MCWP 3-01

Offensive and Defensive Tactics

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FOREWORD

The requirement to balance traditional offensive and defensive tasks and tactics against enduring lessons from recent operations made writing Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-01, *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*, imperative. This publication comprehensively addresses the philosophy of tactics in general and offensive and defensive tactics specifically, across the range of military operations. It does not specifically discuss stability doctrine, tactics, or operations; although it does contain guidance for simultaneously recognizing, executing, and transitioning between offense, defense, and stability activities.

Offensive and Defensive Tactics is the Marine Corps' basic warfighting offensive and defensive tactics publication. MCWP 3-01 serves as a common starting point for leaders and units to address the specific tactical problems that face them. It is a compendium of best practices and common terms, not a dictate that must be rigidly adhered to. MCWP 3-01 provides the basics of offensive and defensive tactics from the squad level to the Marine division and points the reader to references for further study.

This publication is intended for the Marines, leaders, commanders, and staffs from the squad level to the Marine division as a foundational document to assist in the preparation and execution of offensive and defensive tactics in any given operational environment.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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CHAPTER 1
TACTICS

Tactics is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. (*DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*; hereafter referred to as the *DOD Dictionary*) It is the art and science of winning engagements and battles. It includes the use of firepower and maneuver, the integration of different arms, and the immediate exploitation of success to defeat the enemy. (Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication [MCDP] 1, *Warfighting*) Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. Combat power is generated by combining the elements of the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF). The tactical level commander uses combat power in battles, engagements, and small unit actions.

TACTICAL LEVEL OF WARFARE

This is the primary publication for offensive and defensive operations at the tactical level. This publication is for professionals and it requires dedication and study to master. It is authoritative and provides guidance in the form of combat tested concepts and ideas across the range of military operations (ROMO) and focuses on tactics used to win in combat. These tactics are not prescriptive in nature; they require judgment in application.

The tactics and supporting techniques and procedures described in this publication are only starting points for the tactician, who must understand the difference between tactics and techniques and procedures. Tactics requires judgment and adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Techniques and procedures are established patterns that can be applied repeatedly with little or no judgment in a variety of circumstances. Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) provide the tactician with a set of tools to use in developing the solution to a tactical problem. The solution to any specific problem is a unique combination of these TTP or the creation of new ones based on a critical evaluation of the situation. The tactician determines a solution through mastery of doctrine and existing TTP, tempered and honed by experience gained through training and operations. The tactician uses creativity to develop solutions for which the enemy is neither prepared nor able to cope.

The levels of warfare clarify the linkage between strategic objectives and tactical actions. Although there are no finite limits or boundaries between them, the three levels of warfare are strategic, operational, and tactical. They apply to all military operations. The tactical level of warfare is the level of warfare at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces (Joint Publication [JP] 3-0, *Joint Operations*). Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. It is

important to understand tactics within the context of the levels of warfare. The strategic and operational levels provide the context for tactical operations. Without such context, tactical operations are reduced to a series of disconnected and unfocused actions. Engagements are linked to battles. One or more battles are linked to winning major operations and campaigns, leading to operational success, which can lead to strategic success. See JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and MCDP 1-0 with Change 1, *Marine Corps Operations*, for further discussion on major operations and campaigns.

An engagement is a tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelon maneuver forces (JP 30). Engagements are typically conducted at the Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB) or regimental level and below. They are usually short, executed in terms of minutes, hours, or days. Engagements can result from one side's deliberate offensive movement against an opponent or from a chance encounter between two opponents, such as a meeting engagement.

A battle consists of a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement. Battles can affect the course of a campaign or major operation. For example, a battle occurs when a Marine expeditionary force (MEF) commander fights for one or more significant objectives. Battles are usually operationally significant, if not operationally decisive.

Levels of command, size of units, types of equipment, or types of forces or components are not associated with a particular level of warfare. National assets, such as intelligence and communications satellites, previously considered principally in a strategic context, are an important adjunct to tactical operations. Commanders consider strategic, operational, or tactical actions based on their effect or contribution to achieving strategic, operational, or tactical objectives.

Advances in technology, information-age media reporting, and the compression of time-space relationships contribute to the growing interrelationships between the levels of warfare. The levels of warfare help commanders visualize a logical flow of operations, allocate resources, and assign tasks to the appropriate command. However, commanders at every level must be aware that in a world of high connectivity that allows for constant and immediate communications, any single event may impact any or all three levels of warfare.

ART AND SCIENCE OF TACTICS

The art and the science of tactics are two distinctly different yet inseparable concepts. A tactician is an individual devoted to mastering the art and science of tactics. Commanders and leaders at all echelons must be tacticians to lead their Marines and Sailors in the simultaneous conduct of offensive, defensive, and stability activities.

Art of Tactics

When discussing the art of tactics, one may consider three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decision-making under conditions of uncertainty when faced with an intelligent enemy, and an understanding of human factors—the effects of combat on Marines and Sailors. An art, as opposed to a science, requires exercising

intuitive faculties that cannot be learned solely by study. Tacticians must temper their study and evolve their skill through a variety of relevant, practical experiences. The more experience the tactician gains from practice under a variety of circumstances, the greater is that individual's mastery of the art of tactics.

The tactician invokes the art of tactics to solve tactical problems within the commander's intent by considering—

- Types and forms of operations, forms of maneuver, methods, and tactical tasks.
- Task organization of available forces, to include allocating scarce resources.
- Arrangement and choice of control measures.
- Tempo of the operation.
- Risks the commander is willing to take.

These considerations represent a starting point for the tactician to create a unique solution to a specific tactical problem. While there may be checklists for techniques and procedures, there are no checklists for solving tactical problems. Tacticians must not look for a checklist approach to tactics; instead, they must use the experience and creativity of themselves, their staffs, and their subordinates to outthink their enemies.

There are three aspects to the art of tactics that define a competent tactician. The first is the requirement for creative and flexible application of the tools available to the commander, such as doctrine, TTP, training, organizations, materiel, and personnel. The infinite variations of any situation, the changing mission factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available–time available (METT-T), and the independent will of the enemy demand creativity and flexibility from the tactician. Since each situation is unique, there can neither be comprehensive checklists that make success a certainty, nor guarantees that a tactic that worked in one situation will work again. Each tactical problem is unique and must be solved on its own merits.

The second aspect of the art of tactics is recognizing and operating within the reality that tactical decision-making occurs under conditions of uncertainty, in time-constrained environments, against an opposing will. Leaders must be willing to apply their judgment in this environment, making the best use of the time and information available at the moment of decision and avoiding the illusion of certainty. Leaders use mission type orders and direction to execute command and feedback into their decision-making process to establish control.

The third aspect of the art of tactics is to understand the human factors—both enemy and friendly—that differentiate actual combat from the problems encountered during training or in a classroom. Success in combat depends on the human aspect of warfare as much as it does on any numerical or technological factor. Marines and Sailors remain key generators of combat power. Combat leaders therefore seek to recognize and exploit fear and weakness in their enemies while safeguarding friendly forces from similar effects. Tacticians strive to accomplish this through gaining and maintaining the initiative and dictating the tempo of continuous combat operations.

Continuous combat operations against an intelligent enemy takes a toll on friendly forces, severely straining their physical and mental stamina, which can result in decreased vigilance, slowed perception, difficulty communicating, and an inability to concentrate or accomplish manual tasks. The tactician seeks to maximize these effects on the enemy while minimizing them on the friendly force by choosing tactics that dictate tempo and by exercising tactical patience—the art of developing the situation and timing decisions when conditions are favorable. The tactician must weigh the risk between pushing personnel beyond their limits to exploit success versus resting them to prevent the collapse of unit cohesion.

Science of Tactics

Consideration of the science of tactics requires an understanding of those military aspects of tactics—capabilities, techniques, and procedures—that can be measured and codified. The science of tactics includes measuring the physical capabilities of friendly and enemy organizations and systems, such as determining how long it takes a given organization (e.g., regimental landing team [RLT]), to move a certain distance. It also includes techniques and procedures used to accomplish specific tasks, such as the tactical terms and control graphics that compose the language of tactics. While not easy, the science of tactics is fairly straightforward. Much of what is contained in this publication is the science of tactics—techniques and procedures for employing various elements of the combined arms team. See chapter 2 for further discussion of combined arms.

Mastery of the science of tactics is necessary for the tactician to understand the physical and procedural constraints under which units must work. These constraints include the effects of terrain, time, space, and weather on friendly and enemy forces. However, because combat is an intensely human activity, the solution to tactical problems cannot be reduced to a formula. This realization necessitates the study of the art of tactics.

HASTY VERSUS DELIBERATE OPERATIONS

A hasty operation is an operation in which the tactical situation requires the use of immediately available forces and fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) to perform actions with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation time for speed of execution. A deliberate operation is an operation in which the tactical situation allows for the development and coordination of detailed plans, mission-specific rehearsals and task-organization of the force, thorough preparation, and synchronized shaping and sustaining actions.

Most operations lie somewhere along a continuum between the extremes of hasty and deliberate operations. The initial assault of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment into Hue City in 1968 illustrates one end, hasty operations conducted with the forces immediately available. At the other end of the continuum is a deliberate operation, such as the 1st Marine Division's breach operation during the opening hours of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. While improvement in command and control (C2) systems provides greater situational awareness, facilitation of decision making, and a diminishing of the distinction between hasty and deliberate operations; it does not make that distinction irrelevant.

CHOICES AND TRADEOFFS

The decision to conduct a hasty or deliberate operation is closely related to the decision to operate with more or less certainty. Greater certainty is necessary for the detailed planning and thorough preparation associated with deliberate or complicated operations. Greater uncertainty, often accompanying sudden crisis or changes to the situation, is most often associated with hasty operations—situations that demand immediate action given the forces and information available at the moment. Fundamentally then, the hastiness or deliberateness of an operation is based on the commander's current knowledge of the enemy situation and an assessment of whether the assets available (to include time) and the means to coordinate and synchronize those assets are adequate to accomplish the mission. If they are not, the commander takes additional time to plan and prepare for the operation or bring additional forces to bear on the problem. A commander never has perfect intelligence, but knowing when there is enough information to make a decision within the higher commander's intent and constraints is a critical skill for a commander and part of the art of tactics.

The commander should take only the minimum time necessary in planning and preparation to ensure a reasonable chance of success. This allows friendly forces to see and act faster than the enemy, permitting the rapid concentration of friendly strength against enemy vulnerabilities and mitigating uncertainty in tactical operations. While commanders must certainly understand the possible negative effects of reduced coordination, they must balance that risk against allowing the enemy more time to change the situation, conduct preparations, and move additional units within supporting range or distance. If the enemy can improve their disposition faster than the friendly force can, delays in execution decrease the commander's chances of success. Additionally, commanders seek to provide subordinates the maximum time possible to conduct their own planning and preparations.

The fundamentals of maneuver warfare indicate that it is normally better to err on the side of speed, audacity, and momentum than on the side of caution when conducting military operations. Bold decisions give the best promise of success; however, one must differentiate between prudent risk and gambling. Prudent risk is a deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment as being worth the cost. It is the application of military judgment, the mitigation of risk to an acceptable level, and the determination of whether the remaining risk is worth accepting in order to exploit the opportunity at hand. In World War I, the advance of the Marines into Belleau Wood to stem the German advance is an example of a justifiable, prudent risk. A gamble is conducting an operation that can lead either to victory or to the complete destruction of one's force. Rare situations can arise when a gamble may be justified, such as when defeat is merely a matter of time and the only chance for victory lies in an operation of great risk. Lieutenant Colonel Chamberlain's decision to conduct a bayonet charge with what was left of the 20th Maine on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg is an example of a military gamble.

The commander can be less deliberate in planning and preparing for an operation when facing a clearly less-capable and less-prepared enemy force. In these circumstances, the commander can forego detailed planning, extensive rehearsals, and significant changes in task organization. For

example, an attacking battalion landing team encountering enemy security outposts just moving into position will conduct actions on contact to immediately destroy the outposts without the loss of momentum. It then follows that against a larger and more prepared enemy, the commander needs more preparation time and a larger force to succeed. If the commander determines that the enemy forces cannot be defeated with the forces immediately at hand, the commander must determine what additional measures to take to be successful. These measures can include any or all of these factors along the continuum of hasty versus deliberate operations.

RISK REDUCTION

As discussed, the differences between hasty and deliberate decisions have much to do with certainty and uncertainty—what leaders know and what they do not know about a given situation and the time they have available to make a decision. But even when executing a hasty operation, commanders still seek to operate within the framework of prudent risk, not within the framework of mere chance. As seen in figure 1-1 commanders do so through a mix of gaining information and intelligence and making flexible tactical choices.

Commanders reduce risk through the acquisition of information and intelligence within the context of the time available to make a decision. Combat information is unevaluated data, gathered by or provided directly to the tactical commander which, due to its highly perishable nature or the criticality of the situation, cannot be processed into tactical intelligence in time to satisfy the user's tactical intelligence requirements. (*DOD Dictionary*) The key difference between combat information and intelligence is analysis and the time to accomplish that analysis. Acting on combat information exposes friendly forces to risk, such as enemy deception, but also allows for the exploitation of fleeting opportunities. Acting on intelligence increases the effectiveness of tactical operations and the efficient use of resources but risks surrendering battlespace tempo to the enemy. As combat information and intelligence become available, the commander determines where to operate along the continuum of hasty versus deliberate operations to accomplish the mission.

Commanders reduce risk through the methods they choose to employ their forces. The greater the uncertainty, the more likely friendly forces will choose formations that prioritize force protection over speed, and the more likely they are to create a large reserve capable of reacting to unforeseen events. Conversely, the greater the certainty, the more likely friendly forces will reduce risk by dispersing and distributing forces and increasing the tempo of operations. While it is true that C2 systems and precision fires often provide Marine Corps forces an asymmetric advantage over certain enemies, such advantages are often fleeting with enemy forces quickly reacting by camouflaging themselves (e.g., hiding among the population). Further, Marines constitute the Nation's crisis responders—the force ready to enter and undertake operations in uncertain, fluid environments. Therefore, Marines do not expect certainty, but rather seek to act boldly and accept necessary, prudent risk to achieve success.

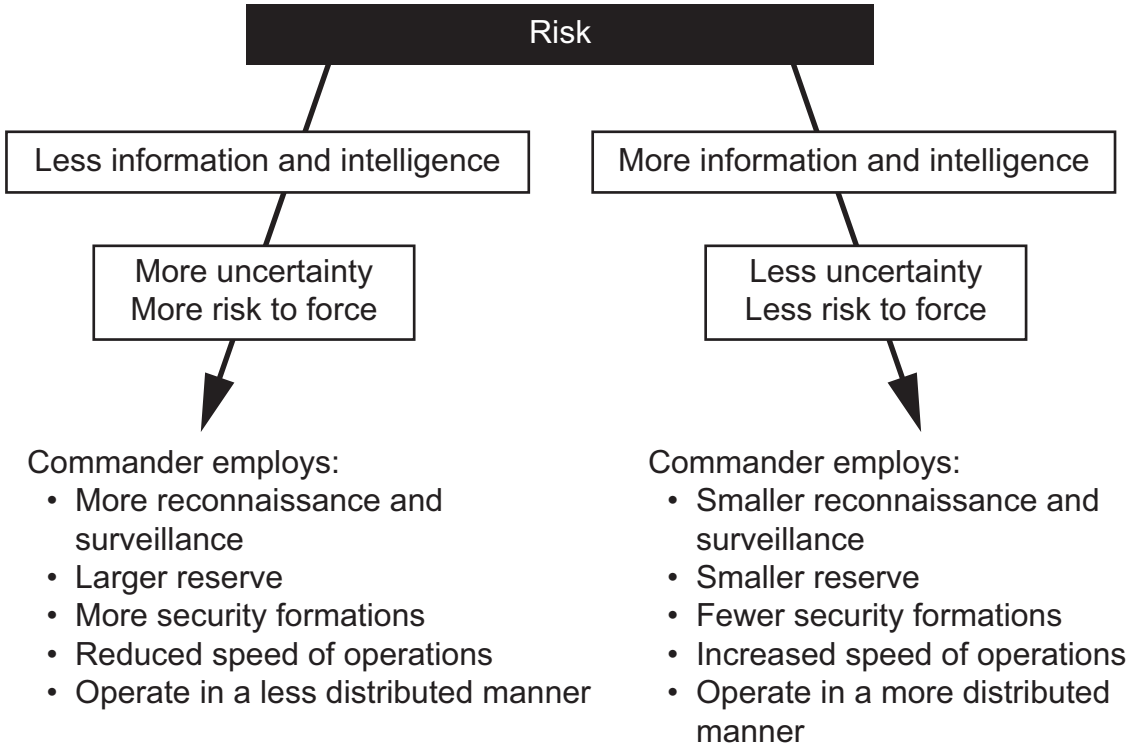


Figure 1-1. Risk Reduction Factors.

SOLVING TACTICAL PROBLEMS

The commander and combat leader uses a mastery of the art and science of tactics, an understanding of the situation, and sound judgment to create unique solutions appropriate to the mission and the other specific mission factors of METT-T. There are usually several solutions that might work, although some will be more effective than others. Marines seek solutions that defeat the enemy in the time available at the least cost in personnel and materiel. The solution should be decisive and posture the unit for future missions while providing the greatest flexibility for unexpected enemy actions or reactions. The solution must be in accordance with the higher commander's intent. A thorough understanding of the enemy greatly assists the tactician in the development of workable solutions.

Marines enable the success of their solutions to tactical problems by gaining and maintaining the initiative—forcing the enemy to react to friendly operations, initiating combat on their own terms—at a time and place of their choosing. A commander should never surrender the initiative once it is gained. The commander should build momentum quickly to win decisively through the simultaneous, rapid application of available combat power while operating inside the enemy's decision-making cycle, and mastering the transitions from the defense to the offense and vice versa. These general rules allow the commander to maximize friendly and minimize enemy

combat power by preventing the enemy from fighting as a combined arms force. Commanders seize, retain, and exploit the initiative by—

- Maneuvering more rapidly than the enemy to gain positional advantage (the place where the effects of fires are most destructive) over the enemy.
- Employing firepower to facilitate and exploit positional advantage.
- Sustaining subordinate forces before, during, and after engagement with the enemy.
- Achieving and maintaining information superiority.
- Planning beyond the initial operation and anticipating possible events.

The commander tenaciously and aggressively presses the battle. The commander accepts risk while leading Marines and Sailors and pushes systems to their limits.

Tactical success occurs when the opposing enemy force can no longer achieve their tactical objectives or prevent friendly forces from accomplishing their mission. That is the end goal of all offensive and defensive operations. Decisive tactical success occurs when the enemy no longer has the means to oppose the friendly force. It also occurs when the enemy admits defeat and agrees to a negotiated end of hostilities. Historically, a rapid tactical success results in fewer friendly casualties and reduced resource expenditures. However, the tactician avoids chancing subordinate forces and losing combined arms synchronization in search of rapid victory.

Finally, solutions to tactical problems are a collective effort. Success results from the commander's plan and the ability of subordinates to execute it. Commanders must have full confidence in their subordinates' mastery of the art and science of tactics and in their ability to execute the chosen solution. See MCDP 1 and MCDP 1-3, *Tactics*.

CHAPTER 2
COMMON TACTICAL CONCEPTS AND CONTROL MEASURES

Commanders and combat leaders must understand the common tactical concepts, definitions, and language used by the military profession in the conduct of offensive and defensive operations. This chapter introduces the Marine Corps doctrinal hierarchies that form the framework by which this publication is organized. The concepts and terms in this chapter are common to most operations.

DOCTRINE HIERARCHY

Figure 2-1 illustrates the various types of operations that occur across the ROMO and the various tasks, activities, and actions a unit might conduct while participating in those operations. Units may conduct these actions separately, sequentially, or in combination. They may transition back and forth between them depending on the mission and situation. For example, a regiment may

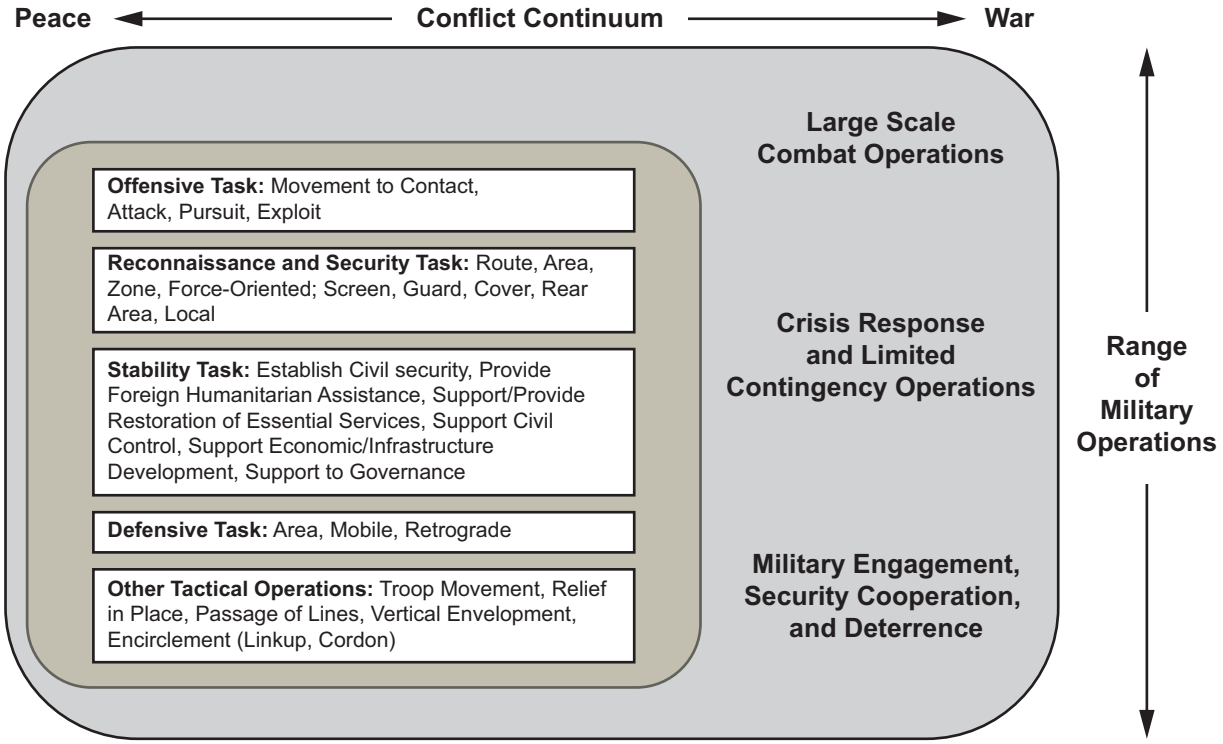


Figure 2-1. Marine Corps Tasks and Activities Across the Range of Military Operations.

have one battalion conducting an attack, while another defends the flank, and a third establishes civil security and supports humanitarian assistance. See Marine Corps Warfighting Publication [MCWP] 3-03, *Stability Operations*, for more information on stability tasks and activities.

Reconnaissance and security and other tactical operations are actions commanders may employ to assist in the execution of the various tasks and actions associated with combat and stability activities. Other tactical operations are never decisive in themselves, but rather enable other operations to be decisive. A forward passage of lines might enable an attack to continue, allowing a fresh unit to pass through one that has reached a culminating point, thereby maintaining momentum and keeping pressure on the threat.

BATTLESPACE FRAMEWORKS

Battlespace is, "The environment, factors, and conditions that must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, or complete the mission. This includes the air, land, sea, space, and the included enemy and friendly forces; facilities; weather; terrain; the electromagnetic spectrum; and the information environment within the operational areas, areas of interest, and areas of influence." (Marine Corps Reference Publication [MCRP] 1-10.2, *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*) A battlespace framework assists commanders in understanding and organizing their battlespace so they can relate their forces to one another in time, space, event, and purpose. Battlespace frameworks provide commanders and their staffs with a means to ensure they consider all essential elements of military operations while in the planning and execution phases. Frameworks are situation and mission dependent and may vary between units within the same operation. Battlespace frameworks are not methods or means of tasking units or resources. Commanders generally choose to use either spatial- or purpose-based battlespace frameworks.

Spatial-based battlespace frameworks consist of deep, close, and rear operations (see fig. 2-2) and may be either contiguous or noncontiguous. Commanders most often use lines of operation in association with spatial-based battlespace frameworks. Purpose-based battlespace frameworks consist of decisive, supporting, and sustaining actions. Commanders most often use lines of effort in association with purpose-based battlespace frameworks. It is possible to blend the two types, and changes in situation and mission might mandate a transition between them. See MCDP 1-0 for further discussions of battlespace frameworks, areas of interest, influence, and operations, as well as contiguous and noncontiguous AOs. See also JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, for further information on lines of operation and lines of effort.

Spatial-Based Battlespace Framework

Spatial-based battlespace frameworks focus on arranging operations and forces in terms of time, space, and geography. Most often associated with aspects of traditional warfare, spatial-based battlespace frameworks are useful whenever the primacy of the tactical problem, mission, and situation is based on ground objectives, physical capabilities of the enemy, and the corresponding deployment of friendly forces.

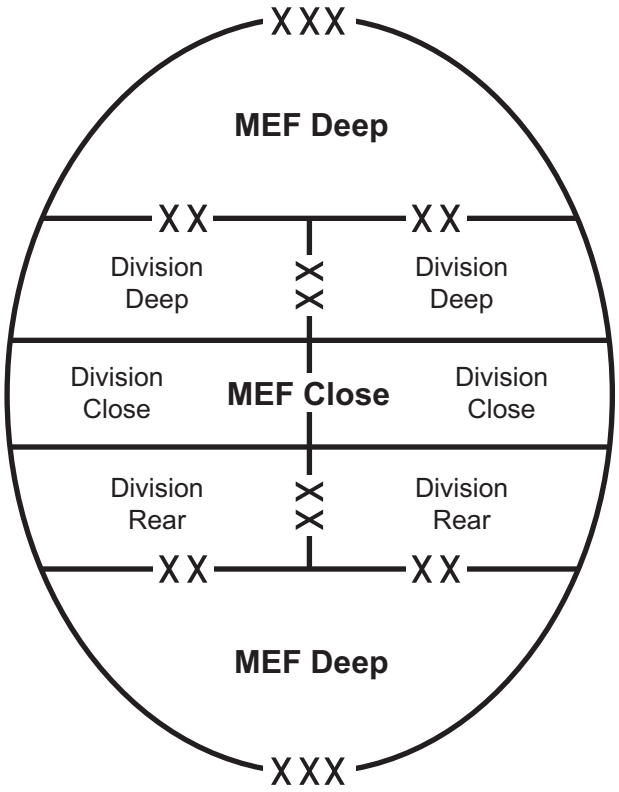


Figure 2-2. Spatial-Based Battlespace Framework Example.

Deep Operations. Deep operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are those operations that help locate the enemy, restrict enemy freedom of action, disrupt the coherence and tempo of operations, interdict enemy supplies, and isolate or destroy enemy forces. (MCDP 1-0) They afford commanders an opportunity to shape or prevent future close battles. Supporting efforts are normally associated with deep operations. A designated subordinate unit provides a supporting effort to directly contribute to the success of the main effort. Deep operations can strip away enemy capabilities, force an early culmination, or otherwise attack the enemy system so friendly forces can handle what remains when the enemy forces become a part of the close battle. By conducting deep operations, the commander can seize the initiative, create windows of opportunity for decisive action, restrict the enemy's freedom of action, and disrupt the cohesion and tempo of enemy operations. Deep operations may require coordination and integration with national-level assets and joint forces.

Close Operations. Close operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are those operations which project power against enemy forces in immediate contact to create the effects that lead to a decision (MCDP 1-0). Close operations project power against enemy forces in immediate contact to achieve the purpose of the operation. The main effort is normally associated with close operations. A main effort is the designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. It is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power and is directed against a center of gravity through a critical vulnerability. (MCRP 1-10.2) Designating a main effort temporarily prioritizes resource allocation. The reserve may serve as the element of decision. Close operations require speed and mobility to rapidly concentrate overwhelming combat power at the critical time and place. Fire and maneuver conducted

primarily by combined arms forces from the ground combat element (GCE) supported by the rest of the MAGTF dominate close operations.

Rear Operations. Rear operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are those sustainment and security operations that ensure the freedom of action of the force and continuity of operations, logistics, and command and control. (MCDP 1-0) All MAGTF elements conduct rear operations. Supporting efforts are normally associated with rear operations. The MAGTF commander may need to provide commanders in the rear area with additional capabilities, such as a tactical combat force, fire support assets, civil affairs, and associated command and control. To minimize the logistical footprint, rear operations may exploit seabasing, host-nation (HN) support, and existing infrastructure. As the operation progresses, the geographic location, C2 structure, and the organization of the rear area will likely change.

Purpose-Based Battlespace Framework

Purpose-based battlespace frameworks focus on arranging operations, forces, and resources in terms of time, conditions, and effects. Most often associated with aspects of irregular warfare, purpose-based battlespace frameworks are useful whenever the primacy of the tactical problem, mission, and situation is based on functions, activities, actions, and effects.

Decisive Actions. Decisive actions are those actions that lead to results larger than themselves; they are actions that the commander deems fundamental to achieving mission success at any given point of time or phase. (MCDP 1-0 and MCDP 1-3) The decisive action is normally accomplished by the designated main effort. While multiple subordinate units may be engaged in the same decisive action, priorities between them must be carefully delineated. It is possible that any particular action or series of actions conducted by friendly forces might prove decisive, and commanders must remain prepared to exploit unexpected or unplanned opportunities. For example, strikes and raids associated with shaping operations lead to a loss of will and an unexpected enemy withdrawal from the battlespace.

Shaping Actions. Shaping is the use of lethal and nonlethal activities to influence events in a manner that changes the general condition of war to an advantage. Shaping actions sets conditions for the decisive action through effects on the enemy, indigenous populations and institutions, and terrain. Shaping actions may occur throughout a unit's area of operations (AO) and involve any combination of forces and capabilities. Shaping actions may occur before, during, or after the decisive action begins. They are normally accomplished by supporting efforts. Shaping actions can become decisive actions if circumstances change or they enjoy unexpected success or opportunities.

Sustaining Actions. Sustaining actions are actions taken to prepare, sustain, and support those elements the force requires for decisive action. Sustaining actions differ from decisive and shaping actions in that they are focused internally (on friendly forces) rather than externally (on the enemy, environment, or population). For example, logistics support in stability operations would not be a sustaining action since it is part of mission accomplishment. Sustaining actions typically address important logistics and force protection actions essential to the success of decisive and shaping actions. While the success of decisive and shaping actions may ultimately rely on sustaining actions, these actions cannot be decisive themselves.

FACTORS OF METT-T

The five mission factors of METT-T describe the unique situation in which a tactician executes the art and science of tactics. Analyses of the mission factors are critical to planning and to execution and assessment. The tactician considers these five factors, as well as civilian considerations, which are continuous and inherent for any type of operation. Their individual impact on an operation will differ, but each mission factor must be considered during the commander's visualization and design process. Some may be part of the science of tactics—such as terrain and weather effects on movement rates and fuel consumption, while others may be part of the art of tactics—such as the same terrain and weather effects on morale.

BASIC TACTICAL CONCEPTS

The following paragraphs contain basic tactical concepts common to both offensive and defensive operations. They are listed in alphabetical order, not in order of importance. These concepts, along with the principles of joint operations, factors of METT-T, elements of operational design, warfighting functions, estimates, input from other commanders, and the commander's own experience and judgment allow the commander to visualize the conduct of operations.

Combined Arms

Combined arms is the full integration of combat arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. It is the TTP employed by a force to integrate firepower and mobility to produce a desired effect upon the enemy. The combined arms team is the full integration and application of two or more arms or elements of one Service into an operation. (*DOD Dictionary*) More broadly, combined arms are two or more capabilities mutually supporting one another, usually consisting of a mixture of infantry, armor, aviation, field artillery, air defense artillery, engineers, and information operations (IO) such as military deception and electronic warfare.

Weapons, units, and systems are more effective when they operate in concert than when used individually or separately. While no commander should artificially sacrifice tempo merely to achieve combined arms, efficient and cost effective solutions to most tactical problems are achieved through combined arms. The concept of combined arms applies equally to all types of operations, whether used destructively (e.g., an attack) or constructively (e.g., achieving synergy in stability operations).

Control Measures

A control measure is a directive given graphically or orally by a commander to subordinate commands to assign responsibilities, coordinate fires and maneuver, and control operations. Each control measure can be portrayed graphically. In general, all control measures should be easily identifiable on the ground (i.e., terrain feature). Examples of control measures include boundaries, objectives, coordinating points, contact points, and direction of attack.

Decisive Engagement

A decisive engagement is an engagement in which a unit is considered fully committed and cannot maneuver or extricate itself. Decisive engagement may be accepted (e.g., a unit is the main effort of an operation) or it may be forced (e.g., a reconnaissance unit is compromised). The unit's mission is what usually results in the acceptance of decisive engagement rather than the unit's physical ability to extricate itself. For example, a unit might become decisively engaged to hold key terrain, defeat a specific enemy force, or seize a specific objective. Decisive engagement occurs from the perspective of the involved unit. What constitutes a committed or uncommitted force occurs from the perspective of a senior headquarters to their subordinates. A committed force is a force in contact with an enemy or deployed on a specific mission or course of action (COA) that precludes their employment elsewhere. An uncommitted force is a force that is not in contact with an enemy and is not already deployed on a specific mission or COA.

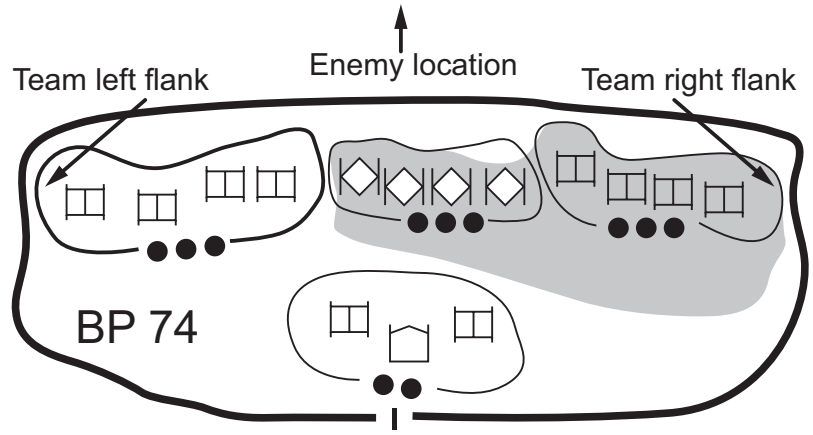
Defeat in Detail

Defeat in detail is achieved by concentrating overwhelming combat power against separate parts of a force rather than defeating the entire force at once. It may occur as a result of enemy action such as piecemeal commitment to the battle, which allows for defeat of each portion as it arrives. Or it may occur as a result of friendly action, such as conducting operations to individually isolate and then destroy portions of the enemy. A smaller force can use this technique to achieve success against a larger enemy.

Flanks

Flanks are the right or left limits of a unit. For a stationary unit, they are designated relative to the enemy's actual or expected location (see fig. 2-3). For a moving unit, they are defined by the direction of movement (see fig. 2-4). The vulnerability of flanks is dependent upon formation and position. An assailable flank is a flank exposed to attack or envelopment. In figure 2-3, the flanks are assailable because the force can only bring limited combat power to bear to their right and left. Conversely, an attack on the flanks of the force in figure 2-4 is risky because the force need merely turn right or left to rapidly bring the preponderance of their combat power to bear. Decisions about the vulnerability of friendly and enemy flanks are fundamentally decisions of mission, terrain, position, and orientation.

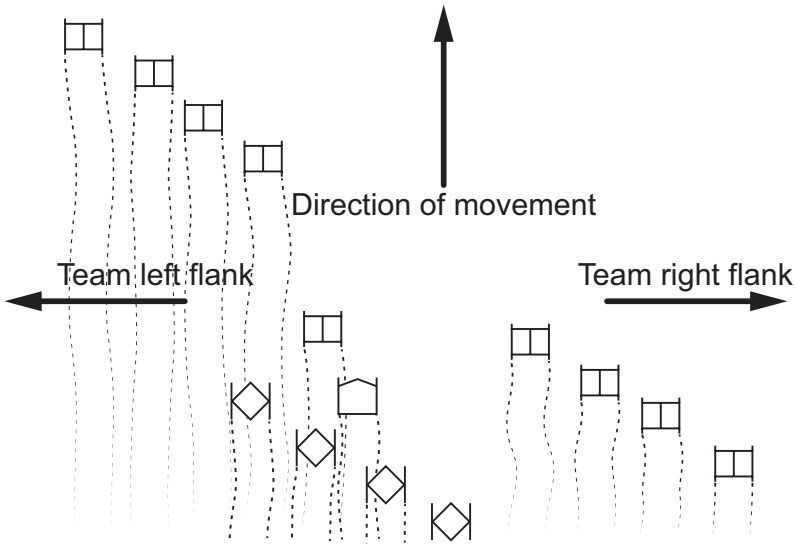
The vulnerability of flanks is normally a function of mission, terrain, the weakness of forces, position or formation, technical capability of the opponent (e.g., the ability to conduct vertical envelopment), and uncovered gaps between adjacent units. A force in the attack may accept risk to their flanks to bring combat power to bear at the point of decision. A flank anchored on restrictive terrain may not be vulnerable to armored or mechanized forces, but may be vulnerable to foot mobile infantry forces. Sufficient room must exist for the attacking force to maneuver for the flank to be assailable. A unit may not have an assailable flank if both flanks link into other forces. When a commander has an assailable flank, the commander may attempt to refuse it by using various techniques, such as supplementary positions.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
BP battle position

Figure 2-3. Flanks of a Stationary Unit.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 2-4. Flanks of a Moving Unit.

A flanking position is a geographical location on the flank of a force from which effective fires can be placed on that flank. An attacking commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions against a defending force to place destructive fires directly against enemy vulnerabilities. A defending commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions on the flanks of a hostile route of advance for the same reason. A flanking position that an advancing enemy can readily avoid has little value to the defender unless the enemy does not realize it is occupied.

Maneuver

Maneuver is the movement of forces for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy. Maneuver is one of the six warfighting functions. Maneuver creates and exposes enemy vulnerabilities to the massed effects of friendly combat power. A commander employs elements of combat power in symmetrical and asymmetrical ways so as to attain positional advantage over an enemy and be capable of applying those massed effects.

Piecemeal Commitment

Piecemeal commitment is the immediate employment of units in combat as they become available instead of waiting for larger aggregations of units to ensure mass. It is the unsynchronized employment of available forces so that their combat power is not employed effectively. Piecemeal commitment subjects the smaller committed forces to defeat in detail and prevents the massing and synchronizing of combat power with follow-on maneuver and combat service support (CSS) elements. While generally negative, piecemeal commitment may be advantageous to maintain momentum, to retain or exploit the initiative, or to reinforce a faltering operation, especially if the commitment of small units provides all of the combat power needed to avert disaster. Search and attack operations employ the piecemeal commitment of troops. See chapter 4 for a discussion of search and attack operations.

Reconstitution

Reconstitution consists of those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization. Reconstitution is a total process. It is not solely a logistic operation, though CSS plays an integral role. The commander conducts reconstitution when one or more subordinate units become combat ineffective, or when the commander can raise the combat effectiveness of a subordinate unit closer to the desired level by shifting available resources. Besides normal logistic actions, reconstitution may include—

- Removing the unit from combat.
- Assessing effectiveness with external assets.
- Reestablishing a chain of command.
- Training the unit for future operations.
- Reestablishing unit cohesion.

Reconstitution transcends normal day-to-day logistic actions. However, it uses existing systems and units to do so.

Reserve

A reserve is the portion of a body of troops that is kept to the rear, or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement, in order to be available for a decisive movement. (*DOD Dictionary*) The reserve exists primarily to reinforce success, not failure. The reserve is not a committed force and thus does not normally have a full suite of combat multipliers available to them until their commitment. It is normally a unit's main effort once committed. The commander constitutes a reserve regardless of where within the ROMO a mission falls. The commander bases the size of the reserve on the level of uncertainty and risk in the current tactical situation. The location occupied by the reserve depends on their most likely mission, time-distance requirements, and on survivability considerations. A quick reaction force is an example of a reserve. The primary tasks for a reserve are to—

- Conduct the decisive action.
- Retain or regain the initiative.
- Take advantage of unexpected success.
- Counter tactical reverses that threaten the integrity of the friendly force's operations.

A commander should always retain a reserve, reconstituting one whenever possible on the commitment of the original reserve.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement (ROE) are directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which US forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. (*DOD Dictionary*) How ROE impact a commander's conduct of operations depends on their restrictiveness or permissiveness. A company might conduct a flanking attack in any number of situations. Rules of engagement may affect how the commander conducts that attack in terms of weapon systems used to isolate the objective, suppress enemy positions, and exploit success; company mortars versus air-

delivered precision weapons, or physical isolation and pursuit versus isolation and pursuit by fire. Rules of engagement always recognize the right of self-defense and the commander's right and obligation to protect assigned personnel. They are not replacements for the considered judgment of a leader who maintains sight on the desired end state.

Tactical Mobility

Mobility is a quality or capability of military forces which permits them to move from place to place while retaining the ability to fulfill their primary mission. (*DOD Dictionary*) Exercising mobility in and around the enemy is tactical mobility, a function of the relationship between cross-country mobility, firepower, and force protection. Tacticians weigh tactical mobility when developing COAs and the relative combat power of friendly and enemy forces. Armor units have good mobility, but their tactical mobility in restrictive terrain is poor. Their mobility in open terrain is superb unless faced with an enemy who can neutralize their protection and resist suppression. Similarly, foot mobile infantry battalions move slowly, but have superior tactical mobility in restrictive terrain. In open terrain such units move more quickly, but their vulnerability to enemy fires and maneuver makes their tactical mobility poor. Tactical mobility can be enhanced by route selection, movement techniques, and movement times.

BASIC CONTROL MEASURES

Basic Control Measures

Airspace Coordinating Measure
Area of Operations and Boundaries
Assembly Area
Checkpoint
Contact Point
Critical Friendly Zone
Direct Fire Control Measure
Engagement Area
Fire Support Coordination Measure
Fire Support Target
Forward Line of Own Troops
Line of Contact
Named Area of Interest
Obstacle Control Measure
Phase Line
Position Area for Artillery
Routes and Corridors
Target Area of Interest

This section establishes basic control measures common to offensive and defensive tactics. The appropriate chapters of this publication discuss those control measures that apply to only one type of military operation. For example, chapter 4 discusses the objective since that control measure applies only to offensive operations. The control measure graphics apply to both automated and hand drawn displays and overlays such as situation maps and concept sketches. See Military Standard (MIL-STD) 2525D, *Joint Military Symbology*, for further information on military graphics. Units conducting tactical operations receive task, purpose, and commander's intent. To help delineate responsibilities and coordinate fire and maneuver among various subordinate units, commanders use control measures. While control measures are both permissive (allows something to happen) and restrictive (limits how something is done), commanders strive to use them in a manner that provides the greatest possible freedom of action to subordinates, establishing only those necessary to provide essential coordination and deconfliction between units. Commanders remove restrictive control measures as soon as possible. Control measures may be graphical, such as boundaries, or procedural, such as target engagement priorities.

Well-conceived control measures facilitate the conduct of current and future operations. The commander adjusts control measures as necessary to maintain synchronization and ensure mission accomplishment as the tactical situation evolves. The commander balances the risk of introducing additional friction into the operation with the benefits gained by changing them.

Control measures apply to all forces at all echelons. A phase line (PL) or checkpoint established by higher headquarters applies not only to a commander's unit, but to subordinate units as well. Commanders reference only the control measures established by the higher headquarters when making reports to that headquarters. Commanders may, or may not, choose to establish a standard naming convention for control measures in the unit standing operating procedures (SOP). Examples of such naming conventions would be reserving car model names for PLs and city names for objectives. This publication does not use a standard naming convention.

Airspace Coordinating Measures

An airspace control plan, approved by the joint force commander, provides guidance on how airspace is controlled and managed in the joint force operational area. Within that plan are airspace coordinating measures (ACMs), measures employed to facilitate the efficient use of airspace to accomplish missions and simultaneously provide safeguards for friendly forces. (*DOD Dictionary*) Airspace coordinating measures are important to commanders utilizing all methods of

air support in conducting offensive and defensive tactics. Airspace elements establish ACMs to accomplish one or more functions:

- Establish reserved airspace for specific airspace users.
- Restrict the actions of some airspace users.
- Create airspace in which units can use weapons with minimal risk of friendly fire incidents. (Friendly fire incidents include death by friendly fire, injury, and property damage.)
- Control actions of specific airspace users.
- Require airspace users to accomplish specific actions.

Joint Publication 3-52, *Joint Airspace Control*, provides additional information on each of the following joint ACMs:

- Coordinating altitude.
- Low-level transit routes.
- Minimumrisk routes
- Restricted operations areas.
- Special-use airspace.
- High-density airspace control zones.
- Standard use Marine Corps aviation flight routes.

Figure 2-5 shows how some of these joint ACMs are used to create an airspace coordination area.

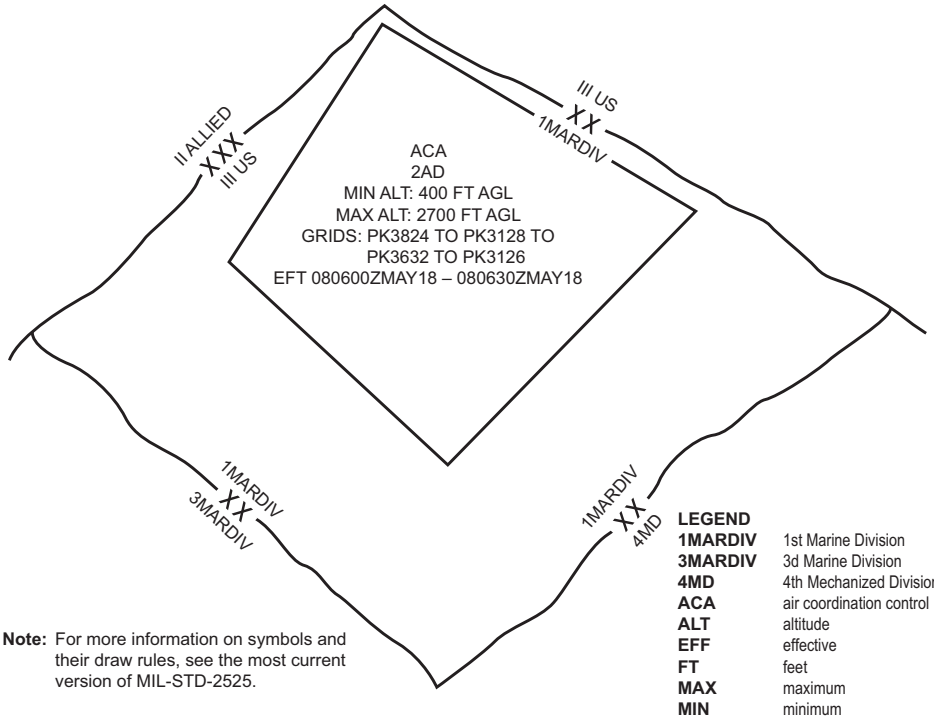


Figure 2-5. Airspace Coordination Area Example.

Area of Operations and Boundaries

An AO is an operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. (JP 3-0) Areas of operation are a common control measure used whenever commanders possess ground-based tactical tasks. A higher headquarters assigns subordinates an AO using boundaries. These commanders may, in turn, assign subordinates their own AOs. Depending on the METT-T, AOs may extend down to the company level. Assigning an AO to subordinates decentralizes execution while maximizing freedom of action. Not using an AO centralizes execution and limits the options of subordinates. Centralizing execution normally occurs when mandated by METT-T. For example, a RLT commander assigning subordinate battalions battle positions (BPs) in support of a RLT engagement area (EA). Areas of operation normally change over the course of an operation. Factors that influence such change are—

- Incorporating geopolitical constraints.
- Accomplishing objectives.
- Assuming a new task or mission.
- Shifting to a new phase of the operation.
- Anticipating exploitation and pursuit.
- Assuming the main effort.

When assigning an AO, commanders must consider the capabilities of subordinate units to control and manage the AO. Areas of operation that are greater than a unit's area of influence should not be assigned. An area of influence is a geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control. (JP 3-0) While ground combat units normally receive AOs, aviation and logistic units might also receive AOs if properly resourced. For example, a MAGTF might assign an air base and corresponding AO to the aviation combat element (ACE). The ACE would likely require augmentation of C2 assets and security forces. All units assigned an AO have the following responsibilities within that AO:

- *Terrain management*. The AO owner controls the battlespace to include assigning additional boundaries and AOs to subordinates. Even when higher headquarters assigns units to the AO, the owning unit still dictates final placement. This ensures the unit commander controlling the AO knows what units are in that AO and where they are located.
- *Intelligence collection*. Commanders assigned AOs conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities within their AOs to maintain current and accurate operational pictures of their AOs that they can share both within and external to their units to establish a common operational picture (also referred to as COP) of those AOs. See chapter 12 for more information on reconnaissance and MCWP 2-10, *Intelligence Operations*, for more information on intelligence processes.
- *Civil-military operations*. Ensuring that public order and safety exist within the unit's AO are implied tasks for commanders during any operation.
- *Air and ground movement control*. Units may not move across boundaries into another unit's AO without receiving clearance from the unit owning the AO. Once assigned an AO, the owning unit controls movement throughout the AO. The designation, maintenance, route

security, and control of movement along routes within an AO are the responsibility of the owning unit unless the higher echelons' coordinating instructions direct otherwise. Similarly, the ground maneuver commander manages the airspace below the coordinating altitude, using procedural control measures and positive control measures, to include air defense. The coordinating altitude is an ACM that uses altitude to separate users and as the transition between different airspace control elements. (*DOD Dictionary*) Details regarding airspace control can be found in MCWP 3-20, *Aviation Operations*.

- *Clearance of fires*. Within their AO, the owning unit may employ any direct or indirect fire system without receiving further clearance from higher headquarters. Standard exceptions regarding cross-boundary effects and ROE apply.
- *Security*. The security of all units operating within the AO is the responsibility of the owning commander. If the commander cannot or chooses not to provide security throughout the AO, all concerned individuals and organizations are informed of when, where, and under what conditions the commander will not exercise this function. Each unit commander remains responsible for local unit security measures. See chapter 13 for further information on security operations.
- *Personnel recovery*. Personnel recovery is the sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel (JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*). The Marine Corps executes both ground-based personnel recovery and aircraft-based tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (also referred to as TRAP), a mission performed by an assigned and briefed aircrew for the specific purpose of the recovery of personnel, equipment, and/or aircraft when the tactical situation precludes search and rescue assets from responding and when survivors and their location have been confirmed (JP 3-50). A person can become isolated by enemy action, by becoming disoriented, or by environmental conditions. The commander assigned an AO is responsible for recovering and returning isolated persons within that AO to friendly control.

Contiguous and Noncontiguous Areas of Operation. A contiguous AO is one in which all subordinate commands' AOs share one or more common boundary (see fig. 2-6). A noncontiguous AO involves one or more subordinate AOs that do not share a common boundary (see fig. 2-7). The intervening area between noncontiguous AOs remains the responsibility of the higher headquarters. The commander can choose to organize the AO so that subordinates have contiguous AOs, noncontiguous AOs, or some combination of both. The AOs occur within both spatial- and purpose-based battlespace frameworks.

Contiguous AOs have distinctive forward, lateral, and rear boundaries. A commander bases the decision to establish contiguous AOs on METT-T analysis. Units with contiguous AOs are normally within supporting distance of one another and may be within supporting range. Other reasons why a commander establishes contiguous AOs include the following:

- The AO is of limited size to accommodate the force.
- Political boundaries or enemy disposition require concentration of force.
- There is a risk of being defeated in detail by enemy forces, the enemy situation is not clear, or the friendly force is significantly outnumbered.
- Concentration of combat power along a single axis of advance, movement corridor, or against a single avenue of approach is required.

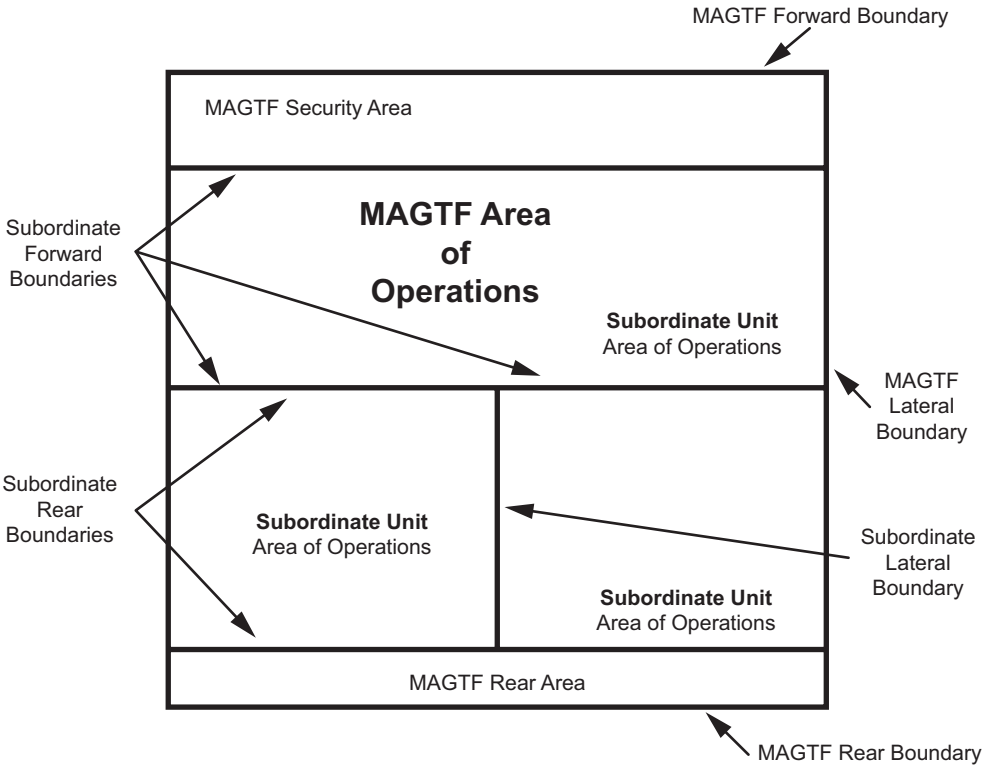


Figure 2-6. Contiguous Areas of Operation.

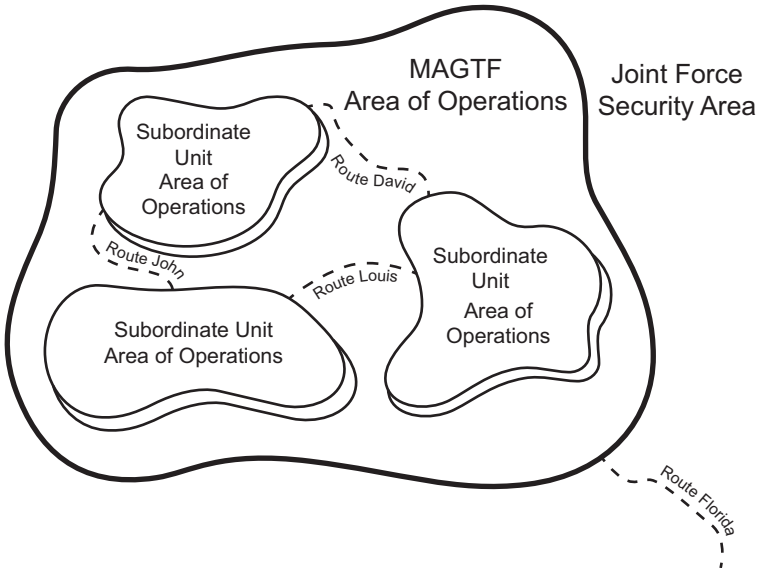


Figure 2-7. Noncontiguous Areas of Operation.

A noncontiguous AO does not have distinctive forward, rear, and lateral boundaries. It is established by a boundary that encloses the entire area. Subordinate boundaries will be continuous, 360 degree arcs that closely approximate the subordinate unit's area of influence. For example, the commander would normally place a noncontiguous regimental boundary at the limit of observed fires for the RLT's security forces. Because noncontiguous boundaries must provide all around security, they generally allow for less concentration of combat power along a single axis. Further, there is a risk associated with establishing noncontiguous AOs because the units are normally out of supporting range from each other.

> ***Note:*** Battle positions are not AOs since a unit is not restricted from operating outside their BP. A commander who deploys subordinates into BPs is not conducting noncontiguous operations. Chapter 8 defines a BP.

The commander bases the decision to establish noncontiguous AOs on METT-T analysis. Reasons why a commander establishes noncontiguous AOs include—

- Limited friendly forces must occupy or control widely separated key terrain. Key terrain is any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant (JP 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment*).
- Subordinate units do not need to provide mutual support.
- Dispersed enemy or population centers throughout the AO require a corresponding dispersal of friendly units.

Operations in areas not included in assigned noncontiguous AOs are the responsibility of the common higher commander.

Using noncontiguous AOs places a premium on the use of innovative means to conduct logistic operations, including aerial resupply. A commander whose subordinates have noncontiguous AOs has three basic choices for establishing ground lines of communication (LOCs) with subordinates:

- Assign subordinates the route security mission for each main supply route (MSR). For the situation depicted in figure 2-7, the MAGTF assigns its various elements responsibility for Routes Louis, David, and John. The MAGTF would likely provide an AO along each route, perhaps extending 4 kilometers on either side.
- Assume risk by having CSS elements run convoys with only their organic self-defense capabilities, while assigning the mission of responding to enemy contacts beyond a convoy's self-defense capability to subordinate units.
- Assign a subordinate unit the mission of providing convoy security for each convoy. For the situation depicted in figure 2-7, the MAGTF could assign its military police the mission of providing convoy security for critical ground convoys.

Boundaries. A boundary is a line that delineates surface areas for the purpose of facilitating coordination and deconfliction of operations between adjacent units, formations, or areas (JP 30). The commander uses boundaries to define the limits of an AO and, as such, establishes ground forces' responsibilities. The ACM control the vertical dimension. The commander ideally bases the boundaries of subordinate units on clearly defined terrain features. Boundaries should not split

responsibilities for roads, rivers, or railways. Responsibility for an avenue of approach and key terrain should also belong to only one unit. The commander adjusts boundaries as necessary in response to the evolving tactical situation. Any areas not delegated to a subordinate remain the responsibility of the commander.

After military characteristics of the terrain are accounted for within the context of the unit's assigned mission, existing political boundaries, such as city limits and provincial borders, are important considerations in developing friendly unit graphical control measures and assigning subordinate unit AOs. Military boundaries that conflict or do not align with existing political boundaries require additional effort when trying to deconflict, manage, or organize the use of indigenous capabilities. However, during the conduct of protracted operations within an AO, subordinate unit AOs should be periodically adjusted to avoid the inadvertent creation of sanctuaries that an enemy could exploit.

The forward boundary is the farthest limit, in the direction of the enemy, of an organization's responsibility, beyond which is the responsibility of the next higher headquarters. Decisive or shaping actions directed against enemy forces beyond an echelon's forward boundary are the responsibility of the next higher headquarters. The higher echelon headquarters normally assigns the lower echelon a forward boundary based on the higher echelon's scheme of maneuver (SOM). The ability to acquire and attack targets in the area between the forward boundary of the subordinates and the echelon's forward boundary determines the exact position of that forward boundary. For example, if a division assigns a forward boundary to a regiment, then the division conducts operations beyond the regiment's forward boundary. Lateral boundaries are boundaries that extend from the unit's rear boundary to their forward boundary. Similar to forward boundaries, decisive or shaping actions directed against enemy forces beyond an echelon's lateral boundary are the responsibility of adjacent units or the next higher headquarters.

The rear boundary is the line that defines the rear of an AO, sector, or zone of action assigned to a particular unit. The area behind the rear boundary belongs to the next higher commander and positioning of elements behind it must be coordinated with that commander. Immediately to the front of the rear boundary is the rear area. The rear area is that area extending forward from a command's rear boundary to the rear of the area assigned to the command's subordinate units. This area is provided primarily for the performance of CSS functions. (MCDP 1-0) Regardless of whether assigned or utilizing a contiguous or noncontiguous AO, the rear area is generally the area opposite the direction of a unit's focus on an enemy force. The rear area is the area where the majority of the unit's logistic, administrative, and CSS functions occur. Because a unit's combat power is generally focused forward or outward, commanders seek to defend their rear areas and exploit those of the enemy.

Assembly Area

An assembly area (AA) is an area in which a command is assembled preparatory to further action. Ideally, an AA provides—

- Concealment from air and ground observation.
- Adequate entrances, exits, and internal routes.

- Space for dispersion; each AA is separated by enough distance from other AAs to preclude mutual interference.
- Cover from direct fire.
- Good drainage and soil conditions that can sustain unit vehicles and individual movement.
- Terrain masking of electromagnetic signatures.
- Terrain allowing observation of ground and air avenues into the AA.
- Standoff distance outside the range of enemy medium indirect fires.

Ideally, the commander assigns each unit their own AA or, if necessary, subdivides an AA. Since the AA of one unit is normally in the AO of another, AAs are treated as noncontiguous AOs. The unit occupying the AA has the same responsibilities as if it were an AO. Figure 2-8 contains graphic representations of AAs. See MIL-STD-2525D for more information and draw rules for symbology.

Relative to the concept of operations, AA locations should contribute significantly to security, flexibility, and future operations. An AA location should allow for movement to subsequent positions to take place smoothly and quickly by concealed routes. Smaller, lighter, and less tactically mobile units use AAs closer to the enemy than do larger, heavier, and more tactically mobile units.

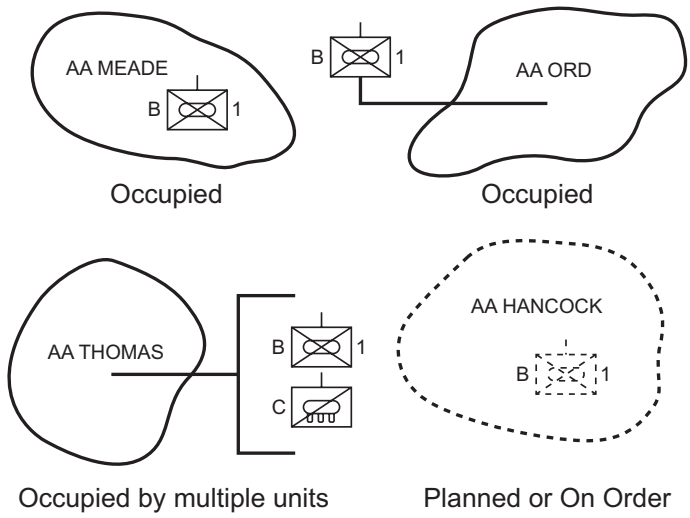


Figure 2-8. Assembly Area Examples.

Checkpoint

A checkpoint is a predetermined point on the ground used to control movement, tactical maneuver, and orientation. Units can also use a checkpoint as a fire control measure in lieu of the preferred control measure—a target reference point (TRP). Checkpoints are useful for orientation. Units may use checkpoints to supplement or as substitutes for PLs. Figure 2-9 depictscheckpoint 13.

Figure 2-9. Checkpoint Example.

Contact Point

In land warfare, a contact point is a point on the terrain, easily identifiable, where two or more units are required to make contact. (JP 3-50) Commanders use contact points to ensure coordination between units or to coordinate linkups. (See chap. 18 for more information on linkups.) Contact points are established where PLs intersect with lateral boundaries or on identifiable terrain. The commander provides a date-time-group to indicate when to make contact, normally physically. Figure 2-10 depicts contact point 8.

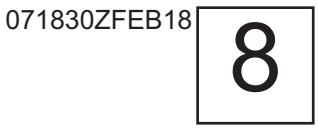


Figure 2-10. Contact Point Example.

Control Point

In land warfare, a control point is an access point or position along a route at which forces are stationed to inspect, provide information, and regulate the passage of supply or traffic. Commanders use control points to control, coordinate, deconflict, and effect the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Control points may be hasty or deliberate. They may be friendly, neutral, or hostile focused. For example, control points may regulate friendly forces, such as an ambulance control points, or provide force protection, such as an entry control point. They may be neutral focused, such as a deliberate vehicle control point that controls the movement of a population. Finally, they may be hostile focused, such as a hasty vehicle control point that seeks to interdict enemy movement or break-up friendly movement patterns. Control points are established at major road intersections, choke points, friendly position entry and exit points, and at any other place the commander deems appropriate to regulate movement. Deliberate control points receive a task and purpose similar to an obstacle and are assigned to an owning unit. Hasty control points occur on order with a specified date-time-group and duration. Figure 2-11 depicts a personnel entry control point for RLT 7.

Critical Friendly Zone

A critical friendly zone (CFZ) is an area where a friendly unit or units are located that the maneuver commander designates as critical. (Marine Corps Tactical Publication [MCTP] 3-10E, *Artillery Operations*) A CFZ is one of four different types of zones used with artillery target acquisition radars. Typical CFZs include: maneuver AAs, command posts (CPs), forward arming

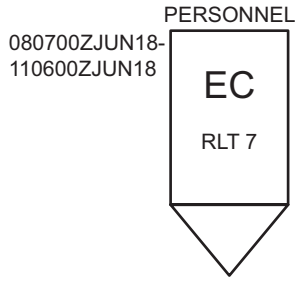


Figure 2-11. Entry Control Point Example.

and refueling points, friendly breaching sites, and other troop concentrations. The exact size and shape of the CFZ reflects the technical characteristics of the sensor coverage and varies in accordance with the terrain. Figure 2-12 shows a CFZ for an RLT. (For additional examples of CFZs, see MIL-STD-2525D.) The designation of a CFZ requires the availability of target acquisition radars to cover the designated area and fire support weapon systems to conduct counterfire. The supporting artillery unit's automated fire support system is tied to that sensor to place the location of a weapon firing into the CFZ ahead of all other targets in priority for counterfire. This results in an immediate call for fire unless the system operator manually overrides the automated request for fire. The other three types of radar zones are call-for-fire zone, artillery target intelligence zone, and sensor zone. For additional information on the employment of all four of these radar zones, see MCTP 3-10F, *Fire Support Coordination in the Ground Combat Element*.

Direct Fire Control Measures

Commanders create the greatest effect on the enemy by controlling the manner, method, and time to initiate, shift, and mass fires, and when to disengage by using control measures for their direct fires. The use of direct fire control measures also enables commanders to control, coordinate, and

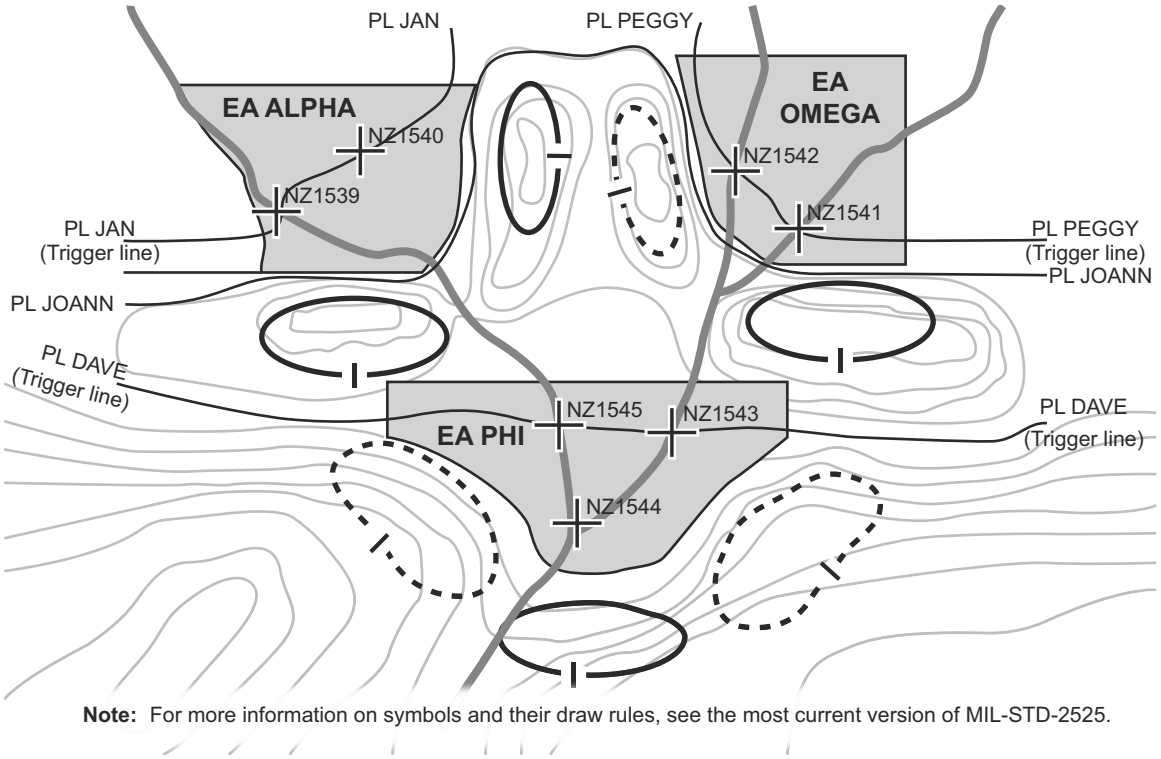
Figure 2-12. Critical Friendly Zone Example.

deconflict their battlespace geometry. Commanders must understand the characteristics of weapon systems and available munitions (e.g., the danger to unprotected personnel when tanks fire discarding sabot ammunition over their heads or near them). Direct fire control measures defined in this publication include EAs, engagement criteria, engagement priorities, sectors of fire, TRPs, and trigger lines. Publications for the rifle squad and infantry platoon address other direct fire

control measures, such as frontal, cross, or depth fire patterns and simultaneous, alternating, or observed techniques of fire.

Engagement Area

An EA is an area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force using the massed fires of all available weapons. This includes organic firepower and supporting systems, such as close air support (CAS). Figure 2-13 depicts several EAs used within the context of a battalion defense. The commander determines the size and shape of the EA by the relatively unobstructed line of sight from the weapon systems in their firing positions and the maximum range of those weapons. The commander designates EAs to cover each enemy avenue of approach into unit positions. The commander also can use them to designate known or suspected enemy locations. The commander selects EAs and then arrays available forces and weapon systems in positions to concentrate overwhelming effects into these areas. The commander routinely subdivides an EA into smaller EAs for subordinates using one or more TRPs or prominent terrain features. The commander assigns sectors of fires to subordinates to prevent friendly fire incidents, but responsibility for an avenue of approach or key terrain is never split. These sectors normally do not affect friendly maneuver. Commanders of units up to battalion task force size normally use this control measure. See MCTP 3-34B, *Combined Arms Countermobility Operations*, for further discussion of EA development.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 2-13. Battalion Engagement Area Example.

Engagement Criteria

Engagement criteria are those circumstances that allow engagement of an enemy force without a specific command to do so. Examples are a point or line on the ground that an enemy crosses or an event or action that an enemy takes. They may be restrictive or permissive. For example, a company commander could tell the first platoon to wait until three enemy tanks reach a TRP within their EA before initiating fire. Another example is a battalion commander telling a company commander not to engage an approaching enemy unit until the enemy commits themselves to an avenue of approach. The commander establishes engagement criteria in the direct fire plan. Commanders and leaders of small tactical units use engagement criteria in conjunction with engagement priorities and other direct fire control measures to mass fires and control fire distribution.

Engagement Priority

Engagement priority is the designated sequence of attack for targets in order of importance assigned to specific units, weapons, or weapon systems to facilitate the defeat of the enemy. Engagement priorities are assigned based on the type or level of threat at different ranges to best match friendly capabilities against threat vulnerabilities. Engagement priorities are situationally dependent. The commander uses engagement priorities to distribute fires rapidly and effectively. Subordinate elements can have different engagement priorities. For example, the commander establishes engagement priorities so that light armored vehicles engage enemy infantry fighting vehicles or armored personnel carriers, while M1 Abrams tanks engage enemy tanks. Normally, units engage the most dangerous targets first, followed by targets in depth or specialized systems, such as engineer vehicles.

Sector of Fire

A sector of fire is a defined area that is required to be covered by the fire of individual or crew-served weapons or the weapons of a unit (see fig. 2-14). Battalions and smaller echelons primarily use this direct fire control measure.

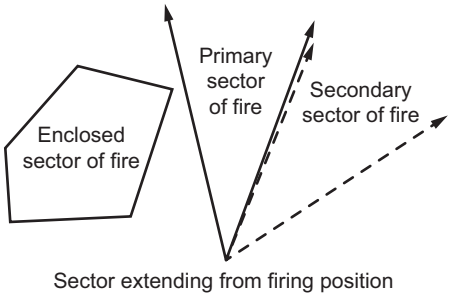


Figure 2-14. Sector of Fire Example.

Each sector of fire can extend from a firing position to the maximum engagement range of the weapon, or it can be an enclosed area at a distance from the firing position. The commander should assign each subordinate unit or available weapon system a primary sector of fire and a secondary sector of fire to increase the capability of concentrating fire in certain areas. The primary sector of fire is that area in which the assigned unit, individual, or crew-served weapon is

initially responsible for engaging and destroying enemy targets in accordance with established priorities of engagement. Fire shifts to the secondary sector, on order, when there are no targets in the primary sector, or when the commander needs to cover the movement of another friendly element. This secondary sector of fire should correspond to another element's primary sector of fire to obtain mutual support. Subordinate commanders may impose additional fire control measures as required.

Target Reference Point

A TRP is an easily recognizable point on the ground used for identifying enemy targets or controlling direct fires. (MCTP 3-10F) Once established, they also become indirect fire targets designated by the fire support officer. Target reference points are used by regiments and below. They assist in the identification of sectors of fire and in the distribution or concentration of direct and indirect fires. Target reference points must be easily identifiable regardless of visibility and normally consist of terrain features, buildings, or markers emplaced by the owning unit. While normally associated with EAs, TRPs are useful in all types of defenses and in the offense as well—in the same manner as establishing targets in a fire support plan for an attack. As in indirect fire targeting, TRPs are also established using a top-down planning, bottom-up refinement methodology. Finally, similar to indirect fire targeting, commanders and subordinates should resist establishing too many TRPs, shifting direct and indirect fires off existing TRPs if necessary. Target reference points are either designated per standard indirect target naming conventions or, if not associated with an indirect fire target, by a numeric-only system. Figure 2-15 depicts the symbol for TRP 032, a direct-fire only TRP.

> ***Note:*** The rest of the TRPs in the figures of this publication are both direct and indirect fire targets and thus designated using indirect fire symbology.

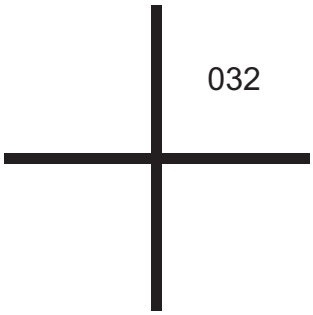


Figure 2-15. Target Reference Point Example.

Trigger Line

A trigger line is a PL used to initiate a preplanned event. Trigger lines are often used to initiate and mass fires into an EA or an objective at a predetermined range for all or like weapon systems. They may signal the requirement to withdraw to another position. In the offense, the crossing of a PL may act like a trigger to execute preplanned fires. A trigger line could indicate the requirement to engage certain types of enemy systems, such as enemy breaching assets. Similar to PLs, trigger lines are normally located on identifiable terrain that crosses an EA, a direction of attack, or an axis of advance. The commander can designate one trigger line for all weapon systems or separate

trigger lines for each weapon or type of weapon system. The commander may combine other control measures, such as engagement criteria and priorities, with trigger lines. Such criteria may be either time- or event-driven, such as a certain number or certain type of vehicle to cross the trigger line before initiating engagement. The commander can use a time-based or a geography-based fires delivery methodology. The commander may reserve the authority to initiate engagement by firing the commander's personal weapon or giving the command to fire.

The location of a trigger line varies according to the requirements of METT-T, with special focus on time-distance factors—for example, the distance an enemy force is likely to traverse in the time it takes from when fires are requested to when they impact (see fig. 2-16). By beginning with identifying where the commander wants the effects of direct and indirect fires to occur, planners can use the time to deliver those fires with the likely speed of the enemy to determine where to place the trigger line. Distance generally reflects the more rapid response

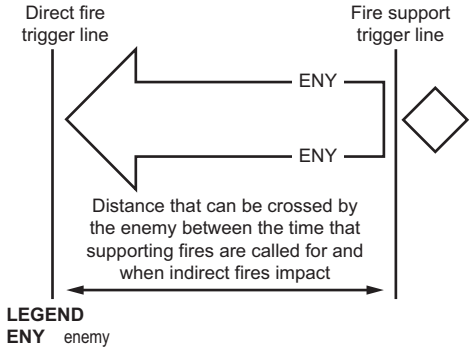


Figure 2-16. Trigger Line Examples.

Plans are built to be flexible, and commanders and planners should avoid the temptation to use trigger lines to begin long sequences of events. It is better to use more trigger lines or other control measures, such as TRPs. Similarly, the effects of fires should be considered when using trigger lines. Massed fires in depth may create visibility conditions that preclude the use of direct fires.

Fire Support Coordination Measures

Similar to control measures used for direct fires to aid commanders in generating the greatest effects on the enemy, fire support coordination measures (FSCMs) facilitate the rapid engagement of targets while deconflicting battlespace geometry. Fire support coordination measures are either permissive or restrictive. As discussed above, a unit's boundaries are the most basic FSCM. The fire support coordinator recommends FSCMs to the commander based on the commander's guidance, location of friendly forces, SOM, and anticipated enemy actions. Fire support coordination measures discussed in this publication include battlefield coordination lines (BCLs), coordinated fire lines (CFLs), fire support coordination lines (FSCLs), free-fire areas (also referred to as FFAs), kill boxes, no-fire areas (NFAs), restrictive fire areas (RFAs), restrictive fire lines (RFLs), and fire support targets. See MCWP 3-31, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Fires*, for further information on FSCMs.

Permissive Fire Support Coordination Measures. The primary purpose of permissive measures is to facilitate the attack of targets. Once they are established, further coordination is not required to engage targets affected by the measures. Permissive FSCMs include BCL, CFL, FSCL, free-fire area, and kill box.

Battlefield Coordination Line. The BCL is an FSCM, similar to an FSCL, that facilitates the expeditious attack of targets with surface indirect fires and aviation fires between this measure and the FSCL. To facilitate air delivered fires and deconflict air and surface fires, an airspace coordination area will always overlie the area between the BCL and the FSCL. The BCL location is graphically portrayed on fire support maps, charts, and overlays by a solid black lie with the letters "BCL" followed by the establishing headquarters in parentheses above the line and the effective date-time group below the line (see fig 2-17). The BCL facilitates the expeditious attack of surface targets of opportunity between the BCL and the FSCL. When established, the primary purpose is to allow MAGTF aviation to attack surface targets without further approval of the commander in whose area the targets are located.

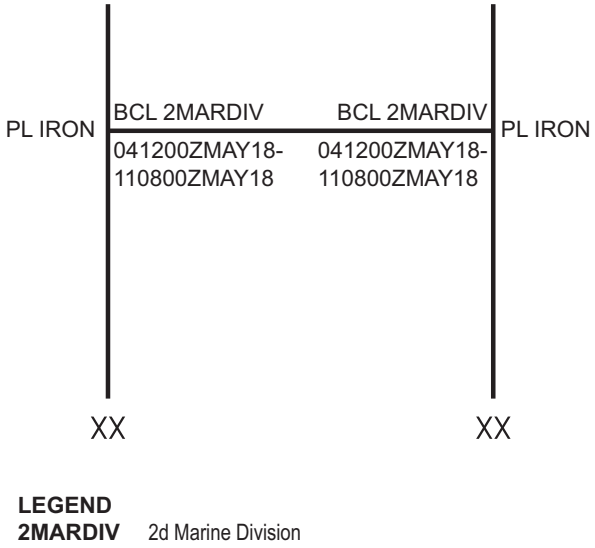


Figure 2-17. Battlefield Coordination Line Example.

Coordinated Fire Line. A CFL is a line beyond which conventional surface-to-surface direct fire and indirect surface fire support means may fire at any time within the boundaries of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination. The purpose of the CFL is to expedite the surface-to-surface attack of targets beyond the CFL without coordination with the ground commander in whose area the targets are located. (JP 3-09, *Joint Fire Support*) Regimental landing teams or Marine divisions usually establish CFLs. It is located as close as possible to the establishing unit without interfering with maneuver forces to open up the area beyond the CFL to fire support (see fig. 2-18). A higher echelon may consolidate subordinate unit CFLs. If this occurs, any changes to the subordinate CFLs are coordinated with the subordinate headquarters.

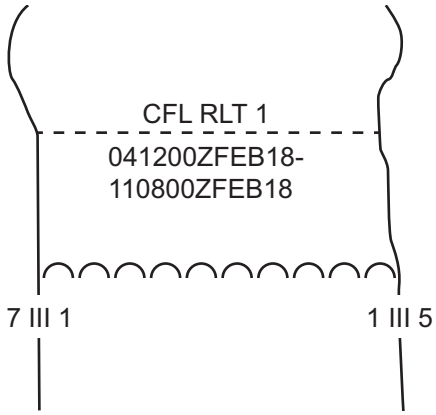


Figure 2-18. Coordinated Fire Line Example.

Fire Support Coordination Line. The FSCL is an FSCM established by the land or amphibious force commander to support common objectives within an area of operation; beyond which all fires must be coordinated with affected commanders prior to engagement, and short of the line, all fires must be coordinated with the establishing commander prior to engagement. (JP 3-09) The primary use of the FSCL is to facilitate the expeditious attack of targets of opportunity beyond the coordinating measure. It provides a measure for coordination between ground elements and supporting forces without endangering friendly troops in the air or on the ground or requiring additional coordination with the establishing headquarters (see fig. 2-19).

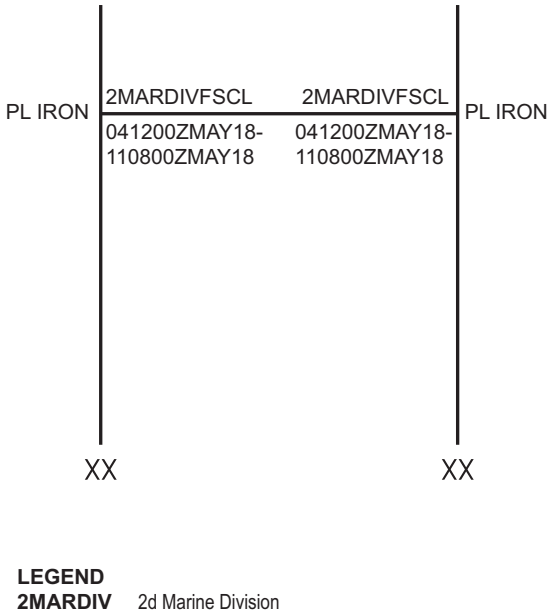


Figure 2-19. Fire Support Coordination Line Example.

The FSCL—

- Facilitates attack of surface targets beyond it.
- Provides ground commanders with sufficient control of aircraft short of it to ensure troop safety.
- Maximizes employment of weapons where they are most efficient, and provides aviation commanders, air control agencies, and pilots with enough information to identify where control or coordination is required before aircraft can attack ground targets.

An FSCL does not divide an AO by defining a boundary between subordinate unit AOs and the AO of the establishing headquarters. Supporting elements attacking targets beyond the FSCL must ensure that the attack will not produce adverse effects on, or to the rear of, the line. Short of
an FSCL, all air-to-ground and surface-to-surface attack operations are controlled by the appropriate commander.

The commander designating an FSCL remains responsible for establishing the priority, effects, and timing of fires impacting beyond the FSCL. The FSCL should follow well-defined terrain features easily identifiable from the air. Positioning of the FSCL must consider the tactical situation. This should include the SOM or plan of defense, weather, terrain, type and source of aircraft, and overall flexibility of maneuver and fire support. When establishing an FSCL, a key factor is the range of the commander's organic weapon systems. By establishing an FSCL close-in, yet at sufficient depth so as to not limit high tempo maneuver, land and amphibious force commanders ease the coordination requirements for engagement operations within their AOs by forces not under their control, such as naval surface fire support or air interdiction.

Free-Fire Area. A free-fire area is a specific area into which any weapon system may fire without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters. (JP 3-09) Normally, it is established on identifiable terrain by a GCE or MAGTF command element (see fig. 2-20).

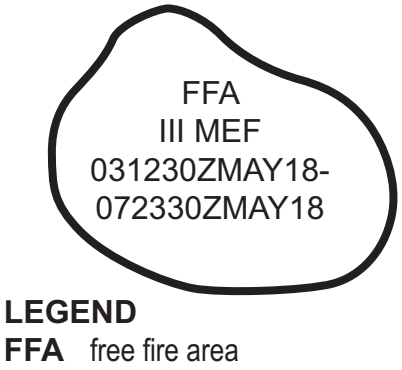


Figure 2-20. Free Fire Area Example.

Kill Box. A kill box is a three-dimensional permissive FSCM with an associated ACM used to facilitate the integration of fires. (JP 3-09) Kill boxes facilitate air-to-ground and surface-to-surface interdiction fires by allowing lethal attacks against surface targets without further coordination with the establishing commander and without the requirement for terminal attack control.

There are two types of kill boxes: a blue kill box and a purple kill box. The purpose of a blue kill box is to facilitate the attack of surface targets with air-to-surface munitions (see fig. 2-21). The purpose of a purple kill box is to facilitate the attack of surface targets with subsurface/surface-to-surface, and air-to-surface munitions. The key difference is that the purple kill box increases the number of joint weapon systems able to combine and maximize their effects without significant coordination. Surface-to-surface direct fires are not restricted in either type.

See JP 3-09 for more information on kill boxes. See MIL-STD-2525D for additional examples of kill boxes.

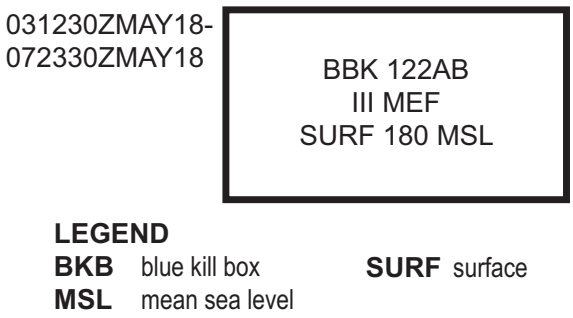


Figure 2-21. Kill Box Example.

Restrictive FSCM. Restrictive FSCMs safeguard friendly forces. A restrictive FSCM imposes coordination requirements prior to the engagement of those targets affected by the measure. Those requirements include an NFA, RFA, RFL, and fire support targets. See MCWP 3-31 for more information on restrictive FSCMs.

No-Fire Area. An NFA is an area designated by the appropriate commander into which fires or their effects are prohibited. (JP 3-09.3, *Close Air Support*) See figure 2-22. A commander uses an NFA to protect independently operating elements (e.g., forward observers, support elements) and for humanitarian reasons such as protecting concentrations of displaced civilians or cultural monuments. The exceptions to this rule are when the establishing headquarters temporarily approves fires within the NFA or when an enemy force within an NFA engages a friendly force, and fires are deemed necessary to defend friendly forces.

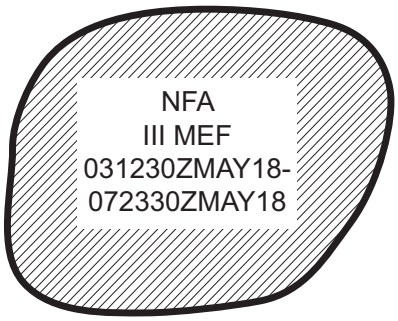


Figure 2-22. No Fire Area Example.

Restrictive Fire Area. A RFA is an area in which specific restrictions are imposed and into which fires that exceed those restrictions will not be delivered without coordination with the establishing headquarters. (JP 3-09) See figure 2-23. Any ground unit commander, normally at the battalion level and above, can establish an RFA within the ground unit commander's own zone. On occasion, a company operating semi-independently may establish a RFA. To facilitate rapidly changing maneuver areas, on-call RFAs may be used. The RFA is activated and deactivated when requested by the maneuvering unit or scheduled by time or event. It may be on recognizable terrain or expressed by grid coordinates or by radius from a point.

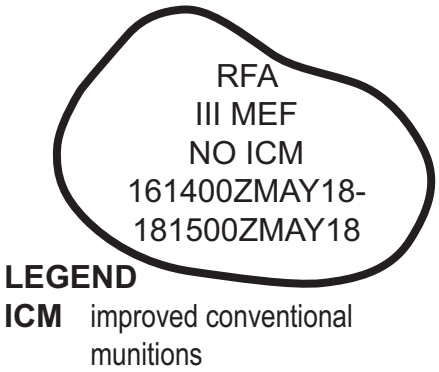


Figure 2-23. Restrictive Fire Area Example.

Restrictive Fire Line. An RFL is a line established between converging friendly surface forces—one or both may be moving—that prohibits fires or their effects across that line without coordination with the affected force. (JP 3-09) The common commander of the converging forces establishes the RFL. The RFL is located on identifiable terrain, and it is usually located closer to the stationary force—if there is one—than to the moving force. See figure 2-24.

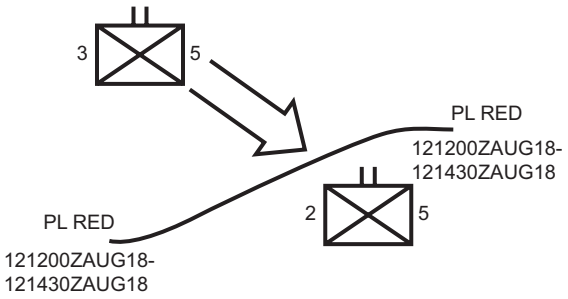
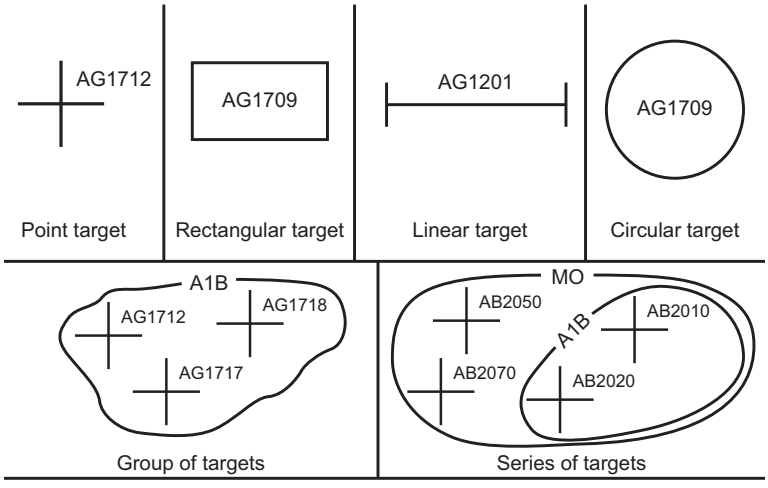


Figure 2-24. Restrictive Fire Line Example.

Fire Support Targets. In the fire support context, a target is an area designated and numbered for future firing. (JP 3-60, Joint Targeting) There are control measures for point targets, circular targets, rectangular targets, and linear targets. Figure 2-25 depicts these symbols. (See MIL-STD-2525D for more information on target symbology.) The commander designates fire support targets using a two-letter and four-digit code established in fire support doctrine. The commander may group two or more targets for simultaneous engagement. The commander may also attack individual targets and groups of targets in series or in a predetermined sequence. The fact that a series or group of targets has been designated does not preclude the attack of individual targets within the series or group. It also does not preclude the attack of one or more groups of targets within the series.

Fire support targets are classified as either planned targets or targets of opportunity. Planned targets are those targets on which fires are prearranged, although the degree of this prearrangement may vary. Targets of opportunity are not planned in advance and are engaged as they present themselves in accordance with established engagement criteria and ROE.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 2-25. Fire Support Target Symbols.

Individually planned fire support targets may be further subdivided into scheduled and on-call fires. Scheduled targets are planned targets on which artillery and other fire support assets deliver their fires in accordance with a pre-established timeline. On-call targets are planned targets engaged in response to a request for fires rather than in accordance with an established timeline. An on-call target requires less reaction time than a target of opportunity. The degree of prearrangement for the on-call target influences the reaction time from request to execution—the greater the prearrangement, the faster the reaction time. Priority targets are an example of on-call targets that have short reaction times, since each priority target has a firing unit designated to execute at any given time. An example of a priority target is final protective fires (FPFs).

Time-sensitive targets are not area targets designated and numbered for future firing. A time-sensitive target is a joint force commander validated target or set of targets requiring immediate response because it is a highly lucrative, fleeting target of opportunity or it poses (or will soon pose) a danger to friendly forces. (JP 3-60) See MCWP 3-31 and MCTP 3-10F for more information on fire support and fire support targets.

Forward Line of Own Troops

The forward line of own troops (FLOT) is a line that indicates the most forward positions of friendly forces in any kind of military operation at a specific time. The FLOT does not refer to small, long-range reconnaissance assets, observation posts (OPs), or stay-behind forces. Rather, the FLOT normally identifies the forward location of covering and screening forces. In the defense, it may be beyond, at, or short of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), depending on the tactical situation. (Chap. 9 discusses the FEBA with other defensive control measures.) Friendly forces forward of the FLOT may have a restrictive fire coordination measure, such as an RFA, placed around them to preclude friendly fire incidents. Figure 2-26 depicts the symbol for the FLOT.

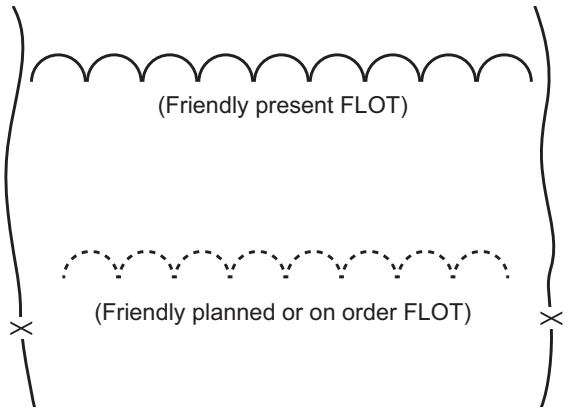


Figure 2-26. Forward Line of Own Troops Examples.

Line of Contact

The line of contact (LC) is a general trace delineating the location where friendly and enemy forces are engaged. In a manner similar to the FLOT, it does not refer to ambushes, patrol contacts, and other small unit tactical actions but rather delineates the general line of engagement between significant ground forces. In the defense, an LC is often synonymous with the FLOT. In

the offense, an LC is often combined with the line of departure (LD). (Chap. 3 discusses the LD.) Figure 2-27 depicts the symbol for the LC.

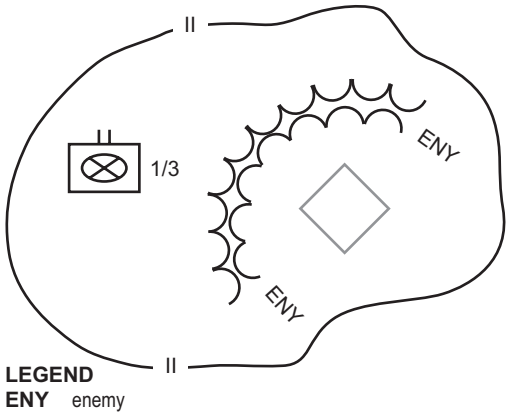


Figure 2-27. Line of Contact.

Named Area of Interest

A named area of interest (NAI) is a point or area along a particular avenue of approach through which enemy activity is expected to occur. Activity or lack of activity within a NAI will help to confirm or deny a particular enemy COA. Named areas of interest are usually selected to capture indications of enemy COAs but also may be related to battlespace and environmental conditions. In this later case, the NAI may actually be a person, group, or portion of cyberspace. The commander tailors the shape of the NAI symbol to the actual area the commander wants observed, rather than using a prescribed shape. It is possible to redesignate a NAI as a targeted or target area of interest (TAI) on confirmation of enemy activity within the area, allowing a commander to mass the effects of combat power on that area. Figure 2-28 depicts NAI Augusta.

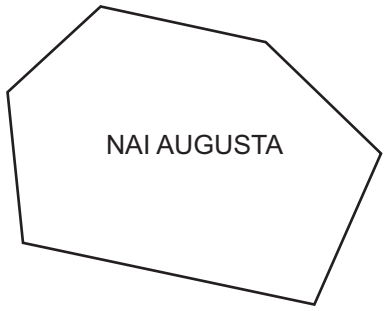


Figure 2-28. Named Area of Interest Example.

Table 2-1. Obstacle Control Measures.

Obstacle Control Measure	Echelon	Specific Obstacle Effect	Size of Enemy Avenue of Approach/Mobility Corridor	
			Armored	Light
Zone	Division and Corps	Optional; not normally used	Division/Brigade	Brigade/Battalion
Belt	Brigade and Regiment	Optional; normally used	Brigade/Battalion	Battalion/Company
Group	Battalion, Brigade, Regiment, Division, Corps	Mandatory	Battalion/ Company	Company/Platoon
Restrictions	Corps, Division, Brigade, Regiment, Battalion	Mandatory	Not applicable	Not applicable

Obstacle Control Measures

An obstacle is any natural or manmade obstruction designed or employed to disrupt, fix, turn, or block the movement of an opposing force, and to impose additional losses in personnel, time, and equipment on the opposing force. (JP 3-15, *Barriers, Obstacles, and Mine Warfare for Joint Operations*) Forces emplace tactical and protective obstacles that reinforce existing terrain and obstructions, and integrate them with fires to shape engagements and affect the enemy's ability to move or maneuver. Commanders possess the authority to emplace protective obstacles within 500 meters of their positions though higher headquarters may provide restrictions on the types of obstacles. Higher headquarters provides guidance and employment authority for other obstacles. Commanders use the concept of obstacle control to ensure that emplaced obstacles support the concept of operations and do not interfere with future operations. Obstacle control measures are groups, belts, zones, and restrictions. Table 2-1 summarizes obstacle control measures. Table 2-2 illustrates obstacle control measure graphics. See MCTP 3-34B for information on EA development and achieving obstacle integration.

Obstacle Zones. Obstacle zones are a division-level C2 measure, normally depicted graphically, to designate specific land areas where lower echelons are allowed to employ tactical obstacles (JP 3-15). Marine air-ground task force and division commanders use them to grant obstacle-emplacement authority to major subordinate units. Obstacle zones may consist of an entire AO or, conversely, more than one obstacle zone may be assigned to a commander. Obstacle zones do not cross unit boundaries which allows for unity of effort and command between obstacles, maneuver, and fires. Obstacle zones are permissive and, therefore, commanders do not normally assign an obstacle effect (block, fix, turn, or disrupt) when they assign a zone—this grants maximum flexibility for subordinate units. Commanders should, however, establish construction and resourcing priorities between different obstacle zones. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacle zones.

Table 2-2. Obstacle Control Measure Graphics.

Obstacle control measure	Emplacement authority From	Emplacement authority To	Graphic	Example
Zone	MEF DIV	DIV REGT	Letter designation Effect graphic optional	2
Belt	MEF DIV REGT	REGT[1] REGT² BN	Number designation Effect graphic optional	3 1
Group	DIV REGT BN	REGT² BN² CO	Letter designation Effect symbol is the graphic	Obstacle groups in a belt
Obstacle Restricted Zone	Any		2RLT 120900ZSEP18- 162400ZSEP18	1 A B

1. Rarely done by MEFs and divisions, but possible.
2. Done only when directed and integrated with MEF or division fire plans.

Graphic effects symbols	Distrupt	Fix	Turn	Block

Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

2RLT	2d Regimental Landing Team	**CO**	company	**REGT**	regiment
BN	battalion	**DIV**	division		

Obstacle Belts. An obstacle belt is a brigade-level C2 measure, normally depicted graphically, to show where within an obstacle zone the ground tactical commander plans to limit friendly obstacle employment and focus the defense. (JP 3-15) Marine air-ground task force and regimental commanders use obstacle belts to grant obstacle-emplacement authority to their major subordinate units. Obstacle belts may consist of an entire AO or conversely, more than one

obstacle belt may be assigned to a commander. Obstacle belts do not cross unit boundaries which allows for unity of effort and command between obstacles, maneuver, and fires.

Obstacle belts are restrictive. While commanders do not specify types or numbers of obstacles, they do assign intent to obstacle belts in addition to guidance on prioritization of construction and resourcing. Obstacle intent consists of the effect that must be achieved by fires and obstacles (obstacle effect) against a specific enemy (target) within the defined belt (relative location). Assigning a specific obstacle effect to a belt does not dictate that all obstacle groups within that belt must have the same effect, as long as the combined effects of those obstacle groups achieve the intended overall effect of the belt. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacle belts.

Obstacle Groups. Obstacle groups are one or more individual obstacles grouped to provide a specific obstacle effect. Marine air-ground task force and battalion commanders use obstacle groups to grant obstacle-emplacement authority to their subordinate units. Unlike obstacle zones or belts, obstacle groups are not areas but relative locations for actual obstacles. Commanders use obstacle groups to direct the emplacement of tactical obstacles and ensure they support the unit's SOM. Obstacle groups provide a greater degree of control on the emplacement of tactical obstacles; but they are still general enough to allow for minor adjustments to the location of individual obstacles, based on the reality of the terrain, to create the desired effects. Commanders may use any number of obstacle groups with various effects within an assigned obstacle belt as long as the combined effect of those groups meets the obstacle belt intent. Subordinate units, such as company teams, do not normally receive responsibility for more than one obstacle group. Obstacle groups require detailed integration of tactical obstacles with direct and indirect fire plans. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacle groups.

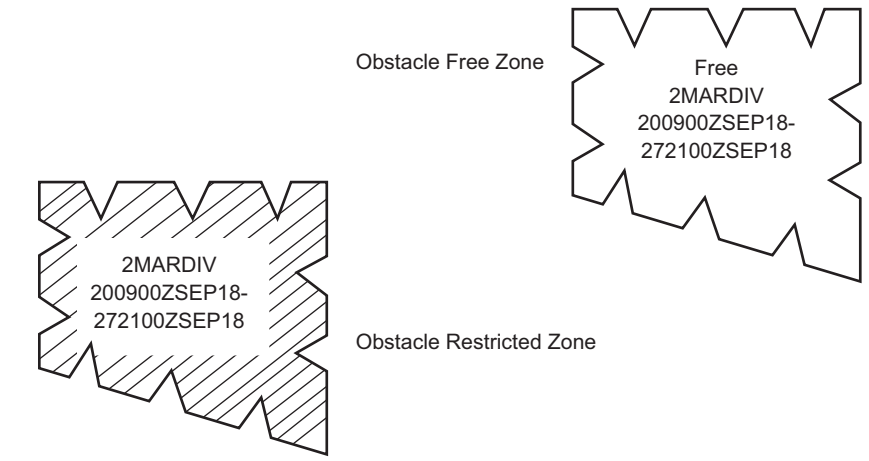
Individual Obstacles. Individual obstacles are combined to form and create the desired effects of obstacle groups. The location and orientation of each type of individual obstacle, such as abatis, antitank ditch, booby traps, mines and minefields, roadblocks, craters, and wire obstacles, are recorded and reported through the chain of command. Commanders must report individual obstacles in sufficient detail so that any unit moving through the area can bypass or reduce the obstacle without excessive risk. Each headquarters is responsible to ensure exact obstacle locations are disseminated throughout its organization. Individual obstacle graphics are rarely shown on maps above the battalion echelon and are not depicted in this publication. See MCTP 3-34B for further information on individual obstacles.

Obstacle Restrictions. Commanders use obstacle restrictions to provide additional obstacle control and to limit the specific types of obstacles used (e.g., no scatterable mines). In general, obstacle restrictions consist of either obstacle-free areas in which obstacles are forbidden, or obstacle restricted areas. An obstacle restricted area is a C2 measure used to limit the type or number of obstacles within an area. (JP 3-15) These restrictions ensure that subordinates do not use obstacles with characteristics that impair future operations. Subordinate commanders may increase, but not decrease, the level of restrictions established by the higher commander. Some examples of establishing an obstacle restriction include—

- Placing an obstacle restricted area within a zone or belt.
- Designating a counterattack axis, passage lane, or other maneuver control measure as an obstacle free area.

- Stating no obstacles within a certain distance of an MSR, movement corridor, passage lane, or a restricted target.
- Establishing obstacle free areas or no-later-than self-destruct times for scatterable mines within a specific area, such as an objective, a planned BP, or an area bounded by PL.

See figure 2-29 for illustrations of obstacle restriction graphics.



Notes:
1. Obstacle restricted zone designate the area where a specific restriction is enforced. This may or may not have a specific time period when the restriction is in place.
2. Obstacle free zones are a special case of the obstacle restricted zone. The intent is to ensure that the area is completely free of reinforcing obstacles. This may or may not have a specific time period when the restriction is in place.

LEGEND
2MARDIV 2d Marine Division

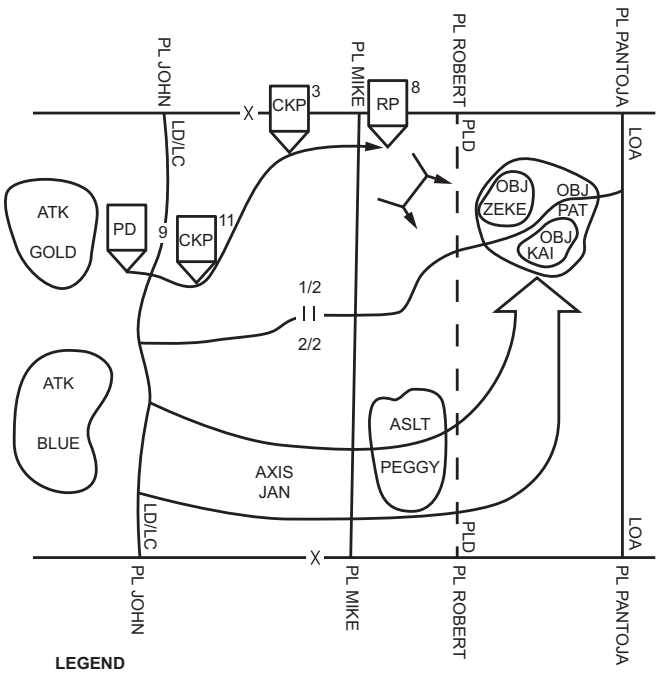
Figure 2-29. Obstacle Free and Obstacle Restricted Zones.

Phase Line

A PL is a line utilized for control and coordination of military operations, usually an easily identified feature in the operational area. (JP 3-09) See figure 2-30. A commander establishes PLs to control the maneuver of subordinate units. Phase lines are not boundaries unless designated as such and do not establish any specific responsibilities between units, unless the operation order so specifies. When possible, the commander places them along easily recognizable terrain features (e.g., roads, railroad tracks, rivers, ridgelines) to ensure easy identification. Some PLs have additional designations for specific purposes, such as a LD or a probable line of deployment (PLD). Chapter 5 discusses these specific purposes.

Position Area

A position area is an area that is occupied, or to be occupied, by an artillery unit with their elements disposed to provide artillery support. See figure 2-31. Commanders assign position areas for artillery (PAAs) for terrain management purposes, to deconflict maneuver, to simplify battlefield geometry, and to manage risk (e.g., probable areas of enemy counterfires). Position areas are not AOs and occupying artillery units do not possess the authority and responsibilities



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 2-30. Phase Lines with Other Control Measures.

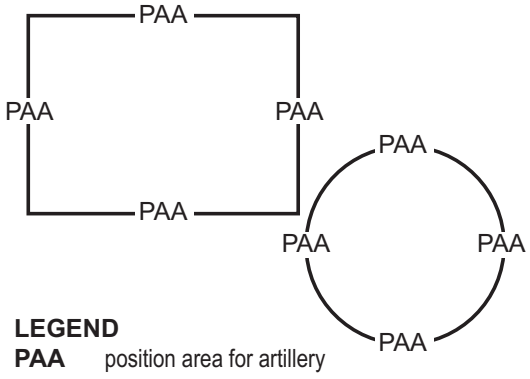


Figure 2-31. Position Area for Artillery.

associated with AO ownership. For example, other units can move through a PAA without clearing that movement with the artillery unit. Similarly, PAAs do not constitute a rigid restrictive area for the artillery unit. They should be considered only as guides to be followed as closely as the mission, terrain, and tactical situation permit. See MCTP 3-10E for further information on PAAs.

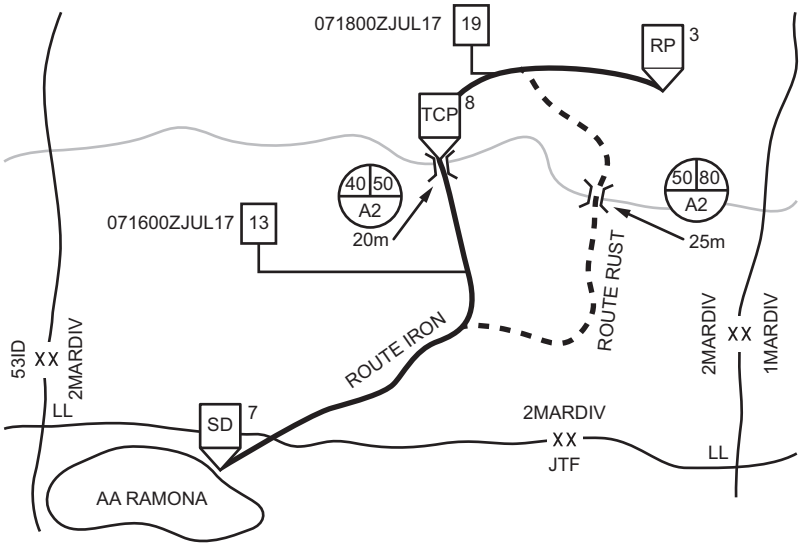
Route

A route is a prescribed course from a point of origin (start point) to a specific destination (release point); it could be a road or an axis of advance (see Route Iron in fig. 2-32). Commanders use

routes to manage maneuver and deconflict traffic. Routes can have different functions such as passing routes or MSRs. Commanders can further designate routes as open, supervised, dispatch, reserved, or prohibited. The commander can assign names, numbers, or alphanumeric designations to routes within an AO.

Target Area of Interest

A TAI is the geographical area where high-value targets can be acquired and engaged by friendly



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND					
1MARDIV	1st Marine Division	**53ID**	53rd Infantry Division	**LL**	light line
2MARDIV	2d Marine Division	**JTF**	joint task force	**m**	meters

Figure 2-32. Route Examples.

forces. Not all TAIs will form part of the friendly COA; only TAIs associated with high priority targets are of interest to the staff. These are identified during staff planning and wargaming. Target areas of interest differ from EAs in degree. Engagement areas plan for the use of all available weapons; TAIs might be engaged by a single weapon. (JP 2-01.3) See figure 2-33. The commander designates a TAI where friendly weapon systems can best attack high-value and high-payoff targets. The unit staff develops these TAIs during the planning process. The shape of a TAI reflects the type of target and the weapon system intended to engage that target. A commander can designate a TAI for any organic or supporting systems, including CAS.

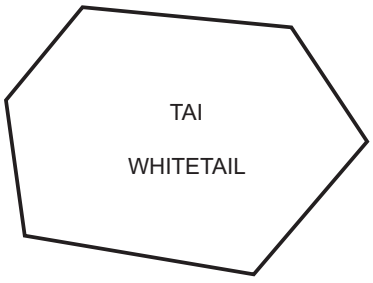


Figure 2-33. Target Area of Interest Example.

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PART TWO
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

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CHAPTER 3
BASICS OF THE OFFENSE

The offense is the decisive form of warfare. While other operations may do great damage to, or harm to the interests of, an enemy, offensive operations are the means to decisive victory. Offensive operations allow commanders to impose their will on the enemy by shattering the enemy's moral, mental, and physical cohesion. An offensive operation is an operation conducted to take the initiative from the enemy, gain freedom of action, and generate effects to achieve objectives. The four types of offensive operations are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. This chapter discusses the basics of the offense. The basics discussed in this chapter apply to all offensive operations.

When seizing, retaining, or exploiting the initiative, the commander is conducting offensive operations. Even when conducting defensive or stability operations, wresting the initiative from the enemy requires the spirit of the offense. Offensive operations—

- Destroy enemy forces and equipment.
- Deceive and divert the enemy.
- Deprive the enemy of resources.
- Gain information.
- Fix the enemy in place.
- Seize key terrain.
- Force an enemy decision.
- Disrupt enemy actions or preparations.

The focus of offensive operations is the enemy, not seizure of terrain. Successful offensive operations—

- Avoid the enemy's strength and attack their weakness by focusing combat power against the enemy's critical vulnerabilities.
- Isolate the enemy from their sources of support to include the population.
- Strike the enemy from unexpected directions, disrupting their plans.
- Exploit every advantage.
- Overwhelm the ability of enemy decision makers to observe, orient, decide, and act.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENSE

Characteristics of the Offense
Surprise
Concentration
Tempo
Audacity

Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity characterize the offense. Effective offensive operations capitalize on accurate and timely intelligence allowing the commander to shape the battlespace, maneuver to gain a position of advantage, and generate a greater operational tempo than the enemy can match. Commanders accept operational risk to maintain the initiative, dictate the terms of battle, and undertake COAs that—while difficult or unexpected—generate the maximum effects on the enemy.

Surprise

In the offense, commanders achieve surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place the enemy does not expect or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. Estimating the enemy commander's intent and denying that commander the ability to gain thorough and timely situational understanding is necessary to achieve surprise. Unpredictability and boldness help gain surprise. The direction, timing, and force of the attack also help achieve surprise. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses the enemy commander's C2 systems, induces psychological shock in enemy soldiers and leaders, and reduces the coherence of the defense. By diminishing enemy combat power, surprise enables attackers to exploit enemy paralysis and hesitancy.

Tactical surprise is fleeting and outright surprise is difficult to achieve. Modern surveillance and warning systems, the availability of commercial imagery products, and the global news cycle make achieving surprise more difficult. Nonetheless, commanders can achieve surprise by recognizing and reacting quickly to opportunity and operating in a way the enemy does not expect. Commanders do this through accepting operational risk, demonstrating a willingness to endure hardship, and through the use of warfighting doctrine and mission type orders that generate flexibility and adaptability. They deceive the enemy as to the nature, timing, objective, and force of an attack. They use bad weather, seemingly impassable terrain, feints, demonstrations, and false communications to lead the enemy into inaccurate perceptions. They use sudden, violent, and unanticipated attacks to paralyze the enemy and shape the environment for the main effort's decisive action.

Friendly forces can achieve surprise through unexpected changes in tempo, such as moving slowly or creating a perception of unpreparedness before rapidly accelerating operations. Commanders can conceal the concentration of their forces, masking activity that might reveal the direction or timing of an attack, and then use superior mobility to achieve rapid massing of combat power. Finally, friendly forces use advantages and capabilities such as air assault and amphibious raids, special operations forces (referred to as SOF), information and cyberspace actions, and naval strikes and joint fires, to create gaps in the enemy's defenses that enable surprise.

Concentration

Concentration is the massing of combat power to generate overwhelming effects to achieve a single purpose. Commanders balance the necessity for concentrating forces to create effects with

the need to disperse them to avoid creating lucrative targets or giving away the element of surprise. Advances in ground and air mobility, target acquisition, and long-range precision fires enable attackers to rapidly concentrate effects. Command and control information systems can provide reliable, relevant information that assists commanders in determining when and where to concentrate forces to mass effects.

Attacking commanders manipulate their own and the enemy's force concentration by combining dispersion, concentration, military deception, and attacks. By dispersing, attackers stretch enemy defenses and deny lucrative targets to enemy fires. By massing forces rapidly along converging axes and synchronizing the effects of available supporting assets, attackers overwhelm enemy forces at the decisive point. After an attack, commanders prioritize exploitation and maintaining momentum while weighing the risks of keeping their forces concentrated in the face of potential enemy reactions. Should enemy forces threaten them, they may disperse again. Commanders adopt the posture that best suits the situation, protects the force, and sustains the momentum of the offense.

The concentration of combat power to generate overwhelming effects is more than the mere assembly of ground forces. It includes capitalizing on air superiority to deny the enemy the ability to detect or strike friendly forces from the air. It includes using direct land, air, and maritime resources to delay, disrupt, or destroy enemy reconnaissance elements or capabilities. It also includes rear security, information protection, and counterfire to protect friendly forces as they concentrate.

Tempo

In military terms, tempo is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. Tempo not only includes rapidity of action, but also the cadence of activity measured over time (i.e., hours, days, weeks, and even months). The relative speed and rhythm of operations are weapons themselves that contribute directly to combat power.

In the offense, commanders seek to dictate the tempo of operations to maintain dominance, momentum, and the initiative. They never permit the enemy to recover from the shock of the initial assault. A faster tempo degrades the enemy's situational awareness and ability to make timely or relevant decisions, denies them a chance to rest, disrupts their plans, and destroys their ability to react effectively. Commanders make the rapid and timely decisions necessary in a high-tempo environment by empowering subordinates through the use of mission type orders, tightening staff processes to focus on effective command and control, and by be willing to accept uncertainty.

Dictating tempo acknowledges that offensive operations require both rapidity and violence of action but also the coordination and synchronization of combat power and logistics necessary to effect concentration at decision points, maintain the offense, and avoid culminating points. Such coordination and synchronization do not come at the expense of losing opportunities to defeat the enemy. Commanders seek to dictate not only when attacks occur, but also when friendly forces choose to alter tempo to conduct reconstitution and reorganization or reliefs in place. Effective staff processes, efficient logistic procedures, and prior planning are critical to maintaining the ability to conduct operations without ceding the initiative to the enemy.

Audacity

Audacity refers to extraordinary boldness and courage. In military terms, audacity is the willingness of friendly forces to strike boldly and decisively in the midst of uncertainty and operational risk to achieve decisive victory. Audacity may be a simple, daring plan, executed aggressively. It may consist of direct, forceful, solutions to complex problems that seek to break stalemates and political impasses. Audacious commanders violently apply combat power, choose to exploit sudden opportunities, and overcome impassable obstacles. They understand when and where to take risks, and they do not hesitate as they execute their plan. Commanders dispel uncertainty through action; they compensate for lack of information by seizing the initiative and pressing the fight.

FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The Marine Corps warfighting philosophy is offensive in nature. It focuses on the enemy and uses tempo to seize the initiative and degrade the enemy's ability to resist. To be decisive in offensive operations, the attacker weights the main effort. The fundamentals of offensive action are plain language, general rules evolved from the time proven application of the joint warfighting principles. Many of the following fundamentals are related and reinforce one another:

- Orient on the enemy.
- Gain and maintain contact.
- Develop the situation.
- Concentrate superior firepower at the decisive time and place.
- Achieve surprise.
- Exploit known enemy weaknesses.
- Seize and control key terrain.
- Gain and retain the initiative.
- Neutralize the enemy's ability to react.
- Advance by fire and maneuver.
- Maintain momentum.
- Act quickly.
- Exploit success.
- Be flexible.
- Be aggressive.
- Provide for the security of the force.

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The four types of offensive operations are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. There are a number of different ways to conduct and execute these types of offensive operations—such as the different ways to conduct an attack. But, as evinced by the creation of a new type of movement to contact in Operation Iraqi Freedom, search and attack, there is no artificial limit on how commanders and tacticians approach tactical problems or how they execute these offensive operations.

Movement to Contact

Movement to contact is a type of the offense that develops the situation and establishes or regains contact with the enemy. The movement to contact is one of the most often used types of offensive operations because of its almost universal utility. Commanders conduct a movement to contact when the enemy situation is vague, whether trying to locate the enemy, regain contact with the enemy, or preserve tactical flexibility. A movement to contact also forces the enemy to reveal themselves for further targeting or operations. Even when the enemy situation is known, commanders often use movement to contact techniques as a means of force protection in their approach or when conducting exploitations and pursuits. Forces executing this operation seek to make contact with the smallest friendly force feasible to both avoid decisive engagement but to also enable decisive action by a main effort. Once contact is made with an enemy force, the commander has five options: attack, defend, bypass, delay, or withdraw. There are two types of movement to contact—the approach march and the search and attack. See chapter 4.

Attack

An attack is an offensive operation of coordinated movement and maneuver supported by fire to defeat, destroy, or capture the enemy and/or seize/secure key terrain. (MCDP 1-0) Attacks may be either decisive or shaping actions and hasty or deliberate operations. The types of attack are: attack, spoiling, counterattack, feint, demonstration, reconnaissance-in-force, raid, and ambush. The types of attack are not standalone actions, and commanders may blend them to seek greater effects.

Types of Attack
Attack
Spoiling
Counterattack
Feint
Demonstration
Reconnaissance in Force
Raid
Ambush

An attack differs from a movement to contact because, even in a hastily conducted attack, the commander knows part of the enemy's disposition. This knowledge enables the commander to better synchronize the attack and employ combat power more effectively than in a movement to contact. If an attack is successful, the enemy is no longer willing or able to offer meaningful resistance. Chapter 5 discusses the attack and types of attack in further detail.

Exploitation

Exploitation is an offensive operation following a successful attack and is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. It capitalizes on the success of an attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. Exploitations seek to disintegrate enemy forces to the point where they have no alternative but surrender or take flight. Whether conducting hasty or deliberate operations, commanders plan to exploit the success of every attack without losing momentum or the initiative. Exploitation may be conducted by the

attacking force itself, or by a reserve held for that purpose. Exploitations must be relentless to prevent the enemy from reestablishing an effective defense and therefore place necessary, but great, demands on the endurance of Marines and equipment. Chapter 6 discusses exploitation.

Pursuit

A pursuit is an offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying that force. A pursuit normally follows a successful exploitation. However, any offensive operation can transition into a pursuit if enemy resistance has broken down and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield. Because the conditions necessary to conduct a pursuit are not predictable, they are difficult to plan. Commanders and staffs must be flexible enough to recognize and exploit "catastrophic success." Pursuits entail rapid movement and decentralized control. Similar to an exploitation, it places great demands on the endurance of Marines and equipment to take advantage of the opportunity to decisively defeat the enemy. Chapter 7 discusses the pursuit.

PHASES OF THE OFFENSE

The actual phasing of any offensive operation depends on how the commander decides to solve the tactical problem they have been given. In general, and subject to the needs of the commander and the mission, offensive operations occur in the following five phases:

- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Disrupt the enemy.
- Fix the enemy.
- Maneuver.
- Follow through.

Normally, the first three of these phases are shaping actions, while the maneuver phase is the decisive action. Follow through is normally a sequel or a branch to the plan based on the current situation and may consist of a transition to other types of offense, such as an exploitation, or a transition to defense or stability operations.

COMMON OFFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

This section defines, in alphabetical order, those control measures common to the offense that a commander uses to synchronize maneuver and the effects of combat power. The commander uses the minimum control measures required to successfully complete the mission while providing subordinates the maximum flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation.

Assault Position

An assault position is a position between the LD and the objective in an attack from which forces assault the objective. Ideally, it is the last covered and concealed position before reaching the

objective (primarily used by dismounted infantry). Momentum in the assault is critical, and the assault position is not a rest point—if any time is spent there at all, it is minimal. Final preparations include things such as ensuring the readiness of weapons and special equipment, reorganization due to combat losses, or adjustments to the attacking force's dispositions. Assault positions are often located near to either a final coordination line (FCL) or a PLD.

Assault Time

The assault time establishes the moment to attack the initial objectives throughout the geographical scope of the operation. The assault time is similar to the time-on-target coordination method for fire support—it is used to coordinate and synchronize the actions of the assault with the effects generated by other units on the enemy, such as final mortar fires or increased rate of fire from support-by-fire positions. Like time-on-target, assault times are flexible and generally established by the local commanders actually conducting the assault. An assault time differs from a time of attack in scope. A time of attack begins with crossing the LD and synchronizes all the actions necessary to enable the assault to occur; far wider in scope, the time of attack is usually preplanned and relatively inflexible.

Attack-by-Fire Position

An attack-by-fire position designates the general position from which a unit conducts the tactical task of attack by fire (see app. C). A commander normally employs an attack by fire when the mission does not dictate or support close combat and occupation of a geographical objective by another friendly force. The purpose of the attack-by-fire position is to enable subordinate units to accomplish the attack-by-fire task while deconflicting battlespace geometry. The attack-by-fire position only indicates the general location to be occupied, not the specific site. Attack-by-fire positions are rarely applicable to units larger than company size. Figure 3-1 depicts attack-by-fire position.

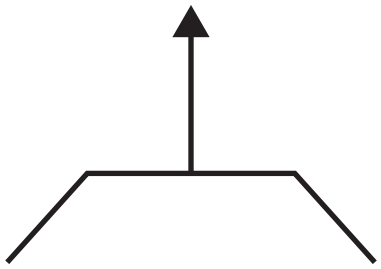


Figure 3-1. Attack-by-Fire Position.

Attack Position

The last position occupied by the assault echelon before crossing the LD. An attack position is not an AA. An attack position facilitates the deployment and last minute coordination of the attacking force before it crosses the LD. It is located on the friendly side of the LD and offers cover and concealment for the attacking force. It is used primarily at the battalion level and below. Whenever possible, units move through the attack position without stopping. An attacking unit might occupy an attack position for a variety of reasons, for example, when the unit is waiting for specific results from preparation fires or when it is necessary to conduct additional coordination,

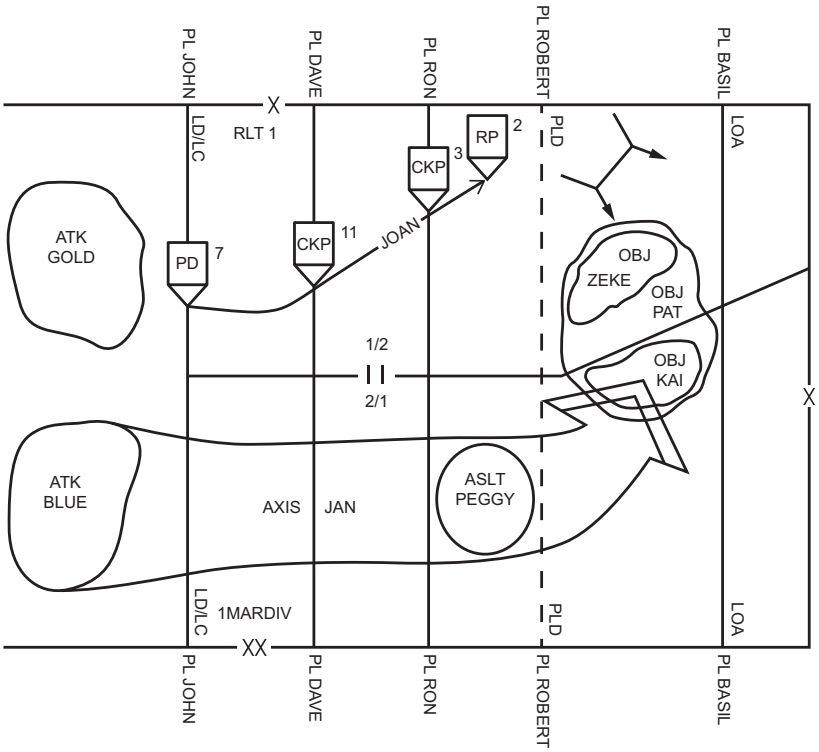
such as a forward passage of lines. If the attacking unit occupies the attack position, it stays there for the shortest amount of time possible to avoid losing momentum or offering the enemy a lucrative target. If required to loiter in the attack position, the attacking unit immediately assumes a defensive posture. Figure 3-2 shows attack positions BLUE and GOLD used in conjunction with other common offensive control measures.

Axis of Advance

An axis of advance is a line of advance assigned for purposes of control; often a road or a group of roads, or a designated series of locations; extending in the direction of the enemy. An axis of advance designates the general area through which the bulk of a unit's combat power must move. When developing the axis of advance, the commander also establishes bypass criteria. Bypass criteria are measures during the conduct of an offensive operation established by higher headquarters that specify the conditions and size under which enemy units and contact may be avoided. There are three primary reasons why a commander uses an axis of advance:

- To direct the bypass of locations that could delay the progress of the advancing force, such as known contaminated areas.
- To indicate that the force is not required to clear the area as they advance, only the assigned axis in accordance with specified bypass criteria.
- To indicate the need to move rapidly (e.g., an exploitation or pursuit).

Figure 3-2 depicts axis of advance JAN.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

1MARDIV	1st Marine Division	**ATK**	attack position	**OBJ**	objective
ASLT	assult position	**LD/LC**	line of deployment/line of contact		

Figure 3-2. Attack Positions Used With Other Common Offensive Control Measures.

Direction of Attack

The direction of attack is a specific direction or assigned route a force uses and does not deviate from when attacking. It is a restrictive control measure. A direction of attack maximizes control over subordinate unit movement, and it is often used during night attacks, infiltrations, and when attacking in limited visibility. The commander establishes a direction of attack through a variety of means, such as TRPs, checkpoints, and way points. When using a direction of attack, the commander designates a point of departure (PD) and a release point. Figure 3-2 depicts direction of supporting attack JOAN.

Final Coordination Line

The FCL is a line used to coordinate the ceasing and shifting of supporting fires and the final deployment of the assault echelon in preparation for launching an assault against an enemy position. Final adjustments to supporting fires necessary to reflect the actual versus the planned tactical situation take place prior to crossing this line. It should be easily recognizable on the ground. The FCL is often associated with an assault position. The FCL is not an FSCM. Figure 3-3 on page 3-10 shows PL ROBERT as the FCL for RLT 1.

Limit of Advance

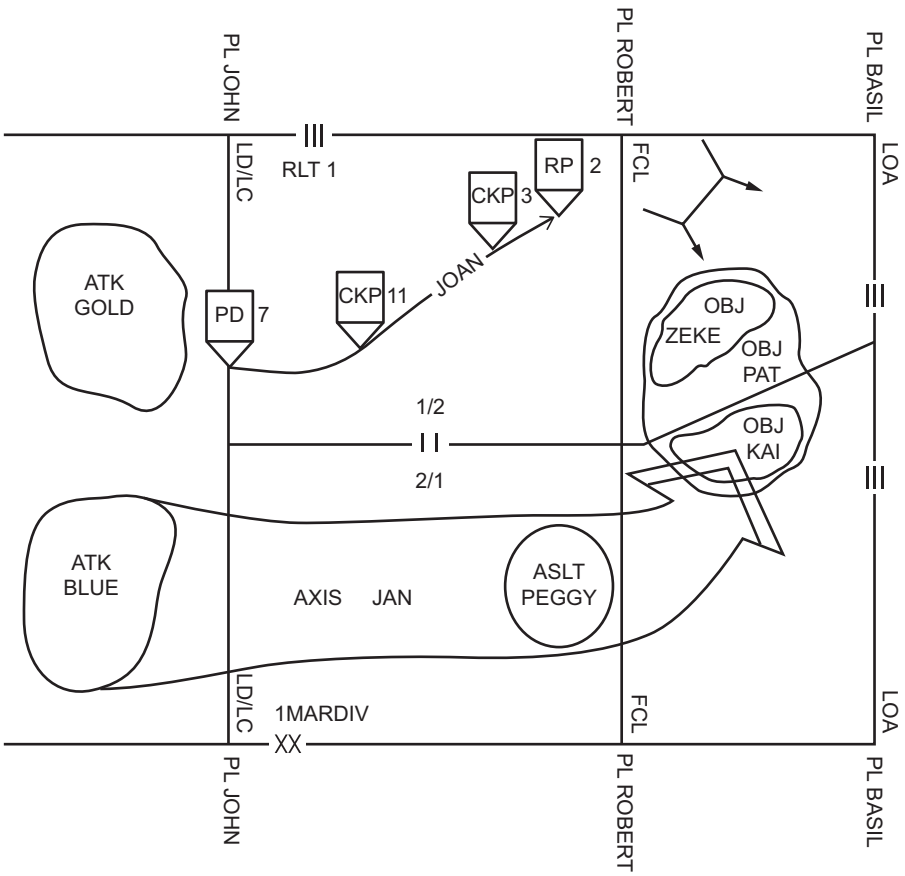
The limit of advance (LOA) is an easily recognized terrain feature beyond which attacking elements will not advance. Limits of advance are restrictive control measures. Since LOAs prevent units from exploiting success, commanders only use them if they do not want units to conduct an exploitation or pursuit. A commander might employ an LOA to prevent overextending the attacking force or to mitigate battlespace geometry (e.g., preventing the maneuver element from advancing into isolation fires). A commander usually selects a recognizable, linear terrain feature on the far side of the objective, perpendicular to the direction of attack, as the LOA. Commanders position LOAs far enough beyond the objective to allow friendly forces to defend it. A forward boundary is always an LOA, but an LOA is not automatically forward boundary. An LOA and the unit's forward boundary should rarely coincide because of the resulting limitations that a forward boundary places on supporting fires beyond the forward boundary. Figure 3-3 shows PL BASIL used as an LOA.

Line of Departure

The LD, in land warfare, is a line designated to coordinate the departure of attack elements. *(DOD Dictionary)* The LD is a restrictive control measure. The purpose of the LD is to synchronize and coordinate the actions of all elements of the attacking and supporting forces to create the greatest concentration of effects on the enemy at the point of decision. It is not intended to serve as a preparatory position—if such a requirement exists, commanders designate an attack position for that purpose. Rather, units assume the appropriate combat formation and cross the LD at the time of attack, allowing other attacking and supporting elements to synchronize and execute their assignments in support of maneuver. Generally, the LD is perpendicular to the direction the attacking force will take on their way to the objective. The commander analyzes friendly actions such as rates of movement, the enemy situation, and terrain before designating an LD. Friendly forces control the LD to prevent enemy interference with maneuver units. Ideally, the LD should provide cover for maneuver units deploying into combat formation and crossing it. When a unit already in contact is the attacking unit, the LD will also be the LC. Figure 3-3 depicts PL JOHN as a combined LD and LC.

Objective

An objective is the clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which an operation is directed, or the specific target of the action taken which is essential to the commander's plan. (JP 5-0) In offensive operations, objectives are either terrain or force oriented. Terrain objectives should place the enemy at a disadvantage and facilitate further actions against them. Force-oriented objectives should focus on disrupting, degrading, or destroying specific elements of the enemy to achieve the commander's purpose. Both types of objectives can be used in the same operation—for example, seizing a key crossroad to prevent the enemy's withdrawal and enable their destruction. The commander normally assigns subordinate commanders only their final objectives, but can assign intermediate objectives as necessary. Figure 3-3 depicts objective PAT. Objective PAT is further broken down into two subordinate objectives, objective KAI and objective ZEKE.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

1MARDIV	1st Marine Division	**ATK**	attack position	**OBJ**	objective
ASLT	assult position	**LD/LC**	line of deployment/line of contact	**RLT**	regimental landing team

Figure 3-3. Offensive Control Measure Examples.

Point of Departure

The PD is a specific place where a unit will cross the LD. Units conducting reconnaissance and security patrols and other operations commonly use a PD as a control measure, especially during periods of limited-visibility. Like an LD, it marks the point where the unit transitions from movement to maneuver. Figure 3-4 depicts PD 7.

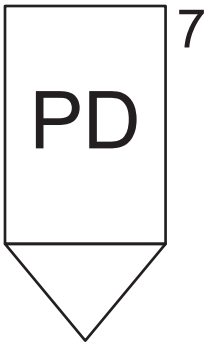


Figure 3-4. Point of Departure Example.

Probable Line of Deployment

A PLD is an easily recognized line on the ground, graphically depicted as a phase line, where attacking units intend to deploy in assault formation prior to beginning an attack. When a unit does not cross the LD in assault formation, a PLD is used. It is usually a linear terrain feature perpendicular to the direction of attack and recognizable under conditions of limited visibility. The PLD should be located outside the range where the enemy can place the attacking force under effective direct fire. It has no use except as it relates to the enemy. In figure 3-3, PL ROBERT could also be designated as the PLD.

Rally Point

A rally point is an easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble and reorganize if they become dispersed. It is also a planned or hasty location where a separated flight joins up. (MCRP 1-10.2) Forces conducting a patrol, convoy, or an infiltration commonly use this control measure. An objective rally point (ORP) is a rally point located nearest the objective where a unit makes final preparations prior to approaching the objective and/or where the unit reassembles after completing actions on the objective. To serve both as a preparation point and a rally point, the ORP is normally far enough from the objective to prevent the enemy detecting the actions. Figure 3-5 depicts Rally Point 14.

Figure 3-5. Rally Point Example.

Support-by-Fire Position

A support-by-fire position is the general position from which a unit conducts the tactical task of support by fire (see app. C). The purpose of these positions is to support the maneuver of another force by using direct fires to suppress or neutralize enemy positions capable of affecting the

maneuver force. Support-by-fire positions are located within the maximum friendly direct fire range of the enemy, in a manner that prevents being masked by friendly maneuver, and properly deconflicted from other elements of battlespace geometry. Support-by-fire positions are often located on the flank of the assault force, elevated above the objective if possible. Support-by-fire positions are rarely applicable to units larger than company size. The support-by-fire position graphic depicted in figure 3-6 indicates the general location and direction from which the unit provides fires; it does not indicate a specific site.

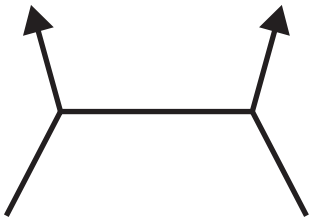


Figure 3-6. Support-by-Fire Position.

Time of Attack

The time of attack is the hour at which the attack is to be launched. If an LD is prescribed, it is the hour at which the line is to be crossed by the leading elements of the force. The time of attack is a useful tool to synchronize shaping actions with the attack itself. Normally, H-hour is the designated time of attack, the time that the main body crosses the LD. However, H-hour can also designate the time to implement preliminary phases of the operation, such as strikes or an air assault phase.

> ***Note:*** In amphibious operations, H-hour is the time at which the first waterborne wave of an amphibious assault lands on a beach.

The headquarters planning the offensive operations specifies the term's exact meaning. When determining time of attack, the commander considers the time subordinates require to—

- Conduct necessary reconnaissance, prepare plans, and issue orders.
- Synchronize plans between all subordinate units.
- Complete attack preparations, such as pre-combat inspections.
- Move to the LD or PD.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

Forms of Maneuver
Frontal Attack
Flanking Attack
Envelopment
Turning Movement
Infiltration
Penetration

Maneuver, one of the six Marine Corps warfighting functions, is the movement of forces for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy. The Marine Corps employs six forms of maneuver: frontal attack, flanking attack, envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, and penetration. The forms of maneuver

are the basis for offensive COA development and synchronization of warfighting functions. The forms of maneuver may be combined in different ways at different levels of command (e.g., a company may conduct a flanking attack in executing their portion of the parent battalion's envelopment). While higher commanders rarely specify forms of maneuver, their guidance and intent, along with the mission and any implied tasks, may impose constraints such as time, security, and direction of attack that narrow a subordinate's options of maneuver. Key factors such as terrain, the actions of adjacent units, and the dispositions and likely reactions of the enemy also impact the choice of maneuver. A single operation may contain several forms of maneuver, such as a frontal attack to clear a security area, a penetration to create a gap in enemy defenses, and envelopments to defeat the rest of the enemy force.

Frontal Attack

A frontal attack is an offensive maneuver in which the main action is directed against the front of the enemy forces (see fig. 3-7). An attacking force normally uses a frontal attack to rapidly overrun a weak enemy force. A commander also might use a frontal attack as a shaping action in conjunction with other forms of maneuver such as applying pressure along a wider front to enable a penetration to occur as the decisive action, or to fix an enemy force in support of an envelopment. Since a frontal attack often pits strength against strength, frontal attacks without significant combat power advantages over the enemy are rarely decisive and often unwarranted. A commander may utilize a frontal attack to—

- Clear enemy security forces.
- Overwhelm a shattered enemy during an exploitation or pursuit.
- Fix enemy forces in place as part of a shaping action.
- Conduct a reconnaissance in force.

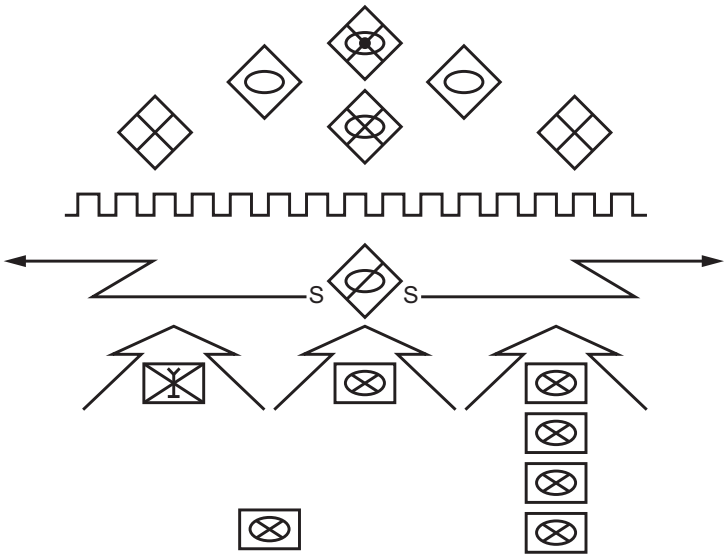


Figure 3-7. Frontal Attack.

Organization of Forces. Since frontal attacks generally result when either friendly forces seek to quickly overwhelm a weak enemy or as part of a much more deliberate shaping effort, there is no unique organization of forces associated with this form of maneuver. As a rule, however, the force

can expect to use security, main body, and reserve elements. Security elements conduct tasks such as locating the enemy and providing support by fire. Main body elements conduct attacks by fire or assaults. A reserve conducts the decisive action or exploits success.

Control Measures. When conducting a frontal attack, units may not require additional control measures beyond the minimum established to control the overall mission—an AO defined by unit boundaries and an objective. Other control measures to control the form of maneuver frontal attack may include—

- Attack positions.
- LD.
- PLs.
- Assault positions.
- LOA.
- Direction of attack or axis of advance for maneuver units.

Planning a Frontal Attack. If planning a frontal attack against considerably weaker enemy forces, the planning focus is on maintaining tempo. Planners seek efficiency and rapidity in deploying into assault formations, executing the assault, and conducting consolidation and reorganization. At the battalion level and below, units often use battle drills to accomplish these actions. When conducting a frontal attack as part of a shaping action, the primary planning objective is how to fix or disrupt the enemy force without incurring prohibitive losses. In this case, a commander may choose to execute a feint or a demonstration, or use an attack by fire (direct or indirect) as the method for conducting a frontal attack.

Executing a Frontal Attack. The unit conducting a frontal attack advances on a broad front, normally with their subordinate ground maneuver elements abreast (except for the reserve). This clears the enemy's security area of enemy security forces and intelligence, reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition assets while advancing the friendly force into the enemy's main defenses. Once the unit makes enemy contact, the attacking force's subordinate elements rapidly develop the situation and report enemy dispositions immediately to the commander, so the commander can direct the exploitation of enemy weaknesses. The attacking force fixes enemy forces in their current locations and seeks to gain positional advantage to destroy them using fire and movement.

If the attacking unit discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, the commander seeks to exploit that weakness and disrupt the integrity of the enemy's defense. After assessing the situation to make sure that it is not a trap, the commander can employ the reserve to exploit the opportunity. The commander synchronizes the exploitation with the actions of other maneuver and support elements to prevent possible enemy counterattacks from isolating and destroying the reserve and other exploitation elements. If a unit conducting a frontal attack can no longer advance, they adopt a defensive posture. The commander may require the unit to assist the forward passage of lines of other units. The unit continues to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks.

Flanking Attack

A flanking attack is an offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy (see fig. 3-8). This form of maneuver seeks to place friendly combat power against an enemy's flank, defeating the enemy while minimizing the effect of the enemy's frontally oriented combat power. Marine Corps operating forces may create a flank through the use of fires or by a successful penetration. Usually, a supporting effort engages and fixes the enemy by a combination of fires and maneuver while the main effort maneuvers to attack the enemy's flank. This form of maneuver is often used in hastily conducted attacks or as a battle drill in meeting engagements.

The primary difference between a flanking attack and an envelopment is one of depth relative to the enemy's positions. A flanking attack is an envelopment delivered squarely on the enemy's flank. Conversely, an envelopment is a flanking attack delivered beyond the enemy's flank and into the enemy's rear area, but short of the depth associated with a turning movement. There are also varying levels of effort in terms of force to space ratios; logistics; and command and control between flanking attacks, envelopments, and turning movements. The flanking attack is the simplest in these terms and is most likely executed by battalions and below. Envelopments occur normally at the RLT and division level, whereas turning movements occur at the division and above. Since the difference between these three forms of maneuver is largely one of degree and which portion of the enemy is attacked, considerations for flanking attacks are addressed in the envelopment discussion below.

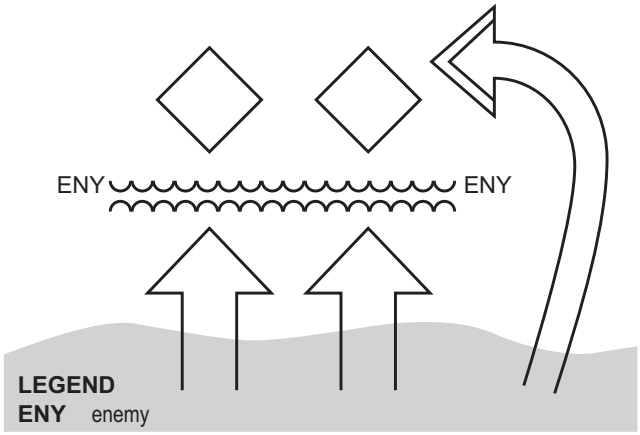


Figure 3-8. Flanking Attack Example.

Envelopment

Envelopment, also called a single envelopment, is an offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear. Envelopments focus on seizing terrain, destroying specific enemy forces, interdicting enemy withdrawal routes, and delivering a psychological shock to the enemy. The commander's decisive action focuses on attacking beyond an assailable flank. By doing so, friendly forces avoid the enemy's strength—the enemy's front—where the effects of enemy fires and obstacles are the greatest, while gaining a position of advantage. If no assailable flank is available, the attacking force may seek to create one through the conduct of a penetration. The four methods of envelopment are the single envelopment, double envelopment, encirclement, and vertical envelopment (see figs. 3-9 on page 3-16, and 3-10 on page 3-17). A double envelopment

is an offensive maneuver designed to force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging axis of the attack. Encirclement is restricting the enemy's freedom of maneuver by controlling all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. Vertical envelopments are tactical maneuvers in which troops that are air-dropped, air-landed, or inserted via air assault, attack the rear and flanks of a force, in effect cutting off or encircling the force.

Double envelopments and encirclements generally require a preponderance of force and can be difficult to control. A force seeking to execute these methods of envelopment must also have substantial mobility advantages over the defender. A unit performs an encirclement or double envelopment by fixing the enemy in place while going around and/or over both hostile flanks. Because of the forces required, normally only divisions and larger organizations have the resources to execute double envelopments and encirclements.

For a discussion of the use of vertical envelopments, see chapter 17. For a discussion of encirclement operations, see chapter 18.

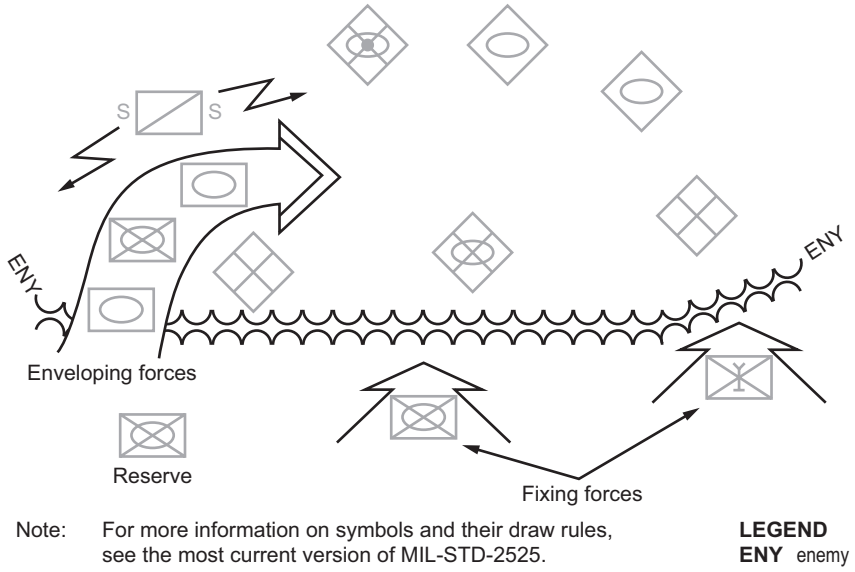


Figure 3-9. Single Envelopment.

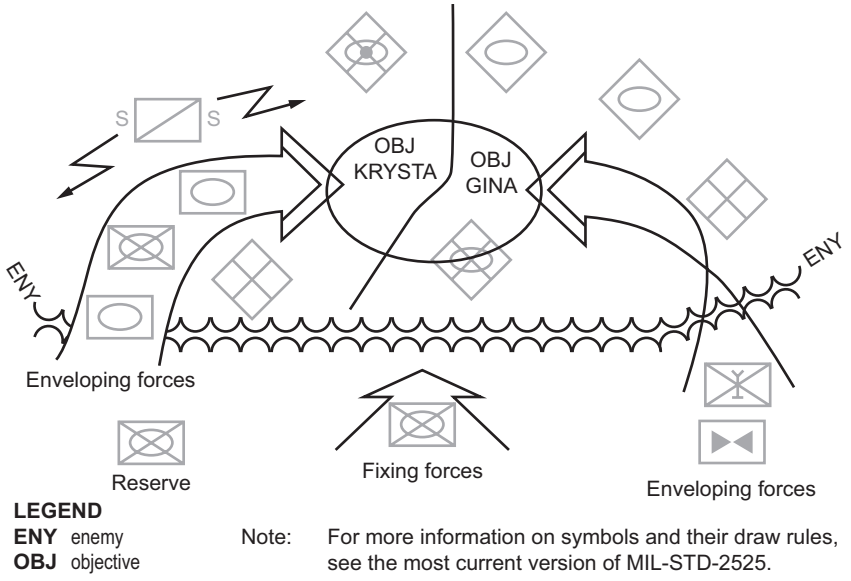


Figure 3-10. Double Envelopment.

Organization of Forces. The friendly force conducting a single envelopment must perform two primary tasks: fix the enemy force in their current location and conduct the envelopment. Security, support, and fixing forces perform supporting effort tasks such as reconnaissance, security, frontal attacks, attacks by fire, and support by fire. Enveloping forces act as the main effort by attacking terrain- or force-oriented objectives beyond the enemy flank. A reserve force is prepared to exploit success or defeat enemy counterattacks. Commanders executing double envelopments avoid spreading their forces ineffectively by determining which of the two envelopments will accomplish the mission and making that force the main effort. Security, support, and fixing forces conducting supporting efforts for both envelopments are prioritized accordingly. The key shaping action necessary for success remains fixing the enemy, and commanders are prepared to accept risk to ensure its success.

Control Measures. The commander, at a minimum, designates AOs for each unit participating in the envelopment by using boundaries. The commander also designates PLs, support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions, contact points, and appropriate direct fire and fire support coordination measures, such as a RFL or boundary between converging forces, and any other control measures necessary to control the envelopment. Figure 3-11, on page 3-18, is an example of control measures used when conducting a single envelopment.

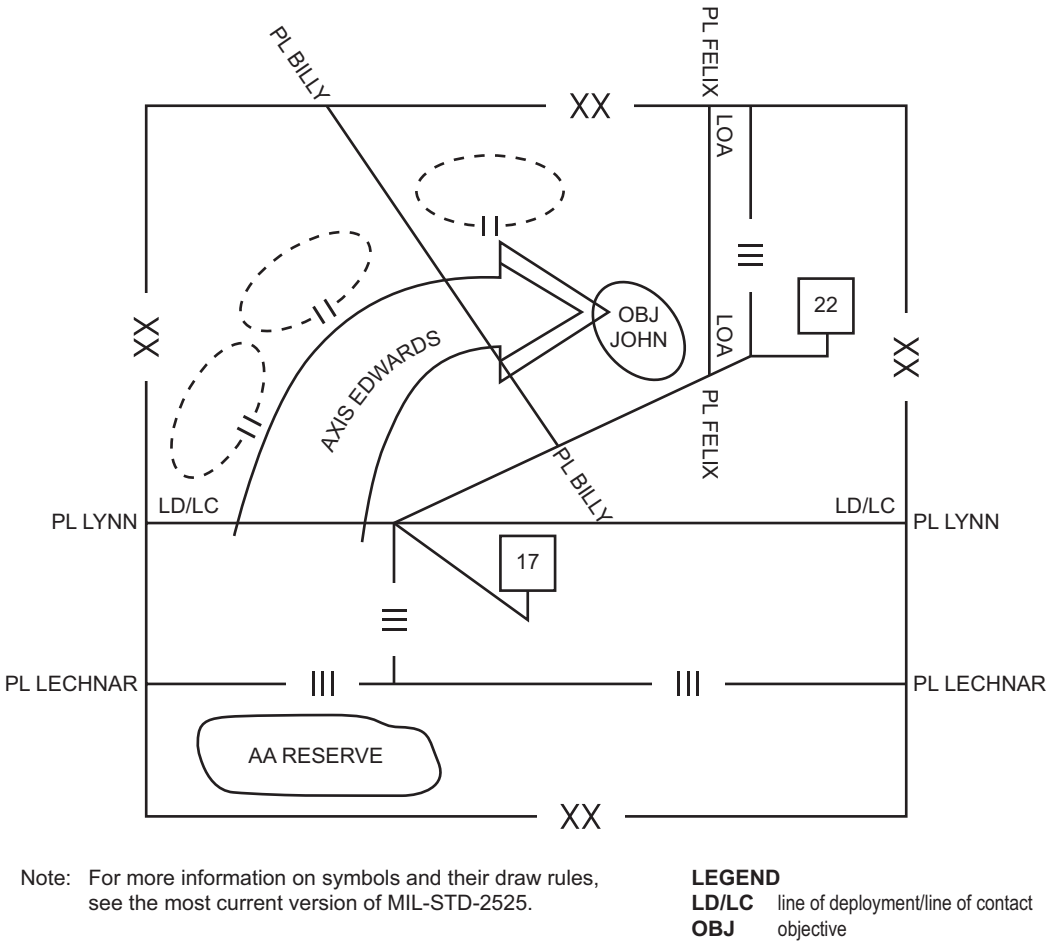


Figure 3-11. Envelopment Control Measures Example.

Planning an Envelopment. The commander seeks to maneuver the enveloping force around or over the enemy's main defenses to secure objectives on the enemy's flank or rear. From those objectives, the enveloping force can use their positional advantage to employ superior combat power against a defending enemy oriented in the wrong direction. To do so successfully, the commander must possess significant awareness of not only the enemy's positions, but their ability to react. For example, if the enemy possesses strong, mobile counterattack forces, their ability to affect the fight must be mitigated. Using branches and sequels, the commander plans how to exploit the envelopment's success—for example, whether to seek encirclement or transition to pursuit.

The commander plans for the enveloping force to remain within supporting distance of the fixing force. (If the enveloping force is going outside of supporting distance, they are probably conducting a turning movement, not an envelopment). Similarly, the commander must ensure the enveloping force possesses adequate short-term sustainment, as LOCs between the rear area and the enveloping force are likely to be intermittent in the early stages of an envelopment. An LOC is a route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. (JP 2-01.3)

Executing an Envelopment. A successful envelopment depends on some combination of surprise, overwhelming combat power, superior tactical mobility, air and information superiority, and the success of fixing the bulk of the enemy in their positions. The commander uses ISR assets to find enemy flanks and determine enemy dispositions, guide the enveloping force, and provide continuous intelligence collection to identify changes in enemy COAs throughout the execution of the envelopment.

Upon identification of an assailable flank, or the creation of a flank through a penetration or ruse, the fixing force pins the enemy in place. The enveloping force then exploits the situation, moving rapidly before the enemy can react. Speed and violence of execution are important as the enemy will likely seek to mitigate envelopments through planning, alternative defensive positions, counterattack forces, or reserves. Friendly forces also use ground and air shaping efforts to isolate the battlespace and prevent the enemy from countering the enveloping force.

The enemy may attempt to counter an envelopment by extending their flank, interdicting the enveloping force's LOC to cut them off from the support of the fixing force, or conduct a frontal counterattack. When faced with an extension of a flank, the enveloping force normally attacks through the weakened extension rather than attempting to maneuver around the new flank, as doing so slows momentum and risks losing support from the fixing force. When facing the temporary interdiction of their LOC, the enveloping force relies upon the proper selection of objectives vital to the enemy and their short-term self-sustainment capabilities to maintain the initiative and dictate tempo by continuing to their objectives. If confronted with a frontal counterattack, the fixing force defends itself or conducts a delay while the enveloping force continues the envelopment.

After the successful envelopment of at least one flank—which places the enemy at a disadvantage—the commander has many options. The commander may choose to establish favorable conditions for passing to a double envelopment by using reserves, or the commander may exploit success by generating additional combat power along the same axis. Alternatively, the commander can destroy or defeat the enveloped enemy force in place, or transition to another type of operation, such as exploitation or pursuit.

Turning Movement

A turning movement is a form of offensive maneuver in which the attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear. A commander uses this form of offensive maneuver to seize vital areas in the enemy's rear area before the main enemy force can withdraw or receive support or reinforcements (see fig. 3-12, on page 3-20). It is normally geography based. Commanders frequently transition to this form of offensive maneuver as part of an exploitation or pursuit. A turning movement differs from envelopment in two ways. First, a force executing a turning movement does not engage the enemy in the enemy's current locations, but seeks their displacement. Second, the force executing the turning movement normally relies upon external support—such as aerial resupply or in the case of an amphibious turning movement, the amphibious task force. For these reasons, turning movements are generally executed by divisions and above. For more information regarding turning movements, reference MCDP 1-0.

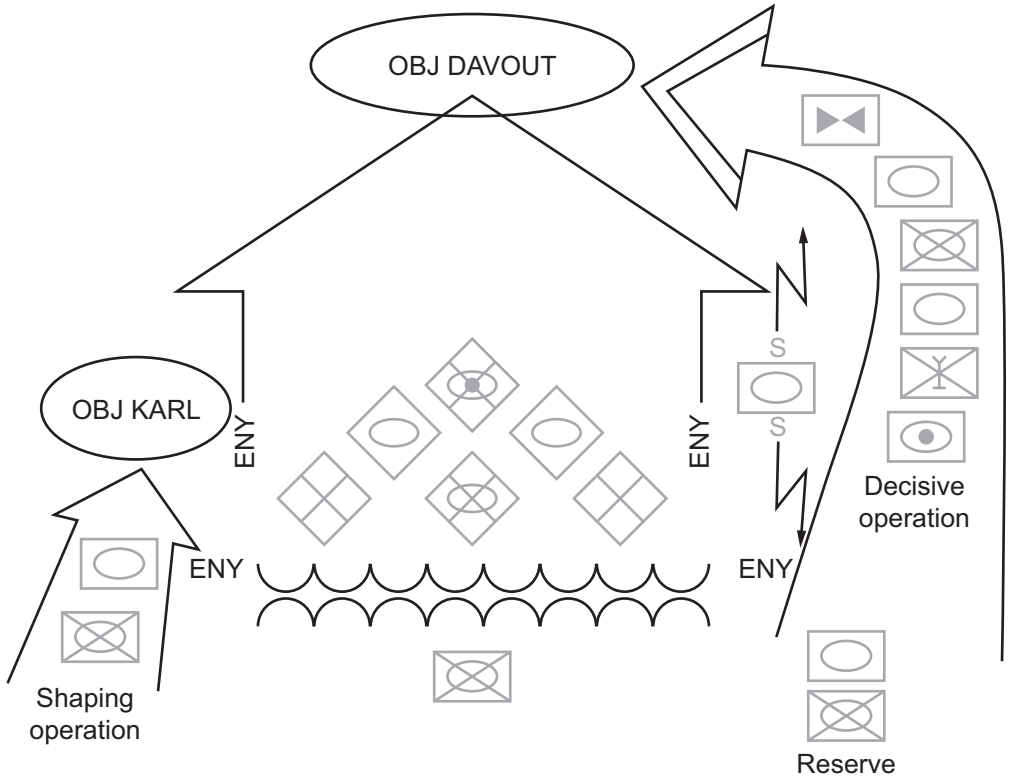


Figure 3-12. Turning Movement–Turning Force Conducting the Decisive Action.

Organization of Forces. The commander directing a turning movement organizes available resources to conduct three main tasks: conduct the turning movement (normally the decisive action), conduct shaping actions, and conduct reserve operations. While METT-T determines the exact composition of these turning, shaping, and reserve forces, each must be capable of executing semi-independent operations across the warfighting functions. In particular, the turning force must be organized and resourced to execute operations independent of the main body for extended periods of time.

The commander task organizes the shaping forces and reserve forces to ensure the success of the turning force. Shaping forces conduct operations such as attacks, feints, and demonstrations designed to divert the enemy's attention or draw resources away from the turning force AO. The reserve force prepares to exploit the success of the turning force, the shaping force, or to counter unexpected enemy actions.

Control Measures. The commander uses boundaries to establish AOs for units executing the turning movement. Additional control measures, such as PLs, contact points, objectives, LOAs, and appropriate direct fire and fire support coordination measures synchronize operations.

Planning a Turning Movement. As turning movements are normally geography based, the key planning factor is accurately determining the critical terrain that will threaten the enemy's survival drive them to displace, and expose them to defeat. The second key factor is determining how the turning force will maneuver to the objective and the detailed planning associated with that

movement (e.g., movement, staging, and loading of assault support assets). The third key factor is how long will the turning force operate before a linkup or relief occurs and how the turning force will be sustained during that time. In addition to the key planning considerations inherent to any offensive action, the commander conducting a turning movement also pays special attention to—

- Exploitation and pursuit branches and sequels for shaping, turning, and reserve forces.
- Defensive operations by the turning force.
- Linkups between the turning force and the main body.
- Retrograde operations for the turning force.

Logistic planning for all forces executing a turning movement is critical to the maneuver itself and the exploitation of success. From maneuvering and sustaining the turning force to avoiding culmination during pursuit, this form of maneuver not only demands significant sustainment planning, but also the willingness of commanders to accept risk to personnel and equipment to prevent the enemy's escape. Traditional doctrinal supporting distances and responsibilities do not always apply to turning movements. Logistic planners recognize this and adjust their plans using available resources. Units carry into the operation only those supplies required to meet their immediate needs as excess supplies and equipment can slow tempo. Staffs establish and maintain required supply levels in the objective area by phasing supplies on an accompanying, follow-up (automatic and on-call), and routine basis. Ammunition and petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL) normally constitute the major tonnage items.

Executing a Turning Movement. The actions of the shaping and reserve forces focus on the successful maneuver of the turning force to the objective area, with sufficient combat power and CSS to accomplish the mission. Whenever possible, the maneuver of the turning force occurs without encountering the enemy. Techniques to accomplish this include outflanking the enemy or using assault support and amphibious means to avoid the enemy's positions. Shaping forces support this effort by executing attacks to fix the enemy, using feints and demonstrations to divert their attention, and conducting information operations to corrupt their decision-making processes. Reserve forces prepare to exploit the turning force successes, exploit unexpected opportunities created by the shaping force, or to reinforce shaping actions that enable the successful maneuver of the turning force.

When threatened with a turning movement, the enemy commander is in a dilemma as the original plan for defense is dissembled. If the enemy tries to recover the situation by attacking the turning force, they must weaken their defense and accept the risk of destruction. If the enemy seeks to ignore the turning force, they invite destruction by allowing the turning force unfettered access to their rear areas. If the enemy seeks to execute the difficult task of retrograding under pressure, they risk destruction in that manner. In execution, the friendly force prepares for all of these possibilities. The friendly force ensures that the turning force is robust enough to defend themselves against enemy counterattacks while using shaping and reserve forces to exploit resulting enemy weaknesses. The friendly force provides the turning force sufficient mobility to wreak havoc in the enemy rear if ignored while ensuring the shaping and reserve forces have enough combat power to defend themselves. Finally, friendly forces are prepared to maneuver aggressively to destroy the enemy should they attempt to leave their positions and withdraw under pressure.

Infiltration

An infiltration is a form of maneuver in which friendly forces move through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. (MCDP 1-0) When executed through enemy territory, infiltration implies that contact is to be avoided. The reverse of infiltration is exfiltration (see app. C). Infiltration is also a march technique used within friendly territory to mask the movement of forces by moving them in small groups at extended or irregular intervals (e.g., camouflaging the movement of units into AAs).

Infiltration occurs by land, water, air, or by any combination of these means. Moving and assembling forces covertly through enemy positions takes a considerable amount of time. To successfully infiltrate, the force must avoid detection and engagement. Since this requirement limits the size and strength of the infiltrating force—and infiltrated forces alone can rarely defeat an enemy force—infiltration is normally used in conjunction with and in support of the other forms of offensive maneuver. The commander orders an infiltration to move all or a portion of a unit through gaps in the enemy's defenses to—

- Reconnoiter enemy positions and conduct surveillance of NAIs and TAIs.
- Attack enemyheld positions from an unexpected direction.
- Support the main effort by isolating the battlespace and occupying support-by-fire positions.
- Secure key terrain or interdict enemy LOCs.
- Conduct ambushes and raids to disrupt the enemy's rear area.
- Conduct a covert breach of an obstacle or obstacle complex.

Generally, special operations forces and infantry units up to regimental size are best suited to conduct an infiltration. However, against an enemy that is forced to disperse over a wide area, the infiltration of heavy forces, especially in small units, is quite possible.

Organization of Forces. Normally, to be successful, the infiltrating force must avoid detection at least until they reach an ORP. The infiltrating unit commander organizes the main body into one or more infiltrating elements. The size of these elements is based on METT-T and the requirements of the mission. Larger elements require greater gaps in the enemy's defenses and the loss of one can endanger the mission, but they also increase the commander's control, speed the execution of the infiltration, and provide responsive combat power. Conversely, smaller elements are harder to detect, require smaller gaps in the enemy defenses, and the discovery or loss of one or two is unlikely to endanger the mission. But smaller elements are more difficult to control, require more control measures, and slow the infiltration.

Each infiltration element organizes itself as if conducting an approach march type of movement to contact (see chap. 4) utilizing security elements and a main body. In general, each infiltration element is responsible for local security and reconnaissance. The larger the infiltration element, the greater their security requirements, such as use of an advanced guard, flank security, and rear guards. In some instances, and if resources allow, the commander may utilize security forces along infiltration routes to conduct screen and guard missions for the infiltration elements. See chapter 13 for more information.

Control Measures. Control measures for an infiltration include, at a minimum, an AO for the infiltrating unit, one or more infiltration lanes with start points and release points (or a direction or axis of attack), an LD or PD, linkup and rally points, one or more geographic or force-oriented objectives, and an LOA. The commander can impose other measures to control the infiltration including checkpoints, PLs, and assault positions. If it is not necessary for the entire infiltrating unit to reassemble to accomplish their mission, the force may use a number of smaller objectives to accomplish their purpose with the appropriate control measures for each infiltrating element moving to their assigned objective.

An infiltration lane is a control measure that coordinates forward and lateral movement of infiltrating units and fixes fire planning responsibilities. The commander selects infiltration lanes that avoid the enemy, provide cover and concealment, and facilitate navigation. Figure 3-13 depicts the graphic control measure for an infiltration lane. Each unit assigned an infiltration lane picks their own routes within the lane and switches routes as necessary. The left and right limits of the infiltration lane act as lateral boundaries for the unit conducting the infiltration. Attacks by rotary- or fixed-wing aircraft, indirect fires, or munitions effects that impact the lane must be coordinated with the infiltrating unit. Company-size units are normally assigned a single infiltration lane, although they can use more than one lane. Larger organizations (i.e., battalion and above) are almost always assigned more than one infiltration lane.

A linkup point is an easily identifiable point on the ground where two forces conducting a linkup operation meet. Figure 3-14 depicts a linkup point. When used in conjunction with an infiltration, linkup points should be physically large enough to provide cover, concealment, and room for all infiltrating elements to assemble. The commander should position linkup points on defensible terrain located away from normal enemy troop movement routes.

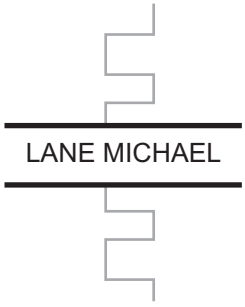


Figure 3-13. Infiltration Lane Example.

Figure 3-14. Linkup Point Example.

Planning an Infiltration. The plan for an infiltration requires three tasks: conducting the infiltration, conducting follow-on actions after the infiltration is complete, and conducting linkup and relief procedures after mission accomplishment. Across these three tasks, the key factor in planning an infiltration is detailed intelligence on the positions of the enemy. Without such intelligence, the infiltration form of maneuver becomes little more than a high-risk, time consuming, probing of the enemy. A second key factor in infiltration planning is supporting fires, information operations, and their integration. Operations security (OPSEC), ruses, tactical deception, and similar information-related capabilities (IRCs) assist the infiltrating force in avoiding an enemy force,

minimizing direct contact, and maximizing surprise. The use of ground- and air-delivered fires can assist in tactical deception, support feints and demonstrations, and fix the enemy in their positions. A third key planning factor is the command and control of the infiltration—deconflicting communications between multiple units on multiple lanes; handling contingencies; synchronizing and coordinating follow-on activities; and conducting linkups and reliefs.

After identifying gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive positions, the commander assigns minimum control measures to subordinate units such as AOs, infiltration lanes, and objectives. The selection of infiltration objectives is based on the effects the commander seeks to generate, not necessarily the relative position of the enemy. Commanders may use single or multiple infiltration lanes depending on the size of the infiltrating force, the terrain to be traversed, the amount of detailed information on enemy dispositions, available time, and the number of possible lanes. Single infiltration lanes—

- Facilitate navigation, control, and reassembly.
- Require the existence or creation of only one gap in the enemy's position.
- Reduce the area for which detailed intelligence is required.

Multiple infiltration lanes—

- Require the existence or creation of more gaps in the enemy's security area.
- Reduce the possibility of compromising the entire force.
- Increase difficulty with maintaining control.

Each subordinate unit commander picks one or more routes within their assigned lane and establishes additional contact points, rally points, assault positions, and other control measures as required. Routes should provide cover and concealment while avoiding known enemy and civilian locations and traffic routes as much as practicable. Multiple routes within infiltration lanes should be far enough apart to prevent elements from seeing one another, but close enough that elements can swiftly move from one to another. Depending on METT-T, infiltration element commanders also determine the movement method by which they will move on the routes within assigned lanes—as a whole unit, in smaller elements, or even as two-person teams.

Planning for the movement portion of an infiltration addresses contingency plans for the following situations:

- A lead element makes contact, but the trail elements have not started infiltrating.
- A lead element infiltrates successfully, but compromises one or more trailing elements.
- A compromised linkup point.
- Abort criteria.

After planning for the infiltration itself, additional planning addresses accomplishment of the mission, post-mission activities (e.g., linkups, reliefs), and sustainment. The manner in which the infiltration force will linkup with other friendly forces is a function of the larger plan. The following questions should be considered:

- Is the infiltration a supporting effort or the decisive action?
- Is the linkup dependent upon success elsewhere?
- What are the contingencies if the overall plan should meet with failure?

The answers to these questions will assist logistic planning by determining what the infiltration force must carry, when and how they might be resupplied, and how they will execute logistic functions such as casualty evacuation during the operation.

Executing an Infiltration. Reconnaissance and security operations continue throughout the conduct of the infiltration to enable infiltration elements to maintain situational awareness of enemy locations and reactions. When the conditions are set by supporting efforts, the infiltrating force departs from the AA in their various infiltration elements which move to their respective start points, through their assigned infiltration lanes, to a release point. If infiltration elements conduct their movement in smaller units (e.g., a company moving by platoons) then the unit uses a series of linkup points to reassemble. Infiltration elements use redundant navigation methods and report progress and statuses to their higher headquarters.

Larger infiltration elements use an approach march technique with advance guard, main body, flank security, and rear guard. The distance between these elements can vary depending on METT-T. For example, a narrow infiltration lane may require the unit to accept risk by forgoing or bringing in their flank security. All considerations for using the approach march apply, to include elements remaining within supporting distance of each other and the necessity for the main body to avoid having decisive engagement forced upon them. Upon exiting the infiltration lanes, elements move to one or more ORPs to consolidate combat power, refine the plan, and conduct any last-minute coordination prior to continuing the mission. The infiltration force then conducts those tasks needed to accomplish their assigned mission.

A commander may need to abort an infiltration operation if the situation changes so drastically during the infiltration that the infiltrating force is no longer capable of accomplishing their mission. Examples of changes that might trigger such an action include—

- Significant portions of the infiltrating force's combat power are lost through navigation errors, enemy action, accidents, or maintenance failures.
- Movement or significant reinforcement of a force-oriented objective.
- Detection of the infiltration by the enemy.
- Changes in the tactical situation that make the mission no longer appropriate, such as the initiation of an enemy attack.

Penetration

A penetration is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system. Destroying the continuity of that defense allows

the enemy's subsequent isolation and defeat in detail by the exploiting friendly forces. A successful penetration begins in the enemy's security area and passes through their main defensive positions into their rear area. A commander employs a penetration when there is no assailable flank, methods of envelopment are impractical or will take too much time, or enemy defenses are overextended and possess exploitable weak spots. Penetrations often require the commander to conduct breaching operations. A breach is to break through or secure a passage through an obstacle. A breaching operation is a synchronized combined arms activity under the control of the maneuver commander conducted to allow maneuver through an obstacle. Breaching operations begin when friendly forces detect an obstacle and begin to apply the breaching fundamentals, and they end when battle handover has occurred between follow-on forces and the unit conducting the breaching operation.

Organization of Forces. Penetrating a well-organized position requires overwhelming combat power at the point of penetration and the resources to maintain local combat superiority to maintain momentum and tempo (see fig. 3-15). The initial penetration is weighted to ensure its success—commanders are willing to accept risk in follow-on penetrations to do so. At a minimum, penetrations utilize breach, support, and assault forces. These elements should be designated for each defensive position the force is required to penetrate. Commanders may designate security and reserve forces to conduct reconnaissance, isolate the area of penetration, deal with expected or unexpected contingencies, and prevent the enemy from interfering with the main effort—normally the assault force.

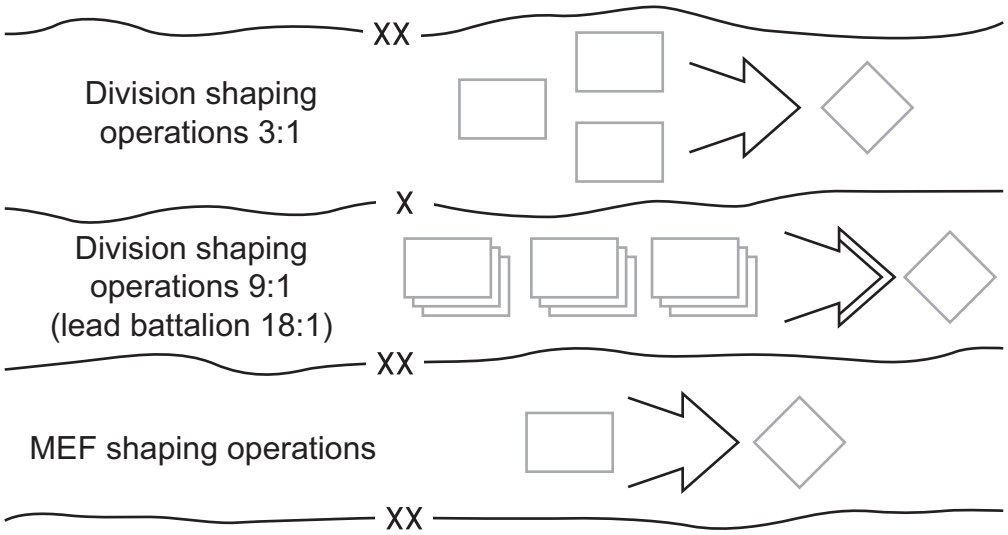
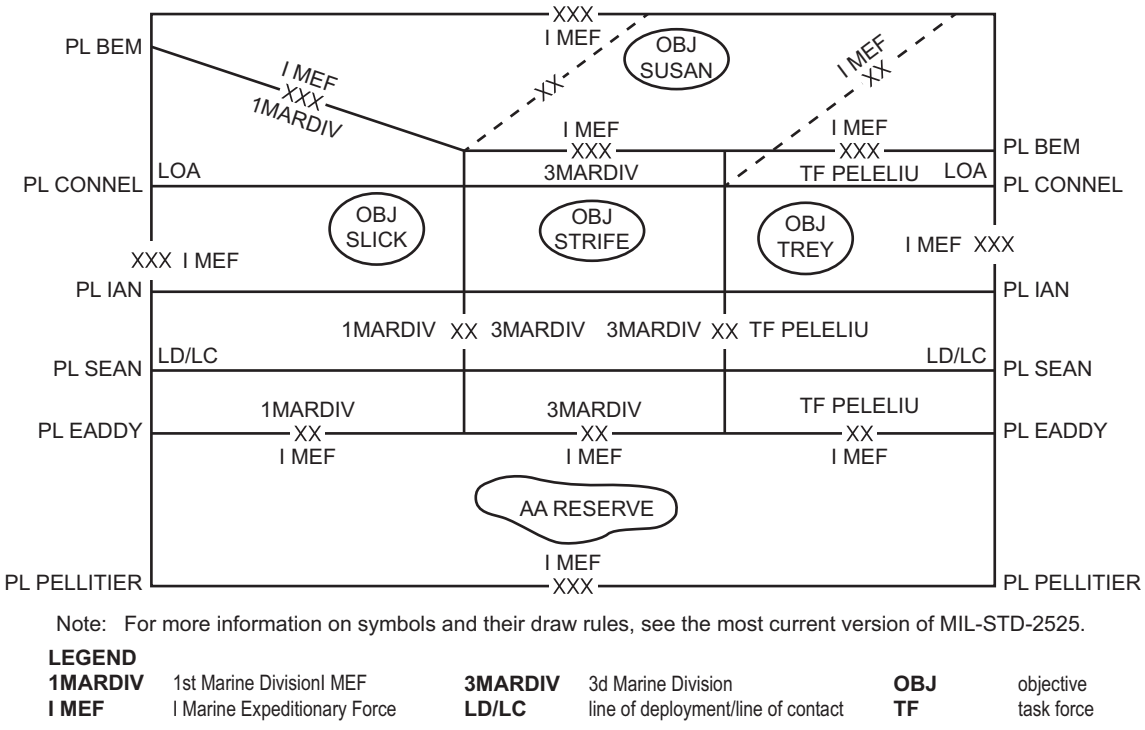


Figure 3-15. Penetration: Relative Combat Power.

Control Measures. A commander assigns, as a minimum, an AO to every maneuver unit; an LD or LC; time of attack or time of assault; PLs; objective; and an LOA or handover line to control and synchronize the attack. The lateral boundaries of the main effort are narrowly drawn to focus the overwhelming combat power necessary at the point of penetration. The commander locates the LOA beyond the enemy's main defensive position to provide maneuver room to complete the breach. The commander uses a handover line instead of an LOA if follow-and-assume forces are

already designated to conduct a forward passage of lines (see chap. 16). If the operation results in opportunities to exploit success and pursue a beaten enemy, the commander adjusts existing boundaries to accommodate the new situation (see fig. 3-16). At the small-unit level, commanders add additional control measures such as breaching points, lanes, checkpoints, support-by-fire positions, PLDs, attack and assault positions. Commanders may also designate either an axis of advance or direction of attack to further control maneuver and mass combat power at the point of decision.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

1MARDIV	1st Marine DivisionI MEF	**3MARDIV**	3d Marine Division	**OBJ**	objective
I MEF	I Marine Expeditionary Force	**LD/LC**	line of deployment/line of contact	**TF**	task force

Figure 3-16. Penetration: Minimum Graphic Control Measures.

Planning a Penetration. The success of the penetration depends primarily on a violently executed and synchronized plan that systematically paralyzes and overwhelms the enemy at the point of penetration. However, merely achieving a penetration is useless unless that penetration can be exploited. In addition to analyzing likely penetration points, planners must also analyze the terrain beyond them to ensure that it enables maneuver elements to proceed from the breach to a decisive objective.

The depth of the enemy position and the relative strength of attacking echelons determine the width of the penetration. The availability of artillery, air support, IRCs, and other combat multipliers helps add to the commander's relative combat power at the point of decision. A wider gap enables a greater flow of friendly forces into the enemy rear area while making it more difficult for the enemy to close the gap. A deeper penetration eases the task of rolling up newly created enemy flanks exposed by the breach while making it more difficult for the enemy to restore their defense by withdrawal.

Like a frontal attack, a penetration aims at the strength of the enemy defense (though boundaries between enemy units often offer weak points). Indeed, a frontal attack may support a penetration. Consequently, planning centers on accomplishing the systematic defeat of the enemy's defense in the area of the penetration. The commander's plan for the penetration normally consists of the following four phases:

- Isolating the area of penetration.
- Breaching the enemy's main defensive positions.
- Widening the breach to secure the flanks.
- Seizing the objective and exploiting the success of the penetration.

Isolation of the area of penetration means denying the ability of the enemy to affect the fight. Isolation includes information operations to disrupt and mislead enemy decision making, ruses and OPSEC regarding friendly troop movements, fires to prevent support and physical reinforcement, and actions to inhibit the enemy's use of supporting arms.

Planners create detailed and synchronized plans to suppress and destroy enemy elements that can affect the breach, determining the effects necessary to commit engineering forces. Planning for this phase addresses how to phase initial assault elements through the breach to secure the far side and expand the penetration. Planning also addresses how to rapidly push combat power through the breach, allowing the breach to become a gap for further exploitation. Units often create multiple breach points to ensure this movement occurs effectively (to include back breaching) and to provide redundancy to the movement plan. (See MCTP 3-34B for more information on breaches and breaching.) Command and control of this portion of the penetration is critical and should rely on secondary and even tertiary means of signals and communications so combat power moves rapidly into and through the point of penetration.

The final phase of the plan—seizing objectives beyond the penetration and exploiting it—requires equally detailed coordination and synchronization. Isolation fires must be lifted or shifted and the enemy must be prevented from interdicting the penetration point. Units will likely conduct battle handovers and forward passage of lines and CSS must phase forward. Finally, equipment and personnel casualties will retrograde through the same narrow movement channels in use by elements moving forward. The key for planners in this phase is to ensure that friendly forces drive deep enough into the enemy's rear to force displacement or risk destruction. While the gap must be held open, diverging combat power to roll up enemy flanks risks allowing the enemy to successfully withdraw and reconstitute the defense.

Executing a Penetration

Isolating the Area of Penetration. Shaping actions, conducted by one or more support forces, set the conditions for a successful breach and mark the beginning of the penetration. Information operations precede the beginning of the operation, and accelerate immediately prior to and during the penetration. Supporting arms not only deliver fires in the vicinity of the breach site, but also seek to fix enemy reserves and interdict movement routes into the penetration area. Feints, demonstrations, and frontal attacks reinforce IO effects and fix the enemy in their positions, especially in the penetration area. Finally, depending on METT-T, other forms of maneuver, such

as infiltration and vertical envelopment, deliver supporting efforts directly into the enemy's rear to further isolate the area.

Breaching the Enemy's Main Defensive Positions. Once the support force sets the conditions, the commander commits the breach force on a relatively narrow front focusing combat power on the penetration point and close-in objectives that support it. (Figure 3-17 depicts 1st Battalion seizing objective HARRY.) Elements of the support force deliver suppressive and destructive fires to enable the maneuver of the breach and assault forces. (Figure 3-17 depicts 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance [LAR] Battalion in a support-by-fire position BOB.) The assault force moves rapidly through successful breaches to secure them and the immediate area before continuing forward. (Fig. 3-17 depicts 1st Battalion possessing both breach and assault tasks). Other support forces, or the reserve force, with follow-and-support missions, trail the assault force. (Fig. 3-17, depicts 2d Battalion as the follow-and-support force). See appendix C for more information on follow-and-support and follow-and-assume tactical tasks.

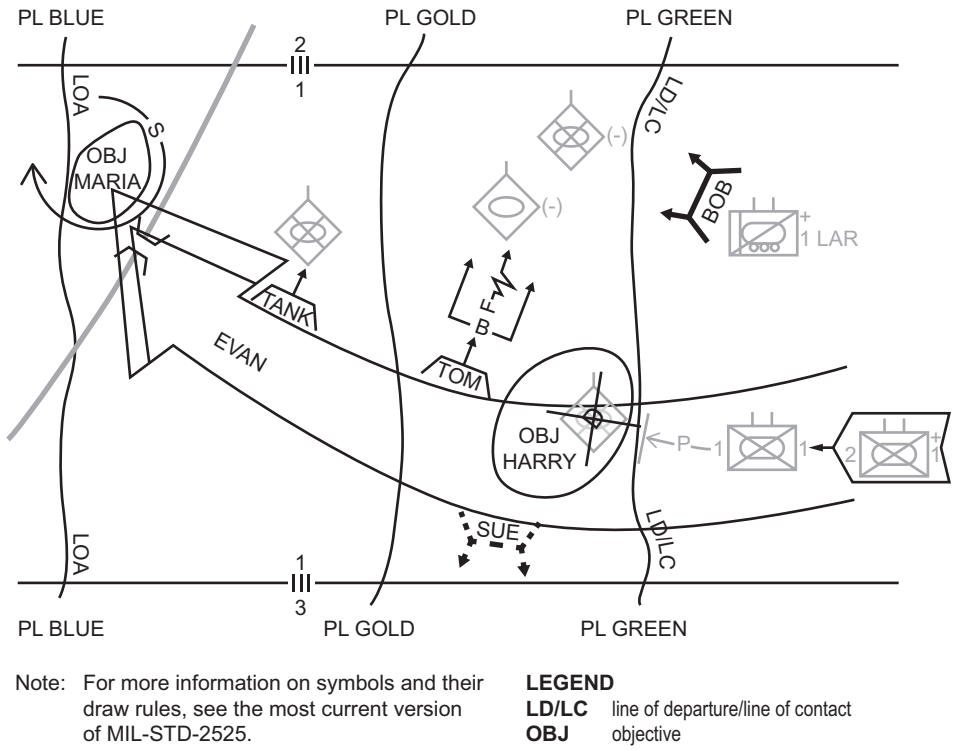
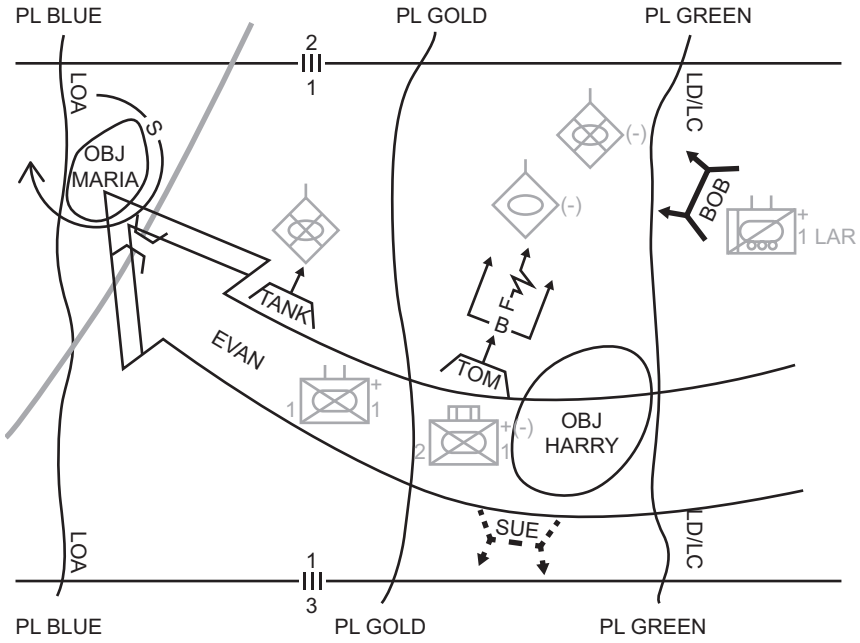


Figure 3-17. The Penetration.

The commander closely monitors operations by ensuring that supporting efforts coordinate and synchronize their actions with the progress of the breach and assault forces (e.g., shifting of fires, electronic warfare and other information operations); continue to disrupt enemy reactions; supporting efforts move forward to occupy other support positions; and follow-on units are prepared to immediately move forward and reinforce or exploit the breach. The intelligence staff tracks reporting and battle damage assessments to assist the commander in determining that subordinate forces are actually penetrating the enemy's main defensive positions and not just the enemy's security area.

Widening the Breach to Secure the Flanks. Upon penetrating the main defenses, friendly forces begin to widen the penetration by conducting shallow envelopments or attacks by fire to hold it open and progressively widen its flanks (see fig. 3-18). This task normally falls to supporting forces, trailing the assault force, tasked with follow-and-support missions (see fig. 3-18, 2d Battalion). If commanders choose to commit the reserve for this task, they either accept risk or reconstitute the reserve from another part of the force (see fig. 3-18, tasking 1st LAR Battalion). The actions of supporting arms continue to be closely coordinated to simultaneously maintain isolation of the area of penetration, support the assault force, and support follow-and-support forces and their missions. Additional supporting efforts, such as combat engineers, are committed forward to assist in improving lanes and to provide mobility and countermobility support to forces widening and securing the flanks.

Seizing the Objective and Exploiting Success. The assault force conducts the decisive action by seizing the objectives that destroy the continuity of the enemy's defense (see fig. 3-19, on page 3-31, 1st Battalion). Objectives may be geographic, force-oriented, or both. The commander commits other follow-and-support forces to enable the assault force to continue their maneuver (see fig. 3-19, Company C, 1st Tanks). If the distance from the point of penetration to the objective is too great for the initial assault force to continue, or unexpected enemy actions demand it, the commander uses follow-and-assume forces to pass forward, become the new main effort, and continue the assault. Coordination and synchronization remain critical to phase exploitation units forward, shift supporting arms, and counter enemy actions.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
LD/LC line of departure/line of contact
OBJ objective

Figure 3-18. Widening the Breach to Secure the Flanks.

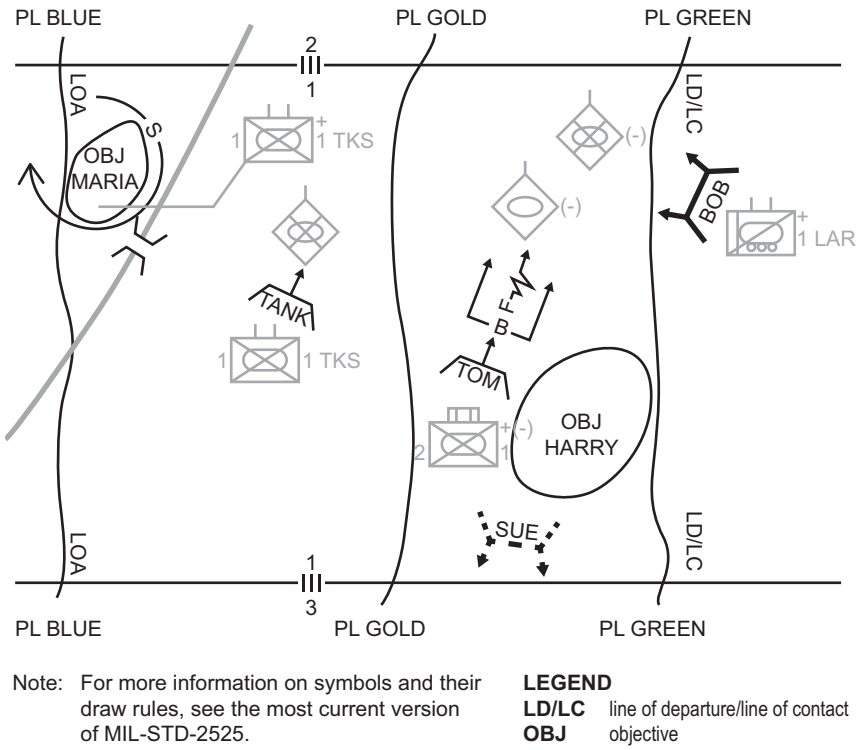


Figure 3-19. Seizing the Objective.

COMMON OFFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Subsequent chapters address the various offensive operations and activities outlined above in further detail, providing more insight into planning for them. However, just as there are general considerations and guidelines for the various types of offensive operations and forms of maneuver, there are also general offensive planning considerations. The following paragraphs, using the warfighting functions as a framework, address those considerations.

Command and Control

While proper command and control is important to any military operation, the requirement to retain the initiative, generate greater momentum and tempo than the enemy, and dictate the terms of engagement make command and control critical to the demands of the offense. The use of

commander's intent and mission tactics creates unity of effort and enables small unit initiative that shapes the battle amidst uncertainty and against an independent will. The key planning tenet for command and control in the offense is simple—commanders must know how to lead and fight their forces using Marine Corps warfighting principles.

Tied closely to this most basic tenet is that command and control is designed to support the commander's solution to the tactical problem at hand. The daily and weekly battle rhythm, the method of command, and the information required for control, are different in every type of operation, and can change within the operation as the situation changes. Commanders must ensure

that the direction they provide in the offense—the act of command—maximizes the ability of subordinates to recognize and exploit opportunity. Commanders must ensure that the feedback they receive in the form of information—the act of control—is the right information they need to provide good direction. Because opportunities can be fleeting and the situation can change quickly, in the offense commanders must constantly evaluate the manner in which they are conducting command and control to ensure it remains appropriate. For further information on command and control, see MCDP 6, *Command and Control*.

The offense demands taking immediate action to overcome friction at critical points in the operation. During planning and execution, commanders determine likely points of friction and probable decision points and endeavor to place themselves at these points, such as a choke point near a breaching lane or the leading edge of an enemy obstacle. Modern C2 systems enable commanders to maintain situational awareness of the overall operation and the micro-level tactics of one particular aspect of the operation. But these systems do not do well at creating situational awareness of the middle space. For example, a battalion commander may have great awareness of the regimental fight around them and can view a specific platoon fight, but lack the context to see and understand the struggles, challenges, and opportunities of the battalion's companies. This is an awareness the commander can only get by standing above a breach point to observe progress or choke points, or by moving up to see and feel the effects of enemy resistance and make resource allocation decisions on the spot. The middle space provides critical context for the commander's decision-making.

The offense requires coordination and synchronization to mass combat power at the point of decision. Commanders achieve this through creating frameworks for success vice micromanagement. Such frameworks provide flexibility in the face of uncertainty and when plans go awry, as well as opportunities that subordinates may recognize and seize. Modern information systems excel at providing the information needed to coordinate and synchronize actions, which often leads to an atmosphere of certainty where no such certainty exists. In the offense, commanders ensure their C2 framework and the information it possesses empowers subordinates. The Marine on site still has the best grasp of the ebb and flow of the problem in front of them and the higher commander's access to information becomes a resource to be drawn from, not a mandate to be executed. Redundancy is critical to C2 planning in the offense. Neither the enemy nor nature are passive actors in the battlespace. From survivability issues to enemy information operations attempts, the commanders ensure that command and control enables their movement throughout that AO. Commanders increase redundancy by using techniques such as forward and main CPs, and most importantly, they create plans that can survive the loss of communications by using pyrotechnic, messenger, visible/infrared light and event-driven signaling, and implicit communications, empowered by commander's intent.

Maneuver

While inherent to all military operations, the very concept of the offense is inextricably linked to maneuver. To attack, one must maneuver against the enemy—regardless of their relative mobility—to strike blows that cause damage and create defeat. Maneuver is combined with fires to avoid enemy strengths and create or exploit enemy gaps. Commanders use maneuver to achieve surprise and create greater effects than the force would otherwise accomplish symmetrically. Security forces and information operations mask maneuver, other supporting efforts shape the battlespace for the success of maneuver, and the main effort delivers the decisive action through maneuver. Finally, when facing a disciplined, willful foe, maneuver combined with fires allows

friendly forces to successfully close with and destroy or defeat the enemy by close combat and shock effect. Close combat, which encompasses all actions that place friendly forces in a direct-fire fight with the enemy, is supported by direct and indirect fires and other assets. Close combat may also include hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. The two most important planning factors of offensive maneuver are objective and relative mobility. Objective is the most critical since it addresses the purpose of maneuver. Is the objective a key piece of terrain or an enemy force? If one is maneuvering against terrain that will provide an advantage over the enemy, their forces are only relevant to friendly forces if they effect moving, reaching, and seizing the objective. Friendly forces may even choose to bypass them or force them to withdraw. The maneuver considerations can be very different if trying to find, fix, and defeat a mobile enemy force.

The second important planning factor of maneuver is relative mobility. Relative mobility is a friendly force's mobility relative to that of the enemy. Given the terrain and means available, are friendly units more or less mobile than the enemy? For the commander who is commanding infantry mounted in armored vehicles, maneuvering in the desert is a much different problem than maneuvering in heavily forested terrain.

Combat Formations

As discussed, maneuver is inherent to all military operations. How units actually conduct maneuver consists of the method by which they move (e.g., by foot, truck, air) and the manner in which they conduct that movement (i.e., tactically or administratively). Combat formations are used by units conducting ground movement in the presence of the enemy, or when contact with an enemy is likely or intended. As it relates to ground operations, a combat formation is an ordered arrangement of forces for a specific purpose and describes the general configuration of the formation. A commander can use seven different combat formations depending on METT-T: column, line, echelon (left or right), box, diamond, wedge, and vee. Terrain characteristics, the means of movement, and visibility determine the actual arrangement and location of the unit's personnel and vehicles within a given formation. Combat formations allow a unit to move on the battlefield in a posture suited to the mission and commander's intent. A unit may employ a series of combat formations during the course of an operation; each has its advantages and disadvantages. Subordinate units within a combat formation can also employ their own combat formations, consistent with their particular situation. When choosing formations and moving between them, commanders consider the advantages and disadvantages of each as they apply to command and control, maintenance, firepower orientation, ability to mass fires, and flexibility. All combat formations use one or more of the three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Chapter 14 describes these three movement techniques. By designating the combat formation planned for use, the commander—

- Establishes the geographic relationship between units.
- Indicates probable friendly reactions to enemy contact.
- Indicates the level of security desired.
- Establishes the preponderant orientation of subordinate weapon systems.
- Postures friendly forces for attack or defense.

Column. The column formation is a formation in which elements are placed one behind another. The unit moves in column formation when the commander does not anticipate enemy contact, the

objective is distant, and speed and control are critical. Figure 3-20 illustrates a RLT in battalion column. If present, the location of fire support units within the column reflects the column's length and the range fans of those fire support systems. Normally, the lead element uses a traveling overwatch technique while the following units are in traveling formation. Employing a column formation—

- Provides the best formation to move large forces quickly, especially with limited routes and limited visibility.
- Limits enemy contact to a small part of the total force while facilitating control and reaction to that contact.
- Provides a base for easy transition to other formations.
- Works in restricted terrain.

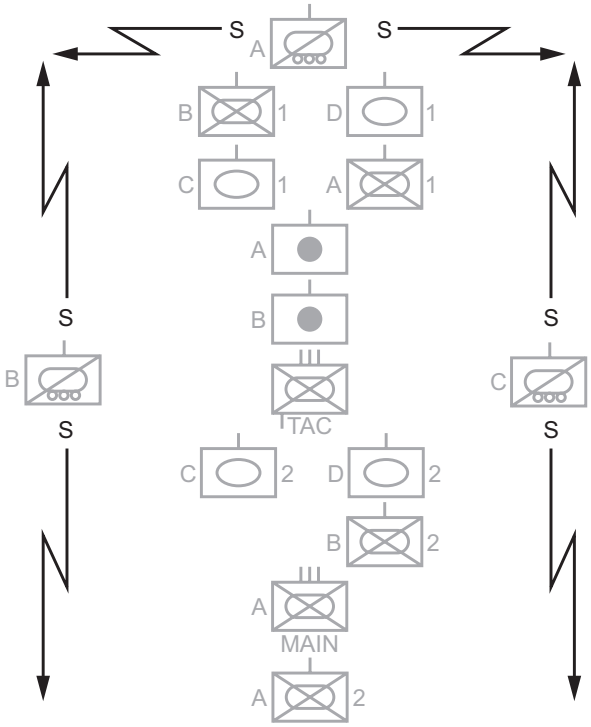


Figure 3-20. Regimental Landing Team in Battalion Column.

A disadvantage of using the column formation is that the majority of the column's firepower can only be immediately applied on the column's flanks. The length of the column can negatively impact control. Additionally, there are the possibilities of inadvertently bypassing enemy units or positions and exposing the unit's flanks and rear or running head on into an enemy deployed perpendicular to the column's direction of movement.

Line. In a line formation, the unit's subordinate ground maneuver elements move abreast of each other (see fig. 3-21). A commander employs this formation when assaulting an objective because it concentrates firepower to the front in the direction of movement. A line formation also—

- Facilitates speed and shock in closing with an enemy.
- Allows the coverage of wide frontages.
- Facilitates the occupation of attack-by-fire or support-by-fire positions.

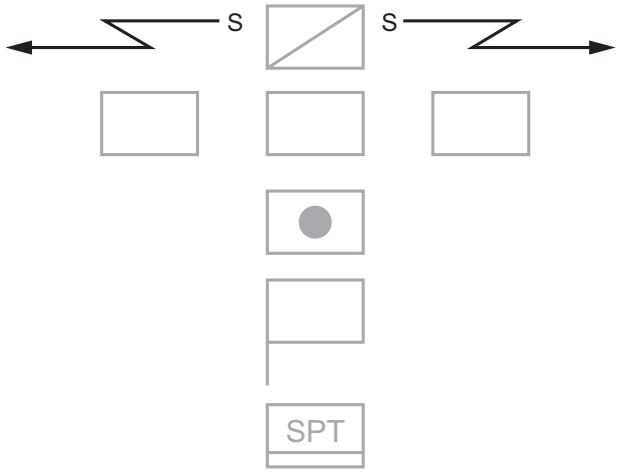
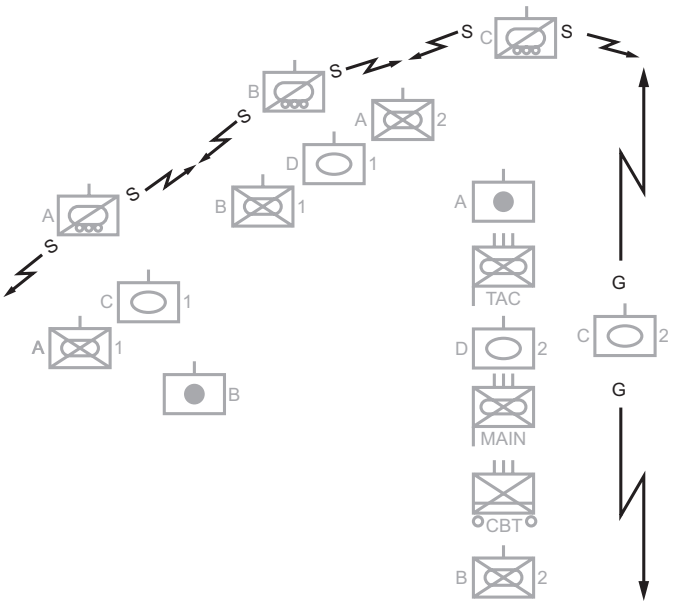


Figure 3-21. Line Formation Example.

There are also disadvantages of a line formation:

- Provides less flexibility of maneuver than other formations since it does not distribute units in depth.
- Linear deployment allows a unit deployed on line to bring only limited firepower to bear on either flank.
- Provides limited or no reserve.
- Limits overwatch forces.
- Limits control of a unit using a line formation in restricted terrain or in limited visibility.

Echelon. An echelon formation is a unit formation with subordinate elements arranged on an angle to the left or to the right of the direction of attack (echelon left, echelon right). This formation provides for firepower forward and to the flank of the direction of the echelon (see fig. 3-22, on page 3-36). It facilitates control in open areas. Echelons allow forces not in contact to maneuver against known enemy forces because all elements will not simultaneously make contact. It provides minimal security to the opposite flank of the direction of the echeloning. Units operating on the flank of a larger formation commonly use this formation. The primary disadvantages of the echelon formation are that it is more difficult to maintain control in restricted terrain or in limited visibility, and the lack of firepower available on the opposite side the echelon.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 3-22. Regimental Landing Team in Echelon Left Formation.

Box. The box formation is a unit formation with subordinate elements arranged in a box or square, or two elements up and two elements back. It is a flexible formation that provides equal firepower in all directions. It is generally used when the enemy location is known. This formation can cause 50 percent of the force to be decisively engaged at the same time, therefore limiting the combat power available to maneuver against an enemy. The box formation arranges the unit with two forward and two trail maneuver elements (see fig. 3-23). A unit with only three maneuver elements, such as an infantry battalion, cannot adopt the box formation unless it is reinforced. The

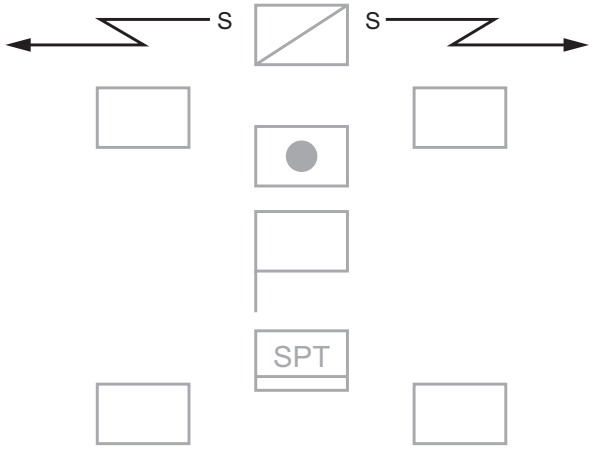


Figure 3-23. Box Formation Example

subordinate elements of the box usually move in a column formation with flank security. It is often used when executing an approach march, exploitation, or pursuit when the commander has only general knowledge about the enemy. Employing a box formation—

- Allows the unit to change quickly and easily to any other formation.
- Facilitates rapid movement, yet still provides allaround security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Facilitates control.

The primary disadvantages of a box formation are that it requires sufficient maneuver space for dispersion and the availability of multiple routes. At the battalion and company level, there also exists the possibility of enemy units massing on one element at a time as the other elements' direct fires are masked by other friendly forces.

Diamond Formation. A diamond formation is a variation of the box formation with one maneuver unit leading, maneuver units positioned on each flank, and the remaining maneuver unit to the rear (see fig. 3-24, on page 3-39). The subordinate elements of the diamond usually move in a column formation with flank security. It is most effective during approach marches, exploitations, or pursuits when the commander has only general knowledge about the enemy. Employing a diamond formation—

- Allows the commander to maneuver either left or right immediately, without first repositioning, regardless of which subordinate element makes contact with the enemy. This is the chief advantage of and the difference between a diamond and a box formation.
- Facilitates making enemy contact with the smallest possible force, yet provides all-around security.

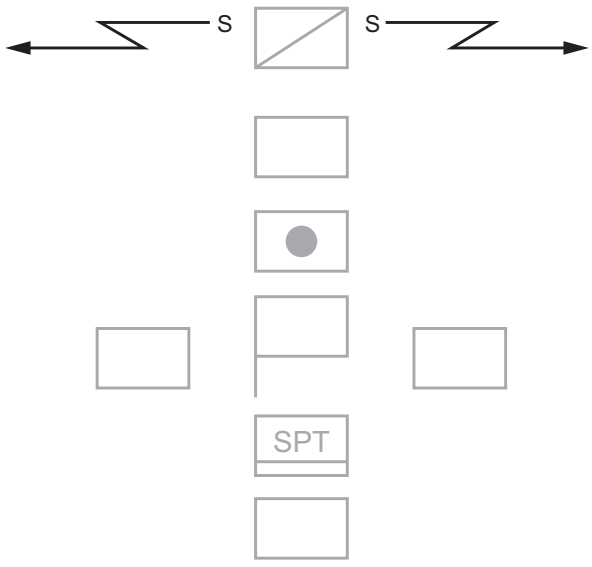


Figure 3-24. Diamond Formation Example.

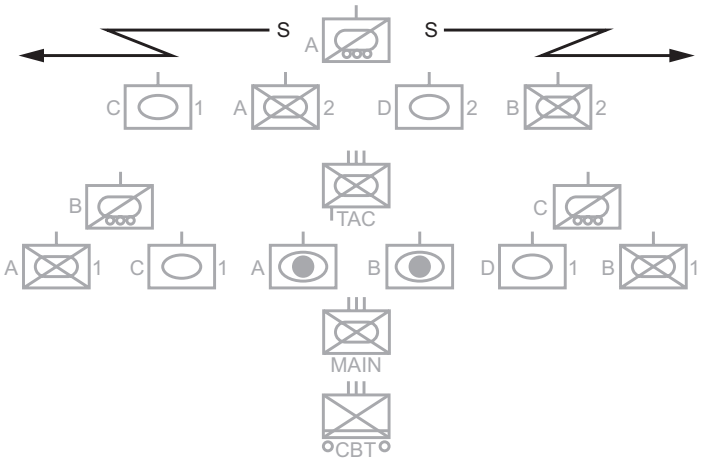
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Changes easily and quickly to another formation.
- Facilitates speed of movement while remaining easy to control.
- Provides an uncommitted force for use as a reserve.

The primary disadvantages of this formation are that it requires—

- Sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Four subordinate maneuver elements.
- The availability of multiple routes.

Wedge. The wedge formation arranges forces to attack an enemy appearing to the front and flanks (see fig. 3-25). A unit with only three subordinate maneuver elements can adopt the wedge formation. The commander uses the wedge when contact with the enemy is possible or expected, but the enemy's location and dispositions are vague. It is the preferred formation for an approach march because initial contact is usually with only one unit, leaving the others free to maneuver and develop the situation. Within the wedge, subordinate units employ the formation best suited to the terrain, visibility, and likelihood of contact. Employing a wedge formation—

- Provides maximum firepower forward and allows a large portion of the unit's firepower to be used on the flanks.
- Allows rapid crossing of open terrain.
- Facilitates control.
- Allows for rapid changes in the orientation of the force.
- Facilitates the rapid change to other formations.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 3-25. Regimental Landing Team in Wedge Formation.

The primary disadvantages to the wedge formation is that it—

- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Requires the availability of multiple routes.
- Lacks ease of control in restricted terrain or limited visibility.

Vee. The vee formation disposes the unit with two maneuver elements abreast and one or more units trailing (see fig. 3-26). This arrangement is well suited for an advance against a known threat to the front. The commander may use this formation when expecting enemy contact and the enemy's location and disposition are known. Employing a vee formation—

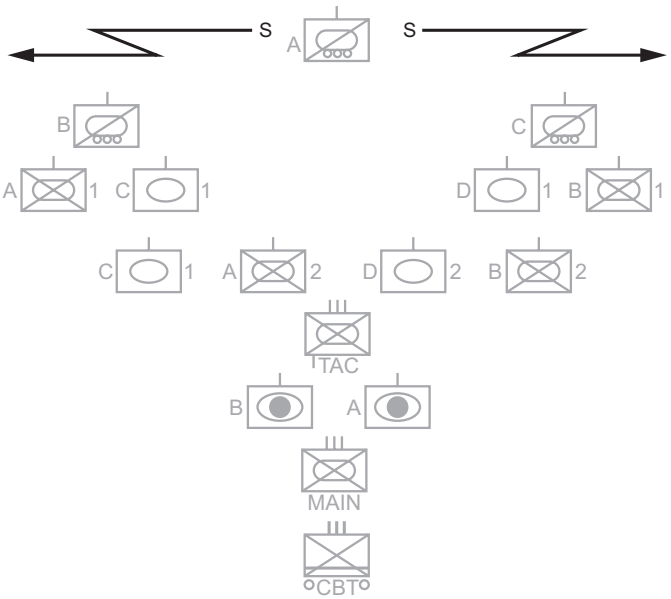
- Provides maximum firepower forward and good firepower to the flanks, but the firepower on the flanks is less than that provided by the wedge.
- Facilitates continued maneuver after contact is made and a rapid transition to the assault.
- Allows the unit to change to other formations quickly.

The primary disadvantages to this formation are that it—

- Makes reorientation of the direction of movement, such as a 90-degree turn, more difficult than using a wedge.
- Makes control in restricted terrain and limited visibility conditions difficult.
- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.

Limited Visibility Conditions

Traditionally, offensive operations conducted in conditions of limited visibility presented the commander with significant control problems but also significant rewards if done successfully.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 3-26. Regimental Landing Team in Vee Formation.

This remains generally true. The force that possesses the capability and training to operate effectively in limited visibility can achieve significant advantages over the force that cannot do so as well or at all. For conditions of limited visibility to be an opportunity rather than a disadvantage, commanders must ensure they train to fight and operate in these conditions—to include phasing from daylight to night operations.

Regardless of technology, operations conducted in limited visibility or adverse weather require more planning and preparation time than normal. They require significant redundancies in control methods such as terrain associated reference points, route marking, guides, or GPS [Global Positioning System] waypoints to guard against failure or degradation of night vision. They require the commander to develop GO/NO GO criteria and decision points about the use of illumination. Despite technology, limited visibility operations degrade the capabilities of individuals and units. Cognitive abilities degrade more rapidly than physical strength and endurance. Night vision devices degrade the user's depth perception. Ideally, planning should include recuperation time for units conducting a night attack before being committed to other operations. While always an issue, the fighting load of Marines conducting night operations should be limited.

Assured Mobility

Assured mobility is a framework of processes, actions, and capabilities that assures the ability of a force to deploy, move, and maneuver where and when desired, without interruption or delay, by integrating mobility, countermobility, and survivability tasks to support mission accomplishment. When planning offensive operations, commanders and staffs apply the assured mobility fundamentals of predict, detect, prevent, avoid, neutralize, and protect:

- Predict potential obstacles to mobility by analyzing enemy TTP, capabilities, and likely countermeasures; the effects of terrain; and civil considerations in terms of vehicular traffic, dislocated civilians, etc.
- Detect the location of avenues of approach, natural and manmade obstacles, and enemy obstacle resource capabilities.
- Prevent negative effects on friendly mobility through shaping actions such as eliminating enemy countermobility capabilities, preparing to mitigate natural obstacles, and destroying terrorist networks implanting improvised explosive devices and mines. Prevent also includes denying the enemy the ability to disrupt or destroy friendly mobility capabilities—such as protecting breaching assets until they must be committed.
- Avoid likely impediments to mobility, whether in terms of enemy action, natural features, friendly shortfalls, or combinations of all three—even if this results in the selection of less favorable, but unexpected routes.
- Neutralize, reduce, or overcome obstacles and impediments as soon as possible to allow unrestricted movement of forces. The TTP available to do this are a factor of METT-T, ROE, and the type of military operation being conducted. For example, how one mitigates an urban minefield in a major combat operation will be different from mitigating that same urban minefield in a peacekeeping operation.
- Protect by implementing survivability and other force protection measures that will prevent observation of friendly forces and degrade or eliminate the effects of enemy actions. This can include actions from creating new routes that allow forces to move unobserved and

unmolested, to the employment of mine rollers, to the use of electronic warfare systems to disrupt improvised explosive devices.

For more information on assured mobility, see MCTP 3-34A, *Combined Arms Mobility*.

Mobility. In the offense, commanders rely upon mobility to provide them the ability to concentrate combat power, conduct shaping operations, exploit success, and to pursue a retreating enemy. Mobility allows commanders to achieve surprise by passing through or over terrain thought impassable, or by creating new routes to allow forces to mass unseen by the enemy. Mobility allows friendly forces to retain momentum and dictate tempo by passing quickly and efficiently through natural and manmade obstacles. Mobility is a quality or capability of military forces which permits them to move from place to place while retaining the ability to fulfill their primary mission. Mobility operations are those combined arms activities that mitigate the effects of natural and manmade obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver. Mobility operations include these six primary tasks:

- Conduct breaching operations.
- Conduct clearing operations (areas and routes).
- Conduct gap crossing operations.
- Construct and maintain combat roads and trails.
- Construct and maintain forward airfields and landing zones (LZs).
- Conduct other mobility support operations.

Maintaining momentum in the offense often requires breaching operations. Ideally, obstacles are bypassed. If necessary, the preferred method of conducting breaching operations is employing a hasty breach, which avoids the loss of time and momentum associated with deliberate breaches. A hasty breach is the rapid creation of lanes through minefields, barriers, fortifications, or enemy obstacles by any expedient method when the time factor does not permit detailed reconnaissance, deliberate breaching, or bypassing the obstacle. Deliberate breaching is the creation of a lane through a minefield or a clear route through a barrier or fortification, which is systematically planned and carried out. (MCTP 3-34A) Commanders ensure that maneuver forces possess the means to conduct hasty breaches. The fundamentals of assured mobility allow commanders to determine likely breach sites, and if unavoidable, how to best shape and conduct efficient deliberate breaches. Breaching operations use a reverse planning sequence from the objective back to the AA. For more information on breaching, see MCTP 3-34A.

Clearing operations are conducted to eliminate the enemy's obstacle effort or residual obstacles within an assigned area or along a specified route. A clearing operation is a mobility operation, and, as with most mobility operations, it is typically performed by a combined arms force built around an engineer-based clearing force. A clearing operation could be conducted as a single mission to open or reopen a route or area, or it may be conducted on a recurring basis in support of efforts to defeat a sustained threat to a critical route. For more information on clearing operations, see MCTP 3-34A.

Rivers and other gaps remain major obstacles despite advances in technology and aviation support. Wet gap crossings are among the most critical, complex, and vulnerable of military operations. In a manner similar to breaches, hasty crossings are preferred to maintain momentum

and limit the amount of defensive preparation time available to the enemy. The size of the gap, as well as the enemy and friendly situations, will dictate the specific TTP used in conducting the crossing. Deliberate gap crossings normally require augmentation of amphibious and engineering assets. For more information on gap crossings, see MCTP 3-34A.

Countermobility. Though priority in the offense is to mobility operations, commanders use countermobility operations to enable economy of force operations, isolate the battlespace, and provide security. Countermobility operations are those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and manmade obstacles to deny enemy freedom of movement and maneuver. (MCTP 3-34B) The creation of obstacles provide security to flanks and deny the enemy counterattack routes as friendly forces advance into the enemy's defense. Similarly, the employment of obstacles provides force protection for consolidation and reorganization after a successful offensive operation. Countermobility operations enable economy of force operations—smaller forces able to defend larger areas—allowing commanders to mass combat power for offensive action elsewhere. Finally, they help isolate the battlespace, preventing reinforcement and withdrawal and dividing the enemy's defense into portions for defeat in detail. While countermobility operations have significant utility in the offense, commanders ensure that conducting countermobility does not hinder offensive maneuver. Countermobility operations include four primary tasks:

- Site obstacles.
- Construct, emplace, or detonate obstacles.
- Mark, report, and record obstacles.
- Maintain obstacle integration.

During planning, avenues of approach that offer natural flank protection to an attacking force are identified, such as rivers or ridgelines. Obstacles are sited and constructed, bridges destroyed, and minefields emplaced to interdict roads, trails, and avenues of approach. Swamps, canals, lakes, forests, and escarpments are natural terrain features that can be quickly reinforced for flank security. To maintain momentum, countermobility operations conducted in the offense stress rapid emplacement and flexibility. Engineer support must keep pace with advancing maneuver forces and be prepared to emplace obstacles alongside them. Planners ensure that mobility operations are properly prioritized, and that engineers receive both the resources and planning guidance necessary to make decisions that support the commander's plan during execution. Siting, construction, and emplacement planning consider blocking enemy avenues of approach and withdrawal, containing bypassed enemy forces, and isolating the battlespace from reinforcement. Depending on METT-T and the ROE, commanders employ air- and artillery-delivered minefields to create obstacles. Obstacles must be marked, reported, and recorded, and properly integrated with maneuver. The integration of countermobility operations into the defense is addressed in chapter 8. For more information on countermobility operations, see MCTP 3-34B.

Fires

Fires is the use of weapon systems or other actions to create specific lethal or nonlethal effects on a target. Fire support is fires that directly support land, maritime, amphibious, and special operations forces to engage enemy forces, combat formations, and facilities in pursuit of tactical and operational objectives. (*DOD Dictionary*) Commanders and staffs use the targeting process to

select and prioritize targets, and match resources to those targets to support the offensive SOM. The four fire support tasks are—

- Supporting forces in contact.
- Supporting the commander's concept of the operation.
- Integrating fire support with the SOM.
- Sustaining fire support.

The use of indirect and joint fires, and their integration with information operations, provides the commander with numerous options for generating lethal and non-lethal effects to gain and maintain fire superiority and use that superiority to enable maneuver. In the offense, fires without maneuver is a waste of resources while maneuver without fires is waste of lives. The commander uses long-range fire support systems (e.g., artillery and air support) and short-range fire support systems (e.g., mortars) to engage the enemy throughout the depth of the battlespace. Fire support planning is a continuous, concurrent cycle of analyzing the enemy and friendly situation; conducting targeting; tasking and allocating fire support assets; scheduling fires; and coordinating execution to integrate fire support with the SOM and maximize combat power. Its tangible result is a fire support plan. It relies upon top-down planning and bottom-up refinement. Fire support planning answers the question, "How will fires support the SOM?" In the offense, the SOM will generally follow some version of the following:

- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Disrupt the enemy.
- Fix the enemy.
- Maneuver.
- Follow through.

In support of this general scheme, the staff determines—

- What types of targets to attack.
- How to acquire and track targets.
- When to attack targets.
- What fire support assets are available to attack targets.
- How to coordinate the attacks.
- How to integrate with information operations.
- What defines success.

And in planning these offensive fires, fire support planners consider—

- Assigning priority of fires to the main effort.
- Planning fires on critical points in movement and on known or suspected enemy direct fire positions.
- Planning priority targets.

- Planning fires to support the momentum of the supported unit (e.g., screens, suppressive fires on bypassed enemy defenses or obstacle clearing).
- Planning fires on likely AAs.
- Planning fires on the objective, on gaps, and beyond the objective to exploit success.
- Preventing the enemy's withdrawal from, or reinforcement of, the objective.
- Creating a gap in the enemy's defenses or causing them to react where they become vulnerable (e.g., fires to disrupt their direct fire weapons to facilitate maneuver of the supported unit).
- Attacking enemy indirect fire assets to keep them from firing on friendly forces as they advance.
- Planning fires on flanks and crossings of exposed areas, such as smoke and air- and artillery-delivered scatterable minefields.
- Ensuring fire support assets are positioned and supplied to provide continuous support during the attack.
- Creating fire support control measures as close to maneuver elements as possible to maximize fire support to maneuver, shape the battlespace, and engage targets of opportunity.

As the attacking force moves forward, preparatory fires suppress, neutralize, or destroy enemy positions, shaping the battlespace to create conditions favorable to maneuver. The probable effects of preparatory fires are weighed against the potential advantages of achieving surprise against the enemy, especially under conditions of limited visibility. Even if the commander chooses to make an assault without using preparatory fires, fires are planned anyway so they are available if needed.

The effective assignment of joint forward observers and target acquisition assets to quick-fire or exclusive nets also provides responsive fires. Quick-fire nets allow the lead observers to associate directly with specific field artillery or mortar fire units. These kinds of communication arrangements enhance responsiveness through streamlined net structures and focused priorities. Communications planning should also include the need for communication nets for the clearing of targets for rotary- and fixed-wing attacks.

Air and Missile Defense

The GCE's primary means of air defense is the employment of passive air defense measures and the ACE's execution of antiair operations in accordance with the joint force air component commander. Passive air defense measures are an essential, and inherent, part of air and missile defense planning at all levels. If attacked by enemy aerial systems in AAs, attack positions, or while moving, units disperse and conduct small arms air defense. Enemy air threats consist of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft. As part of the overall air defense plan, the GCE can expect to account for, and support, the deployment of various radar systems and the presence and maneuver of light antiair defense units. The commander at each echelon establishes air defense priorities based on the concept of operations, SOM, air situation, and the air defense priorities established by higher headquarters. If the commander has air defense systems in direct support of the attack, their coverage is generally weighted toward the unit's decisive action and establishes a protective corridor over the terrain traversed by the subordinate unit or units conducting that decisive action. Command and control of all air defense assets require complete and timely communications to ensure proper weapon status for the protection of

friendly air support assets. See MCTP 10-10B, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Air and Missile Defense (AMD)*, for more information.

Information Operations

Information-Related Capabilities
Military Deception
Electronic Warfare
Operations Security
Military Information Support Operations
Cyberspace Operations
Physical Attack
Physical Security
Information Assurance
Communication Strategies and Operations
Counterintelligence
Civil-Military Operaitons
Defense Support to Public Diplomacy

Information operations are the integration, coordination, and synchronization of all actions taken in the information environment to affect a relevant decision maker in order to create an operational advantage for the commander. The MAGTF executes information operations as an inherent element of all operations to enable and enhance the overall ability to conduct successful military actions. Information operations may target decision makers such as individuals, groups, or even populations. The role of information operations in the offense is to enable the commander to successfully maneuver and mass combat power at the point of decision. Information operations are integrated with fires and maneuver to accomplish this purpose. Information operation activities in support of this goal may vary from military deception to induce an action or inaction by enemy commanders, electronic warfare attacks to disrupt enemy C2 networks at critical moments in the battle, to mitigating interference in military operations from neutral or hostile populations. Information operations are conducted through the integration, coordination, and synchronization of IRCs:

- Military deception supports commanders across the ROMO by helping them to operate within the decision-making cycle of the enemy, and supporting the achievement of positive correlation of forces at times and locations supportive of the commander's operational objectives. In the offense, military deception seeks to manipulate the enemy's intelligence collection and analysis capabilities to gain time, achieve surprise, reveal their strengths and intentions, execute inappropriate or delayed actions, and employ their forces to the advantage of the MAGTF.
- Electronic warfare uses a combination of offensive and defensive TTP to shape, disrupt, and exploit an enemy or adversary such as disrupting or destroying enemy C2 networks, disrupting improvised explosive devices, assisting military deception activities, disrupting enemy air defense systems, protecting friendly C2 networks, etc.
- OPSEC contributes to the offense by depriving the enemy or adversary of information, which slows the enemy's or adversary's decision-making cycle, thereby providing opportunity for attainment of friendly objectives.
- Military information support operations support the offense by undermining the will of the enemy to resist, increase the acceptance of friendly forces in occupied territory, increase the element of surprise, encourage the noninterference by civilians with military operations, and increase the psychological effect of military deception activities on enemy leaders and forces.
- Cyberspace operations occur in conjunction with electronic warfare using both offensive and defense cyberspace operations to attack, deceive, degrade, disrupt, deny, exploit, and defend electronic information and infrastructure.
- Physical attack is simply the application of combat power to physically neutralize or destroy enemy forces, equipment, installations, and networks associated with their C2 system. Since

the enemy may recover, physical attack is normally conducted at a particular moment or to generate an effect for a certain period of time.

- Physical security consists of friendly actions taken to prevent or mitigate an enemy's attempt to conduct physical attacks against friendly C2 forces, equipment, installations, and networks.
- Information assurance uses information security and computer security to protect friendly information—and the credibility and accuracy of that information—from enemy attack or influence.
- Counterintelligence is the intelligence function focused on force protection—identifying and counteracting enemy attempts at espionage, sabotage, subversion, or terrorism.
- Marine Corps communication strategies and operations (also referred to as COMMSTRAT) communicates and engages domestic and foreign publics to build understanding, credibility, and trust. Because of legal strictures regarding communication strategies and operations, it must have an awareness of all IO activities, integrate with those that it is appropriate to integrate with, and avoid compromising others. Communication strategies and operations also provides commanders operational imagery and supports IO activities, with visual information. For more information, see MCTP 3-30F, *Marine Corps Public Affairs*, and MCTP 3-32A, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Combat Camera*.
- Civil-military operations is the responsibility of commanders at all levels, regardless of whether they receive civil affairs personnel or other enablers. They include any activity of the command concerned with the relationships between the force and the civil authorities and people in the unit's AO. Primarily they are focused on enabling military operations to occur by mitigating issues with the civil populace. For more information, see MCTP 3-03A, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Civil-Military Operations*.
- Defense support to public diplomacy consists of activities and measures taken by Department of Defense components, not solely in the area of information operations, to support and facilitate the public diplomacy efforts of the US Government. Much of the operational-level IO activity conducted in any theater will be directly linked to public diplomacy objectives. Defense support to public diplomacy requires coordination across US Government departments and agencies, and amongst all Department of Defense components.

See MCWP 3-32, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Information Operations*, for more information.

Intelligence

The intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) process exists to help the commander understand the tactical problem and design the framework to solve it. A continuous process that begins even before mission receipt, the commander uses available ISR assets to study the terrain and confirm or deny the enemy's strengths, dispositions, and likely intentions, especially where and in what strength the enemy will defend. Intelligence collection continues throughout the operation. Indications of the location and composition of obstacles and the positioning of engineer assets may be key in determining where and when the enemy will defend. These assets also gather information concerning the civilian population within the AO to confirm or deny their numbers, locations, and likely intentions, especially with regard to staying in shelters or fleeing from combat areas.

Intelligence and operations officers, in coordination with the rest of the staff, develop a synchronized and integrated intelligence collection plan that satisfies the commander's decision, maneuver, targeting, and information requirements. A commander's information requirements are dictated by METT-T, but commonly include—

- Analysis of key terrain, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, avenues of approach (also referred to as KOCOA). See MCTP 2-10B, *MAGTF Intelligence Production and Analysis.*
- Locations, composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the defending enemy force, to include high priority targets and enemy ISR capabilities.
- Intervisibility lines, lines-of-sight, enemy direct-fire weapon range fans.
- Locations and range fans of enemy indirect-fire weapon systems and units.
- Effects of weather and terrain on current and projected operations.
- Numbers, routes, and directions of movement of dislocated civilians.
- Likely actions and reactions of civilians and third party actors.
- Withdrawal routes for enemy forces.
- Anticipated timetable schedules for the enemy's most likely COA and other probable COAs.
- Locations of—
  - Obstacles.
  - Possible enemy AAs.
  - Gaps and assailable flanks.
  - Areas for friendly and enemy air assault operations.
  - Enemy air defense gun and missile units.
  - Enemy IO assets and units.
  - Enemy logistic assets.
  - Enemy C2 and intelligence nodes and ISR systems and the frequencies used by the information systems linking these systems.

If friendly ISR assets cannot answer the commander's information requirements, the echelon intelligence staff can send a request for information to higher and adjacent units, the commander can commit additional resources, or the commander can decide to execute the offensive operation with the current information.

Logistics

Logistic Functional Areas
Supply
Maintenance
Transportation
General Engineering
Health Service Support Services

The purpose of logistics in offensive operations is to assist the tactical commander in maintaining the momentum; to avoid a culminating point where offensive operations must cease in order for logistic functions to occur. Such a pause risks ceding the initiative to the enemy. Further, commanders want to take advantage of windows of opportunity and launch offensive operations with minimum advance warning time. Therefore, logistic commanders and planners must remain closely integrated throughout the operations process (i.e., plan, execute, assess) with their ground counterparts to be aware of these potential opportunities

and likely actions to exploit them. A key to successful offensive operations is the ability to anticipate the requirement to push support forward, specifically in regard to ammunition, fuel, replacements, and water. The commanders of logistic elements must act, rather than react, to support requirements.

Logistic elements conduct CSS and the logistic functions as far forward, and as close to maneuver units as possible, to maintain momentum and tempo. Preplanned and preconfigured packages of essential items—such as POL and ammunition—are used to help maintain offensive momentum and tempo or for short-duration offensive operations such as raids or in support of distributed operations. The commander works with logistic officers and elements to analyze the unit's basic load, identify specific and critical items necessary to the operation, evaluate contingency requirements, and determine sustainment requirements. Attacking units cross-load supplies and critical resources to prevent their destruction due to the loss of a single vehicle or system. The commander makes decisions regarding the risk that logistic preparations for the offense will be detected by enemy forces and give indications of the unit's tactical plans.

The availability of adequate supplies and transportation to sustain the operation becomes more critical as it progresses, especially in situations where maneuver elements are widely dispersed. Whether foot-mobile or vehicle-mounted, supply LOCs become strained, and requirements for repair and replacement of weapon systems increase. The CSS elements in direct support of maneuver units must task organize and be as mobile—regardless of terrain—as the forces they support. They may do so through the use of aerial resupply and forward logistics bases.

Maintenance assets move as far forward as the tactical situation allows to repair inoperable and damaged equipment and to return it to battle as quickly as possible. Crews continue to perform their preventive maintenance checks and services as modified for the climate and terrain in which they find themselves. The expedient execution of battle damage repair by maintenance crews and recovery teams is critical to sustaining offensive operations. Battle damage repair restores the minimum essential combat capabilities required to support a specific combat mission or to enable the equipment to self-recover.

The offense consumes more resources than other operations, and it can generate significantly greater casualties in a short period of time. As with other logistic functional areas, the means of triaging and evacuating casualties is pushed as far forward as possible. Logistic planners anticipate greater health service support requirements with offensive operations and coordinate and synchronize additional medical support and augmentation, such as medical evacuation support, forward resuscitative surgical intervention provided by forward surgical teams, and established Class VIII resupply. Health services planning, in terms of evacuation routes and ambulance exchange points, becomes more important depending on the type of offensive operation and enemy capabilities. A penetration conducted in an urban environment will most likely preclude aerial casualty evacuation at, or near, the point of injury. Similarly, the vulnerability of LOCs in an envelopment may preclude ground casualty evacuation. In any event, planners must coordinate and integrate casualty evacuation and treatment plans across the warfighting functions.

Force Protection

Force protection is the measures taken to preserve the force's potential so that it can be applied at the appropriate time and place. The offense, seeking to mass combat power, while conducting

maneuver that exposes itself to enemy actions, poses significant challenges to protecting the force. Maintaining greater momentum and tempo is a way for creating protection for the force in the offense. Doing so denies the enemy a chance to plan, prepare, and execute an effective response to friendly actions. Using multiple routes, dispersion, highly mobile forces, piecemeal destruction of isolated enemy forces, scheduled rotation and relief of forces before they culminate, and wise use of terrain are techniques for safeguarding the force to mass them at the point of decision. In addition, commanders consider—

- Integration of the force protection warfighting function with IRCs such as OPSEC, communication strategies and operations, information assurance, and counterintelligence.
- Units are prepared to execute personnel recovery according to METT-T.
- Units mitigate friendly fire through the use of confirmation briefs, rehearsals, and briefbacks, maintaining situational awareness across the force, and the elements of battlespace geometry.
- Rear area security is properly tasked, organized, led, and resourced.
- The continuous use of passive (camouflage, cover, concealment, counter-improvised explosive device awareness) and active (the use of engineering assets) survivability activities. See chapter 8 for more discussion of survivability and MCTP 3-34C, *Survivability Operations.*
- The employment of proper chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) postures and preparedness.

TRANSITIONS

Tactical units execute assigned missions using various tasks and actions associated with offense, defense, and stability activities. As discussed in chapter 2, units may employ different tasks at different times depending on mission and situation. Transitions, in this case, occur when there is a change to either the mission, the environment, the AO, unit task organization or function, enemy's actions or TTP, or some combination of these.

Offensive operations cease only with the realization of victory and an end to hostilities, when a commander receives a change in mission (e.g., being ordered to conduct security operations for another element), or when the force reaches a culminating point. A culminating point is the point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense. (*DOD Dictionary*) In offensive operations this happens when the balance of strength shifts from the attacking force to their opponent. The culminating point occurs because of operational reasons, logistic reasons, or some combination of the two. Examples of operational reasons are encountering heavily defended areas that cannot be bypassed, the enemy receiving reinforcements, or the enemy experiencing success with a counterattack. Examples of logistic reasons are physical exhaustion, casualties, equipment losses, and expenditures that outstrip CSS. Units can regain offensive momentum, but often only after difficult fighting or following an operational pause.

An operational pause is a temporary halt in operation. (*DOD Dictionary*) An operational pause in offensive operations may be forced by a culminating point as discussed above. Conversely, a

commander may plan an operational pause to replenish combat power. Planning operational pauses requires careful phasing, expeditious sustaining actions, and operations to maintain pressure on the enemy and deceive them as to the nature and length of the pause.

Transition to Defensive Oriented Operations

A unit transitions from the offense to the defense because they are ordered to do so, have planned to do so after some phase or objective is met, or are forced to do so by a culminating point or some enemy action. Of these scenarios, the worst is having the defense forced upon the commander because it invites substantial risk as the force must significantly alter their posture and focus suddenly and unexpectedly. Units are spread out and might be weakened, defensive measures are hasty, and personnel may find themselves fighting on unfavorable and desperate terms. Consequently, commanders either plan to transition to the defense or seek to anticipate likely culmination points so they have the freedom to choose when and where to halt the attack, and have time to plan the defense, minimize vulnerability to attack, and facilitate a return to offensive operations. As the unit transitions from the offense to the defense, the commander—

- Maintains contact and surveillance of the enemy.
- Establishes a security area, security forces, and local security measures.
- Redeploys artillery assets to ensure the support of security forces.
- Redeploys forces to support future offensive actions.
- Maintains or regains contact with adjacent units in a contiguous AO and ensures that units remain capable of mutual support in a noncontiguous AO.
- Transitions the engineer effort by shifting the emphasis from mobility to countermobility and survivability.
- Consolidates, reorganizes, and requests logistic support for defensive operations, and seeks to maximize opportunities for reconstitution of the force.
- Explains to the unit's personnel the rationale for transitioning from the offense.

A commander can use two basic techniques when transitioning to a defense weighted operation, regardless of the type of defense the commander plans to conduct—area, mobile, or retrograde. (See chapter 8 for more information on the defense.) The first technique is for the leading elements to commit forces and push forward to claim enough ground to establish a security area anchored on defensible terrain. The main force moves forward or rearward as necessary to occupy key terrain and institutes hasty defensive operations that progress towards deliberate as time and resources allow. The disadvantage of this technique is that if the force is facing a culminating point or unexpected change in the situation, they probably lacks the combat power necessary to push forward to create a proper security area—thus leaving the main body exposed to decisive enemy actions.

The second technique is to establish a security area generally along the unit's current position, moving the main body rearward to defensible terrain. The security force thins out and the remaining force deploys to organize the defense. The disadvantage of this technique is that unless the main body falls back far enough to create a deep security area, enemy forces will probably accurately template the forward trace of friendly units and engage with artillery and other fire support systems, complicating defensive preparations and causing personnel and equipment casualties.

Civil considerations are inherent to all operations, and a transition from the offense to the defense often requires an increasing focus on stability operations as well. Transitioning to defensive operations often creates a lull that civilian populations may exploit to seek aid, flee the area, or if hostile, passively and actively interfere with friendly operations. The commander must consider how to minimize the impact of these activities on military operations while still meeting general protection requirements associated with international law.

Transition to Stability Activities

Units change their focus of effort from offensive related tasks to stability activities due to a change in mission, change in the situation, or at the end of hostilities. If the latter, this transition should be the execution of previous planning efforts—the stability activities needed to support a transition to civil authority cannot be afterthoughts. Ideally, all the unit's efforts to date have been about setting the conditions to successfully transition to stability activities and eventual withdrawal. It follows that setting these transition conditions have significant impact on the planning and execution of the combat actions leading up to them. As the unit transitions from offensive tasks to stability activities, the commander—

- Maintains contact and surveillance of any remaining enemy or hostile elements.
- Maintains the combat power necessary to conduct security operations.
- Establishes AOs, either contiguous or noncontiguous, for subordinate forces.
- Prepares to transition some or all combat support units to other roles such as provisional infantry, mobility support, or critical infrastructure reconstruction.
- Conducts command and control and task reorganization to support stability activities functions to include adding and integrating new functions and enablers.
- Seeks to integrate operations with proper civil authority, whether an occupational government, international organization, or HN authority.
- Consolidates, reorganizes, and requests logistic support for stability activities, and seeks to maximize opportunities for reconstitution of the force.
- Readdresses risk assessment assumptions and ROE.
- Conducts necessary training and reorientation of the unit's personnel to combat complacency and reinforce the shift in emphasis from the offense to stability.

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CHAPTER 4
MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

Movement to contact is a type of offensive operation that develops the situation and establishes or regains contact with the enemy. This type of offensive operation is applicable across the ROMO. Commanders conduct a movement to contact to create favorable conditions for subsequent tactical tasks, such as forcing the enemy to reveal themselves. A commander conducts a movement to contact when the tactical situation is not clear or when the enemy has broken contact. A properly executed movement to contact develops the combat situation and maintains the commander's freedom of action after contact is gained. This flexibility is essential to maintaining the initiative. All of the tactical concepts, control measures, and planning considerations introduced in chapters 2 and 3 apply to the conduct of a movement to contact. The attack preparation considerations introduced in chapter 5 also apply.

OVERVIEW

A movement to contact employs purposeful and aggressive movement, decentralized control, and the hasty deployment of combined arms formations from the march to develop the situation for further action. Two types of movement to contact are approach march and search and attack. The fundamentals of a movement to contact are—

- Focus all efforts on finding the enemy and forcing them to reveal themselves.
- Make initial contact with the smallest force possible to develop the situation and avoid decisive engagement of the main body until a time of the commander's choosing.
- Task organize and use movement formations that enable the force to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.
- Keep subordinate forces within supporting distances to facilitate a flexible response.
- Maintain contact regardless of the COA adopted once contact is gained.

Close air support, air interdiction, and antiair operations are essential to the success of large-scale movements to contact. Local air superiority or, as a minimum, air parity is vital to the operation's success.

Current intelligence collection capabilities often preclude the need for large units, such as regiments and divisions, to conduct movements to contact for purposes of finding the enemy. But finding the enemy in general terms, and locating them in specific terms that allow them to be targeted are often very different propositions. Further, apparent certainty can be quickly degraded by an enemy's use of complex terrain (e.g., jungle, urban, extensive forests), OPSEC, and

information operations. The more capable an enemy, the more likely intelligence collection may be disrupted. Regardless, locating the enemy is only one aspect of a movement to contact. The movement to contact remains the preferred method to gain and maintain contact with the enemy where they are, to develop the situation as enemy dispositions are discovered, and to mitigate risk if the enemy is contacted during movement.

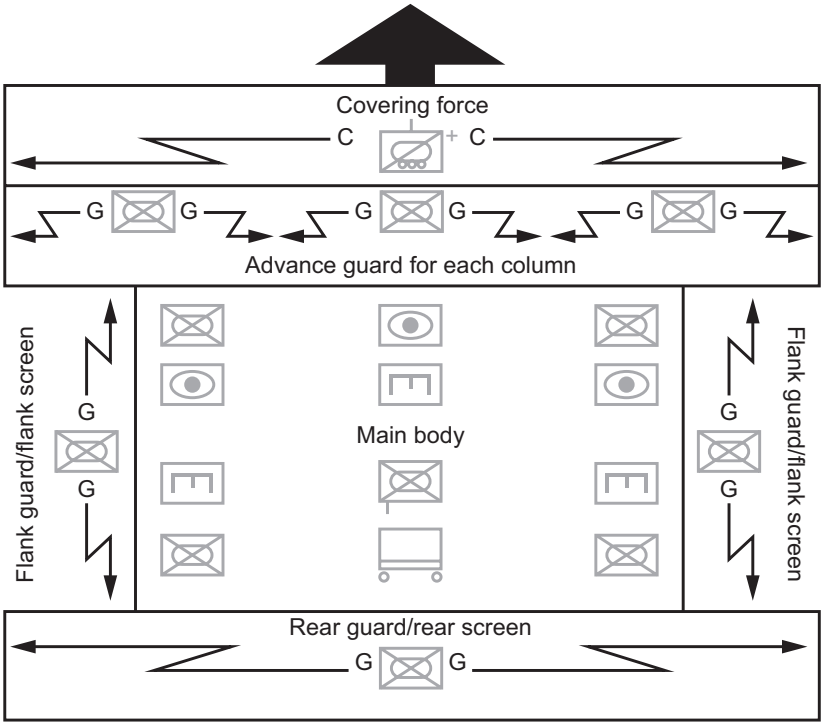
One of the primary threats to friendly force movement that a movement to contact mitigates is a meeting engagement. A meeting engagement is a combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. The enemy force encountered may be either stationary or moving. For a meeting engagement to occur, both forces do not have to be surprised by their meeting. The force making unexpected contact is the one conducting a meeting engagement. In a meeting engagement, the force that reacts first to the unexpected contact generally gains an advantage over their enemy—seizing the initiative is the overriding imperative. Prompt execution of battle drills at platoon level and below, and standard actions on contact for larger units, can give that initiative to the friendly force.

APPROACH MARCH

An approach march is the advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is imminent. Troops are fully or partially deployed. The approach march ends when ground contact with the enemy is made or when the attack position is occupied. (MCRP 1-10.2) A commander employs this form of a movement to contact when the enemy is operating in larger, organized elements whose locations may be generally—but not specifically—known, when seeking to gain or regain contact with the enemy and develop specific information on their disposition, or when contact is possible and security is more important than speed (e.g., conducting an exploitation or moving from the LD to the assault position). All units at the platoon level and above can conduct an approach march. Approach marches may be conducted by any means of ground movement. Commanders conduct shaping operations to support subordinate maneuver elements conducting approach marches. Such operations might include targeting known and suspected enemy positions, isolating the battlespace, attacking enemy reserves, and conducting information operations. Subordinate commanders receive the necessary support (e.g., fire support, enablers, logistic support) to seize the initiative upon contact with the enemy.

Organization of Forces

At a minimum, a movement to contact using an approach march is organized with a forward security force—either a covering force or an advance guard—and a main body. However, subordinate units within the main body may use advanced guards to operate behind the covering force as shown in figure 4-1. Commanders may add flank and rear security elements, especially when their rear or flanks are not protected by adjacent or following units. The main body may consist of one or more columns. Security elements may receive screen or guard missions. Resourcing of the forward security force, flank, and rear security elements is dependent upon METT-T. Chapter 13 discusses security operations such as screen and guard.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 4-1. Force Organized for a Movement to Contact.

Security Forces. All security elements of an approach march have two primary purposes. The first is to protect the main body against surprise; the second is to prevent the main body from becoming decisively engaged by the enemy if, or until, the commander decides to do so. Forward security elements possess two additional purposes. They are to make contact with the enemy to develop the situation and are responsible for mobility and countermobility operations in support of the main body.

While flank and rear security elements receive either screen or guard missions to achieve their purposes, the forward security element may be assigned a cover mission and serve as a covering force. The key factor in distinguishing a covering force is their ability to operate independently of the main body. Because of the resources required to create a covering force, covering forces do not normally occur in approach marches conducted below the regimental level. More often, the forward security element is organized as an advance guard.

The advance guard is a detachment sent ahead of the main force to ensure their uninterrupted advance; to protect the main body against surprise; to facilitate the advance by removing obstacles and repairing roads and bridges; and to cover the deployment of the main body if it is committed to action. (*DOD Dictionary*) Being far easier to resource, and less mission specific, units frequently use advanced guards to support the main body in all types of movement—even administrative. As seen in figure 4-1, subordinate units within the main body may use advanced guards to operate behind the covering force, but in advance of their individual columns, to provide

specific support and protection to that column. Whether organized as a covering force or advanced guard, the forward security element is a combined arms unit task-organized for that purpose. Regardless of terrain, elements comprising the forward security element should have at least equal, if not superior mobility, to that of the main body. For this reason, units containing a mixture of mounted infantry, LAR, and tanks are often most suitable for use in the forward security element. If mobility and countermobility operations are anticipated, the forward security element should possess necessary engineering assets, though availability of these assets may lead the commander to retain them with the main body and send them forward as needed.

The forward security element moves as quickly and as aggressively as possible. It forces the enemy to withdraw or destroys small enemy groups before they can disrupt the advance of the main body. When the forward security element encounters large enemy forces or heavily defended areas, they take prompt and aggressive action to develop the situation and, within their capability, defeat the enemy. The commander reports the location, strength, disposition, and composition of the enemy and tries to find the enemy's flanks and gaps or other weaknesses in the enemy's position. The main body may then join the attack. The commander of the approach march usually specifies how far in front of the main body of the force the forward security element is to operate. The commander reduces those distances in close terrain and under low visibility conditions.

If utilizing flank security, main body elements positioned near those flanks normally provide the combat power necessary for that task—for example, the regiment on the left of a division approach march would be tasked with left flank security. If rear security is used, they are sourced from a subordinate element and reports directly to the unit conducting the approach march—for example, a company pulled from a subordinate battalion will serve as rear security and work directly for the regiment conducting the operation. Flank and rear security elements normally perform either screen or guard tasks. Flanks may conduct cover missions if there are clearly identified, significant threats to the flank—though this requires significant resources to accomplish. Aviation units may conduct screens if appropriate to METT-T, though there is increased risk to the main body. See chapter 13 for detailed information on security operations and screen, guard, and cover missions.

Main Body. The main body is normally the element that will conduct the decisive action within the approach march. The main body consists of forces not detailed to security duties—a reminder to commanders and staffs that they must balance security requirements against the success of the main effort. The combat elements of the main body are prepared to respond when the unit's security forces make contact with the enemy. Commanders may support the main body's mission by assigning follow-and-support missions to other subordinate units. For example, if one of a regiment's battalions is conducting an approach march method of movement to contact, another of the regiment's battalions may receive a follow-and-support mission. This technique prevents the slow attrition of the movement to contact battalion as the follow-and-support battalion relieves the approach march battalion of tasks such as observing bypassed enemy forces, guarding the flanks, handling displaced civilians, and clearing routes.

The commander designates a portion of the main body for use as the reserve. The size of the reserve is based upon METT-T and the amount of uncertainty concerning the enemy. The more vague the enemy situation, the larger the size of the reserve. The reserve typically constitutes approximately one-fourth to one-third of the force and increases the commander's flexibility and

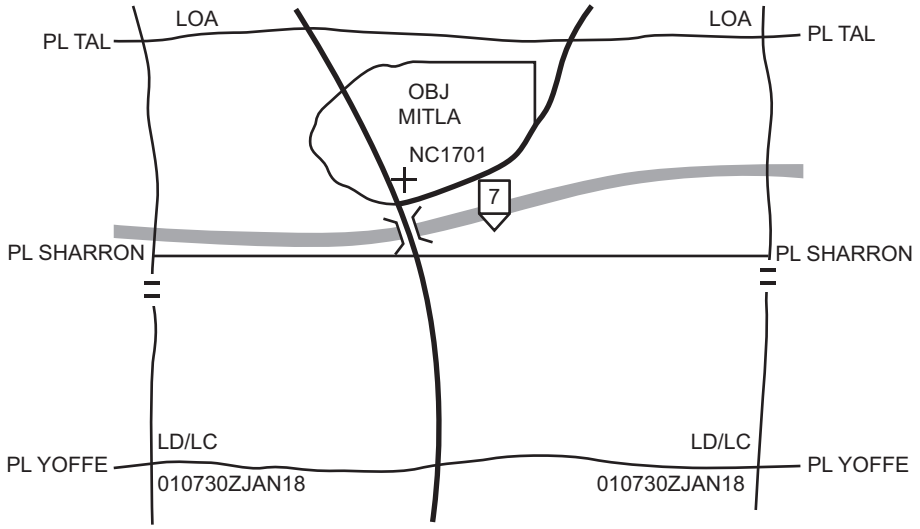
adaptability. By being able to use the reserve to react to unforeseen circumstances or tasks, commanders can retain the ability to commit the main body to the decisive action when they see fit, vice being forced to do so prematurely.

The proper handling of logistics is important to maintaining the momentum of the main body. Ground combat element units executing smaller unit or shorter duration approach marches may be able to rely on their basic loads and organic transport for immediate logistic needs. But approach marches conducted to support movements to contact at the regimental level or above, or as part of exploitations and pursuits, require increased coordination and reliance on the ACE and logistics combat element (LCE) to handle lengthening MSRs, aerial-resupply, and the phasing forward of CSS to keep pace with the advance. Unit planners must realistically address rates of advance, likely consumption rates, and similar factors to avoid culmination points.

Control Measures

A commander uses the minimal number and type of control measures possible to maximize the freedom of maneuver in the face of an uncertain enemy situation. These measures include designation of an AO with left, right, front, and rear boundaries, and an LD. Commanders may use an axis of advance in limited visibility, but this reduces maneuver space and risks bypassing the enemy. The commander may use an LOA to control the depth of movement, terrain objectives to limit depth and orient the force (though the focus remains on the enemy), and PLs, contact points, and checkpoints as needed (see fig. 4-2).

The use and shifting of boundaries becomes critical in delineating responsibilities and authorities in approach marches above the battalion level (e.g., coordinating fire support). Commanders can use PLs to successively serve as "new" rear boundaries for forward security elements as they advance. Each rear boundary becomes the forward boundary of the main body and shifts as the



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
LD/LC line of departure/line of contact
OBJ objective

Figure 4-2. Movement to Contact Control Measures.

security force moves forward. The rear boundary of the main body designates the limit of responsibility for the rear security element. This line also shifts as the main body moves forward. See chapter 13 for a discussion of security force boundaries.

Planning an Approach March

Planning for the approach march begins with what is known about the enemy and what is unknown. Commanders develop their understanding of how the operation will unfold by anticipating potential and probable points of enemy contact and the impact of terrain on mobility and mutual support among various elements and portions of the force. This understanding informs the designation of main and supporting efforts, resourcing of the security elements, the reconnaissance focus of the forward security element, formation of the reserve, employment of engineering assets, and how the main body will mass combat power for the decisive action. Subordinate units can then plan and conduct rehearsals (e.g., likely battle drills, hasty breaches, bypass maneuvers, hasty defenses).

The decisive action in an approach march varies widely since the purposes for which an approach march are executed vary so widely. In a movement to contact tasked with regaining contact with the enemy, the decisive action may be deployment of the main body in an attack-by-fire position to allow other actions to occur. In a battalion-sized approach march conducted as part of an exploitation, the decisive action may be the commitment of the main body against any organized enemy resistance of company strength or greater. As with all operations, the approach march is conducted for a purpose, and a critical planning factor is tailoring the organization and movement of the approach march to realize that purpose.

The GCE staff officers, in conjunction with the ACE, examine the geographic and civil terrain to determine choke points, obstacles, danger areas, likely points of enemy contact, areas of population density, and ground and air avenues of approach. Because of the uncertain nature of the enemy situation and the vulnerability of the friendly force during movement, the staff is careful not to underestimate the enemy's most likely and dangerous COAs or the impact of civil considerations on the SOM. Since the foundation of the approach march is mobility, reconnaissance plans, fire support plans, mobility and countermobility plans, IO plans, civil affairs plans, etc. focus on mitigating the environment to enhance the force's ability to move and maneuver. The result of their efforts directly affects when the force is likely to change formations, how fast the force may or may not move, and when and where dispersion is increased or decreased.

The commander plans to gain contact with the smallest elements possible. These elements are ideally ground or aerial reconnaissance elements (including UAS), or other ground combat assets of the forward security element leading the reconnaissance effort. The unit's planned movement formation should contribute to the goal of supporting reconnaissance and making initial contact with the smallest force possible. It should also provide for efficient movement of the force and employment of the reserve. The commander can choose to have all, or only a part of the force, conduct an approach march as part of a movement to contact to provide that efficient movement (other elements could conduct follow-and-assume or follow-and-support tasks).

The frontage assigned to a unit conducting an approach march must allow sufficient room to fire, maneuver, and mass combat power to gain contact with the enemy and retain the initiative. Too

large a frontage dilutes combat power, leaves the commander unable to effectively influence the AO, and risks ceding the initiative to the enemy. Too narrow a frontage restricts the commander's ability to maneuver and dictate tempo while simplifying the enemy's tactical problem and potentially ceding them the initiative. Terrain also influences frontage in terms of its effects on the mobility of the force and the ability of elements to support each other. The ability to control the battlespace and constitute and maneuver a reserve is often helpful in determining frontage assignments. Does the forward security element have the ability to control their battlespace, execute their mission, and still possess a reserve to help develop the situation? Can forward security element have those things while still leaving the main body with the combat power necessary to execute the decisive action?

Commanders rely upon fire support assets to weight the lead element's combat power and to support the decisive action. The ACE is an important source for fire support, assault support, and reconnaissance support. Just as logistic planning for the approach march requires integration with the LCE, so does maneuver planning require integration with the ACE. The fire power of the ACE, when combined with that of available artillery and mortars, provides the immediate and responsive fire support required to allow the forward security element to contact the enemy and develop the situation, and support the main effort.

Units cannot execute the tactical task, clear, by using an approach march. (See app. C for more information on the clear tactical task). Depending on METT-T, it is likely that commanders will have some sort of bypass criteria to avoid unnecessarily slowing or diverting forces from the primary mission. For example, a RLT in an open desert environment could declare that no mounted enemy force larger than a platoon be bypassed. All other forces would be cleared from the regiment's AO either by the forward security element, employment of the reserve, or the commitment of the main body. However, any force that bypasses an enemy unit must maintain contact with them until handing the enemy unit off to another friendly element, usually a force assigned a follow-and-support mission.

Commanders plan shaping operations as part of the approach march, despite the fact that an approach march conducted as part of a movement to contact occurs when the enemy situation is vague or uncertain. Such shaping operations seek to suppress or neutralize enemy reserves, interdict and isolate likely enemy routes in and out of the battlespace, and disrupt or destroy enemy units that expose themselves during the operation. Shaping operations are also those actions conducted by the forward security element to set the conditions for their own operations, the commitment of the reserve, or the employment of the main body.

Preparing for an Approach March

The preparations for the conduct of an approach march are the same as those for an attack. See chapter 5 for additional information on this subject.

Executing a Movement to Contact

Each element of the force synchronizes their actions with adjacent and supporting units, maintaining contact and mutual support, and minimizing the chance of the enemy infiltrating or exploiting seams between friendly elements. The advance guard maintains contact with the covering force (if one is established). The lead elements of the main body maintain contact with the advance guard. The rear guard and flank security elements maintain contact with and orient on

the main body's movement. Reconnaissance elements operate to the front and flanks of each column's advance guard and maintain contact with the covering force. The commander may instruct each column's advance guard to eliminate small pockets of resistance bypassed by the forward security element (see fig. 4-3).

The commander of the forward security element chooses combat formations designed to make contact with the smallest possible force while providing flexibility for ease of deployment and maneuver. The commander ensures that the route or axis of advance traveled by the main body is free of enemy forces in keeping with any bypass criteria. Some indirect fire assets, such as a mortar platoon or artillery battery and fire support teams, may be positioned with the advance guard.

The main body keeps enough distance between itself and the forward security elements to maintain flexibility for maneuver. This distance varies with the level of command, the terrain, and the availability of information about the enemy. The commander does not commit the main body to canalizing terrain before the forward security elements have cleared it. As the enemy situation becomes known, the commander may shorten the distance between elements to decrease reaction time or deploy the force to prepare for contact.

The main body advances as rapidly as terrain and the enemy situation allows. The main body uses multiple parallel routes with numerous lateral branches to remain flexible and reduce the time needed to initiate maneuver. Elements of the main body use traveling, traveling overwatch, or bounding overwatch techniques to conduct movement (see chap. 14). At the battalion level and below, the use of cover and concealed routes is maximized. Regardless of situation and environment, the main body's march dispositions must allow maximum flexibility for

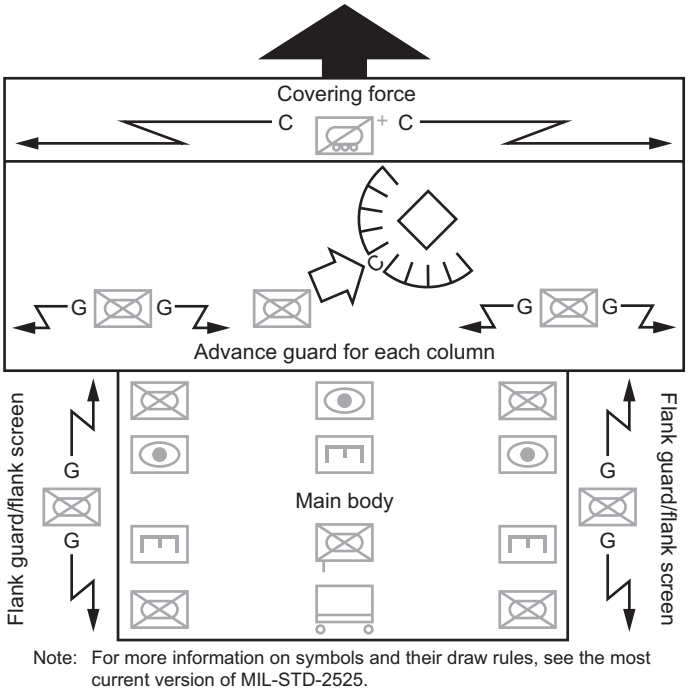


Figure 4-3. A Column Advance Guard Attacking to Destroy a Contained Enemy Force.

maneuvering during movement and when establishing contact with the enemy force. Command posts and combat trains travel along highmobility routes within the AO and occupy hasty positions as necessary.

Fire support assets and IRCs seek to disrupt enemy forces, suppress enemy positions, and obscure or screen exposed friendly forces. The movement of fire support assets and updating of priority targets is synchronized with the advance of the force to avoid slowing the advance while maintaining seamless fire support. The GCE relies on the ACE for air and missile defense as well as adding flexibility to its fire support plans. The movement of low altitude air defense units is coordinated with the movement of the main body and security elements.

The unit's information operations, tempo, use of cover and concealment, dispersion, and minimization of electromagnetic emissions complicate the enemy's ability to detect and target the main body until contact is made. Once the force makes contact and concentrates their effects against detected enemy forces, the force becomes visible and vulnerable. Depending on the mission, the main body rapidly seeks to reduce their vulnerability by dispersing, resuming the advance, or transitioning to the defense to avoid effective enemy counteractions.

Bypassing whenever possible, the force uses breaching and gap crossing techniques where they must to avoid any loss of momentum. The forward security element executes their responsibility to maximize main body maneuver by conducting mobility operations at both identified and discovered gaps and obstacles. If unable to provide the forward security element with engineering assets, the commander places those assets within the main body and positions them in a way that facilitates their rapid movement forward if needed. Obstacles and gaps are overcome as quickly as possible, leaving full reduction and lane improvement to follow-and-support forces. Similarly, security elements conduct necessary countermobility operations to support and protect the advance of the main body, transitioning responsibility for these obstacles to follow-and-support forces.

Commanders move well forward in approach marches to facilitate decision-making upon contact with the enemy. When contact is made with the enemy, the forward security element deploys and reports and begins to develop the situation.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact. The approach march force gains contact with the enemy through any one, or combination of, eight forms: direct; indirect; non-hostile or civilian; obstacle; CBRN; aerial; visual; and electronic. Ideally, forward security elements determine the enemy location through other than physical means, allowing them to dictate if, when, and how contact occurs. This enables the commander to receive information on enemy strength and dispositions and commit the main body on more favorable terms. Regardless of how the covering force or advance guard makes contact, they executes actions on contact. Actions on contact are a series of combat actions, often conducted simultaneously, taken upon contact with the enemy to develop the situation. Once contact is gained, the forward security element seizes terrain that provides advantages to observation and maneuver, and strives to prevent the enemy force from breaking contact unless ordered to do so by the commander. The main body remains ready to exploit identified weaknesses and gaps.

Actions on Contact

Deploy and report
Evaluate and develop the situation
Choose a COA
Execute selected COA
Recommend follow-on actions to the higher commander

Intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance units and the forward security element conduct actions on contact regardless of whether detected by the enemy. The unit assumes obstacles are covered by fire and treats them like any other form of enemy contact. The covering force or advanced guard seizes the initiative and dictates the tempo of the contact by aggressive execution of the actions on contact. Well-rehearsed SOPs and battle drills enable the forward security element to act aggressively. Actions on contact include the following:

- *Deploy and Report*. When a unit's security element encounters an enemy unit or obstacle, they deploy to a covered position that provides observation and fields of fire. If the security element is under enemy fire, they use direct and indirect fire to suppress the enemy and restore freedom of maneuver. Simultaneously, the commander of the security element reports the contact, provides all available information on the situation, and updates the C2 information system's common operational picture. This alerts the commander and allows the initiation of necessary actions.
- *Evaluate and Develop the Situation*. The unit's security element develops the situation rapidly by employing techniques ranging from stealthy, foot-mobile reconnaissance to reconnaissance by fire, using both direct and indirect fire weapons. The element seeks to determine critical elements of information on the enemy, such as strength, disposition, and intentions to support the approach march commander's decision-making. The covering force or advanced guard submits additional reports as required.
- *Choose a COA*. Having taken immediate steps to deploy, report, and conduct basic force protection, the forward security element chooses a COA on how to proceed consistent with their mission and capabilities. Taking into account IPB and commander's intent, the commander of the forward security element decides whether to attack, bypass, defend, or observe. Commanders will generally bypass or destroy smaller enemy forces to maintain the momentum of the advance. The presence of large enemy forces, or upon reaching the force-oriented objective of the approach march, will dictate a choice between observation, engagement, or defense (to include retrograde if the survival of the force is threatened). In the case of obstacles—whether covered by fire or not—the unit can bypass, create a minimum number of lanes, or conduct a hasty breach and attack. The selection of a COA is rapid and should be based upon the mission, the operation plan, and battle drills. The higher commander has the option of disapproving the COA, but to avoid delay, unit SOPs may provide automatic approval of certain actions.
- *Execute Selected COA*. Commanders of the covering force or advance guard rapidly convey their decision to the security element and higher headquarters, and execute it.
- *Recommend Follow-on Actions to the Higher Commander*. Since the forward security element is in contact with the enemy and is conducting shaping operations, they provide recommendations on further action to the commander. Such recommendations may address committing the main body, bypassing the enemy, etc. As a rule, the higher commander should position himself/herself forward in a manner that allows him/her to rapidly join the security element commander and gain firsthand knowledge of the situation.

Disrupt the Enemy. Once contact is made, the main body commander brings overwhelming fires to isolate the battlespace and prevent the enemy from conducting either a spoiling attack or executing a coherent defense. Using fires and information operations, the force seeks to disrupt or destroy the enemy (e.g., enemy reserves, critical equipment, C2 centers, fire control nodes). Disrupting the enemy helps create the conditions necessary for decisive action.

Fix the Enemy. Fixing the enemy marks a transition point from a movement to contact using an approach march to an attack. If the forward security element can fix and then defeat or bypass the enemy force encountered, the approach march continues. If the security force cannot do so without deploying the main body, or a portion of them, then fixing the enemy becomes a shaping operation to support the main body's employment. The organization, size, and combat power of the security force, and the MAGTF resources that can be brought to support that force, are the major factors that determine the size of the enemy force the forward security element can either defeat or fix in place for the main body's decisive action.

The covering force or advanced guard uses fires and maneuver to fix the enemy force in their current positions and prevent their maneuver. The forward security element can do this in a number of different ways. They can decisively engage enemy forces to prevent their ability to move without risking destruction. The forward security element can attack enemy command and control, fire direction control facilities, and enemy fire support assets, to limit their ability to break contact. The forward security element can disrupt and interdict enemy follow-on forces and reserves to eliminate the enemy's ability to alter the situation. The ACE supports these priorities by engaging the enemy throughout the depth of the AO.

Decisive Action or Maneuver. When the forward security element contacts the main enemy force, or encounters enemy security forces they cannot overcome, the main body commits to decisive action. This is normally the hasty execution of one of the forms of offensive maneuver, such as a penetration or envelopment, but could be a hasty defense depending on the threat and mission. Maintaining the freedom to act is one of the key reasons that commanders ensure their main body is not engaged until the time and place of their choosing. When and where possible, this maneuver should be initiated at a tempo the enemy cannot match, to either maintain the momentum of the advance when facing strong enemy security forces, or to accomplish the mission of the movement to contact when encountering the enemy's main body.

Efficient deployment of the main body occurs as rehearsed, planned, or as part of the unit's SOP to accomplish the mission before the enemy can react, deploy, or reinforce. Commanders of main body elements conduct hasty reconnaissance and forward passage of lines coordination with the covering force or advanced guard. The variations on how the main effort is delivered are infinite and depend on the planning, rehearsals, and capabilities of the force, and most importantly, on the commander's determination on how to solve the tactical problem at hand. For example, the commander may order an immediate attack by one of the main body's columns to support shaping operations, allowing the other columns to conduct reconnaissance and a flanking attack or envelopment. The commander may wait until the bulk of the main body is fully deployed before launching a penetration. Regardless, commanders understand that the deployment of the main body is their bid for victory and avoid piecemeal commitment except when rapidity of action is essential and a portion of the main body can achieve combat superiority at the decisive point.

If the rapid defeat of the enemy does not occur, the commander has three main options: bypass, transition to a more deliberate attack, or conduct some type of defense. In all cases, the commander must retain the initiative and prevent the enemy from stabilizing the situation. This occurs by maintaining pressure through violent and resolute attacks and coordinating additional combat support and CSS.

Follow Through. After a successful attack, the approach march commander resumes the movement to contact if the location of the enemy main body is still unclear and the LOA has not been reached or the commander transitions to the appropriate operation—deliberate attack, exploitation, or defense—for the existing tactical situation.

SEARCH AND ATTACK

Search and attack is a method of movement to contact used to develop the situation, deny the enemy the ability to operate in a given area, or when the enemy is operating in small, dispersed elements. A commander employs this form of movement to contact when the enemy is operating as small, dispersed elements whose locations cannot be determined to targetable accuracy by methods other than a physical search, when the task is to deny the enemy the ability to move within or operate from a given area, or as a possible method of conducting a clearing task. Regiments and below normally conduct search and attack operations, though examples of divisions using this method exist. For example, during Vietnam, the Marine Corps and the Army conducted division-sized "search and clear" missions in the Central Highlands and northern provinces against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese formations. The search and attack method of movement to contact requires superior tactical mobility.

Organization of Forces

Units conducting search and attack must accomplish reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing functions. Units execute these functions in one of two ways. In the first instance, units can task organize themselves into standing reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing elements. Shaping and supporting efforts locate and fix various enemy units, while the main effort finishes them—the decisive action. In the second instance, a unit executes search and attack by function. All subordinate elements execute the reconnaissance function. When an enemy force is found, unengaged units are assigned to supporting fix, and decisive finishing functions.

The fundamental consideration for organizing the force is the required size of the reconnaissance effort or force. The larger the AO (in terms of both geography and population) and the greater the uncertainty of the enemy situation, the larger the reconnaissance requirement. The reconnaissance force typically consists of reconnaissance, infantry, aviation, and electronic warfare assets. The fixing force must have the mobility to respond and the combat power required to isolate the enemy forces once the reconnaissance force finds them. The finishing force must also possess the mobility to rapidly respond and the combat power necessary to defeat the located enemy force. The force must possess the logistic strength to rapidly reconstitute and continue search and attack operations within the AO.

Control Measures for a Search and Attack

The commander establishes control measures that allow for decentralized actions and small-unit initiative to the greatest extent possible. The minimum control measures for a search and attack are an AO, TRPs, objectives, checkpoints, and contact points (see fig. 4-4). The use of TRPs facilitates responsive fire support once the reconnaissance force makes contact with the enemy. The commander uses objectives and checkpoints to guide the movement of subordinate elements.

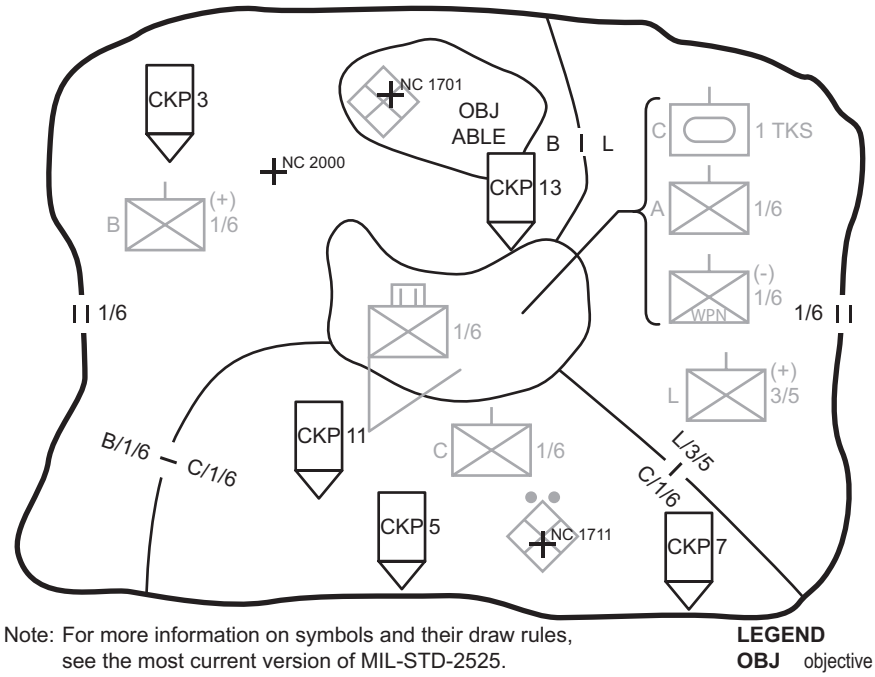


Figure 4-4. Search and Attack Control Measures.

Coordination points indicate a specific location for coordinating fires and movement between adjacent units. The commander uses other control measures, such as PLs, as necessary.

Planning a Search and Attack

While the purpose of a search and attack is often to develop the situation and generate additional information on the enemy, the IPB process still remains critical to search and attack planning. The nature of the terrain impacts task organization, employment of combat support, and tactical mobility planning. Analysis of the enemy's most likely positions, employment, and size impacts the friendly force's reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing efforts.

Planning considerations focus on how to accomplish two critical tasks: finding the enemy, and then finishing them. To find the enemy, the commander must craft the battlespace in a manner that increases the likelihood for success. This involves deploying intelligence collection assets to assist the reconnaissance force and narrowing the focus of the search through detailed terrain analysis. What the enemy is doing is an important part of this analysis. For example, operating base camps and rest areas requires water sources, routes of some type, and a certain amount of physical space. Crafting the conditions for successful reconnaissance also includes creating properly sized AOs and properly organized and equipped reconnaissance forces. While terrain and enemy analysis can help mitigate a large AO and a small reconnaissance force, a platoon assigned dozens of square miles of jungle is going to be ineffective. Similarly, that same platoon assigned a comparable space of desert, but remaining foot mobile, is likely to be ineffective. The second critical task, finishing the enemy, requires fixing them in place and then delivering the decisive action. Again, the size of the AO and the means of accomplishing these functions are critical planning factors. A commander may choose to organize the reconnaissance forces with enough combat power and combat support to accomplish both reconnaissance and fixing functions. However, the

commander may choose to organize a fixing force to enable greater dispersion and flexibility for the reconnaissance force. The positioning of the fixing force, their combat support, and the means and speed by which they can move are important factors for planning. Similar planning is required for the finishing force, especially when a unit is tasked with both fixing and finishing functions. In fixing and finishing, the single driving factor in determining task organization, location, and method of movement is the maximum length of time the commander feels is acceptable between finding and defeating an enemy and their ability to evade friendly forces.

Search and attack planning factors address the creation of maximum flexibility. They include preparing for contingencies such as personnel recovery, reserves, and threats to the survival of the force and establishing adaptable combat support (e.g., positioning combat engineers). Planning to achieve flexibility also includes the development of fire plans and the use of fire control measures (e.g., TRPs, priority of fires) to ensure responsive fire support. Mobility and countermobility planning assists the force in locating, responding to, and restricting the movement of the enemy. Finally, the organization of the search and attack force, the length of the operation, and the methods of movement influence logistics significantly. Foot-mobile infantry elements, sustaining themselves in the field, in a small AO, will have significantly different logistic planning demands than a vehicle- and helicopter-mobile force, basing itself within and operating across a large AO. Given that the success of a search and attack movement to contact rests foremost with locating the enemy, commanders choose austerity over comfort.

Executing a Search and Attack

In this case, each subordinate element operating in their own AO is tasked to destroy the enemy within their capability. The company maintains the finishing force. Units may enter the AO by infiltrating as an entire unit and then splitting out (see fig. 4-5) or by infiltrating as smaller units via ground, air, or water. The commander establishes control measures and communications means between any closing elements to prevent friendly fire incidents. The reconnaissance force conducts a zone reconnaissance to reconnoiter identified NAIs.

Once a reconnaissance force finds the enemy, the fixing force develops the situation and executes one of two options. The first option is to fix the enemy by isolation—identifying and blocking escape or reinforcement routes until the finishing force arrives. The second option is to fix the enemy by attacking them in their current positions until the finishing force arrives. Depending on the enemy's mobility and the likelihood of the reconnaissance force being compromised, the commander may need to position the fixing force before the reconnaissance force enters the AO.

Regimental landing teams (and possibly battalions) may establish fire support bases as part of fixing force operations. These positions should be mutually supporting and prepared for all-around defense. They are located in positions that facilitate aerial resupply. The development of these positions depends on METT-T because their establishment requires diverting combat power for force protection.

If conditions are not right to use the finishing force or main body to attack the detected enemy, the reconnaissance or the fixing force can continue to conduct ISR activities to further develop the situation. Whenever this occurs, the force maintaining surveillance must be careful to avoid detection and possible enemy ambushes.

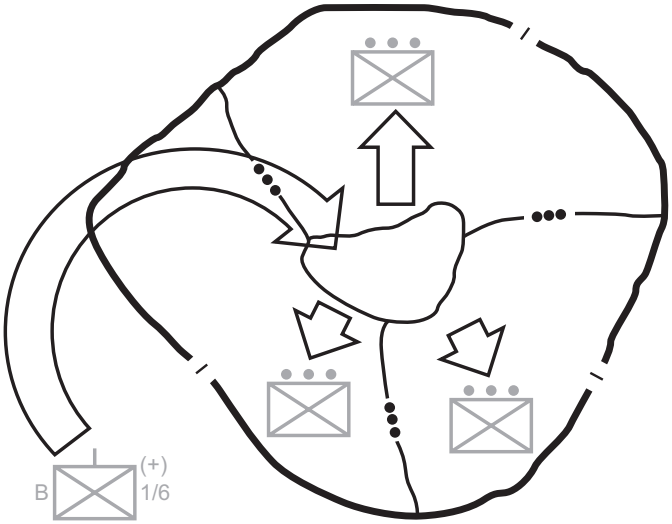


Figure 4-5. Company Search and Attack.

The finishing force either moves in trace of reconnaissance and fixing forces, or deploys to the point of contact, maintaining the responsiveness necessary to engage the enemy before the enemy can break contact. The finishing force deploys to defeat the detected and fixed enemy by either attacking, isolating the enemy to support another unit's attack, or by employing indirect fire or CAS. The commander may have the finishing force establish an ambush and use the reconnaissance and fixing forces to drive the enemy into it.

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CHAPTER 5
ATTACK

When the commander decides to attack or the opportunity to attack occurs during combat operations, the execution of that attack must mass the effects of overwhelming combat power against selected portions of the enemy force with a tempo and intensity that cannot be matched by the enemy. The resulting combat should not be a contest between near equals. Attackers must be determined to seek decision on the ground of their choosing through the deliberate synchronization and employment of the combined arms team.

OVERVIEW

Attacks take place along a continuum defined at one end by FRAGOs that direct the execution of rapidly executed battle drills by forces immediately available. The other end of the continuum includes published, detailed orders with multiple branches and sequels, detailed knowledge of all aspects of enemy dispositions, a force that has been task-organized specifically for the operation, and the conduct of extensive rehearsals. Most attacks fall between the ends of the continuum See chapter 1 for more information on this continuum between hasty and deliberate operations.

This chapter addresses considerations unique to the offensive operation, attack. Those general offensive warfighting function considerations discussed in chapter 3 continue to apply. There are no unique logistic or force protection functional considerations that apply only to the attack.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

Upon the selection of a SOM, the commander task organizes the force to give each unit enough combat power to accomplish their mission. An attacking unit is normally organized into a security force, a main body, and a reserve, all supported by organic CSS assets, the LCE, and the ACE. Whenever possible, changes to task organization occur in time to allow units to conduct rehearsals with their attached and supporting elements. The best place and time for an attacking force to task organize is when located in an AA.

Security Forces

Under normal circumstances, a commander creates security forces in an attack only if the action will uncover the flanks or rear of the attacking force as they advance. In this case, the commander designates a flank or rear security force and assigns them a guard or screen mission, depending on METT-T. Normally, an attacking unit does not need extensive forward security forces; most

attacks are launched from positions in contact with the enemy, which reduces the usefulness of a separate forward security force. Exceptions occur during limited visibility attacks, or when transitioning from an operation in which a security force already exists, such as a movement to contact or the defense.

Main Body

The main body is a combined arms formation designed to conduct the decisive action and necessary shaping actions. It focuses on delivering the main effort to the point of decision. The subordinate unit or units designated as the main effort can change during the course of the attack. The commander designates assault, breach, and support forces, if the commander expects to conduct a breach operation during the attack.

It may be impractical to immediately determine what the decisive action will be, such as during a hasty attack. Even so, commanders still designate a main effort, such as the reserve, arrange forces in depth, and maintain centralized control of fires. As soon as the tactical situation clarifies enough to allow the commander to designate the decisive action, the commander focuses available resources to shape the conditions for success and support the main effort's achievement of its objective. If the commander possesses follow-on echelons, the commander can assign follow-and-assume or follow-and-support tasks to those echelons (see app. C).

Reserve

In the attack, the reserve exploits success, defeats enemy counterattacks, or restores momentum to a stalled attack. Once committed, the reserve's actions normally become or reinforce the decisive action. The commander makes every effort to reconstitute another reserve from units made available by the revised situation. Often a commander's most difficult and important decision concerns the time, place, and circumstances for committing the reserve. The reserve is not normally committed to any other task, such as follow and support. In exceptional circumstances, a commander may designate the least engaged unit as the reserve.

The strength of the reserve depends primarily on the level of uncertainty about the enemy situation, especially the strength of any expected enemy counterattacks. The greater the uncertainty, the more capable the reserve. Additional considerations are the forces available, the form of offensive maneuver, the terrain, and acceptable risk. For example, in a hasty attack the reserve might contain up to one-third of the force's combat power. Alternatively, in a deliberate attack the commander may specify the size of the reserve to defeat the enemy's likely counterattack. The commander should not constitute the reserve by weakening the decisive action. A reserve must have mobility equal to or greater than that of the enemy.

In an attack, the commander generally locates the reserve to the rear of the unit, balancing protection of the force from hostile observation and fire with the need to move quickly and decisively when needed. For mounted and armored reserve forces, key factors are cross-country mobility and road networks. For dismounted forces, key factors are existing roads and trails, and the availability and appropriateness of using trucks and assault support. The commander prioritizes the positioning of the reserve to reinforce the success of the decisive action first, then to counter the worst-case enemy counterattack.

Combat Service Support

The attack places significant demands on logistic support and coordination, requiring the placement of combat trains and CSS assets well forward. From these forward locations, the CSS elements can sustain the attacking force, rapidly evacuate personnel and equipment casualties, and provide priority of support to the main effort. As the attacking force advances, combat trains and CSS elements displace forward to keep supply lines short and ensure uninterrupted support to maneuver units. Depending on the enemy threat, the commander may need to provide a maneuver element to provide security to the rear area or forces conducting sustaining actions. Chapter 13 addresses area security operations in more detail.

CONTROL MEASURES

Units conducting offensive operations are assigned an AO within which to operate. Within the AO, the commander normally designates the following control measures regardless of whether the attack takes place in a contiguous or noncontiguous environment:

- AOs for subordinate units of battalion size or larger.
- A PL as the LD, which may also be the LC.
- The time to initiate the operation.
- The objective.

If necessary, a commander can use either an axis of advance or a direction of attack to further control maneuver forces (fig. 5-1 depicts minimum control measures for an attack). A commander may add AAs for preparation and attack positions to await the establishment of the conditions necessary to initiate the attack. Depending on the terrain, and especially for limited visibility attacks, the commander may add additional control measures for movement such as checkpoints, PLs, directions of attack, assault positions, and PLD. To mitigate battlespace geometry issues, commanders may add all manner of direct fire control measures and indirect FSCMs such as FCLs, LOAs, and support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions.

See chapters 2 and 3 for more information on control measures. See chapter 3 for description on the use of AOs, AAs, LC, PLs, common direct and indirect fire coordinating measures, and discussion of battlespace geometry.

PLANNING AN ATTACK

In the attack, friendly forces seek to place the enemy in a dilemma that leaves the enemy no options other than surrender or destruction. The attacker accomplishes this through the use of combined arms and isolation of the battlespace, leaving the enemy unable to withdraw or reinforce without risking destruction. To do this successfully requires both synchronizing combat power while providing for the flexibility required to address unexpected changes and opportunities.

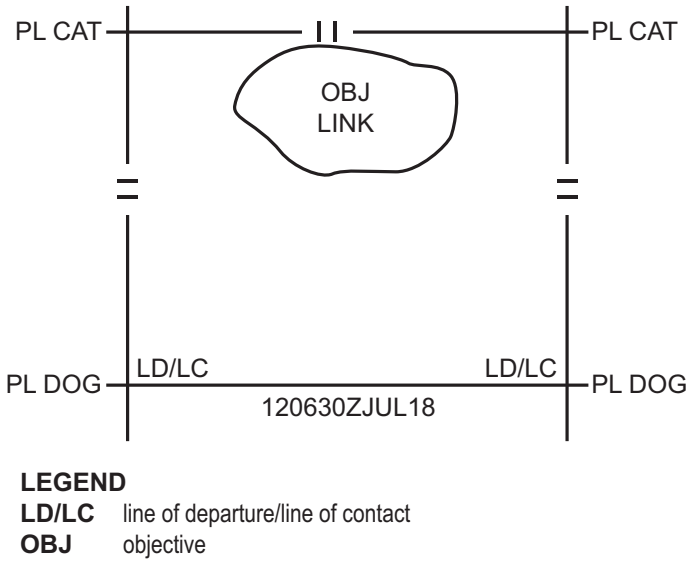


Figure 5-1. Minimum Attack Control Measures.

Fire superiority is that degree of dominance in the fires of one force over another that permits that force to conduct maneuver at a given time and place without prohibitive interference by the enemy. To successfully maneuver without prohibitive losses requires the attacker to achieve fire superiority at critical points during the attack, such as when maneuver forces are crossing a danger area. The commander gains fire superiority when needed by integrating maneuver, direct fires, fire support, and information operations. Common TTP include counterfires, maneuvering to support-by-fire positions, neutralization of enemy positions, disruption of enemy command and control, tactical deception, and destruction of key facilities and assets.

Command and Control

An attack is a tactical problem like any other, and planning begins with the commander's understanding of the situation and environment and a vision for how to solve the problem. The commander weighs known and likely enemy positions and capabilities, the effects of the environment on what can and cannot be done, and the capabilities of the friendly force. In doing so, commanders develop a general concept of the operation, an approach. This concept informs further planning. For example, the commander may look at the planning time available, the enemy situation, and the friendly force's mobility and combat power, and then decide that the most likely solution to the tactical problem is a flanking attack or single envelopment. This becomes guidance for further development of the attack plan.

Depending on the size of the unit, commanders use the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) or the troop leading steps to develop the initial concept into one or more COAs, which are evaluated, weighed, and selected, and then developed into an order. A SOM is determined to include methods of movement and formations, main and supporting efforts, and the forces assigned to them. Where the enemy can see and effect the force is analyzed and fires and information operations are integrated with maneuver to mitigate them, and control measures are created. Commanders determine where to best position themselves during various moments in the attack to overcome likely points of friction and maintain momentum. The plan is developed to provide

subordinates the maximum latitude during execution and to create a decision framework that allows the force to rapidly react to unexpected developments and exploit opportunities. For more information on planning, see MCWP 5-10, *Marine Corps Planning Process*.

Maneuver

The point of maneuver is to achieve an advantage over the enemy and to place overwhelming combat power at the decisive point. While the use of time (e.g., time of attack) is an important coordination tool, the use of events and the fulfilment of conditions—such as using CAS and artillery to achieve suppression on the enemy as the condition for committing the breach force—offers the attacker the best way to concentrate force while still allowing for the unexpected.

Central to maneuver planning is achieving surprise to offset and mitigate enemy defensive measures. Commanders may seek to gain surprise by attacking from an unexpected direction or time, by utilizing bad weather, by taking advantage of greater operational tempo, or by crossing seemingly impassable terrain. Units integrate information operations to maximize surprise by deceiving the enemy, introducing hesitation, and creating decision paralysis. For example, a unit in extremely hilly or mountainous terrain may use assault support assets to place infantry on high-ground and have them maneuver down the terrain. The commander may use feints and demonstrations to mask true decisive and shaping actions.

Other maneuver planning focuses on enabling and coordinating the movement of subordinate units. Commanders and subordinate leaders analyze the results of IPB and METT-T to determine routes, combat formations, formation changes, directions of movement, and navigational aids they will use to traverse the ground from the LD or PD to the objective. When required, units use security forces to post guides at locations critical to movement and maneuver.

Daylight attacks allow friendly forces to effectively use their equipment while facilitating control of their maneuver. They are the least stressful psychologically and physically on the attacking units. One major disadvantage is that the enemy force can effectively use their weapon systems to oppose the attack. Another disadvantage of daylight attacks is that friendly forces are not able to take advantage of the Marine Corps' generally superior night vision capabilities.

Limited Visibility Attacks

While attacks conducted during limited visibility tend to be more deliberate in nature than a daylight attack, they possess significant tactical and psychological advantages over a lesser capable enemy. The commander planning a night attack considers how limited visibility complicates the integration of the warfighting functions, such as intelligence collection, identifying and engaging targets, navigating and moving without detection, locating and evacuating casualties, conducting resupply, and conducting mobility operations. Table 5-1 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of conducting limited visibility attacks.

The primary planning factors for limited visibility attacks are the training and capabilities of the attacker and defender. Highly-trained units equipped with current night vision devices can conduct limited visibility attacks similar to the way they conduct daylight attacks, even against a similarly equipped and trained enemy. Units without extensive night vision devices or effective training can still use conditions of limited visibility to conceal movement and close with the

enemy, but will require more time and control measures to do so. They will not be able to operate effectively against enemies with superior night vision equipment and training.

Table 5-1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Limited Visibility Attacks.

Advantages of Limited Visibility Attacks	Disadvantages of Limited Visibility Attacks
• Defenses are more susceptible to infiltration. • Darkness can conceal the movement of large forces. • Physical and psychological factors favor the attacker, as shock, disorientation, and isolation are easier to achieve. • Air assets can operate more safely because air defenders with only optical sights have greater difficulty acquiring targets at night. • The element of surprise may increase because defenders are more susceptible to deception techniques, such as dummy lights, noise, smoke, and fires. • The defender cannot employ reserves as quickly at night as the defender can during daylight conditions. • US forces trained in a limited visibility environment are superior to most potential opponents.	• Control of maneuver forces in the absence of night vision devices is more difficult. • A well-rehearsed defender can react more quickly to changing situations than the attacker. • The attacker has difficulty determining the limits of obstacle systems. • Restrictive terrain is more difficult to traverse. • Light, smoke, noise, and fires can deceive the attacker. • The attacker can lose momentum because attacks are conducted at a reduced speed to maintain the coherence of the unit. • Land navigation, without GPS, is more difficult at night; units may become separated, cohesion can be lost, and support elements can move to the wrong positions. • The enemy can reposition or emplace obstacles during darkness without being detected by friendly ISR assets. • The defender's security forces can be more effective at night. • Adjusting indirect fire is difficult, even with night vision devices or illumination. • Units require significantly larger quantities of signal ammunition such as smoke, tracers, flares, and illumination rounds. • Units have more difficulty locating and evacuating casualties. • The risk of friendly fire incidents may increase.

The presence or lack of illumination characterizes the conduct of limited visibility attacks. Non-illuminated attacks offer the best chance of gaining surprise but commanders should plan for the use of illumination in case it is needed. Illuminated supported attacks are almost like daylight attacks. The commander can choose to conduct a non-illuminated attack until subordinate forces make contact, at which point the objective can be illuminated. Once illuminated, the attack should continue with illumination. The enemy can also choose to employ illumination to increase the effectiveness of defensive efforts. All leaders within the attacking unit must understand the time, conditions, and authority required to employ illumination. Illumination can be effective in confusing or deceiving the enemy. The commander plans for limited visibility operations in the same manner that the commander does for daylight operations, with emphasis on—

- Keeping the plan simple.
- Taking additional time for reconnaissance.
- Taking advantage of easily identifiable terrain features, such as roads and railroad tracks, when establishing control measures.

- Using intermediate objectives to control and maintain the correct movement direction during the attack.
- Concealing preparations.
- Using cover and concealment as if the attack was conducted during daylight.
- Scheduling rehearsals during daylight and twilight, with the final rehearsal at night.

To simplify control problems, the commander may weight supporting efforts over the main effort to reduce the number of personnel moving on the objective in the darkness. The distances between vehicles and individuals may be reduced as necessary to maintain contact. To simplify navigation, units may develop plans that do not require them to change their movement azimuth after they cross the LD/PD.

Intelligence

To attack successfully, commanders must understand the terrain and environment, the enemy's capabilities and tactics, and their strengths and weaknesses. They must also recognized information gaps that affect further planning and execution. Available time and resources to gather information dictates whether friendly forces conduct a hasty or deliberate attack. The commander and staff graphically display intelligence gathering and information requirements in products such as enemy situational templates and range fans. The unit develops and executes an intelligence collection plan to address the commander's information requirements. Other information requirements can include—

- The location and depth of enemy reserves.
- The location and extent of contaminated areas.
- The location and extent of obstacles, possible breach sites, and enemy EAs.
- The location of areas where attacking units could become disoriented, such as rough or restrictive terrain.
- The most favorable routes of approach to the attack objective.
- Areas and routes that the attacker can use for counterattacks, flanking fire, and maneuver.
- Suitability of planned friendly assault, support, artillery, and CSS positions.
- Enemy deception operations.

Commanders and leaders at all echelons personally participate in this process. Collecting intelligence on the enemy is a continuous process. The two fundamental employment techniques for reconnaissance in the attack are reconnaissance-pull and reconnaissance-push. In reconnaissance-pull, the objective is to determine enemy surfaces and gaps and "pull" the main body towards identified weaknesses for exploitation. The reconnaissance elements continue to move, seeking paths of least resistance and pulling the main body deep into the enemy's rear. In reconnaissance-push, the main body pushes the reconnaissance elements forward to support a previously selected COA. The objective is to identify the obstacles and enemy forces that the attack forces must overcome to accomplish the mission. Once friendly reconnaissance elements gain contact with the enemy, they develop the situation within their capabilities. If the objective is an enemy force, the reconnaissance element orients on the enemy force to maintain contact and determine as much as possible about the enemy's dispositions.

The commander uses ISR assets to gather critical information throughout the attack. If the enemy units attempt to modify their defenses, those actions will be detected. In turn, this allows the commander to adjust the SOM as the enemy situation becomes clearer.

See chapters 12 and 13 for additional discussion of reconnaissance and security operations. See MCWP 2-10 and MCRP 2-10B.1, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield/Battlespace*, for additional information on the intelligence warfighting function and ISR assets and capabilities.

Fires and Information Operations

The planning process integrates the unit's maneuver with fires and information operations to mass effects, achieve surprise, and obtain decisive results. The commander must first identify the critical times and locations where the effects of fires and information operations must support maneuver, which become essential fire support tasks. Commanders must then take into account limitations on the employment of fires such as ROE and the presence of other friendly forces. Fire and IO support of maneuver consists of preventing the enemy from successfully reacting to the attack. Such actions include inhibiting the enemy's ability to place direct and indirect fires on maneuver elements, isolating the battlespace from enemy withdrawal or reinforcement, disrupting C2 networks, and preventing enemy counterattacks. For more information on fires, essential fire support tasks, and IO planning, see MCTP 3-10F and MCWP 3-32. Based on the commander's guidance, desired effects, and COA development, fire support and IO planners develop concepts of support. Commanders emphasize simple and rapidly integrated fire support plans using quick-fire planning techniques and SOPs. Fire and IO plans are refined using "top-down planning, bottom-up refinement." Fire plans feature the following characteristics:

- Integrated with information operations.
- Targeting cycle integrated into, and supported by, the intelligence collection plan.
- Targets have designated primary and secondary observers and communication links.
- The placement of fire support assets and their movement plan provide attacking maneuver forces with uninterrupted fire support.
- Quick-fire planning techniques, nets, and unit SOPs are used to facilitate rapid planning.
- Preparation, deception, and isolation fires are integrated with information operations and used to shape the enemy's defense.
- The use of proper weaponeering to match various fire support assets against appropriate targets to include ammunition requirements.
- Suppression of enemy air-defenses is proactive and integrated with information operations.
- Battlespace geometry is deconflicted.
- Targets have redundant means of attack and leverage the use of FSCMs, shifting of fires, and ceasing of fires to allow maneuver forces to get as close as possible to the objective.
- Suppression and obscuration fire plan to support breaching operations.
- Pre-positioned ammunition backed by prepackaged munitions stocks capable of rapid delivery.
- Radio and visual signals for ceasing and shifting fires on the objective.
- Information operations plans feature the following characteristics—
- Integrated with fires plan.

- IO planning begins as early as possible given longer lead times for certain IRCs.
- IO planning and execution linked into the targeting cycles.
- Actions of IRCs are deconflicted to preclude IO friendly fire incidents.
- IO essential tasks support maneuver.
- IO "weaponeering" matches IRCs against appropriate targets.
- Wherever possible, IRCs mass effects to include establishing redundant means to attack a target.

PREPARING AN ATTACK

Even in fluid situations, such as those resulting from a movement to contact, attacks are best organized and coordinated in AAs which provide the attack force with at least a moment to organize and mass combat power. If a commander decides that rapid action is essential to retain a tactical advantage, then they may choose not to use an AA, mitigating risk through the use of battle drills and advanced planning. Unless already in an AA, the attacking unit moves into one to prepare. The unit sends advanced parties to prepare the AA and to provide guides. The unit moves with as much secrecy as possible, normally at night and along routes that prevent or degrade the enemy's ability to observe or detect the movement. The unit avoids congesting the AA and occupies it for the minimum possible time. While in the AA, each unit is responsible for their own force protection activities, such as local ground security.

While the AA is being occupied, the commander completes planning and attack coordination. Once the AA is occupied, the attacking force executes troop leading procedures and priorities of work to the extent the situation and mission allow. Preparations include but are not necessarily limited to—

- Protecting the force.
- Conducting task organization to include positioning for subsequent action.
- Performing unit and leader reconnaissance.
- Refining the plan.
- Briefing the troops.
- Conducting rehearsals.
- Moving CSS forward to provide continuous support throughout the attack.
- Conducting a rest plan.

A thorough reconnaissance of the objective, its foreground, and other enemy positions is a critical part of attack preparations. The commander exploits all available ISR assets to provide the necessary information. Reconnaissance forces infiltrate the enemy security area to locate and confirm the main defensive positions and unit dispositions. When tasked and resourced, reconnaissance forces conduct shaping operations. Such shaping operations might include destroying enemy outposts, conducting covert breaches, locating tentative support-by-fire positions, and establishing guides and routes.

Also during attack preparation, commanders position fire support assets, CSS units, and air defense elements. Fire support agencies establish counterfire systems and procedures, such as counterbattery radars. Combined arms rehearsals occur with subordinate leaders and supporting elements to ensure all units understand the plan, the relationship between fire and movement, and the synchronization of critical events. These critical events include—

- Moving from the AA to the LD.
- Maneuvering from the LD to the PLD.
- Occupying support-by-fire positions.
- Conducting breach or gap crossings.
- Assaulting the objective.
- Consolidating on the objective.
- Exploiting success or pursuing a withdrawing enemy.
- Actions of echelon reserves.

When time is available, the unit should conduct rehearsals under as many types of adverse conditions as possible. At smaller unit levels, rehearsals focus on critical events, such as breaching and battle drills.

Attacking units move from their AAs to their respective LDs (see fig. 5-2). They move with the same considerations as any other tactical movement. Depending on the distance and METT-T, commanders may move dismounted troops for some or all of the distance by vehicle to avoid unnecessarily tiring foot-mobile troops. (See chap. 14 for troop movements.) The number of columns a unit employs in their movement depends on the availability of suitable routes and the friendly and enemy situation. The tactical situation and the order in which the commander wants subordinate units to arrive at their attack positions govern the march formation.

Units move rapidly through their attack positions, assume an appropriate tactical formation, and cross the LD, which should be controlled by friendly forces. A unit uses their designated attack position only by exception, such as awaiting establishment of the conditions required to successfully move forward. For infiltrating units, commanders may designate a PD instead of an LD. Heavy and motorized forces units normally use gaps or lanes through the friendly positions to allow them to deploy into combat formations before they cross the LD.

Preparation for an attack may include preparatory fires and conducting reliefs in place (RIPs) and forward passages of lines. Relieving units in contact or passing forward fresh units can maintain or reestablish momentum, change the direction of the attack, or exploit enemy weaknesses. Preparatory fires can accomplish the following functions:

- Destroy the enemy.
- Disrupt the enemy’s reconnaissance and security forces.
- Suppress, neutralize, or disrupt high-value or high-payoff targets.
- Gain fire superiority through the degradation of enemy fire support assets.
- Suppress enemy forces.

- Facilitate the attacking force's maneuver.
- Deceive the enemy.
- Degrade enemy.

See chapter 15 for details of a RIP and chapter 16 for details of a forward passage of lines.

EXECUTING AN ATTACK

Successful attacks rely heavily on the characteristics of the offense—surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity. The attack is violent and aggressive, orienting on the enemy. Leaders at all levels use their initiative to shift combat power and resources as needed to maintain momentum

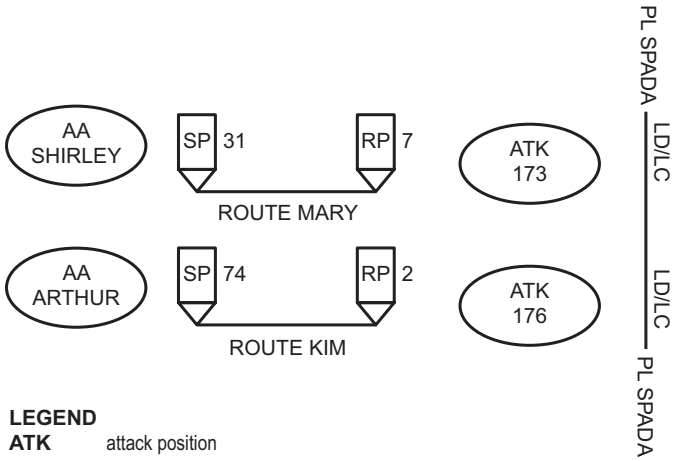


Figure 5-2. Movement From Assembly Area to Line of Departure.

and take advantage of opportunities to defeat the enemy. They avoid becoming overly committed to their initial plans, but rather use those plans during execution to help frame new decisions, mitigate unexpected enemy action, reinforce success, and exploit enemy errors. Commanders do not delay the attack to preserve the alignment or symmetry of subordinate units beyond tactical necessity.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Commanders conduct an attack because they have already gained and maintained contact with the enemy. They have either done so through a movement to contact, or because they are already in contact. An important aspect to this activity is employing reconnaissance and security forces to deprive the enemy of information while increasing friendly understanding of the situation.

The enemy will resist these efforts by establishing security areas to make early contact with the friendly attacking forces to determine their capabilities, intent, most likely COA, and to delay or disrupt their approach. Enemy commanders will endeavor to use their security forces to defeat friendly reconnaissance assets and hide enemy dispositions, capabilities, and intent. The enemy

will seek to gain significant understanding of the attackers while creating enough uncertainty in the attackers' mind to compel them to either abandon their attack, or return to a movement to contact.

The attackers defeat the enemy's counterreconnaissance efforts by using stealth and deception, increasing the combat power of security and reconnaissance units, and creating redundancy in the intelligence collection plan. The commander seeks to gain an understanding of the disposition of all significant parts of the enemy force, such as fire support assets, major elements, and enemy reserves and reinforcements. Winning the fight in the enemy's security area provides the attacker with increased understanding, retention of the initiative, the ability to recognize and exploit opportunities, and increased tempo.

Disrupt the Enemy

The attacking force seeks to unhinge the enemy's defensive plans, disrupt their tempo, interrupt their timetables, and cause them to prematurely commit or piecemeal their forces. This can be as simple as disrupting the enemy's fire support systems to enable maneuver to mass for the decisive action, or using interdiction to disrupt the enemy's attempt to employ their reserve. It might be more complex, such as synchronizing disruption across all of the enemy's warfighting functions. For example, the attacker might allow the enemy's C2 network to properly function while executing military deception activities. As the enemy begins to react, friendly forces then attack the enemy C2 system through multiple means to cause confusion and uncertainty.

Disruption continues throughout the attack with the goal of supporting the main effort, and then supporting transitions to exploitation, pursuit, or the defense. Capitalizing on the reconnaissance fight, disrupting the enemy enables the commander to retain and exploit the initiative, maintain freedom of action, impose the commander's tempo on the enemy, and deliver the decisive blow successfully. Disruption also allows the commander to exploit enemy vulnerabilities and react to changing situations and unexpected developments more rapidly than the enemy. Targets for disruption may include enemy C2 facilities, ISR assets, fire support systems, reserves, and CSS nodes. If a commander executes a shaping action too early, the enemy has time to recover and respond before friendly forces conducting the decisive action can complete their maneuver.

Fix the Enemy

A primary purpose in fixing the enemy is to isolate the objective and allow the main effort to deliver the decisive action without interference. Fixing the enemy accomplishes this by limiting the options available to them, which in turn reduces the amount of uncertainty for the attacker. Since the enemy is constrained in how they can react, the attacking force can maneuver to mass the effects of combat power against the point of decision while using economy of force measures in other areas. Fixing the enemy provides the commander more time to modify the attack plan as necessary and orchestrate the employment of friendly forces. The commander may also try to fix an enemy unit, such as the enemy reserve or follow-on force, to prevent them from repositioning or maneuvering against the main effort.

Fixing the enemy must be done with the minimum amount of resources necessary to allow commanders flexibility in employing combat power required for the main effort. Commanders carefully consider which enemy elements to fix and target only those that can significantly affect the operation's outcome. Generally, an enemy force only needs to be fixed until their response can no longer affect the outcome of the friendly attack.

Commanders generate both lethal and nonlethal effects to fix the enemy. An infantry company may use sniper fire to isolate an enemy command bunker while a regiment may use joint fires to destroy a selected portion of the enemy force. The ACE may interdict counterattack forces or destroy bridges that prevent withdrawal. Infiltrating combat patrols may place ambushes on reinforcement routes or scatterable minefields may isolate objectives. Information operations can fix the enemy in place by preventing them from receiving orders or deceiving them into retaining their reserve until it is too late. See appendix C for more information on fix.

Decisive Action/Maneuver

The commander maneuvers the force to gain positional advantage by exploiting the success of shaping efforts associated with gaining and maintaining contact, disrupting, and fixing the enemy. Maneuvering forces take maximum advantage of dead space and covered and concealed routes, using direct and indirect fires to suppress the enemy when forced to move over open ground. Depending on the fire support plan, artillery and mortars may advance with the attacking formation or move forward by bounds to provide continuous fire support. The maneuver process normally follows this sequence:

- Movement from the LD to the PLD.
- Actions at the PLD, assault position, or FCL.
- Breaching operations.
- Actions on the objective.

Movement From the LD to the PLD. The unit transitions from troop movement to maneuver as they cross the LD. They move aggressively and as quickly as the terrain, tactical formation, and enemy situation allow. They move forward using appropriate formations and movement techniques assisted by the fires and information operations of supporting units with an emphasis on speed and simplicity. Fire and movement are closely integrated and coordinated within the battlespace geometry of maneuver, direct and indirect fires, and CAS. Effective suppressive fires facilitate friendly movement, and friendly movement facilitates the placement of ever more effective fires. Whenever possible, the attacking unit uses avenues of approach that avoid strong enemy defensive positions, takes advantage of all available cover and concealment, and places the unit in positions of advantage such as on the flanks and rear of the defending enemy. Where cover and concealment are not available, supporting units increase their rates of suppressive fire and obscurants are employed to cover and conceal movement. Any delays in establishing suppressive fires and obscuration prior to crossing the PLD may require the attacking unit to occupy their assault positions.

Artillery and other ground-based fires assets move as necessary to ensure the attacking unit remains within supported range. The commander builds redundancy into the fire support plan and uses time-distance planning to avoid outrunning fire support while remaining able to take advantage of opportunities. The GCE relies upon the ACE to provide significant firepower and flexibility in the execution of the fire support plan, to cover potential fire support gaps, and to exploit opportunities. The commander keeps attacking artillery forces out of enemy artillery range as long as possible, employing the ACE and IRCs to mitigate enemy counterfire threats.

As attackers move from the LD to the PLD, they use formations that best balance firepower, tempo, security, and control specific to the situation. They minimize formation changes to avoid losing momentum or presenting vulnerabilities to the enemy. If they must change formations, they do so based on thoroughly trained drills. Depending on the depth of the enemy's security area and likely enemy COAs, the attacking unit may employ approach march techniques such as forward or flank security. See chapter 3 for combat formations, chapter 4 for approach march, and chapter 14 for movement techniques.

Between the LD and the PLD, supporting efforts occupy successive support-by-fire positions to support and overwatch the advance. The attacker seizes intermediate objectives only to eliminate enemy positions or bring additional suppressive fires to bear. The emphasis is on employing maximum combat power to overwhelm resistance as quickly as possible. Small enemy units are overrun or bypassed to avoid siphoning off combat power from the main effort. Fire support assets and IRCs support maneuver, execute shaping missions, destroy enemy security forces, and engage targets of opportunity.

Actions at the PLD, Assault Position, or FCL. The attacking unit maintains the pace of their advance when approaching the PLD (see fig. 5-3). Supporting units occupy their support-by-fire positions before the assault force crosses the PLD. Movement of fire support assets during the advance should be complete. Attackers use tactical SOPs, battle drills, prearranged signals, connecting files, RFLs, TRPs, and similar control measures to deconflict battlespace geometry between maneuver and support elements.

The PLD can be collocated with the assault position (see fig. 5-3). Depending on METT-T and the SOM, mounted infantry may use the assault position as a dismount point. If they must stop, the attacking unit limits their time in the assault position, waiting for the conditions to be set—such as obscuration and suppression to be effective or the breaching force to make their final preparations. As long as the assault force remains in the assault position, support forces continue their suppressive fires on the objective. See chapter. 3 for more information on the assault position.

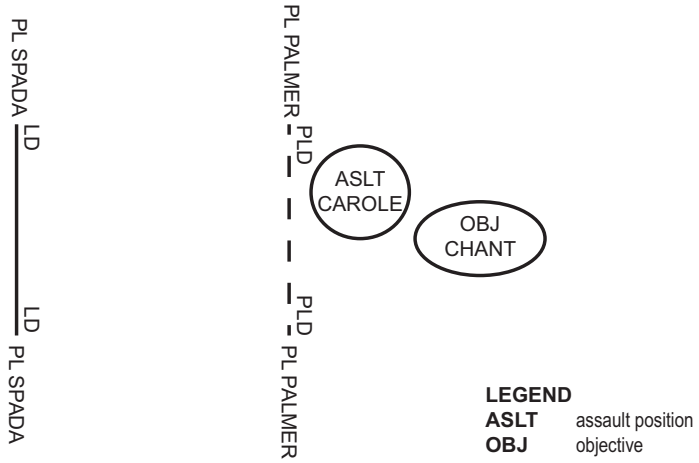


Figure 5-3. Probable Line of Deployment and Assault Positions.

Once the support force sets the conditions, if necessary, a breach force reduces, proofs, and marks the required number of lanes through the enemy's tactical obstacles to support the maneuver of the assault force. To avoid confusion, the commander clearly identifies the conditions that allow the breach force to proceed, such as two of three bunkers destroyed. From the PLD, the assault force uses the fires of the support force to maneuver through the breach and/or against or around the enemy. As the assault force advances and begins to mask suppressive fires—whether direct or indirect—it uses fire and movement to continue the advance.

The most critical factor in all suppression is to deliver effective direct and indirect fires. Only effective fire that presents the real risk of inflicting casualties will result in the suppression or destruction of the enemy. The next most important factor in suppression is sustainability. The supporting elements use a rapid rate of fire to achieve initial fire superiority, then lessen the rate of fire to the minimum rate necessary to sustain the desired effect. The leaders of support units raise and lower their rates of fire according to enemy action and the needs of the assault force, such as when moving through a danger area. It is absolutely critical that supporting and maneuver unit leaders continuously coordinate to ensure that effective suppression covers the assault force until they close with the enemy. Coordination normally occurs in two ways. First, coordination occurs through use of minutes (e.g., 10 minutes of suppression remaining). Second, coordination occurs in terms of the clock (e.g., the maneuver unit needs the rate of fire increased at 1617 hours).

The commander uses smoke to help conceal units and individual weapons. Smoke degrades enemy laser designators, range finders, and directed energy weapons. When planning to employ smoke, the commander remembers that smoke can have the same effects on friendly and enemy forces. If possible during the assault, the commander uses obscuration to blind the enemy and screen friendly movement onto the objective. Obscuration is placed in front of enemy positions, on the far side of obstacles, and in areas that restrict maneuver. The commander may use a smoke haze over the rear areas to limit enemy observation. The neutralization of enemy thermal viewers requires the use of multispectral smoke.

Actions on the Objective. The commander employs overwhelming and simultaneous fire, movement, and shock action during the final assault. This violent assault destroys, defeats, or drives the enemy from the objective area. Mounted infantry may dismount before, on, or beyond the objective. As the assault element moves through the objective, attacking and supporting units use fires and information operations to isolate the objective and prevent the enemy from reinforcing or counterattacking. They also destroy escaping enemy forces and systems.

Regardless of the size of the attacking unit, the final assault is carried out by small units. The situational awareness and initiative of the small unit leader is critical to solving immediate tactical problems and maintaining the momentum of the assault. As the assault devolves into small unit combat, attackers risk concentrating on their immediate opponents rather than the overall situation. Units guard against this through mission type orders, training, and rehearsals that allow small units to stay focused on the mission, overcome the enemy's more detailed knowledge of the terrain, and defeat attempts of enemy forces to alter the outcome of the assault. If faced with a loss of momentum due to disorganization of the initial assault elements, the commander can commit the reserve—a fresh, organized force—to maintain the momentum of the attack and defeat enemy attempts to stabilize the situation.

The commander must isolate and destroy portions of a well-prepared, integrated enemy defense, in sequence (see figs. 5-4 and 5-5). Friendly forces must isolate, suppress, and bypass selected enemy positions. For example, smoke delivered by field artillery and mortars in front of the objective—between the force and the enemy—screens friendly movement and obscures the enemy's weapon systems. Fires placed on and beyond the flanks of the objective isolate the enemy's position. These fires include smoke, high explosives, improved conventional munitions, and precision-guided munitions delivered by a mix of field artillery, fixed- and rotary-wing CAS. In addition, the commander may employ short duration scatterable mines in conjunction with terminally guided munitions to help isolate and impair the enemy's ability to counterattack (their use must not impede the commander's conduct of exploitation and pursuit operations). Information operations can be used to cut or degrade information system links between the enemy's maneuver force and their supporting artillery.

The commander generates overwhelming combat power in sequence against isolated centers of resistance. The assault element commander can task organize the element to assault one portion of the objective at a time. For example, within the assault company of a battalion attack, two platoons may suppress while one platoon seizes a portion of the company objective. This initial platoon, having seized a foothold, then suppresses to allow a second platoon to continue the assault. The third platoon may have a third portion of the objective assigned to them to seize in turn. The enemy may attempt to reinforce their defending forces or counterattack during the friendly force's attack. Once the attacking force reaches the far side of the objective, selected elements clear remaining pockets of resistance while the bulk of the assault force prepares for a possible enemy counterattack. After the assault force reaches the objective, the support force leaves their support-by-fire position and rejoins the assault force or moves to a blocking position to counter possible enemy counterattacks.

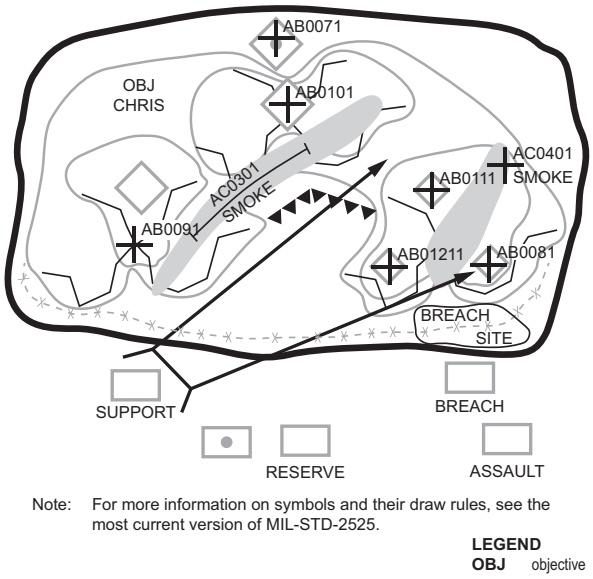


Figure 5-4. Attack of an Objective: The Breach.

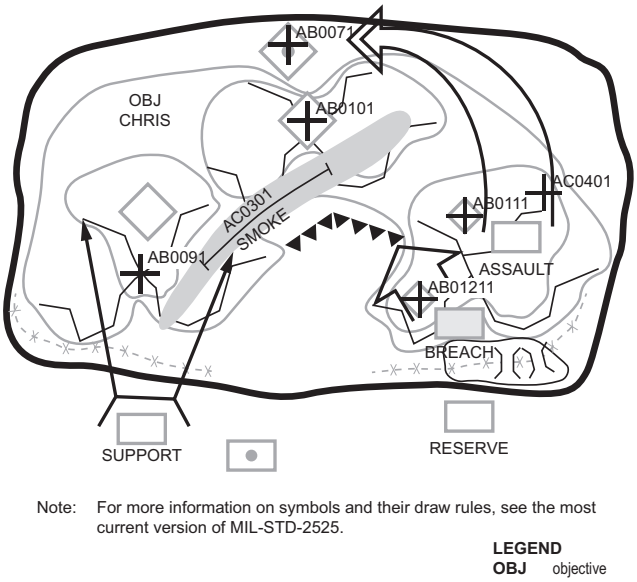


Figure 5-5. Attack of an Objective: The Assault.

Mounted Assault. Mounted assaults increase tempo and shock action, conserve the energy of the troops, and provide protection from small arms and indirect fires. They are best employed against weak, hastily prepared, disorganized resistance, or when attacking with overwhelming combat power. The commander may choose to dismount short of the objective and attack through, dismount on the objective and reduce it, or dismount beyond the objective and attack from the rear of the enemy position. The capabilities of the enemy force, the nature of their position, and other elements of METT-T influence this decision.

A mounted assault closes with the enemy in the same manner as any other attack, but the speed is greater and, therefore, the demand to shift and cease supporting fires comes more quickly. If the assault force is to dismount before the objective, the commander either does so at a preplanned dismount point, such as an assault position, or continues to close on the enemy until the danger to the mounted infantry element exceeds the protection offered by their vehicle. The infantry conducts fire and movement to close with the enemy, relying on the direct firepower of their vehicles to assist in the enemy's defeat. Whenever possible, vehicles should accompany the infantry forward—the infantry providing protection to the vehicles and vice versa.

In cases where the enemy possess little or no anti-armor capability, mounted infantry may capitalize on shock by dismounting in the midst of the enemy position. However, if the enemy chooses to resist, this technique greatly complicates battlespace geometry for supporting forces and within the assault force. The alternative is to overrun the objective, using the shock and firepower of the vehicles to fracture the enemy defense. Infantry then dismounts beyond the objective and sweeps back towards the friendly side to clear any remaining enemy resistance. This technique protects the infantry and capitalizes on the shock and firepower of the vehicles. However, it too requires careful consideration of battlespace geometry as the friendly forces move generally back towards supporting positions.

Dismounted Assault. The commander considers the following conditions when determining whether to conduct a dismounted assault or when to dismount infantry:

- Terrain favors dismounted operations.
- The enemy is in prepared positions with obstacles that prevent maneuver across the objective.
- The enemy has a strong anti-armor capability.
- Tanks are not available to lead the assault.
- Stealth is required to close on the objective.
- A mounted assault stalls on or short of the objective.

Consolidation. Consolidation of position is organizing and strengthening in a newly captured position so that it can be used against the enemy. The use of the enemy position may range from defending it to using it as an AA for follow-on offensive operations. Regardless, consolidation consists of preserving the success of the attack and protecting the force while preparing to transition to the next mission. Actions taken to consolidate gains include—

- Maintaining contact with the enemy.
- Establishing security and conducting reconnaissance.
- Establishing a hasty defense against enemy counterattacks and indirect fires.
- Eliminating enemy pockets of resistance.
- Updating the intelligence collection, fire support, and IO plans.
- Preparing for additional missions.

Immediately after the assault, the commander strives to maintain contact with the enemy. If the attacking force has destroyed all enemy forces on the objective, the commander takes those actions necessary to regain contact with other enemy elements within the unit's AO, to include dispatching patrols in any direction required. Subordinate and higher headquarters commanders reposition ISR assets and adjust assigned missions as necessary to maintain that contact.

The commander establishes security to cover consolidation activities. At a minimum, subordinate units establish OPs to monitor likely enemy avenues of approach. If operating in a contiguous battlespace, the commander dispatches patrols to establish contact with any adjacent units to close gaps the enemy might exploit. A unit is normally responsible for establishing contact with the units to the front and right as defined by the direction to the enemy. If operating in a noncontiguous battlespace, the commander institutes all around security measures.

After the objective is cleared of enemy forces, the attacker occupies positions to defend against potential enemy counterattacks and indirect fires. Normally, an attacking unit does not occupy vacated enemy positions because the enemy is familiar with them, targets them, and they are generally facing the wrong direction and not covering likely enemy counterattack routes. Therefore, the attacker should position themselves away from established enemy positions, usually on the next defensible piece of terrain. The attacking unit conducts the standard priority of work associated with the defense (see chap. 8), to include updating intelligence collection, fire

support, and IO plans. Fire support assets displace forward to cover the success of the attacking unit and to support follow-on missions, whether offensive or defensive in nature.

As part of consolidation, the commander reconstitutes the reserve if they were committed. If not committed, the reserve represents the most organized force at the commander's immediate disposal. The reserve may be used against enemy counterattacks, to move forward as a security force, or to lead the attacking unit forward on the next mission.

Reorganization is action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase the level of combat effectiveness. Reorganization often takes place as part of the battle rhythm within consolidation, but the two are not automatically linked. It is possible for units to conduct consolidation without reorganization. If a platoon-sized element overruns an enemy OP, the platoon is likely to take a moment to consolidate after the contact but may not have to reorganize. Conversely, reorganization may occur outside of consolidation. An infantry battalion might use their assault positions to take a moment to reorganize before committing to the final assault. Commanders of all types of units at each echelon conduct reorganization. Actions associated with reorganization include—

- Redistributing or resupplying basic loads of ammunition, fuel, repair parts, and supplies.
- Matching operational weapon systems with crews.
- Combining attrited units to form mission capable units.
- Replacing key personnel.
- Reporting unit location and status.
- Recovering, treating, and evacuating casualties, enemy prisoners of war (EPWs), and damaged equipment.
- Reestablishing unit cohesion.

Reorganization is not tied to time, though it is often associated with actions immediately after enemy contact. At the battalion level and above, reorganization may include activities such as receiving and integrating new personnel and equipment and conducting periods of training to prepare for upcoming operations.

Follow Through. Commanders at all levels plan for one of two alternatives in the follow through: exploit success or transition from the offense. For a force executing an attack, follow through requires planning for the exploitation type of offense. For a force already conducting an exploitation, follow through requires planning for the pursuit type of offense. Both plan to avoid a culminating point and both plan to make use of follow-and-support or follow-and-assume missions (see app. C). Forces that will cease offensive operations after the attack plan to transition to either defensive or stability related activities. See chapter 3 for more information on transitioning from the offense.

Beginning with consolidation, fire support assets and IRCs reorient and move quickly to support a renewal of offensive operations. The ACE continues to attack the enemy, covering both preparations to renew the offense and the displacement of combat support and CSS assets. Rear

area security operations and mobility operations focus on deconflicting dislocated civilians and clearing routes to allow for the repositioning and displacement of these resources.

Ordinarily, a defending enemy force will attempt to hold a position until nightfall to be able to complete their withdrawal under the cover of darkness. The attacking unit maintains relentless pressure, continuing the attack at night, overrunning or bypassing enemy rear security elements. Through this pressure the unit maintains contact with the enemy, keeps the enemy off balance, and makes the enemy force's withdrawal from action extremely difficult. Ideally, friendly forces isolate major elements of the enemy and prevent the enemy from reconstituting a coherent defense.

If the enemy succeeds in withdrawing major forces from action, the commander intensifies reconnaissance to obtain the information necessary to decide on a COA. While aggressive action may prevent the enemy from reconstituting an effective defense in a rearward position, the commander may have to delay the renewal of the attack until completing additional reconnaissance and planning.

SPECIAL PURPOSE ATTACKS

The previous paragraphs discussed the general execution of the attack type of offensive operation. Commanders may execute an attack for any number of reasons, to include the other types of attack—

- Spoiling attack.
- Counterattack.
- Feint.
- Demonstration.
- Reconnaissance in force.
- Raid.
- Ambush.

These types of attack share many of the planning, preparation, and execution considerations of the attack. The following section addresses their unique considerations.

Spoiling Attack

A spoiling attack is a type of attack employed to seriously impair a hostile attack while the enemy is in the process of forming or assembling for an attack. The objective of a spoiling attack is to disrupt the enemy's offensive capabilities and timelines, destroy enemy personnel and equipment, but not to seize terrain or other physical objectives (see fig. 5-6). Commanders may conduct spoiling attacks whenever the enemy presents weaknesses in their AAs, attack positions, or are temporarily halted. A spoiling attack usually relies on fire support and CAS assets with limited maneuver units.

A commander conducts a spoiling attack to—

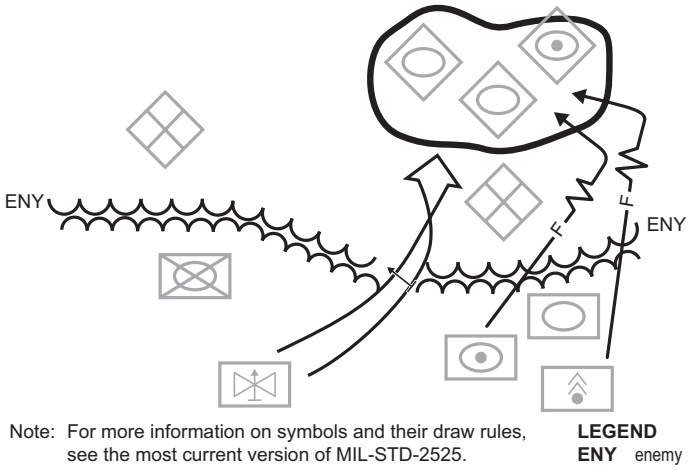


Figure 5-6. Spoiling Attack.

- Disrupt the enemy's offensive preparations.
- Destroy key assets that the enemy requires to attack (e.g., fire support systems, fuel and ammunition stocks, and bridging equipment).
- Gain additional time for the defending force to prepare their positions.
- Reduce the enemy's current advantage in the correlation of forces.

The commander synchronizes the conduct of the spoiling attack with other defensive operations. The conduct of a spoiling attack entails risk by committing, and perhaps losing, combat power that could otherwise support the defense. Commanders regard the following basic considerations:

- Limiting the number of maneuver elements committed to the spoiling attack.
- Not conducting a spoiling attack if losses among friendly forces would jeopardize accomplishing the defensive mission.
- The mobility of the spoiling attack force should be equal to or greater than that of the targeted enemy force.
- Relying upon fire support, CAS, and information operations to mitigate risk to maneuver elements and create greater effects than maneuver alone.

There are two conditions that must be met to conduct a successful and survivable spoiling attack:

- The spoiling attack's objective must be obtainable prior to the enemy being able to respond to the attack in a synchronized and coordinated manner.
- The commander must prevent the force conducting the spoiling attack from becoming decisively committed or vulnerable to destruction.

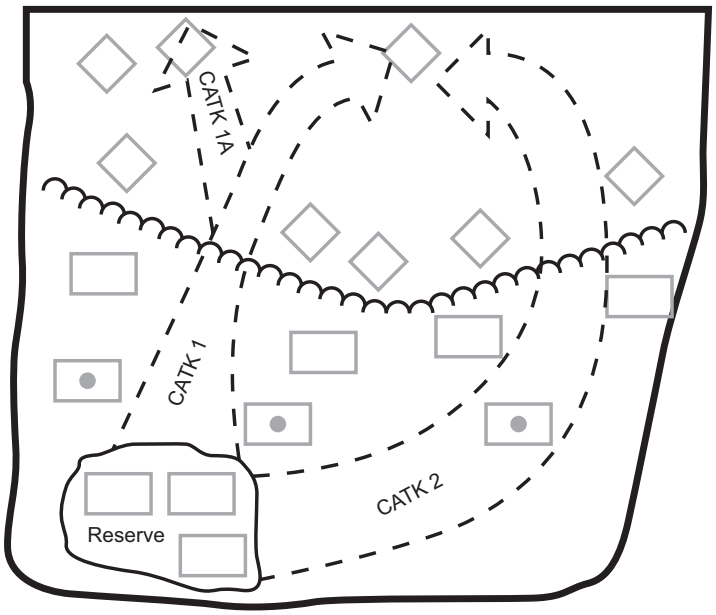
If the spoiling attack fails to meet both conditions, it will likely fail, with grave consequences to the defense.

Counterattack

A counterattack is an attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force to regain ground lost, cut off or destroy enemy advance units, or deny the enemy the purpose of attacking. A unit conducts a counterattack to seize the initiative from the enemy through offensive action. A counterattacking force can maneuver or attack by fire to defeat or destroy an enemy force, restore the original position, or block an enemy penetration. Counterattacks may serve as the decisive action around which the rest of the defense is organized, for example a mobile defense. Regardless, once initiated, the counterattack normally becomes the commander's decisive action (see fig. 5-7). See chapter 8 for information on conducting the defense.

The commander plans and conducts a counterattack to strike the enemy when and where they are most vulnerable, normally as the enemy commits its main effort to defeating the friendly defense. Like any other attack, the commander assigns either terrain- or force-oriented objectives to counterattacking forces, and the maneuver of the counterattack force is supported by other elements of the defense. Local counterattacks are normally contingency actions executed on order, while major counterattacks are preplanned decisive actions integral to the defensive SOM.

Organization of Forces. The commander of a major counterattack force organizes into security, main body, and reserve elements like a normal attack. Defending forces already in contact with the enemy fix or contain the targeted enemy forces. The force for a major counterattack may be sourced from the reserve, the reserve of a higher command, or a designated maneuver element. For example, a battalion conducting a mobile defense may use two companies to set the conditions for the counterattack of the third company—the strike force—while using portions of the weapons company as a reserve. The commander completes changes in task organization in time to allow units to conduct rehearsals with their attached or supporting elements.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 5-7. Planned Counterattacks.

Local counterattacks are normally hasty operations. Commanders conduct them with whatever forces are immediately available to retake positions lost to enemy action or to exploit a target of opportunity. The force often consists of surviving defending forces or the reserves of subordinate units and is loosely organized into a security force and a main body.

Planning a Counterattack. The commander plans to counterattack the enemy force when they are vulnerable. This vulnerability may be as the enemy force advances, when defensive actions and obstacles disrupt enemy units creating gaps and exposing flanks and rears of the attacking force. Or the vulnerability may be in the disorganization the enemy experiences immediately after capturing a position. Opportunities for effective counterattacks are usually brief; the commander must assess the situation rapidly, and the force must execute the counterattack swiftly.

Major counterattack plans are normally developed as the decisive action or a branch or sequel to the main defensive plan. A major counterattack may achieve surprise when it strikes the enemy from an unanticipated direction. For that reason, the force directed to conduct a major counterattack, such as the strike force in a mobile defense, should be involved in developing those plans as well as any plans to exploit potential success. Local counterattacks may or may not be the result of previous deliberate planning.

Preparing a Counterattack. The keys to a successful counterattack are surprise, control, and coordinated fires. Surprise allows the counterattacking force to seize the initiative and dictate tempo. If total surprise is not possible, it must be so nearly complete that the targeted enemy force does not expect the attack until it is too late to react effectively. Thorough planning and preparation help achieve surprise, though when time is limited boldness and audacity of action can surprise the enemy as well. For major counterattacks, preparation includes determining the conditions for committing the counterattack, decision points, and the desired effect of the attack. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets are positioned and tasked to support the commander's decision-making.

Control is necessary in a counterattack to synchronize it with other defensive efforts, deconflict battlespace geometry, and avoid unnecessary exposure of the counterattack force to enemy reactions. Such control begins with planning, continues with reconnaissance, and finishes with rehearsals. It is accompanied by the execution of mobility operations necessary to support the maneuver of the counterattack force. The commander uses OPSEC and counterreconnaissance measures to hide this process from the enemy. The selection of AAs, routes, and other control measures for the counterattack force balance speed against the need to surprise the enemy. The commander designates objectives that orient the counterattack force on the decisive point.

The commander coordinates direct and indirect fires, CAS, and information operations for the counterattack force by adjusting the planned positions of weapon systems and the actions of IRCs to obtain maximum effectiveness against the enemy. As with any attack, fires and information operations seek to isolate and fix the targeted enemy force to prevent escape or reinforcement. These fires must inflict maximum damage quickly before the enemy can respond to the counterattack.

Executing a Counterattack. As the enemy enters the main battle area (MBA) of the defense, shaping actions set the conditions for the success of the defense. In a major counterattack, these conditions are tied to a decision point. Maneuver elements and ISR assets provide a steady flow of

information to the commander. When the decision point is reached, the counterattack force is committed. The security force of the counterattacking unit conducts the same tasks as in any other attack, defeating enemy security assets and helping fix the enemy force. The main body of the counterattacking unit conducts the decisive action, while the reserve of the counterattacking unit prepares to reinforce success or exploit opportunity. Upon the success of the counterattack, the defending commander either reconstitutes the defense or transitions to offensive operations.

In a local counterattack, defensive actions either fail to prevent enemy success or expose an enemy weakness to exploit. In the former case, the commander exercises tactical patience to await the moment of maximum enemy vulnerability—its own decision point. The commander commits the counterattack force, shifting the maximum combat power available to reinforce them. Depending on the purpose of the local counterattack, the commander is prepared to continue the defensive battle (e.g., limiting the depth of an enemy penetration), transition to other types of the defense (e.g., use the success of the counterattack to move to alternative defensive positions or a retrograde), or transition to the offense.

Feints and Demonstrations

A feint is a type of attack involving contact to deceive the enemy about the location or time of the main offensive action. Feints are used to cause the enemy to react in three predictable ways: to employ reserves improperly, to shift supporting fires, or to reveal defensive fires. Forces conducting a feint seek direct fire contact with the enemy but avoid decisive engagement. Commanders assign an objective limited in size, scope, or some other measure to orient the force conducting the feint and control their commitment. A demonstration is a type of attack or show of force on a front where a decision is not sought, made with the aim of deceiving the enemy. Forces conducting a demonstration do not seek contact with the enemy, though they organize and use control measures similar to an attack in case contact is made.

A commander uses feints and demonstrations in conjunction with other IO activities, such as military deception. These types of attack attempt to deceive the enemy and induce the enemy commander to move reserves and shift fire support assets to locations where they cannot immediately impact the friendly decisive action. Feints and demonstrations are never decisive actions, though like all shaping actions, they may create opportunities for decisive action. The commander must synchronize the conduct of these forms of attack with higher and lower echelon plans and operations to prevent inadvertently placing another unit at risk. The planning, preparing, and executing considerations for feints and demonstrations are the same as for the other forms of attack.

Reconnaissance in Force

A reconnaissance in force is a type of attack made to obtain information and to locate and test enemy disposition, strength, and reaction. It is used when knowledge of the enemy is vague and there is insufficient time or resources to develop the situation. A reconnaissance in force is most normally conducted to test enemy reactions or cause the enemy to reveal themselves for targeting. It is different from a movement to contact in that units conducting a reconnaissance in force are normally already in contact with the enemy or have relative certainty about the enemy locations, and possibly even enemy dispositions. Companies and above may conduct a reconnaissance in force. A reconnaissance in force is an aggressive reconnaissance, conducted as an offensive operation with clearly stated reconnaissance objectives. It differs from other reconnaissance

operations because it is normally conducted only to gain information about the enemy and not the terrain. The commander plans for both the extrication of the force or the exploitation of success.

Organization of Forces. As in any attack, the force is organized into security, main body, and reserve elements. The force must be large and strong enough to threaten the enemy in a manner that forces them to react and reveal themselves. They also must be strong enough to seize upon unexpected success and hold until reinforced.

Planning a Reconnaissance in Force. The commander provides specific, limited, force-oriented objectives to the force conducting the reconnaissance in force. These objectives normally are related to—

- Determining the size of the enemy's security force and area.
- Determining the location and disposition of enemy main positions.
- Attacking enemy main positions and attempting to cause the enemy to react so they may be targeted (e.g., forcing the enemy to commit local reserves or major counterattack forces, employ fire support assets, adjust positions, and employ specific weapon systems).
- Determining weaknesses in the enemy's dispositions to exploit.
- Locating obstacles and creating lanes as specified in the execution order.

A reconnaissance in force is a deliberate operation. Similar to a raid, the commander plans on the withdrawal of the attacking force after they meet their objectives and tasks. Unlike a raid, the commander also plans to exploit any unexpected successes or weaknesses the reconnaissance in force enjoys or exposes. Other reconnaissance in force planning factors and control measures mirror those for any other type of attack.

Preparing and Executing a Reconnaissance in Force. The preparation and execution of a reconnaissance in force is similar to that of other types of attacks. Since the reconnaissance in force serves as a shaping action for a larger operation, the decisive action of the reconnaissance in force focuses on creating the required effect. Commanders normally generate this effect by using enemy-oriented tactical tasks such as reconnoiter, attack by fire, and fix. See appendix C for more information on enemy-oriented tactical tasks.

Raid

A raid is a type of attack, usually small-scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain. It ends with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. Raids are usually small, involving battalion-sized or smaller forces for one of the following purposes:

- Psychological advantage.
- Destruction.
- Harassment.
- Information.
- Evacuation and recovery.
- Diversion and deception.

Raids are normally conducted in five phases: movement to the objective area, isolation of the objective area, assault on the raid objective, actions on the objective, and withdrawal (see fig. 5-8,). Raids are different than other types of attacks because of the planned withdrawal. The force is organized into a command element, reconnaissance element, support element, assault element, security element, and a reserve.

Raids are usually deliberate vice hasty operations, and planning is, therefore, thorough and detailed. Planners use a reverse planning sequence, beginning with the decisive action that must occur on the objective, and working backwards to initiating actions. Actions at the objective area form the basis for all other planning. The size of the friendly force and the nature of the target and enemy dictate logistic and fire support requirements. The direction of attack may establish the landing, departure, or insertion locations. Rehearsals follow this reverse planning methodology as well, beginning with rehearsals for actions on the objective.

In the first phase, the raiding force inserts or infiltrates into the objective area. The reconnaissance element is the first to approach the objective area. They may insert sometime prior to meet intelligence collection requirements, establish routes, post guides, and determine tentative support-by-fire and security positions, rally points, LZs, etc. In the second phase, the objective area is isolated by the security element from outside support or reinforcement, to include enemy air. The support element moves to appropriate positions to support the assault element. In phase three, the assault element attacks the objective under the direct and indirect fires of the support element and CAS. The security element maintains isolation of the objective area while the reconnaissance element begins taking actions designed to facilitate the withdrawal of the raid force. In phase four, the assault element conducts actions on the objective (e.g., the destruction of critical facilities). The reserve is available to follow and support or follow and assume. In the fifth and final phase, the raiding force withdraws from the objective area and is extracted. The reconnaissance element leads the way, followed by the assault element and reserve. The support

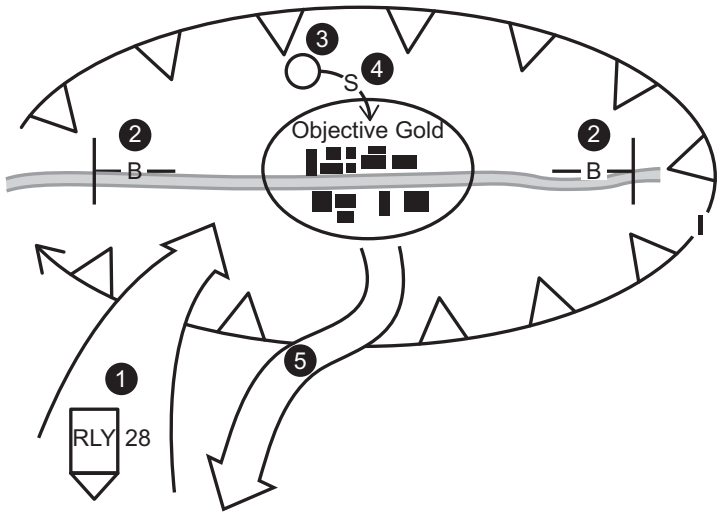


Figure 5-8. Five Phases of a Raid.

element withdraws from their overwatch positions in trace of the assault element, and the security element departs last. For more information on raids, see MCRP 3-30.1, *Raid Operations*.

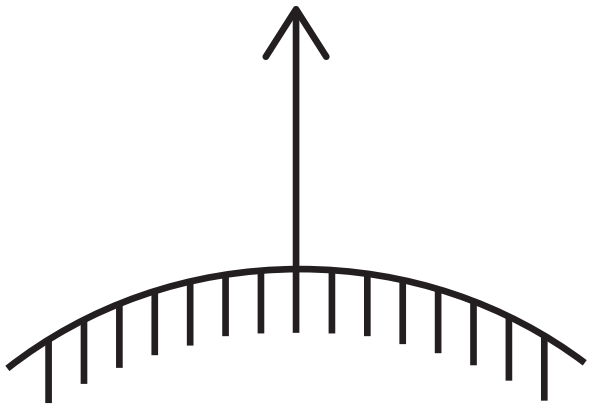
Ambush

An ambush is a surprise attack by fire from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. Ambushes seek to stop, disrupt, or destroy enemy forces by maximizing the element of surprise. Ambushes employ direct fire systems as well as other means, such as command-detonated mines, indirect fires, and information operations. They may include an assault to close with and destroy enemy forces. In an ambush, ground objectives may be used to orient the attacking force, such as establishing a block along an enemy's withdrawal route, but do not have to be seized and held. There are two types of ambushes, point and area. Point ambushes focus on a single kill zone whereas area ambushes consist of two or more related point ambushes. Units smaller than a platoon do not normally conduct area ambushes.

Ambushes may occur as hasty or deliberate operations, and as near or far. A hasty ambush is an immediate reaction to an unexpected opportunity conducted using SOPs and battle drills. A deliberate ambush is planned as a specific action against a specific target. Near and far ambushes are differentiated by the proximity of the enemy. All forces may conduct an ambush. There are no ambush specific control measures. Figure 5-9 shows the ambush maneuver control measure.

Goals of an ambush include the death or capture of all enemy personnel within the kill zone or the destruction of certain equipment, such as artillery pieces. The ambush force uses surprise and overwhelming combat power to defeat the enemy so quickly that they are unable to react or report effectively before the completion of the attacking force's mission.

Organization of Forces. The ambush force organizes into three elements: assault, support, and security. The security element isolates the kill zone, the support element provides the primary destructive power of the ambush, and the assault element fires—and if appropriate—enters the kill zone. Commanders may constitute a reserve to reinforce the decisive action in the kill zone or shaping actions performed by the security element.



The arrow shaft's base is the center of mass of the ambush unit's position. The arrow points in the direction of fire from the ambush unit.

Figure 5-9. Ambush Example.

Planning an Ambush. The key factors to a successful ambush are surprise, coordinated fires, and control. Surprise allows the ambush force to seize the initiative and dictate tempo. If total surprise is not possible, it must be so nearly complete that the target cannot react effectively. Coordinated fires deliver shock and violence of action that preclude timely or effective enemy reaction. Control ensures that the ambush force achieves surprise, conducts actions on the objective, and withdraws in an orderly and timely manner.

The establishment and rehearsal of effective SOPs and battle drills constitutes the planning for hasty ambushes. Deliberate ambushes follow similar planning considerations as other types of attack. Information requirements are enemy focused, such as size, organization, weapons and equipment carried, route and direction of movement, and times the target will reach or pass certain points on the route. Additional planning considerations for an ambush include—

- Establishment of "no later than" and "no earlier than" times for the ambush as required.
- Tentative ambush formations or, for an area ambush, element locations.
- Control measures such as rally points, insertion and extraction routes, LZs, and beach landing sites.
- *GO/NO GO* criteria covering conditions such as enemy contact enroute, compromise of the ambush force, and insertion criteria.
- Actions on the objective such as priority of fires, engagement criteria, and initiation.
- Obstacle, fires, and IO plans that cover movement to and from the ambush site and actions on the objective.

Ambush formations are based on the terrain, the capabilities of the attacker and the enemy, desired effects, and battlespace geometry. In choosing a formation, the commander seeks to deliver the maximum destructive effects into the kill zone. The kill zone is that part of an ambush site where fires are concentrated to isolate, fix, and destroy the enemy. Point ambushes usually employ linear or L-shaped formations (see figs. 5-10 and 5-11).

In a linear ambush formation, the assault and support elements deploy parallel to the target's route of movement—the long axis of the kill zone—subjecting the target to flanking fire. The size of the target that can be trapped in the kill zone is limited by the size of the area that can effectively be covered by the support element's weapons. Obstacles, covered by fire, trap the target in the kill zone. Other obstacles, placed between the kill zone and the ambush force, guard against enemy counterambush drills. Gaps are left in these obstacles to enable the assault element to pass through them. The advantages of the linear formation are its ease of control in all visibility conditions and its effectiveness in close terrain that restricts the enemy's movement. Disadvantages are the increased use of obstacles necessary for employment in open terrain and the risk of the enemy being so dispersed that it is larger than the kill zone.

The L-shaped formation is a variation of the line formation (see fig. 5-11). The long leg of the "L" is parallel to the kill zone and is normally occupied by the assault element, which provides flanking fire. The short leg of the "L" is at the end of the kill zone and at right angles to it. It is normally occupied by the support element, which delivers enfilading fires and blocks forward movement of the enemy. The commander can employ an L-shaped formation on any route of movement—there is no requirement for a "bend." The limiting factor is the length of the beaten

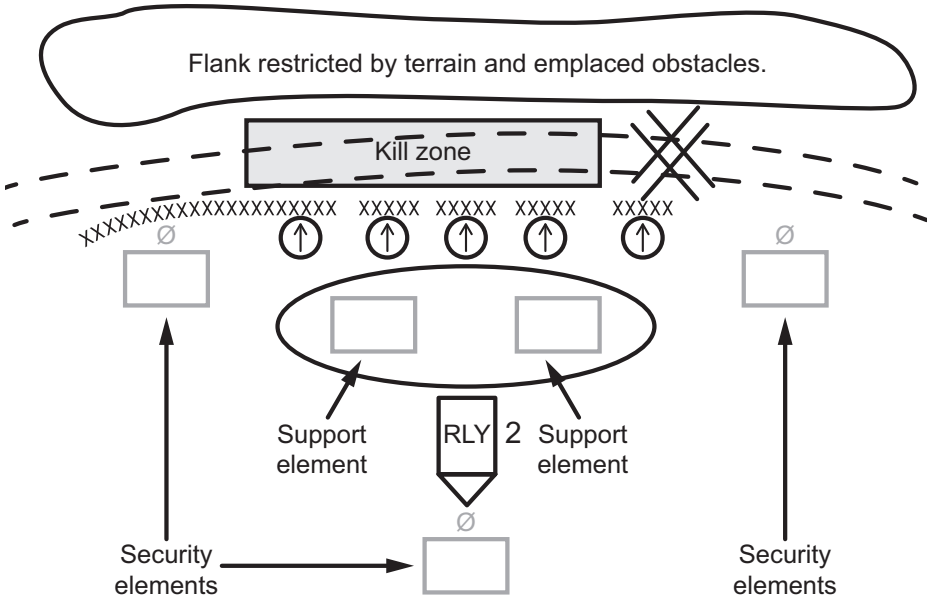


Figure 5-10. Linear Ambush.

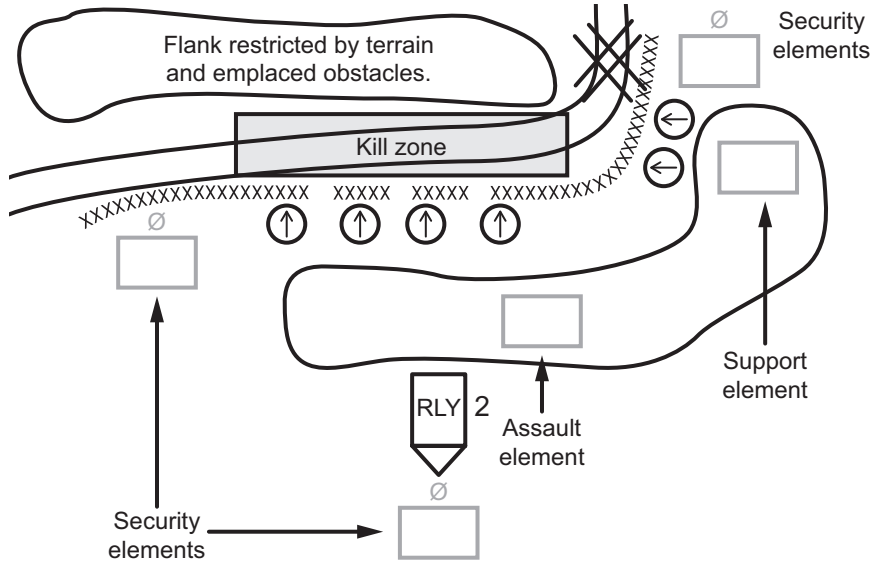


Figure 5-11. L-Shaped Ambush.

zone down which the supporting element can effectively deliver fires. The other advantages and disadvantages of the L-shaped ambush are similar to those of a linear ambush.

An area ambush is normally used by company- or larger-sized elements engaging significant enemy forces likely to be dispersed over the route of movement. The goal of the area ambush is to fracture the enemy force into smaller pieces incapable of supporting one another and subject to individual destruction. It is most effective when enemy movement is largely restricted to trails or roads. The area should offer several suitable point ambush sites (see fig. 5-12). The commander designates a central ambush site at which the main effort will deliver the decisive action. Outlying ambushes are supporting efforts designed to disrupt or delay the enemy's ability to escape from, or reinforce, the central ambush site. Normally, the actions of the outlying ambushes key off the initiation of the central ambush. But commanders can initiate actions in any way they see fit to best shape the engagement and deliver the desired effect. For example, the commander may want to initiate an outlying ambush to encourage the enemy to begin reacting, making them more vulnerable to the central ambush.

The command and control of an ambush is critical to its effectiveness. Commanders must receive timely warning of the enemy's approach, initiate the ambush in a manner that delivers immediate and decisive effects, remain aware of the enemy's reactions, and have the information necessary to know when to begin the withdrawal. Specific communications and redundant signals include—

- Approach of the enemy and target (not always the same thing).
- Initiate the ambush (this should be with a mass-casualty-producing signal initiated by a reliable weapon system or explosive).
- Assault, and shift and cease fires, to initiate the assault element's actions and support their movement and attack.
- Withdraw from the kill zone or ambush site.

Preparation for an Ambush. Commanders deploy ISR assets to further develop the plan and maintain situational awareness. The ambush force leaves friendly lines, follows the designated

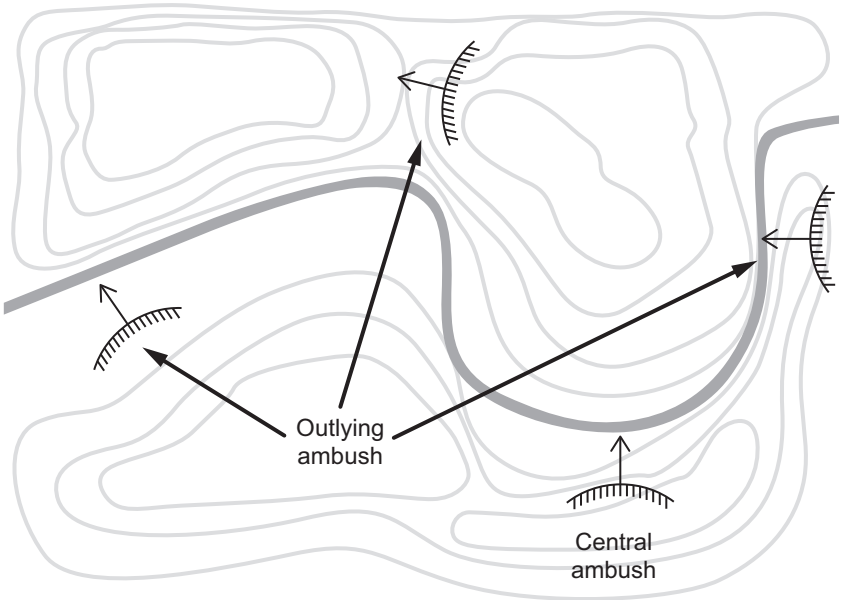


Figure 5-12. Area Ambush Example.

routes, and occupies an ORP. The commander conducts a leader's reconnaissance with key personnel to confirm or modify the plan. Changes to the plan are disseminated immediately. Movement to and occupation of the ambush site is deliberate and controlled with an emphasis on stealth and force protection. Leaders enforce camouflage, noise, and light discipline.

The ambush unit's security element deploys and remains alert to the approach of the target and enemy security forces. The ambush unit deploys rear security to protect withdrawal routes. The commander supervises the assault and support elements positioning of weapons, to include mines and demolitions authorized by the ROE. If the ambush force expects to stay for an extended length of time, the commander institutes a rest plan. In some cases, the assault and support elements may remain in the ORP until alerted of the target's approach by the security element at which time they deploy into the ambush site.

Execution of an Ambush. When warned of the target's approach by the security element, the assault and support elements prepare to conduct the attack. The security element remains alert for enemy awareness of the ambush or deployment of security forces. The ambushing unit withholds fire until the commander gives the signal to initiate the ambush. Once initiated, the assault and support elements deliver maximum, effective fires to include the use of indirect fires and information operations. After enemy fires and resistance have become negligible, the assault element assaults into and through the kill zone, shifting and ceasing supporting fires as necessary. Priority of fires switches to the security element which remains in overwatch, catching enemy stragglers and warning of the approach of relief forces.

On the commander's order, the ambush force withdraws to the ORP, reorganizes, and starts their return march. At a previously established location, small units, such as platoons and below, halt and disseminate any information obtained as a result of the ambush to all elements of the ambush force. Larger units forgo this halt, using C2 systems to pass information immediately to higher headquarters. In the event the ambush fails and the enemy's reaction threatens the survival of the ambush force, they conduct a retrograde to the ORP. The method of retrograde depends on the effectiveness of the enemy response, but at a minimum the commander positions the support element to cover the withdrawal, employing obscuration and fires as they do so.

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CHAPTER 6
EXPLOITATION

Exploitation extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. It takes full advantage of offensive success, follows up initial gains, and makes permanent the temporary effects already achieved. Commanders at all echelons exploit successful offensive actions. Attacks that succeed in annihilating a defending enemy are rare. Failure to aggressively exploit success at every turn may give the enemy time to reconstitute an effective defense by shifting forces or by regaining the initiative through a counterattack. Therefore, every offensive operation not restricted by higher authority or lack of resources should be followed by bold exploitation without delay. The commander designs the exploitation to maintain pressure on the enemy, compound and take advantage of the enemy's disorganization, shatter the enemy's will to resist, and seize decisive or key terrain.

OVERVIEW

Exploitation is an integral part of offensive action and is the primary means of translating tactical success into a larger or operational advantage. The attack of a battalion supports regimental objectives. The exploitation conducted by that same battalion will likely support division objectives. Exploitation capitalizes on the physical and psychological effects created on enemy forces by their tactical defeat. It profits on the disorganization of the enemy force and the confusion and apprehension within their command and control by making permanent what otherwise would only be a temporary tactical advantage. Exploitation may be decisive.

Exploitation applies to all types and sizes of units, all manner of activities and circumstances, and can occur at any point in an operation. Infantry companies may exploit intelligence gained in a cordon and search and regiments may exploit the envelopment of an enemy defense. Attacking forces may create the conditions for exploitation (e.g., conducting a penetration) or exploit sudden opportunities (e.g., the unexpected collapse of an enemy flank). The common theme is that exploitation is an offensive action. This chapter focuses on exploitation as an offensive operation.

Exploitation can occur as part of a unit's immediate actions or as a preplanned endeavor. A battalion may exploit a successful breach to gain access to the enemy's positions and accomplish their immediate mission. The battalion's parent regiment may then exploit the battalion's success by passing another unit through it to continue the attack. Commanders use their intent and mission type orders to enable subordinates to recognize and exploit opportunities that deliver results greater than originally planned. As a rule, the main effort is the element most likely to exploit local success. But all elements of an attacking force are prepared to exploit opportunities if presented and commanders remain flexible and willing to shift the main effort to take advantage

of enemy mistakes and weaknesses. If the main effort is not able to exploit success, commanders use a reserve or pass fresh forces (i.e., follow and assume) into the lead. If preplanned, units conducting exploitations as contingency missions are similar to the size of the attacking units.

The effects of exploitation are cumulative. While individual and local exploitations may appear insignificant beyond the immediate tactical problem, their effects rapidly aggregate. The weight of this aggregation increases friendly tempo and initiative and decreases the enemy's ability to respond effectively. Just as commanders inform their higher headquarters when exercising initiative, commanders inform higher headquarters when exploiting opportunity. This prevents friendly disruption and potential friendly fire incidents, but allows the higher headquarters to respond in ways that capitalize on the exploitation.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

There are three circumstances in which a commander conducting the offensive operation exploitation may find himself/herself. The first is when his/her attacking force conducts and resources their own exploitation activities. The commander uses or modifies the existing security, main body, and reserve elements to accomplish exploitation. The second is when the commander receives support from higher headquarters in the form of additional forces. These forces support the commander by either freeing up attacking elements to conduct exploitation tasks or conducting those tasks for the attacker. The third circumstance is when an independent force is designated to exploit the success of the attacker. These circumstances dictate whether the exploiting force organizes for a movement to contact (see chap. 4) or an attack (see chap. 5).

Commanders exploiting the local successes and opportunities their attack generates initially rely on their security, main body, and reserve. By issuing FRAGOs, commanders redesignate the main effort, shift combat power, or change task organization (e.g., the assignment of assault, support, and breach elements). Similarly, commanders may request additional support to assist in their exploitation such as the repurposing of ISR assets or changes to priority of fires. However, commanders conducting local exploitation cannot be expected to continue exploitation to an extended depth unless they receive additional resources.

Commanders may receive additional support and resources to continue exploitation, such as an infantry battalion receiving the support of an additional maneuver company or receiving assault support from the ACE. Higher headquarters normally retains control of these supporting forces. These additional forces receive either a follow-and-support or a follow-and-assume mission. Units that are assigned follow-and-support missions assist the attacking commander by relieving the main effort or reserve of tasks that would slow their advances. Units that are assigned follow-and-assume missions assist the attacking commander by conducting a forward passage of lines to replace the attacker's main effort or reserve as they approach their culminating point. These additional forces exchange liaison teams with the attacking commander to facilitate support or the passage of lines. See appendix C for more information on follow-and-support and follow-and-assume missions.

Regiments and above may create an independent exploitation force to expand upon the success of a subordinate unit's attack. When committed, this force passes through attacking units and continues the exploitation. Independently established exploitation forces are similar to covering forces in that they are self-sufficient, combined arms organizations capable of operating beyond the supporting range of the main body. They should be large enough to defend themselves from those enemy forces they expect to encounter.

In addition to these basic circumstances, commanders consider the following when organizing to conduct exploitations:

- Retaining or gaining a mobility advantage over the enemy such as providing vehicles, using ACE assault support capabilities, or adding engineering assets to support mobility operations.
- Preparing CSS elements to maintain logistic support to rapidly advancing units in a fluid force protection environment, to include attaching critical assets to maneuver units, such as higher echelon maintenance teams.

CONTROL MEASURES

Exploitation uses fewer control measures than many other operations because of the uncertain enemy situation and the need to provide subordinate commanders with the maximum flexibility to take advantage of fleeting opportunities. Planners develop control measures as part of the planning process. The commander issues these control measures as part of the attack order to facilitate command and control when the force transitions to exploitation. See figure 6-1 for an example of control measures for a major exploitation and figure 6-2 for a local exploitation. As units conduct an exploitation, their boundaries may change often as they take advantage of opportunities or react to enemy contact. Commanders may create contact points to facilitate communication between subordinate units. Permissive FSCMs are established, such as CFLs, to ensure rapid and adequate fire support during the advance. The commander uses both obstacle restricted areas to prevent friendly obstacles from hindering movement and obstacle zones on the flanks to enhance security. Phase lines and subsequent objectives are used to control and orient the conduct of the exploitation, though the focus remains on continuing or completing the defeat of the enemy. The commander may establish an LOA if a culminating point can be anticipated or some other restriction requires its establishment.

PLANNING AN EXPLOITATION

Planning for an exploitation consists of creating a decision framework and contingency plans that enable the attacker to recognize and react to opportunities in a positive manner. Exploitations are far more likely to stall or fail because friendly forces cannot react to an opportunity or, having reacted, are unable to support the exploitation force—the force runs out of fuel rather than being halted by enemy action.

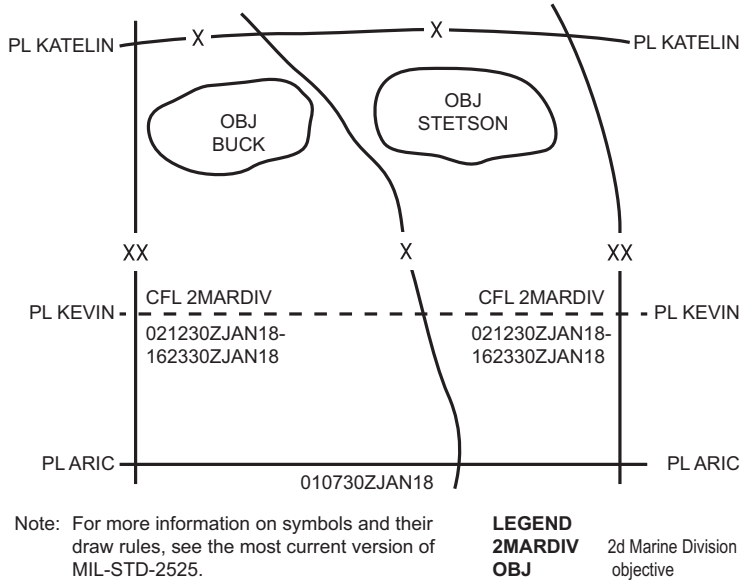

Figure 6-1. Control Measures for a Major Exploitation.

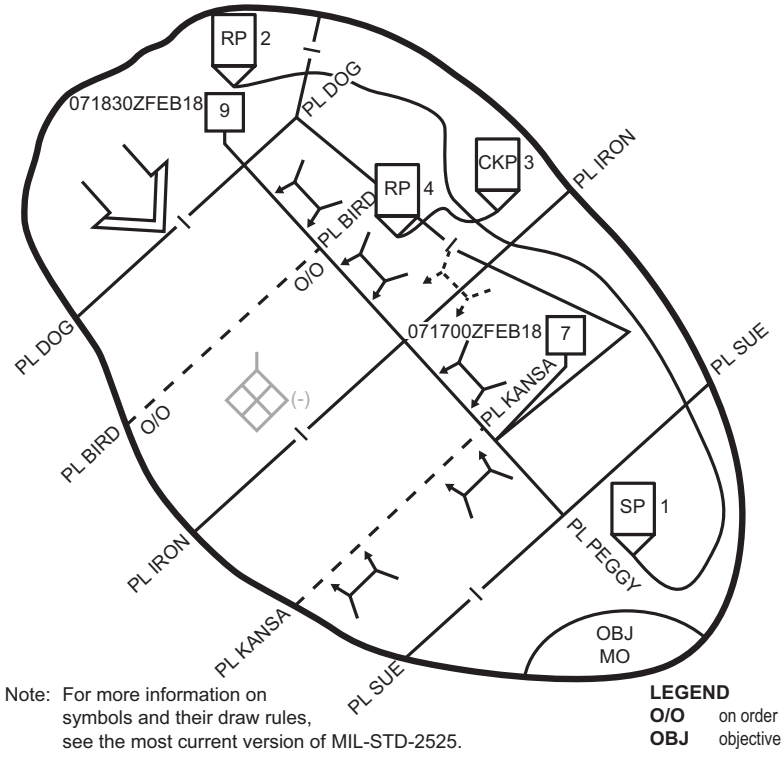

Figure 6-2. Control Measures for a Local Exploitation.

The original plan of attack contains the foundation for exploitation. In hasty operations, it consists of actions such as battle drills. In deliberate operations, it is a branch or sequel tentatively identifying forces, objectives, and subordinate AOs. Exploiting forces use the original plan as the baseline from which to take initiative issuing FRAGOs and updated commander's intent and end

state. For example, the commander may issue a FRAGO to designate a new main effort to execute an encirclement. Fragmentary orders should designate—

- Changes to main and supporting efforts with tasks and purposes.
- Movement formation to include positions of each major element within the formation.
- Any required modifications to task organization.
- Bypass criteria.
- Revised or new control measures.
- Changes to fire and IO plans.
- Changes to the concept of logistic support.

In maneuver planning, the attacker seeks to avoid driving the enemy back on to their strengths, whether those strengths are terrain (e.g., a defendable choke point), capabilities (e.g., coherent command and control or shortening supply lines), or both. The attacking commander remains optimistic about success but guards against overextending the exploitation force and exposing them to defeat. Maneuver planning must take into account mitigating risk to the exploitation force in terms of security for their flanks, rear, and LOCs.

Since the force conducting an exploitation operation typically covers a wider front than an attacking force, air and missile defense and fire support assets may find their supported elements operating outside normal supporting ranges. Planning must account for their displacement forward and the assurance of continuous support during the process. Commanders consider temporarily attaching fire support units to the exploitation force or placing fire support assets in reserve for rapid commitment to exploitation and request appropriate antiair support. Commanders make extensive use of the ACE's ability to conduct antiair operations and to execute exploitation as its own element, to screen forward and to the flanks of the exploitation force, to identify and strike targets beyond the exploitation force, and to provide CAS to that force.

For major exploitations, usually conducted at the regiment and above, forces conducting exploitation normally maneuver on a wide front and on at least two axes. The forces on each axis are capable of independent action, depending on the mobility of the force, the road net, and other aspects of the terrain (see figs. 6-3 and 6-4). The forces advance using the techniques and formations appropriate to METT-T. In exceptional circumstances, when the enemy is incapable of effectively resisting, or when capable of only weak and sporadic defense, the commander can temporarily choose not to retain a reserve but to commit all forces to the exploitation. See chapter 3 for discussions on combat formations and chapter 4 for movement to contact.

Since there is little time to revise target lists in the transition from attack to exploitation, targets that support exploitation are part of the original fire support plan. Similarly, commanders ensure that the intelligence collection plan supports exploitation in terms of maneuver and targeting. Targeting for exploitation is generally similar to the targeting considerations in a movement to contact. However, an attack is predicated by contact and some knowledge of the enemy. Therefore, exploitation fire support plans include targeting of known and suspected enemy positions that might influence the exploitation force (e.g., enemy counterattack forces, command and control, likely routes of withdrawal and reinforcement, terrain that helps isolate the battlespace).

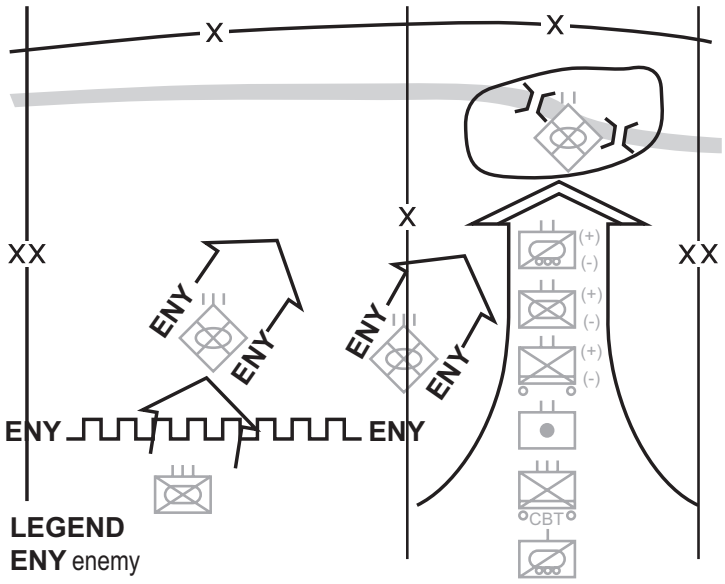

Figure 6-3. RLT Exploitation: Battalions in Column Formation.

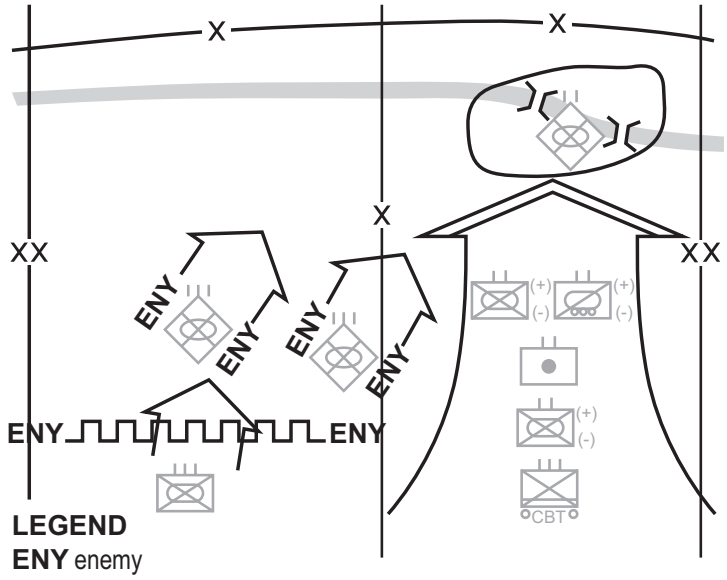

Figure 6-4. RLT Exploitation: Battalions in Vee Formation.

Information operations planning, which may require a longer lead time, begins before the exploitation. The actions and activities of IRCs are synchronized and coordinated with each other and with fires and maneuver to magnify the confusion and disruption of the enemy. Examples of IRCs that support the commander's exploitation goals include electronic warfare, tactical deception, and encouragement to surrender.

As with any advance, the commander considers and plans for both mobility and countermobility operations. As the friendly force shatters the enemy's defensive plan, mobility operations are

more likely to center on gap crossings, breach lane and route improvement, and mitigating hasty obstacles. Mobility is critical not only to maintain the momentum of maneuver elements, but also to ensure the steady flow of logistics to support the advance. Countermobility operations focus on protecting the exploitation force, such as supporting screening forces on the flanks of the exploitation force.

The commander must anticipate the exploitation and ensure that the logistic plan supports the force through the completion of the operation (a transition point, an operational pause, or an LOA). As with all other warfighting functions, logistic planning for the exploitation begins with the original plan of attack and is likely to influence tactical choices. The tactical considerations and impacts of logistics on operations include—

- Gaining control of MSRs capable of sustaining critical items (most likely POL, vehicle maintenance items, and ammunition).
- Gaining control of lateral MSRs capable of supporting the wide fronts normally associated with exploitations.
- Mitigating force protection issues associated with lengthening and potentially vulnerable LOCs.
- Logistic support necessary to control displaced civilians and meet basic humanitarian needs.

Since transportation and supplies to sustain the exploitation force represent a critical vulnerability, the largest possible stocks of fuel, spare parts, and ammunition should accompany the force so they do not lose momentum due to lack of support. Commanders plan on incorporating aerial delivery and assault support for critical items and casualty evacuation. Finally, planners anticipate and designate future MSRs (to include traffic prioritization and management—it is quite possible that logistics will have a higher priority than maneuver elements), unit maintenance collection points, casualty collection points, medical treatment facilities, ambulance exchange points, and detainee or EPW collection points.

EXECUTING AN EXPLOITATION

Exploitations are either on order or event driven and are tied to the progress of the attack and the appearance of unforeseen opportunities. They are transitions that may approach gradually or suddenly. The conditions necessary for the commander to give the order to conduct an exploitation or the event that signals the beginning of an exploitation operation are tied to some combination of the attack's accomplishment of the mission, the attacker's ability to continue operations, and the state of the battlespace in terms of METT-T.

Even in circumstances where an attack successfully accomplishes its purpose, a commander still considers the state of the enemy's ability to recover from defeat or continue to resist when determining whether to pursue exploitation. Indicators that the enemy is failing to maintain their position, retain their cohesion, or conduct meaningful resistance include—

- Threats to, or the use of, weapons of mass destruction to forestall collapse.
- Increasing rearward movement, especially fire support, reserves, and CSS units.

- Preparation to or demolition of facilities, installations, equipment, and supply stockpiles.
- Various units intermix their vehicles and personnel in combat formations or convoys.
- The number of captured EPWs and abandoned equipment and material increases significantly.
- Enemy fire decreases in intensity and effectiveness or becomes disjointed and unsynchronized.
- Enemy resistance decreases considerably, becomes sporadic and disjointed, and friendly company- and battalion-sized units begin defeating enemy battalion- and regimental-sized units respectively.
- Reports confirm the capture or absence of enemy leaders.
- Friendly forces overrun enemy artillery, C2 facilities, and supply points.

Regardless of the manner in which a commander conducts an exploitation (i.e., use of own forces, additional forces provided, or an independent exploitation force), the attacking force must ensure that supporting tasks continue. These activities and tasks include—

- Attrition or defeat of enemy reserves prior to their commitment.
- Destruction of enemy countermobility assets prior to their employment against the exploitation force.
- Disruption of enemy units attempting to reestablish a coherent defense.
- Disruption of enemy sustaining actions.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Training and planning are the foundational elements for transitioning from attack to exploitation faster than the enemy can recover. As the attacker accomplishes the offensive mission, unit training and SOPs allow for consolidation and reorganization to occur rapidly, ensuring the force is immediately postured for follow-on operations. The unit's planning allows for the intelligence collection effort to rapidly transition to exploitation, shifting to new NAIs that support decision, maneuver, and targeting cycles. Finally, an aggressive attacker understands that successful accomplishment of the mission is merely the preliminary step—victory lies in ruthless exploitation of success. Consequently, the attacker immediately pushes forward reconnaissance and security forces to discover whether the opportunity exists to initiate an exploitation and to prevent the enemy from successfully breaking contact and gaining time to recover. This may occur even before actions are complete on the objective (e.g., only minimal resistance remains).

The commander seeks to conduct an exploitation as a continuation of the attack, not as a movement to contact, and provides guidance on the amount of pressure necessary to prevent the enemy from mounting an active defense. These decisions are based on an aggressive intelligence collection effort that focuses on the current enemy situation and likely COAs, the condition and state of friendly forces, and the means by which the commander intends to exploit success—with the forces at hand, with additional forces, or by passing an independent exploitation force forward. The GCE makes extensive use of the ACE's ability to conduct reconnaissance, determine and attack high-payoff targets, and disrupt enemy attempts to move or reconstitute a defense.

Disrupt the Enemy

The commander's decision to exploit presumes that the enemy has already been somewhat disrupted. The commander uses all available resources to maintain or increase this disruption and

prevent the enemy from reconstituting an effective defense. At the regiment and above, commanders maintain disruption by combining the rapid maneuver of ground elements with the ability of higher headquarters to shape the battlespace in the deep fight against enemy reserves and uncommitted forces. The ACE ranges to the front of ground maneuver forces to destroy high-payoff targets and provide situational awareness to exploiting ground commanders. The LCE transitions forward, using preplanned logistic packages and decentralized support to prevent maneuver elements from experiencing a culminating point. Commanders mitigate risk and achieve security by the use of speed—rapid advances keeping the enemy force off balance and degrading their intelligence and surveillance capabilities. Disrupting the enemy means never allowing the enemy an opportunity to recover from the initial blow.

Ground maneuver elements support disruption by maintaining greater tactical mobility than the enemy. Commanders use armored or motorized forces to conduct rapid raids, thrusts, and envelopments that break up enemy formations, destroy key capabilities, and frustrate enemy attempts to reorganize. Dismounted infantry are combined with assault support from the ACE to conduct vertical envelopments to secure terrain objectives or choke points critical to the advance and to cut enemy lines of escape. The exploiting force clears only enough of their AO to permit their advance and keep the enemy off balance. They cut through enemy logistic units and LOCs to seize objectives vital to the enemy's defense. They attack from the march to overrun weak enemy formations. In accordance with the bypass criteria, the exploiting force can contain and bypass those enemy pockets of resistance too small to jeopardize the mission while the commander of the exploiting force reports these enemy forces to adjacent units, following units, and higher headquarters.

The exploiting force may face prepared belts of defensive positions in depth when they are exploiting the initial success of the attack. The rapid maneuver of the exploitation force disrupts the ability of the enemy to execute their defensive SOM—such as falling back into subsequent or supplemental positions. The faster the exploiting force moves, the less likely it is that succeeding defensive lines will be fully prepared and the less effort it will take to penetrate each successive defensive position.

The greatest vulnerability to the exploitation force at this moment is becoming unable to support the advance and maintain pressure on the enemy due to internal friction. The use of mission type orders and prior planning provide the necessary framework for decision-making and execution in exploitation, leaving commanders free to shift their focus from tactical details to ensuring that subordinate units are properly resourced and supported. Commanders seek to place themselves at the point of decision, where their influence can do the most good. As the exploitation forces move from gaining and maintaining contact to advancing and disrupting the enemy, the point of decision is likely to be in the rear area (e.g., ensuring fire support assets transition forward, critical CSS elements receive priority of movement, civil populace issues are properly mitigated and do not interfere with current operations).

Fix the Enemy

Fixing sets up the enemy for defeat by the main effort—the decisive action. When possible, enemy elements are overrun or bypassed according to bypass criteria, which continues disruption across the entire enemy force. Larger units or specific critical elements of the enemy force are fixed to shape the conditions necessary for their defeat. The exploitation force fixes enemy units

in positions out of supporting distance of each other, setting them up for destruction in detail. They prevent enemy units from maneuvering to defend key terrain. Potential enemy reserves, uncommitted forces, C2 nodes, and fire support assets are suppressed, interdicted, and pinned in place. As the exploitation unfolds, commanders seek to rapidly identify any enemy force or capability around which an effective defense may coalesce, and then fix that enemy force or capability for defeat by either the exploitation force or follow-on forces.

While the exploiting force is conducting their operations, the follow-and-support force, if available—

- Widens or secures the flanks of a penetration.
- Destroys bypassed enemy units.
- Relieves supported units that have halted to contain enemy forces.
- Blocks the movement of enemy reinforcements.
- Opens and secures LOCs.
- Guards EPWs, key areas, seized enemy bases and installations, and LOCs.
- Controls dislocated civilians.

Decisive Action/Maneuver

The decisive action of the exploitation is force-oriented, geography-oriented, or both. The nature of an exploitation is such that while there may be numerous skirmishes and engagements—each with its own decisive action—the overall focus of the exploitation effort remains directed at creating an effect greater than itself, normally the accomplishment of the objectives and goals of higher headquarters. A battalion that effectively eliminates all enemy forces down to the squad level while failing to capture the division level objective bridge in their AO is likely a failure despite the local success. Knowing and following the commander's intent enables subordinates to exploit success while properly directing their overall efforts.

Follow Through

The exploitation continues around the clock, so the enemy cannot escape the relentless offensive pressure. Exploitations end when the force reaches a culminating point, reaches an LOA, or meets the conditions necessary to transition to a pursuit. In the first two cases, the exploiting force quickly begins defensive operations, executes countermobility operations, and shifts the focus of ISR assets. If transitioning to the pursuit, the force begins executing those tasks covered in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7
PURSUIT

A pursuit differs from the exploitation in that its primary function is to complete the destruction of the targeted enemy force. Pursuit operations begin when an enemy force attempts to conduct retrograde operations. At that point, the enemy becomes most vulnerable to the loss of internal cohesion and complete destruction. An aggressively executed pursuit leaves the enemy trapped, unprepared, and unable to defend, faced with the options of surrender or complete destruction. Pursuits include the rapid shifting of units, continuous day and night movements, hasty attacks, containment of bypassed enemy forces, large number of EPWs, and a willingness to forego some synchronization to maintain contact with and pressure on a fleeing enemy. Pursuits require swift maneuver and attacks by forces to strike the enemy's most vulnerable areas. A successful pursuit requires flexible forces, initiative by commanders at all echelons, and a high operational tempo during execution.

OVERVIEW

The pursuit tests the audacity and endurance of the force and the attacker risks becoming disorganized. Extraordinary physical and mental effort is necessary to sustain the pursuit and translate tactical success into operational or strategic victory. Pursuit operations begin when offensive operations shatter an enemy's defense or an enemy force attempts to break contact and conduct a retrograde. The enemy may deliberately conduct a retrograde when—

- Reacting to a threat of envelopment.
- Adjusting battlespace dispositions to meet changing situations.
- Attempting to draw the friendly force into fire sacks, kill zones, or EAs.
- Planning to employ weapons of mass destruction.

Unlike an exploitation, which may focus on seizing key terrain instead of the enemy force, the pursuit always focuses on completing the destruction of retreating enemy forces by destroying their ability and will to resist. Unless the enemy's resistance has been broken completely and they are fleeing the battlespace, this is seldom accomplished by directly pushing the enemy back on to the strengths of their LOCs and supply bases. Instead, commanders endeavor to combine direct pressure against the retreating enemy with an envelopment that places friendly forces across the enemy's lines of retreat to fix the enemy in place for destruction. A pursuit may consist of one such envelopment that destroys the entire enemy force, or a series of separate attacks and envelopments that systematically defeats the enemy in detail.

Due to the resources required to conduct a pursuit, the decision to undertake this offensive operation normally occurs at the division level or higher. This does not restrict the execution of the pursuit to the division level, though units below the regiment normally only participate in a pursuit, rather than execute one. Once the pursuit begins, the commander accepts prudent risk, maintains contact with the enemy, and pursues retreating enemy forces without further orders. The commander must be aware of any approaching culmination point. Enemy forces are usually falling back on their supply bases, and potentially on fresh units, while friendly forces become less effective as they expend resources faster than they can be replaced. Reasons to stop the pursuit include the presence of fresh enemy forces, greatly increased resistance, fatigue, dwindling supplies, diversion of friendly units to security missions, increased need to conduct immediate civil security and civil control tasks, and the need to contain bypassed enemy units. The unit staff should have developed a decision support template that depicts decision points, timelines associated with the movement of forces and the flow of the operation, and other key items of information to avoid or forestall a culmination point. There are two basic methods for conducting a pursuit: direct pressure and combination.

Direct Pressure

In the direct pressure method of pursuit, the commander employs only a single force to maintain pressure on the retrograding enemy by conducting operations along the same retrograde routes used by that enemy (see fig. 7-1). Commanders choose this option in three situations. The first is when the enemy defense has been shattered and a general pursuit is warranted. The second is when the commander does not possess a subordinate force with a sufficient mobility advantage to get behind a retrograding enemy. The third is when the commander lacks the resources to enable an encircling force to survive and sustain itself until linkup with the direct pressure force. The existence of restrictive terrain or a disciplined withdrawal conducted by a cohesive enemy may also warrant this method of pursuit. The force uses all the forms of offensive maneuver to maintain pressure on the enemy, slow their withdrawal, prevent the reconstitution of the defense, and destroy them in detail.

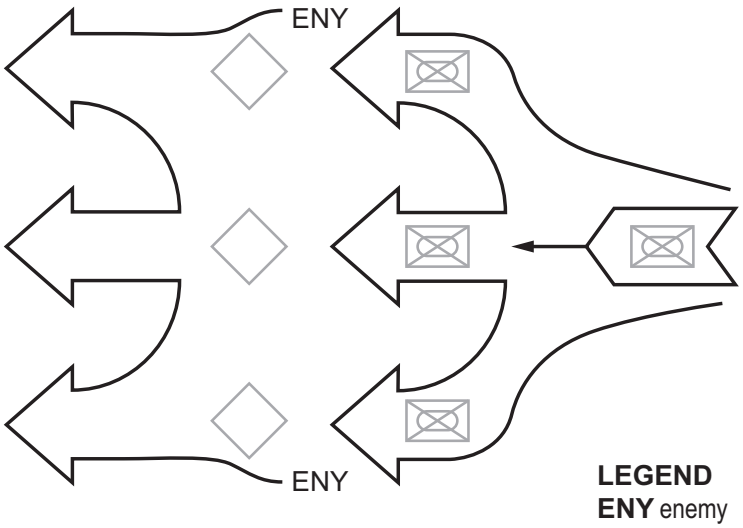

Figure 7-1. Direct Pressure Pursuit.

Combination

In the combination method of pursuit, the commander employs a direct pressure force that orients on the enemy main body to prevent them from disengaging or reconstituting a defense and an encircling force that maneuvers to the flank or rear of the enemy to block their escape (see fig. 7-2). This method of the pursuit is generally the preferred and more decisive of the two pursuit methods as it actively provides the means for the complete destruction of the enemy. Commanders choose this option in three situations. The first is when the enemy defense has been shattered and significant objectives, facilities, and cultural or political structures must be seized and safeguarded. The second is when the commander possesses a subordinate force with the necessary mobility advantage to get behind a retrograding enemy. The third is when the commander possesses the ability to sustain an encircling force until they linkup with the direct pressure force. In executing the combination method of pursuit, the direct pressure force uses all the forms of offensive maneuver to slow the enemy withdrawal, prevent them from reconstituting a defense, and fix them in place. The encircling force uses all the forms of maneuver associated with envelopments (i.e., single, double, encirclement, vertical) and methods of movements (e.g., air assault or amphibious) to isolate the enemy force. Either force may execute the decisive action.

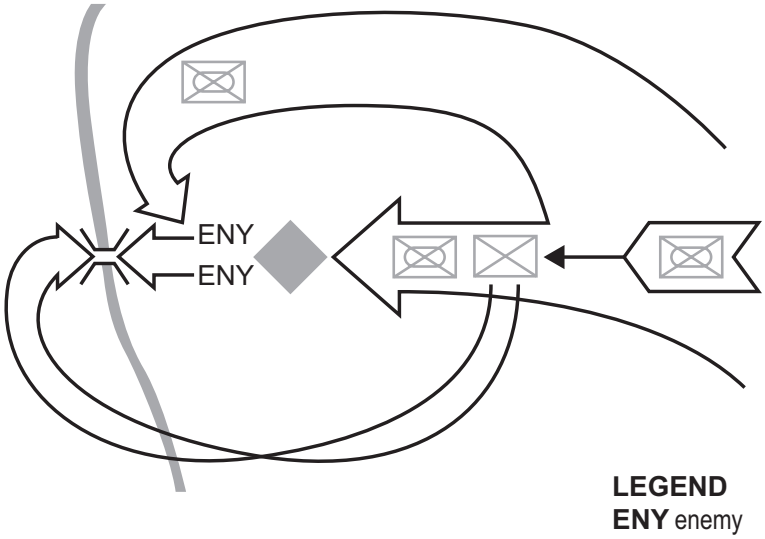

Figure 7-2. Combination Pursuit.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

The direct pressure method of pursuit involves pursuing the enemy directly and requires, at a minimum, a forward security force, main body, and reserve. The commander executing a combination method of pursuit organizes the force into a direct pressure force, one or more encircling forces, follow-and-support forces, and a reserve.

CONTROL MEASURES

In the pursuit, the commander chooses control measures that balance the need to provide subordinates with maximum flexibility and the requirement to deconflict the movement of multiple forces along various axes, the maneuver of encircling forces, and linkups between forces. Control measures should be flexible and capable of rapid adjustments to reflect changing conditions. The commander accomplishes this through centralized planning and decentralized execution. At a minimum, the commander establishes AOs for each maneuver unit and PLs for the direct pressure force. When conducting the combination method of pursuit, the direct pressure force also receives forward and rearward boundaries. Forward boundaries provide higher headquarters the flexibility to operate against the enemy and conduct encircling force operations ahead of the direct pressure force. The rear boundary separates the direct pressure force from the follow-and-support force.

Control measures for the encircling force are identical to those used during an envelopment. The commander must designate a route, an axis of advance, or an AO adjacent to the direct pressure force that allows the encircling force to move parallel to, and eventually ahead of, the fleeing enemy force. The commander can designate a terrain objective as a guide for the encircling force (e.g., Objective HAWKE in fig. 7-3). However, the commander may change this objective rapidly and frequently, based on the progress of the encircling force and the enemy. The objective should be a terrain feature that provides the encircling force good, defensible terrain that the

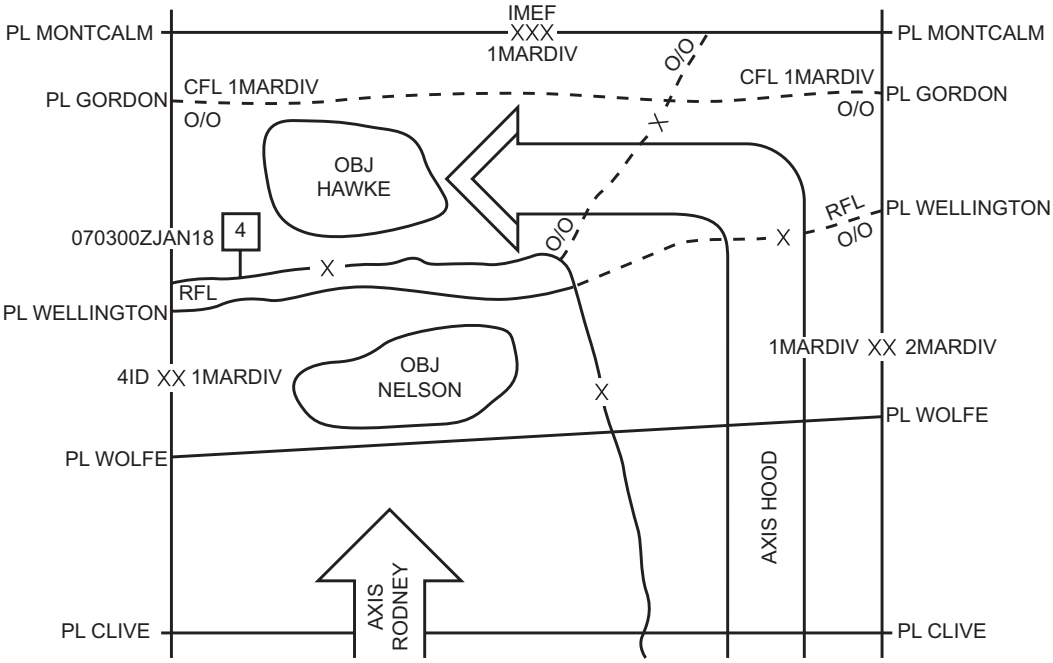

Figure 7-3. Pursuit Control Measures.

enemy cannot easily bypass. The commander often selects choke points, such as defiles and bridges, as objectives for the encircling force.

The commander establishes a boundary, RFL, and other linkup control measures between the encircling and direct pressure forces before the encircling force reaches their objective. (See chap. 18 for more information on linkups). If possible, the commander uses follow-and-support forces to relieve the encircling force of flank and rear security responsibilities—freeing them to focus on engaging the withdrawing enemy.

PLANNING A PURSUIT

Commanders plan pursuit operations as a branch or sequel to an offensive operation. They tentatively identify the method of pursuit and direct pressure, encircling, follow-and-support, and reserve forces with on order or be prepared missions. Pursuit operations employ the maximum number of available maneuver forces possible. The plan adjusts logistic priorities to support the pursuit, seeking to make subordinate elements as self-sufficient as resources will permit. The commander requests and acquires additional support, such as assault support, from higher headquarters. The commander also considers—

- Possible enemy retrograde routes.
- Availability and capability of ISR assets to detect enemy forces and acquire targets in depth.
- SOM to include combat support and CSS.
- Availability and condition of pursuit routes.
- Availability of forces to keep pressure on the enemy force until destruction is complete.
- Critical terrain features.
- Use of reconnaissance and security forces.
- Availability of ACE and LCE to support the pursuit.
- Measures necessary to avoid a culminating point or to mitigate required operational pauses.

The mobility of the direct pressure and encircling forces must be equal—preferably superior—to the withdrawing enemy. If there is no inherent mobility differential, the commander must plan to create one. This may be done through the actions of the direct pressure force, which slow and disrupt the enemy withdrawal, the creation of countermobility effects by targeting choke points and gaps, continued IO activities against enemy C2 functions, and adding mobility to the pursuit force (e.g., vehicles, assault support).

If using the combination method of the pursuit, commanders must plan to create encircling forces strong enough to defend themselves from annihilation while slowing or fixing the enemy until they can linkup with the direct pressure force to destroy the enemy. Depending on the method of envelopment—which may be a function of METT-T as the pursuit begins—a commander may use more than one encircling force, choosing which is the main effort. (See chap. 3 for more information on envelopments.) Other missions that the encircling force may receive include

destroying weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means or linking up with amphibious or air assault forces.

A key component of planning a pursuit is an intelligence collection plan that helps identify an enemy's attempt to retrograde and then supports the pursuit itself. Commanders apply the information from the collection plan and their experience and knowledge of the enemy to differentiate between the enemy's attempt to break contact and their attempt to lure friendly forces into ambushes or tactical mistakes. Indicators that the enemy is preparing to retrograde include—

- An inability to maintain the current position or cohesion.
- The conduct of limited local counterattacks and feints.
- Intensified reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance efforts.
- An increase in the amount of rearward movement and changes in the types of elements conducting them, especially by fire support, reserves, and CSS elements.
- Preparation of facilities, installations, equipment, and supply stockpiles for demolition and destruction.
- Decreases in the intensity and effectiveness of fires.
- An increase in fires in one or more individual sectors that is uncoordinated and unsynchronized with a general decrease in overall defensive fires.

The tactical situation during a pursuit may become obscure because of its potential depth and the fact that much of the necessary information for decision-making is located behind the fleeing enemy force. Commanders plan to use all means at their disposal to determine the—

- Composition of retrograding forces and their direction of movement.
- Existence and composition of any intermediate defensive positions and obstacles.
- Existence, composition, and direction of enemy reserves and uncommitted forces.

The mobility and distance requirements associated with a pursuit, especially the combination method, place a heavy demand on fires and IO planning. Due to the lead times on some types of activities, IO planners must lean further forward than the rest of the staff in planning for pursuits. As in exploitation, IRCs seek to synchronize and coordinate their efforts with maneuver and fires to magnify the disruption, chaos, and despair amongst hostile forces. Tactical and military deception, electronic attack, leaflets that enable easy surrender, and other actions reinforce the effects generated by the disintegration of the enemy defense and the success of the pursuit. Combined with these IO efforts, fires planning relies heavily on the ACE's ability to not only operate against the enemy in depth, but also to provide timely and accurate fire support to the encircling force which is likely to be beyond normal fire support system ranges. If possible, indirect fire assets accompany the encircling force. Both fires and IO planners must seek to push assets and systems forward to keep up with the pursuit and provide timely support to maneuver elements.

Pursuit planning must ensure the timely execution of mobility and countermobility operations to sustain the advance and hinder the enemy's withdrawal. Regardless of the nature of the enemy's withdrawal—panicked retreat or disciplined retrograde—mobility operations will include all aspects of breaching, gap crossing, and clearing activities to include route improvement to support

combat support and CSS elements. Countermobility operations for engineers will likely include flank security for the direct pressure force, support for encircling force security, and reinforcing the efforts to contain bypassed enemy units.

Similar to the requirements for exploitation, logistic efforts focus on the increased demands for fuel and maintenance that the rapidity of the pursuit requires. The sudden appearance of a culminating point or the need to plan an operational pause will most likely be logistics, vice enemy, driven. Logistic planning for the pursuit focuses on creating the ability to rapidly shift priority of support to the maneuver units enjoying the greatest success. Operations and logistic planners must work closely together to balance operational expectations with logistic realities. The depth of a pursuit, the speed of advance, and the mobility of maneuver elements will be driven by the logistic resources available to support the operation. Logistic planners are particularly concerned with supporting the encircling force, such as determining how to provide casualty evacuation over possibly unsecured LOCs. Planning may indicate the need for air delivery or heavily guarded convoys to support this force. Security for CSS convoys and LOCs are major planning considerations.

EXECUTING A PURSUIT

The goal of a pursuit is to destroy the withdrawing enemy. This generally occurs as a result of trapping the enemy between a direct pressure force coupled with either an encircling force or a major geographic barrier (e.g., unfordable river), followed by the enemy's defeat in detail. The commander's timeliness in deciding to initiate a pursuit is critical to its success. If the enemy begins a retrograde undetected, the enemy avoids the constant pressure that results in disrupting that operation.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

At the first indication of an enemy retrograde, and without waiting for orders, the commander who discovers the enemy's rearward movement acts to maintain contact to ensure the enemy does not break contact and conduct an orderly retreat. These forces form the initial direct pressure force and as the situation permits, they reform into the necessary security, main body, and reserve elements. Higher headquarters supports the transition to pursuit in two ways. First, it provides immediate support to the direct pressure force, seeking to augment them and further develop the situation. Second, higher headquarters immediately reorients intelligence collection efforts to support the information requirements of the direct pressure force and the information the commander needs to make further decisions in support of the pursuit operations. Some of the commander's decision-making requirements are the nature and disposition of retreating enemy formations, likely enemy COAs, and the location and activities of enemy reserves and uncommitted forces. In addition, the commander seeks to determine the pros and cons of employing an encircling force in terms of routes, objectives, and threats.

As the pursuit force gains information, the commander makes a decision as to which pursuit method to use—direct pressure or combination—and conducts the planning and orders necessary

to rapidly adjust task organization and support concepts accordingly. The priority during this time remains the direct pressure force.

Disrupt the Enemy

As the situation develops and friendly forces transition to pursuit, the focus is on maintaining and increasing the disruption of the enemy—to prevent them from reconstituting an effective defense or escaping destruction. Regardless of the pursuit method decided upon by the commander, the pursuit will fail if the enemy is allowed a respite in which to develop and execute options. Consequently, the direct pressure force synchronizes fires and information operations with continued aggressive attacks and advances to deepen enemy confusion, slow their decision-making cycle, and increase disruption.

Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets provide insight into enemy retrograde routes, terrain that increases enemy vulnerability, likely places upon which an enemy may seek to anchor a new defense, and insight into the intentions of enemy reserves or uncommitted forces. This information assists the commander in determining where to employ encircling forces and to what end. At the same time, indirect fire assets phase forward in support of both the direct pressure force and designated encircling forces. The ACE conducts necessary antiair operations, provides intelligence to the commander, and attacks targets of opportunity in support of disruption. Targets include enemy columns and troop concentrations, especially at choke points and gap crossings, and critical capabilities such as command and control, fire support, and logistics. Information operations include deception, such as mock air assaults, electronic warfare attacks on enemy C2 systems, and leaflet drops providing information to the populace and urging enemy troops to surrender.

If designated, the encircling force prepares to execute their mission. Logistics, enablers, and other assets move forward to support the encircling force, especially if they will be operating beyond the supporting range of the main body. On order, the encircling force begins their mission. If conducting a vertical envelopment they do so, securing terrain objectives necessary to defend against the enemy and trap them. If conducting any other type of envelopment, they conduct a movement to contact, seeking to avoid combat until they reach the assigned objective areas. Depending on the enemy situation, the encircling force may attempt to get behind the enemy or attack the enemy's flank.

As the direct pressure force advances, it is likely that gaps will open between elements moving forward at different rates determined by terrain, enemy resistance, and other variables. Follow-and-support forces follow in trace of both the direct pressure and encircling forces to take over security tasks and mitigate these types of risks. Further, follow-and-support forces conduct additional mobility operations to support the logistic requirements of the pursuit force's advance, countermobility operations to protect against enemy counterattacks, relieve pursuit forces from containing bypassed enemy units, provide rear area security, and conduct necessary civil-military operations. The designated reserve remains in a position where they can best affect the battle.

Fix the Enemy

The direct pressure force fixes the enemy by constant, unrelenting attacks that prevent the enemy from creating an effective defense, but force them to continually deploy in an attempt to slow the friendly advance. The encircling force supports fixing the enemy by completing the envelopment,

preventing the enemy from being reinforced or retreating. As discussed, the pursuit force may conduct a number of envelopments to destroy the enemy in detail. If this is the case, as the encircling force envelops to fix the local enemy in place, the commander reconstitutes a new encircling force to continue operations forward. The activities of IRCs and the ACE fix enemy reserves and uncommitted forces, preventing their use and influence on the battlespace. Follow-and-support forces conduct continuing actions designed to free combat power for the pursuit and to enable effective and efficient rear area operations that support the direct pressure and encircling forces. The reserve prepares to counter enemy actions, exploit opportunities, and conduct the decisive action if directed to do so.

Decisive Action/Maneuver

Once fixed, the enemy may surrender. More dangerously, the enemy may attempt to defend, conduct a breakout, counterattack, or any combination of these. (See chap. 18 for offensive and defensive considerations of encirclements.) Once the enemy is fixed, the pursuit force endeavors to prevent the enemy from organizing a perimeter defense. The commander designates either the direct pressure force, the encircling force, or the reserve as the main effort. The pursuit force supports the main effort by employing local attacks, fires, and information operations to shape the enemy while the main effort attacks the decisive point—normally a critical concentration of enemy combat power, key C2 nodes, or critical infrastructure and sources of logistic support (e.g., water supplies).

If the enemy does manage to form a perimeter, the pursuing commander must repeatedly split them into smaller elements until the encircled enemy force is destroyed. If time is not critical, the commander can keep the encirclement closed, defeat enemy breakout attempts, and weaken the enemy by fires alone. The commander can greatly accelerate the collapse of a large, encircled enemy force by targeting enemy life support capacity and the use of aggressive information operations.

Follow Through

If the envelopment does not destroy the entire retrograding enemy force or only destroys a portion of them, the commander conducts additional pursuit operations until the enemy is destroyed. If the enemy attempts to reorganize, forces conducting a pursuit execute hasty attacks. They conduct an exploitation to capitalize on the success of these attacks and then move back into pursuit. Once the commander initiates a pursuit, it is continued until a higher commander terminates it. Commanders normally cease pursuits when the enemy is destroyed and resistance ceases, the pursuit force approaches or reaches a culminating point, or the force transitions into other types of offensive or defensive operations, or stability operations.

Pursuit Across the Range of Military Operations

Enemies conduct retrogrades in irregular as well as traditional warfare. In irregular warfare, the retrograde may take the form of a change in posture, the exfiltration of combat power, or a reduction in combat operations. Successful pursuit of the enemy in these conditions relies on maintaining contact through the use of ISR assets, patrols, HN security forces, and information gleaned from the population. Depending on the nature of the terrain and threat, exfiltration routes might be monitored and interdicted in a manner similar to that discussed throughout this chapter. Similarly, signs that the enemy is attempting to conduct a retrograde requires an equally aggressive response—a pursuit—from friendly forces.

Commanders replicate the effect of a direct pressure force by increasing the intensity and speed of the operational methods that have driven the enemy to try and break contact. This increase in operational tempo serves to both disrupt and fix the enemy. Commanders may replicate the effects of the encircling force both literally and figuratively; literally, by occupying exfiltration routes and choke points and conducting operations from there; figuratively, by employing finishing forces that react immediately to enemy contacts or discovery of enemy elements, leadership, and logistics, to destroy them.

Part Three
Defensive Operations

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CHAPTER 8
BASICS OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

A defensive operation is an operation conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable to offensive or stability operations. Defensive operations alone normally cannot achieve a decision. Their purpose is to create conditions that enable friendly forces to regain the initiative and return to the offense. They do so by attriting or fixing the enemy, retaining terrain decisive to mission accomplishment, denying a vital area to the enemy, or by increasing an enemy's vulnerability as they concentrate mass to attack. This chapter discusses the basics of the defense. The basics discussed in this chapter apply to all defensive operations.

While the offense element of operations is more decisive, the tactical defense is the stronger. The inherent strengths of the defense include the defender's ability to occupy positions before the attack, learn and understand the ground, and use the available time to prepare defenses. The defending force ends their defensive preparations only when they retrograde or begin to fight. Even during the fight, the defending force takes the opportunities afforded by lulls in the action to improve their positions and repair combat damage. The defender does not wait passively to be attacked. The defender aggressively seeks ways of attriting and weakening attacking enemy forces before the initiation of close combat. The defender maneuvers to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage and attacks the enemy at every opportunity, using combined arms, counterattacks, and information operations. The static and mobile elements of the defense combine to deprive the enemy of the initiative. The defender contains the enemy while seeking every opportunity to transition to the offense.

The defense is conducted using the same decision-making, planning, and doctrinal fundamentals introduced in chapter 2. Commanders use purpose-based, spatial-based, or combination battlespace frameworks assigning main and supporting efforts, and a reserve, to accomplish the mission. All military operations are conducted to impose one's will on the enemy, the adversary, or tactical problem—the defense is no different.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Successful defensive operations share various combinations of the following characteristics: maneuver, preparation, mass and concentration, flexibility, use of terrain, mutual support, defense in depth, surprise, knowledge of the enemy, and local security.

Maneuver

The defense is not static. Regardless of the type of defense utilized, commanders endeavor to use maneuver in the defense to provide themselves flexibility while adding uncertainty for the

attacker. Maneuver serves as an offensive component of the defense. Maneuver allows the defender to take full advantage of the entire battlespace, achieve positions of advantage over the enemy, and to mass combat power against the attacker when desirable. Maneuver also encompasses rear area operations and the action of security elements to defeat enemy counterreconnaissance efforts and to shape the battlespace.

Preparation

One of the inherent strengths of the defense is that the defender arrives in the battlespace before the attacker and uses the available time to prepare. Even in time constrained environments, defenders possess the opportunity to study the ground and select positions that allow the massing of combat power on likely approaches. They combine natural and manmade obstacles to canalize attacking forces into EAs, coordinate and rehearse actions on the ground, and deploy reconnaissance and security forces. These preparations multiply the effectiveness of the defense, continuing up to, and even in the midst of, the engagement.

Characteristics of Defensive Operations

Maneuver
Preparation
Mass and Concentration
Flexibility
Use of Terrain
Mutual Support
Defense in Depth
Surprise
Knowledge of the Enemy
Local Security

Mass and Concentration

Defenders economize and accept risk in some areas to mass and concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power at the decisive point. Commanders use combinations of maneuver and their reserve to concentrate and generate mass. Depending on the mission, commanders may trade ground to gain time and maneuver space to mass combat power. Commanders mitigate risks associated with concentrating forces through the use of obstacles, security elements, fires, and information operations. The ACE protects the GCE concentration through air and missile defenses.

Flexibility

The ability to prepare the defense allows the defender to build flexibility into their plans. Commanders achieve flexibility through the use of maneuver, defenses in depth, and the use of reserves. Specifically, the commander conducts detailed planning for contingencies to counter and take advantage of the enemy's different COAs. Supplementary and alternate positions are designated, counterattack plans are developed and rehearsed, and plans are made to transition from the defense to the offense. Flexibility in the defense helps ensure mission success by preventing the enemy attacker from translating any local success into a decisive action.

Use of Terrain

The defender has the opportunity to learn and exploit every aspect of terrain and weather to their advantage. As is true across all elements of warfare, terrain in the defense is valuable only if a force gains advantage from their possession or control. Commanders visualize possible enemy avenues of approach, determining which terrain enables the defense to maximize effective fire, cover, concealment, movement, and surprise. While using the strong points of the terrain to their advantage, the defender strengthens any weak points relevant to the defensive SOM by reinforcing and integrating natural obstacles with manmade obstacles. The defender uses terrain to enable the forces at hand to win the defensive battle.

Mutual Support

Mutual support strengthens the defense by supporting the massing of combat power and protecting the defender from the attacker's attempts to impose their will. Mutual support is that support which units render each other. Mutual support is achieved when defensive positions are located in such a way that the enemy cannot attack one position without coming under fire from at least one other. The degree of mutual support obtained depends on the terrain, range of weapons, and visibility. Ideally, the space a force is capable of defending is directly related to their ability to provide mutual support between the units. To neutralize mutually supporting positions, an attacker must disperse fire away from their main objective, diluting the effects of their efforts. Mutual support is essential at all levels.

Defense in Depth

The single-battle concept states that the simultaneous application of combat power throughout the AO improves the chances for success while minimizing friendly casualties. The defending commander may use either a purpose-based or spatial-based battlespace framework to facilitate a defensive single-battle. (See chap. 2 for information on battlespace frameworks.) Quick, violent, and simultaneous action throughout the depth of the defender's AO can damage, confuse, and even paralyze an enemy attacker, just as that enemy force is most exposed and vulnerable. Operations conducted in depth prevent the enemy from gaining momentum in the attack.

Surprise

The attacker possesses the initiative and chooses the time and place of the assault. However, the defender achieves surprise with obstacles, fires, security forces, cover and concealment, mutually supporting positions, and defensive mobility to delay, disrupt, fix, and eventually defeat the enemy. Deception, discipline, camouflage, and use of cover and concealment protect the force and preserve combat power by misleading the enemy as to the true location of friendly positions and strength of forces. The keys to surprise are concealment, counterreconnaissance, OPSEC, and thorough preparation.

Knowledge of the Enemy

The defense is largely reactive by nature—a defender's options are dictated largely by what the attacker does or does not do. To mitigate the initiative inherent to the offense, the defender must possess thorough knowledge of the enemy's capabilities, operational concepts, and habits. Defending commanders must look at their forces and their AOs through the enemy's eyes to identify probable enemy objectives and COAs. Effective problem framing and wargaming will provide insight into enemy COAs, likely AAs, attack positions, routes, firing positions for supporting arms units, axes of advance, and decisive points. When the defending force can accurately anticipate the enemy's options and actions, they can design a defense that defeats the attacker and enables a transition to offensive operations.

Local Security

Local security are those security elements and activities established and conducted in the proximity of a unit to prevent surprise and mitigate enemy actions. Commanders provide security to their forces through information operations, force protection measures, and the employment of reconnaissance and security elements. Security operations prevent enemy ISR assets from

determining friendly locations, strengths, and weaknesses; provide early warning; and execute shaping operations that disrupt enemy preparation and attacks. Force protection efforts preserve combat power. Information operations employ IRCs to deceive the enemy, create hesitation and doubt, and disrupt their operations.

TYPES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Types of Defensive Operations
Area Defense
Mobile Defense
Retrograde

There are three types of defensive operations: the area defense, the mobile defense, and the retrograde. While all three types of defensive operations are significantly different, provide different opportunities, and pose different problems, they all possess the same characteristics of the defense discussed previously and contain static and mobile elements. All three operations employ aspects of the offense, such as spoiling or counterattacks, in the defensive SOM (see chap. 5).

Area Defense

The area defense is a type of defense in which the bulk of the defending force is disposed in selected tactical localities where the decisive battle is to be fought. Principal reliance is placed on the ability of the defending forces to maintain their positions and to control the terrain between them. The reserve is used to add depth, to block, or restore the BP by counterattack. The focus of the area defense is on retaining terrain where the bulk of the defending force positions itself in mutually supporting, prepared positions. Units maintain their positions and control the terrain between these positions through direct and indirect fires and maneuver. Shaping actions focus on disrupting and attriting the enemy as they enter the battlespace. The decisive action occurs by massing fires, possibly supplemented by a counterattack. The commander uses the reserve to reinforce fires, add depth, block, restore compromised defensive positions, seize the initiative, and destroy enemy forces. Units at all echelons can conduct an area defense. The area defense is the most likely type of defense used to support consolidation and reorganization as well as transitions between offense, defense, and stability. See chapter 9 for discussion of the area defense.

Mobile Defense

The mobile defense is a type of defense that uses maneuver and fires with terrain to seize the initiative from the enemy. The mobile defense destroys the attacking enemy through maneuver and offensive action. The mobile defense defeats the enemy by allowing enemy forces to advance to a point where they are exposed to a decisive counterattack by the reserve. It requires an AO of considerable depth to allow supporting efforts the time and space to disrupt, canalize, attrite, and fix the enemy force for destruction by the main effort. The AO must provide maneuver space for the counterattack force to identify and attack at the point of decision. Regiments and larger formations normally execute mobile defenses. See chapter 10 for discussion of the mobile defense.

Retrograde

The retrograde is a type of defensive operation that consists of any movement or maneuver of a command to the rear, or away from the enemy. The enemy may force these operations, or a commander may execute them voluntarily. The higher commander of the force executing the

retrograde must approve the retrograde operation before its initiation in either case. The retrograde is a transitional operation; it is not conducted in isolation. It is part of a larger SOM designed to regain the initiative and defeat the enemy. There are five forms of retrograde: delay, withdrawal, retirement, denial, and stay-behind. See chapter 11 for discussion of the retrograde.

COMMON DEFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

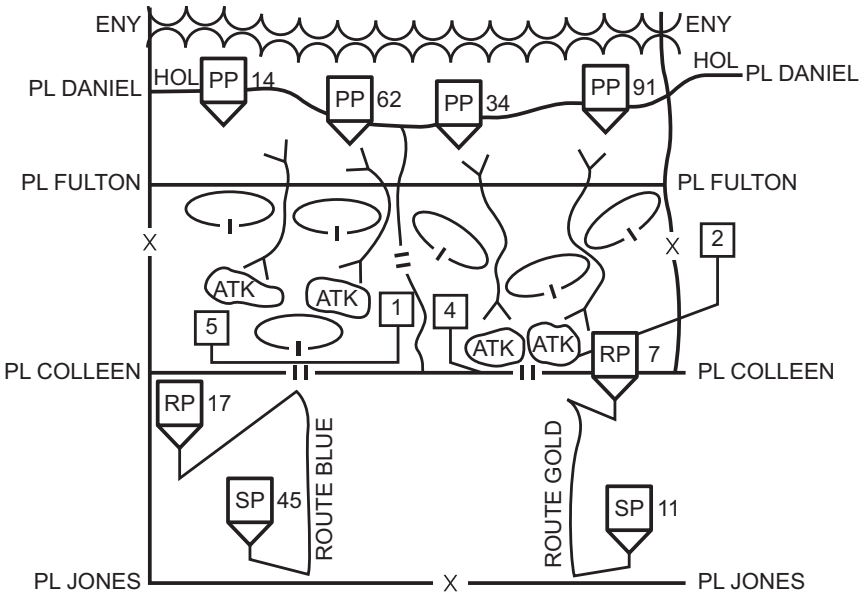
The commander uses control measures to provide the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation and allow the defender to rapidly concentrate combat power at the decisive point. Beyond the control measures discussed in chapter 2, control measures used in the defense include those necessary to designate a security area, MBA, and rear area. See chapter 13 for a discussion of security operations. Control measures common to the defense are discussed in the following paragraphs.

HANDOVER LINE

The handover line is a control measure, preferably following easily defined terrain features, at which responsibility for the conduct of combat operations is passed from one force to another. In ground combat operations, a handover line is a predetermined location, normally a PL designated as a handover line (graphically represented as HOL), where control of the battle is transferred to the main battle force. The common higher commander of the two forces establishes the handover line after consulting with both commanders. The stationary commander determines the location of the line. The handover line is forward of the FEBA in the defense and the FLOT in the offense. The commander draws it where elements of the passing unit can be effectively supported by the direct fires of the stationary unit until passage of lines is complete. (See chap. 16 for passage of lines). The area between the handover line and the stationary force belongs to the stationary force commander. The stationary force commander may employ security forces, obstacles, and fires in the area. Figure 8-1 depicts a handover line used in conjunction with other control measures for a rearward passage of lines.

Battle Positions

A BP is a defensive position oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend or attack for the purpose of denying or delaying the enemy's use of certain terrain or avenues of approach. The BP is both a defensive method and an intent graphic that depicts the location and general orientation of a defending force. Commanders use BPs across all types of defense. The BP is not an AO, and does not mandate that the entire force must exist within its bounds (see fig. 8-2). Units as large as battalion task forces and as small as squads or sections use BPs. They may occupy any terrain appropriate to the mission and METT-T, such as a forward slope or reverse slope. A commander can assign all or some subordinates BPs within the AO (see fig. 8-3).

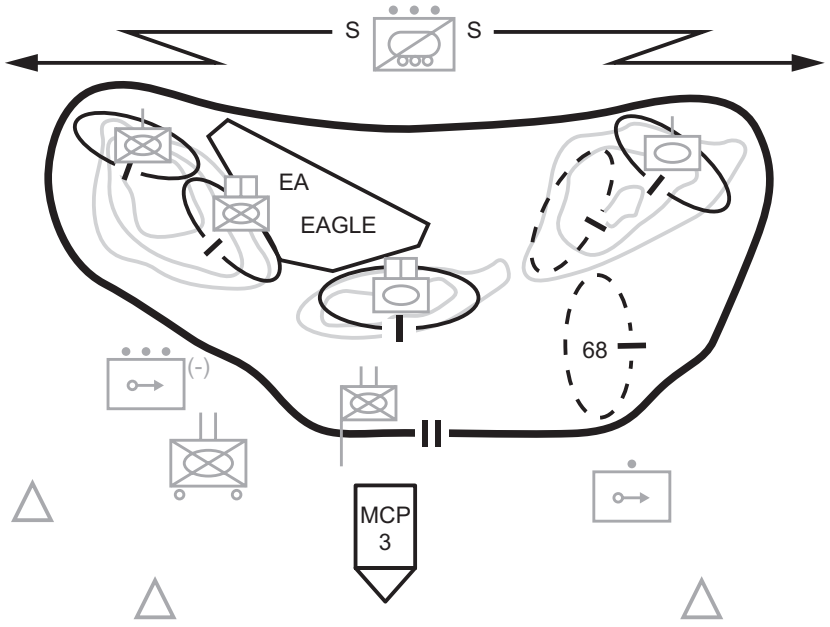


Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

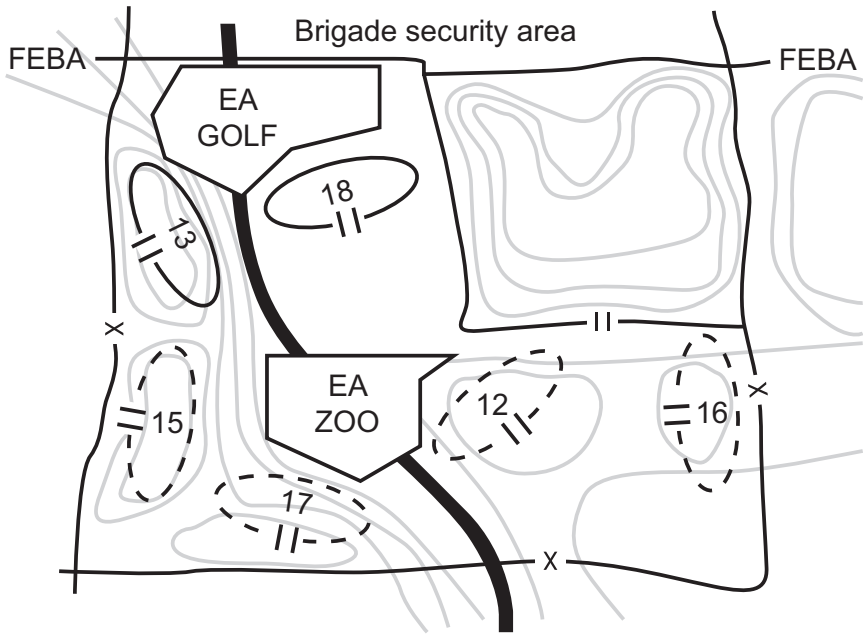
ATK	attack position
ENY	enemy
HOL	handover line

Figure 8-1. Handover Line in a Rearward Passage of Lines.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 8-2. Task Force Battle Position.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 8-3. Area of Operations and Battle Position Control Measures Used in Combination.

When the defensive plan requires it, BPs provide commanders a means of exercising greater control over the maneuver of subordinate units than assigning AOs. A single unit may receive multiple BPs, which allows that unit to maneuver between BPs. Battle positions are assigned to units as a function of their mission. Battle positions are not normally held at all costs since BPs contribute to mission accomplishment, but are not the focus of mission accomplishment. Commanders assigned a BP have the option of moving off the BP and using other positions to accomplish their mission. If higher commanders have specific expectations of units assigned BPs, they assign engagement and displacement criteria. Security elements, combat support, and CSS forces typically operate outside of a unit's BP.

There are five kinds of BPs—primary, alternate, supplementary, subsequent, and strong point (see fig. 8-4). When assigning BPs, the higher commander always designates the primary BP. Subordinate commanders designate and prepare alternate, supplementary, and subsequent positions as time and other resources permit and if the terrain or situation requires them.

The primary position is a position that provides the best means to accomplish the assigned mission. It is assigned by a commander to subordinates in conjunction with their missions as part of the overall defensive plan.

An alternate position is the position given to a weapon, unit, or individual to be occupied when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuitable for carrying out its assigned task and is so located that the weapon, unit, or individual can fulfill their original task. The alternate position accomplishes the same mission as the primary position, covering the same area. These positions add flexibility and maneuver to the defense and increase the defender's survivability by allowing

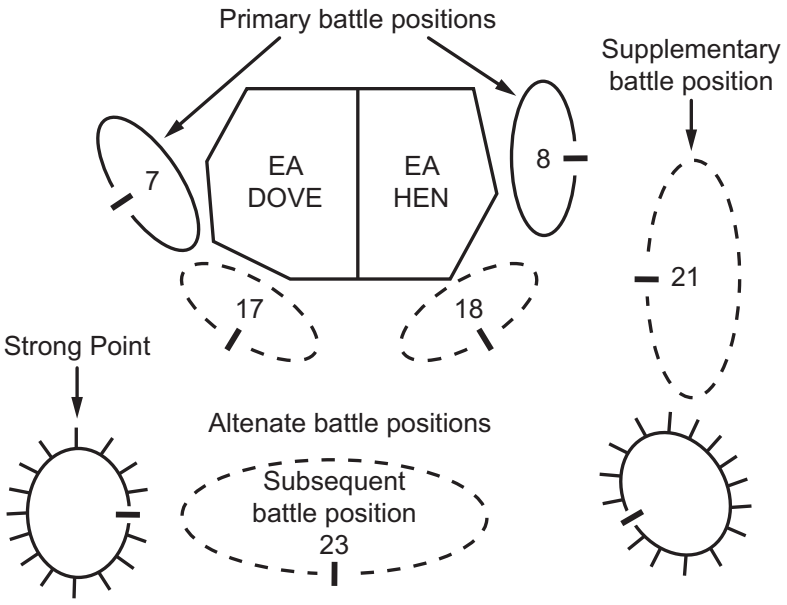


Figure 8-4. Five Types of Battle Positions.

the defender to engage the enemy from multiple positions. While the defender normally leaves the primary position only out of necessity, it is possible for the defensive SOM to deliberately use primary and alternate positions in sequence.

A supplementary position is a position that provides the best means to accomplish a task that cannot be accomplished from the primary or alternate position. Supplementary positions add flexibility to the defense by allowing a unit to react to different enemy COAs while still enjoying the advantages of defensive preparation. The unit will still possess a primary position focused on the most likely enemy COA.

A subsequent position is a position that a unit expects to move to during the course of battle. A defending unit may have a series of subsequent positions, such as during the execution of the delay method of a retrograde. Each subsequent position is part of the defensive SOM and may possess its own alternate and supplementary positions.

A strong point is a defensive method that retains key terrain and denies avenues of approach by establishing a heavily fortified, all-around position prepared for extended occupation and operations if cut-off or surrounded. A fortified area is a defensive system that contains numerous strong points disposed in depth and width in such a manner as to be mutually supporting. Fundamentally, a strong point is a BP that a unit is expected to hold indefinitely and is focused on the terrain upon which it sits. Consequently, commanders prepare strong points for all-around defense and position them on key terrain (see fig. 8-5). Commanders also establish strong points when anticipating that enemy actions will isolate a defending force retaining terrain critical to the defense. Before assigning a strong point mission, the commander ensures that the assigned force has sufficient time and resources to construct the position. A general rule is that an effective strong point will typically require a one-day effort from an engineer unit the same size as the unit

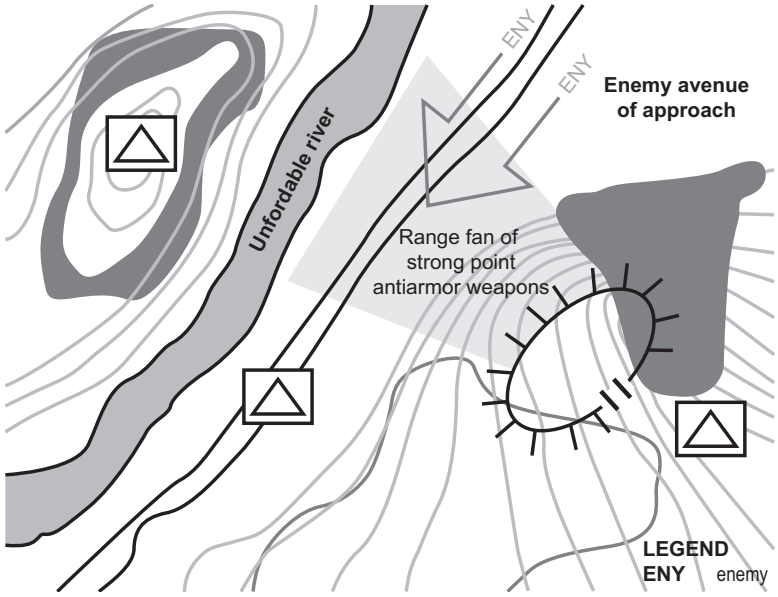


Figure 8-5. Strong Point Defense.

defending the strong point. Normally, companies and battalions occupy strong points. While units smaller than a company may execute a perimeter defense, they generally lack the manpower to secure a perimeter large enough to contain all the required assets and supplies associated with a strong point.

Direct Fire Control Measures

The use of direct fire control measures are critical in the defense because of the reliance the types of defense place upon massing fires to generate the effects necessary for mission accomplishment. Direct fire control measures are depicted in figure 8-6. Chapter 2 discusses direct fire control measures in depth.

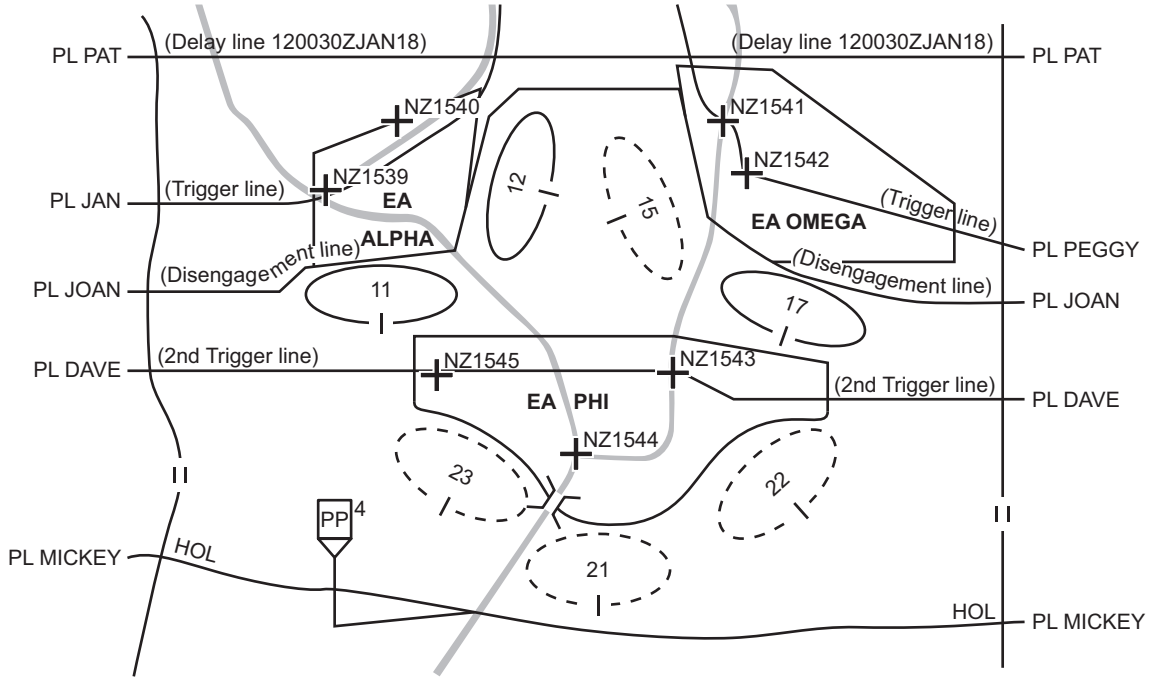
Disengagement Line

A disengagement line is a PL located on identifiable terrain that, when crossed by the enemy, signals to defending elements that it is time to displace to their next position. The commander may use disengagement lines when executing the delay method of the retrograde or when they do not wish to become decisively engaged. Disengagement criteria consists of items such as the number of enemy vehicles by type, friendly losses, or enemy movement to flanking locations. Commanders may designate multiple disengagement lines, one for each system in the defense. In figure 8-6, PL JOAN is a disengagement line.

Fire Support Coordination Measures

In a manner similar to direct fire control measures, FSCMs are critical in the massing of fires necessary to create the effects necessary for mission accomplishment in the defense. (Chapter 2 discusses FSCMs.) Unique to the defense is the FPF.

Final protective fire is an immediately available prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas. (DOD Dictionary) Its primary purpose is to



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 8-6. Direct Fire Control Measures.

support the defeat of an enemy's final assault into a friendly defensive position. Both direct- and indirect-fire weapons can provide FPFs. The commander can only assign each firing battery or platoon a single FPF. An FPF is a priority target for an element or system, and those fire units are laid on that target when they are not engaged in other fire missions. Figure 8-7 depicts an FPF.

Forward Edge of the Battle Area

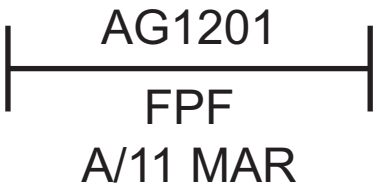


Figure 8-7. Final Protective Fire.

The FEBA is the foremost limit of a series of areas in which ground combat units are deployed, excluding the areas in which the covering or screening forces are operating, designated to coordinate fire support, the positioning of forces, or the maneuver of units. (DOD Dictionary) The FEBA, being more static than the FLOT, applies to defensive operations only. The FEBA is not specifically a boundary, but rather a PL generally demarking the MBA from the security

area—close operations from deep operations. The FEBA reflects the commander's intent as it applies to coordinating fire support and defensive maneuver. The FEBA is often associated with the planned limit for the effects of direct fires. Figure 8-8 depicts a current and proposed FEBA.

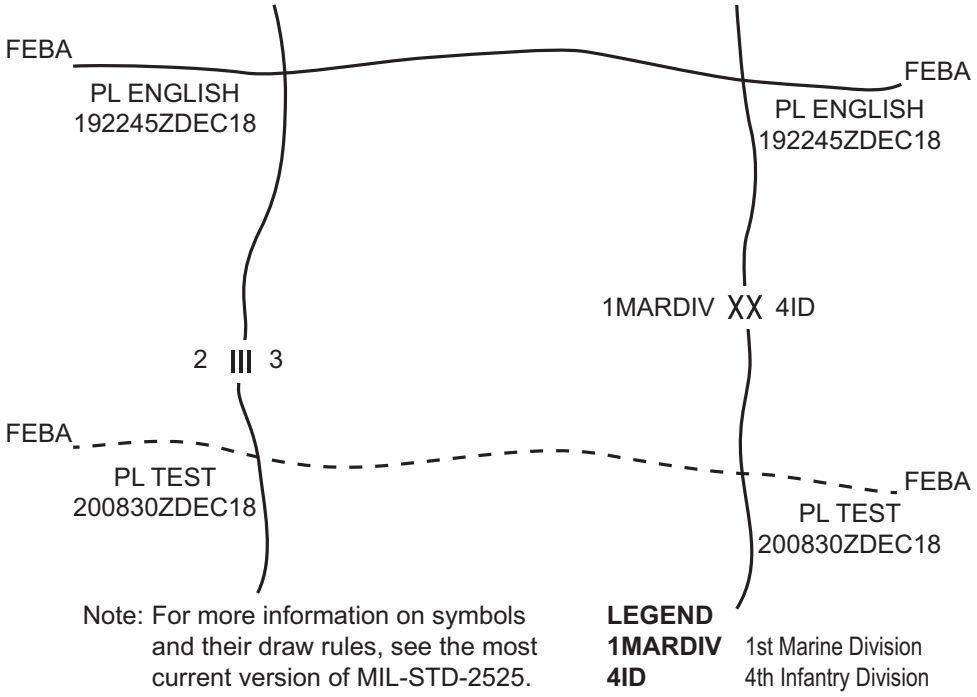


Figure 8-8. Forward Edge of the Battle Area.

Main Battle Area

The MBA is that portion of the battlespace in which the commander conducts close operations to defeat the enemy. Normally, the main battle area extends rearward from the FEBA to the rear boundary of the command's subordinate units. Within a spatial-based battlespace framework, the MBA is where the commander conducts close operations that accomplish the mission. The size of the MBA depends on METT-T, the type of defense the commander chooses to conduct, and where the commander plans to execute the decisive action. The commander organizes forces within the MBA according to the type of defense chosen.

COMMON DEFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The concept of hasty and deliberate operations applies to the defense as well. The more time available, the more deliberate and effective a defense. Commanders compensate for the lack of time in the defense by maintaining a larger-than-normal reserve or accepting greater risk. The general rule in the defense is that preparation is continuous. Preparation includes planning. Every moment the enemy does not attack, every lull between attacks, is additional time to improve the defense and the defensive plan; such as, increasing the effectiveness of the security area,

establishing additional alternate and supplementary positions, refining the defensive plan to include branches and sequels, conducting defensive rehearsals, and maintaining vehicles and personnel. Commanders can create preparation time through shaping operations and aggressive operations by security forces to delay and disrupt the enemy. See chapter11 for discussion of delay.

Subsequent chapters will address the various defensive operations and the activities outlined above in greater detail. However, the common defensive planning considerations addressed in the following paragraphs apply to all types of defensive operations.

Command and Control

The defensive mission generally imposes few restrictions on defending commanders, allowing them to use terrain, distribute forces, and maneuver freely as they see fit within assigned boundaries. Against this, the commander faces significant challenges from an enemy who holds the initiative, normally possesses superior force, and will actively seek to disrupt the defensive plan and dictate the tempo of the engagement. To mitigate these challenges and to create conditions that allow for success and a return to the offense, the defender creates defensive plans that are inherently flexible, but closely coordinated.

The commander accomplishes this using mission type orders and information and feedback to inform decisions. A well developed and implemented intelligence collection plan provides clear understanding of the battlespace, the enemy, and decision points. The commander then designs a defensive plan—with a special emphasis on wargaming—that makes the maximum use of available resources and terrain, masses combat power at the point of decision, optimizes preparation time, and incorporates static and mobile elements. Building flexibility into the plan is critical because as the fight unfolds, commanders may have to shift shaping actions, adjust subordinate unit AOs and task organization while in contact, repeatedly commit and reconstitute the reserve, and execute branches and sequels.

Finally, commanders ensure that subordinate defensive plans are compatible not only with the main plan, but with each other. Combined arms rehearsals are conducted emphasizing decision points, the control of fires, and alternate enemy COAs. Coordination points are established between units, and the commander ensures that subordinates adequately disguise and mitigate unit boundaries and seams that the enemy will seek to identify and exploit. During this process commanders determine resource shortfalls and seek to mitigate them.

In addition to the generalities discussed above, command and control in the defense must take into account the following:

- Defenders face unique challenges in terms of maintaining unit cohesion. Defenders may need to create ad hoc units on short notice, such as forming a detachment left in contact (DLIC) prior to a withdrawal, and attackers will endeavor to leave the defender with little or no time for orderly reorganization and reconstitution. Commanders use unit SOPs to: ease interoperability between units and portions of units, train to function in chaos and adversity, and focus on mission accomplishment.
- Attackers will seek to exploit unit boundaries. Commanders mitigate this by selecting boundaries that do not increase coordination issues by ensuring subordinate units' defensive

plans align with the higher plan and are coordinated and rehearsed. Commanders also ensure that subordinate commanders physically meet with adjacent, supporting, and supported units. Coordination includes intelligence collection plans, location and composition of security forces, obstacle plans, fire plans, IO plans, and air defense coverage areas. If physically tied in, units strengthen their boundaries by integrating them (e.g., at the boundary, one squad of Company A is positioned in Company B's AO and vice versa).

- Command posts in the defense tend to be more static than in the offense and can expect to be actively targeted by the enemy. Commanders and staffs seek to balance the needs of command and control with survivability and plan for displacement and redundancy. Commanders place themselves at points of friction and where their influence will produce the greatest effect.

Maneuver

Maneuver is an inherent part of any defense and provides the commander with flexibility and the ability to shape the defensive battle. Classically, the defender uses maneuver to disrupt and delay the enemy as they pass through the security area, to act decisively against them in the MBA, to limit the enemy's ability to exploit any successes they may have, and to create opportunities for exploitation and a transition to the offense after the enemy's defeat.

Security. The security area begins at the FEBA and extends as far to the front and flanks as security forces are deployed, normally to the forward boundary of the AO. Forces in the security area conduct reconnaissance to furnish information about the enemy and to delay, deceive, and disrupt the enemy. Commanders conduct operations in the security area to confuse the enemy about the location and nature of the commander's defensive plan, prevent enemy observation of preparations and positions, and keep the enemy from delivering observed fire on the positions. Conducted aggressively and effectively, friendly actions in the security area offset the attacker's inherent initiative in choosing the time and place to attack by forcing them to deploy prematurely and by disrupting their tempo and formations.

Beginning as the enemy approaches the security area, the defending force acts against the depth of the enemy's formation in both time and space throughout their attack. If practical and acceptable, commanders do not cede the security area to the enemy, but rather use it as maneuver space in which to continue to conduct operations against the attacker. Failing that, supporting arms, the ACE, and IO activities continue to range the depth of the enemy, seeking to destroy or disrupt the employment of key units and assets, such as artillery and reserves.

Commanders at all echelons counter enemy ground reconnaissance activities through active and passive measures. From divisions pushing forward independent units to conduct cover operations, to a platoon pushing forward a listening post, commanders must not permit enemy ISR assets to determine the precise location and strength of defensive positions, obstacles, EAs, and reserves. While normally associated with the security area, security operations occur throughout the battlespace, including rear areas, to destroy enemy reconnaissance efforts. Units implement OPSEC and other force protection measures to deny the enemy information about friendly dispositions. See chapter 12 for more information on security operations.

Use of Terrain. While the attacker seeks to dictate tempo and the time and place of engagement, the defender normally—even when time is constrained—possesses the ability to choose and occupy

the ground upon which they will defend. The ground chosen should optimize the defending force's capabilities while minimizing and mitigating those of the attacker. An infantry force defending against an armored threat will seek restrictive terrain that eliminates the mobility and firepower advantages of the enemy while maximizing the survivability and maneuverability of the infantry. Similarly, a defender might seek terrain that offers cover and concealment for the themselves while compelling the attacker to cross large open spaces. Beyond merely choosing suitable terrain, the defender uses the time available to add reinforcing obstacles to existing terrain to restrict the maneuver options open to the attacker. In a similar manner, a commander may seek to deny terrain to the enemy in one area to force the attacker into more favorable terrain where the defender can act decisively. See MCTP 3-34B for information on reinforcing obstacles.

The defending commander selects terrain that allows massing of friendly combat power but compels the enemy to choose formations or deployment methods that lead to piecemeal commitment. Commanders accomplish this by analyzing likely avenues of approach, and then using obstacles and defensive techniques to create conditions that disrupt and delay the enemy while maximizing the employment of defensive capabilities (e.g., anti-tank missiles). This allows an outnumbered defender to create favorable force ratios and employ combat multipliers, such as information operations and indirect fires on terms of advantage. Terrain features that favor defensive operations include—

- A series of parallel ridges across the line of hostile advance.
- Unfordable streams, swamps, lakes, and other obstacles on the front and flanks.
- High ground with good observation and long-range fields of fire.
- Concealed movement routes immediately behind defensive positions.
- Limited road network in front of the LC to confine the enemy to predictable avenues of approach.
- Good road network behind the LC that allows the commander to reposition forces as the battle progresses.

Mass and Concentration. Commanders seek to deliver overwhelming combat power at the point of decision in all military operations. The use of maneuver in the defense allows the defender to rapidly shift combat power, conduct economy of force operations, and employ a reserve when and where needed. The decisive action in the defense is normally enemy oriented because, first, a key purpose of any defense is to retake the initiative and return to offensive operations. Second, even if the defensive mission is terrain oriented, the defender must defeat the enemy force to successfully protect or retain that terrain. In an area defense, commanders choose where to defeat the enemy and build EAs that concentrate combat power at that point. In a mobile defense, commanders also choose where to defeat the enemy and use the reserve to deliver the decisive action. Even during a retrograde, commanders choose key points where they can concentrate combat power to disrupt and delay enemy advances or pursuit.

In the defense, there are numerous ways to mass combat power and generate the desired effects. As discussed above, using fires, air support, and information operations throughout the depth of the enemy's advance sets the conditions for decisive action in the close battle. Similarly, a commander may begin employing weapon systems at their maximum range, bringing an ever increasing volume of firepower as the enemy advances—for example, heavy antitank weapons

begin firing, then medium antitank weapons as the range closes, and then light antitank weapons. These types of techniques seek to disrupt, delay, attrite, and, if possible, defeat the enemy as far forward of friendly defensive positions as possible. They are generally applied against enemy forces of similar or larger size than the defender. The major disadvantage is that these techniques disclose friendly positions early, risking their destruction.

Conversely, defenders may use surprise to mass combat power at the point of decision. While commanders still seek to shape the battle in the security area, they use "massed surprise" fires—the equivalent of a defensive ambush—in the close battle. This method synchronizes the simultaneous delivery of indirect, direct, and aerial delivered fires, and information operations (e.g., electronic warfare) at once and at a relatively close range. This type of technique is generally applied when the main effort of the defense is a counterattack and the commander seeks to literally shock and stun the enemy with withering fires prior to delivering the attack. It is also ideal when facing isolated enemy units, when using a reverse-slope defense, or where the enemy is less capable and smaller than the defender. The major disadvantage is the difficulties in synchronizing fires in larger formations coupled with the danger that the mass and momentum of the enemy's attack may carry them into friendly positions anyway.

Force Capabilities. The type of defense a commander chooses to execute, and the employment of maneuver in that defense, is based on the nature of the enemy and the type of friendly forces available. A commander possessing tanks and amphibious assault vehicles should seek to select a defensive SOM that makes the greatest use of their tactical mobility and protection. Combat vehicles provide defending forces with the capability to maneuver, occupy static protective positions, and then return immediately to maneuver. They are ideal for conducting security operations, executing counterattacks, and operating in challenging environments such as CBRN.

Dismounted infantry forces defend against similar enemies in the same manner as armored forces would face other armored forces. Dismounted infantry facing heavy forces will seek to base their defenses on close terrain and prepared fighting positions to maximize their advantages in relative mobility and short-range infantry and antiarmor weapons. Commanders may conduct vertical envelopments, exploiting the mobility of this method to rapidly shift combat power, occupy a blocking position, conduct rear area security (e.g., react to an enemy vertical envelopment), reinforce flanks, and reinforce encircled friendly forces. See chapter 17 and MCTP 3-01B, *Air Assault Operations*, for more information on vertical envelopments.

The speed, mobility, and versatility that the ACE brings to the defense can be crucial in offsetting many of the advantages possessed by the attacker. Beyond those tasks often associated with CAS, the ACE can execute screening operations to the front and on the flanks of the defender, range and conduct attacks throughout the depth of the enemy's assault, and cover obstacles by observation and fire in the security area. In addition to classical assault support roles, the ACE can counter the enemy's ability to conduct vertical envelopments, close gaps in the defensive plan before the arrival of maneuver forces, and disrupt or delay enemy attempts to exploit success. The role of the ACE beyond delivering fires in support of maneuver should not be overlooked in defensive planning.

Assured Mobility. In the defense, all three aspects of assured mobility—mobility, countermobility, and survivability—are present. All demand attention, but with limited time, limited engineering

assets, and limits on resources, the commander must establish priorities among the three. Commanders must coordinate closely with the LCE to determine what is possible and balance that against the defensive tactics they choose to use. A dismounted infantry force operating in restrictive terrain against an armored enemy is likely to prioritize countermobility and survivability tasks. A commander choosing to use a mobile defense in which the reserve will conduct a counterattack as the decisive action is likely to prioritize mobility operations. Regardless, the defense places a heavy demand on assured mobility considerations and on Class IV and V materials. See MCTP 3-34A, MCTP 3-34B, and MCTP 3-34C for more information and details on employing assured mobility concepts.

Mobility. Mobility operations include creating, improving, and maintaining routes to support logistic activities, the rapid movement of combat power within the defensive plan, and the maneuver of the reserve. Routes must support the movement of combat vehicles and tactical support vehicles. Since the enemy will likely target these routes, critical tasks for engineers include the creation of bypasses and alternate routes as well as positioning themselves to support mobility requirements during the conduct of the defense. The priority of mobility support is to routes used by counterattacking forces and then routes used by maneuver forces displacing to subsequent positions. Other mobility operations include coordinating gaps in obstacles and, at higher levels, creating LZs and tactical landing strips to support the defensive plan.

Countermobility. Countermobility efforts focus on denying mobility to the enemy and are balanced against likely, future friendly mobility needs. Destroying a bridge may deny the enemy an avenue of approach, but it also may eliminate counterattack opportunities and complicate future offensive maneuver. Countermobility activities seek to integrate reinforcing obstacles with existing obstacles and terrain to create a greater effect. Tasks include supporting the commander's shaping and decisive actions by halting, delaying, and disrupting enemy movement, canalizing the enemy into EAs, and denying avenues of approach. To do this, obstacles create block, turn, disrupt, and fix effects. Obstacles are integrated into observation and fire plans, are concealed whenever possible, and receive priority focus from counterreconnaissance and security operations.

Because the effects that countermobility actions may generate on future mobility, and due to the nature of countermobility resources (e.g., scatterable mines), obstacle emplacement is tightly controlled. Commanders designate the unit responsible for establishing and securing each obstacle. They may retain execution authority for some obstacles or restrict the use of some types of obstacles to allow other battlespace activities to occur. The commander allows subordinate commanders some flexibility in selecting the exact positioning of obstacles. However, all units must know which gaps or lanes—through obstacles and crossing sites—to keep open for movements, as well as the firing and selfdestruct times of scatterable mines to prevent delays in movement. Commanders must be specific and clear in their orders for executing reserve obstacles and closing lanes.

Improvement to the defensive is continuous. Given time and resources, the defending force constructs additional obstacle systems indepth, paying special attention to assailable flanks and rear. The rear is especially vulnerable if there are noncontiguous AOs or nontraditional threats. Obstacle systems can provide additional protection from enemy attacks by forcing the enemy to spend time and resources to breach or bypass them. The defending commander tries to predict enemy points of breach based on terrain and probable enemy objectives. The defending force

develops the means to counter enemy breach attempts, such as coordinated fires, and reestablishes obstacles by using scatterable minefields or other techniques. Forcing the enemy to breach an obstacle can be a technique used to make the enemy vulnerable to destruction.

Tactical and protective obstacles are constructed primarily at company level and below. Small unit commanders ensure that observation and fires cover all obstacles to hinder breaching. Deliberate protective obstacles are common around fixed sites. Protective obstacles are a key component of survivability operations. They are tied in with FPFs and provide the friendly force with close-in protection. Commanders at all echelons track defensive preparations, such as establishing Class IV and V supply points and start or completion times of obstacle belts and groups. The commander plans how the unit will restore obstacles the enemy has breached. The commander uses artillery, air, or ground systems to reseed minefields. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacles and obstacle integration.

Limited Visibility. Defenders always plan for daylight and limited visibility operations simultaneously. Whether the attack comes during the day, during the night, or lasts from one to the other, the defending force is unlikely to be able to adjust their positions. Defensive plans and positions must be effective in day, night, or anything in between. For example, defenders may choose to position themselves closer to avenues of approach which is more conducive to limited visibility operations. The enemy will likely take advantage of limited visibility conditions to attack, conduct reconnaissance operations, breach or reduce defensive obstacles, conduct infiltrations, or advance closer to friendly positions.

While Marine Corps units possess significant night vision capabilities, limitations on fields of view and depth perception place some restrictions on their utility in the defense. Limited visibility conditions generate psychological impacts on the defender as well as the attacker. These conditions also impact defensive maneuver in the same manner as they impact offensive maneuver—requiring tighter formations, increasing cross-country navigation difficulties, and slowing movement rates. To overcome potential limited visibility problems, defensive planning considers the following:

- Focusing long-range detection equipment, such as radar, sensors, and thermal imaging devices, on well-defined avenues of approach.
- Employing combat power along terrain features the enemy is likely to use for orientation in the darkness, such as wood lines and water courses.
- Increasing the numbers of infantry, scouts, OPs, combat patrols, etc., deployed forward and between defensive positions to detect and slow enemy movement, especially enemy infiltration attempts, and protect obstacles against enemy breaching attempts.
- Employing obstacles and early warning devices to slow the advancing enemy and alert defenders.
- Rehearsing displacement and movement plans (defending units moving over rehearsed routes should be able to move faster than an enemy force moving through unfamiliar terrain).

- Planning for illumination on or behind likely EAs to silhouette enemy forces while leaving defenders in shadows and darkness.
- Ensuring that any adjustments to the defense for limited visibility conditions are completely reversed by daylight and vice versa.

While normally associated with the offense, commanders may use smoke and bispectral obscuration in the defense as well—especially when the commander possesses superior night vision technology. While using smoke as a redundant targeting mark is a classical use, other uses include denying the enemy the ability to determine and target friendly positions, use their target acquisition optics, and impairing the enemy's ability to navigate and maintain formations. As with all smoke and thermal obscurants, proper placement is critical to avoid generating limited visibility effects against oneself. See MCTP 3-10E for more information on the use of smoke.

Enemy Vertical Envelopment. There remain enemies that actively plan to use airborne and air assault capabilities, in various numbers and sizes, against defending US and allied forces. Defeating these enemies begins with the MAGTF taking steps to counter them before they launch and during their movement to the drop zone (DZ) or LZ. Ground combat element and rear area security commanders, when faced with a potential vertical envelopment, rely upon IPB to determine and prioritize each potential DZ or LZ. They establish systematic surveillance of these areas to provide a warning if the enemy attempts to insert forces. Units assigned to defend potential landing sites position themselves at the most likely points, develop positions at other sites, and rehearse movement and occupation tasks. Weapons are positioned to maximize the coverage of DZs and LZs while minimizing battlespace geometry issues. Defenders develop fire support plans that make use of conventional munitions and scatterable minefields. Engineers place obstacles on sites of potential enemy vertical envelopment and commanders consider using countermobility operations along the routes the enemy will most likely use to depart their DZs and LZs.

If enemy forces successfully execute a vertical envelopment, a successful defense is based on containing and counterattacking the enemy force before they become organized and reinforced. The MAGTF isolates the enemy by assisting in the reestablishment of air superiority while indirect fires and CAS fix and disrupt the enemy in place. In a manner similar to a movement to contact, security forces gain and maintain contact, developing and shaping the situation for the deployment of the defender's main effort. The main body, if not already in position, deploys to contain and fix the enemy force, and then executes offensive operations to defeat them. If the enemy is successful in consolidating and reinforcing, the defensive priority shifts to containing the enemy and creating the conditions for eventual offensive action. If an enemy vertical envelopment is a likely COA, commanders must consider how they will shape their battlespace and organize and resource subordinate units since the execution of a vertical envelopment will likely be conducted in conjunction with other offensive actions. It is probably beyond the capability of units at the regiment and below to both defend against ground assault and defend against vertical envelopment.

Fires

In the defense, the commander uses the fires warfighting function to neutralize, suppress, or destroy enemy forces; to delay or disrupt the enemy's ability to execute a given COA; and to

enhance the effects of massed direct fires. Fires and information operations support the commander's decisive and shaping actions.

Information Operations. The IO activities and planning considerations for the defense are very similar to those discussed in chapter 3. The commander still analyzes and determines the decision makers, whether individuals, groups, or populations, that require influence to support the defensive SOM. Depending on the nature of the defensive action, information operations may range from degrading enemy C2 capabilities to directing the movement of civilians to evacuation centers.

While a commander conducting offensive operations faces potentially hostile populations as the advance moves forward, commanders conducting defensive operations face the opposite problem—the probability of fighting on, and relinquishing some of, the territory of friendly populations. This issue is more than one of military expediency—such as keeping dislocated civilians off routes critical to military operations—but is an issue of politics and emotion. These considerations may act as a constraint on available COAs. For example, the military may not be allowed to trade space (and the friendly population associated with it) for time. Regardless of whether such constraints exist, commanders must synchronize their IRCs to support defensive COAs that maximize the probability of success while minimizing or mitigating the impact of the friendly populace.

Indirect Fires and Joint Fires. The defending commander combines information operations with indirect fires and CAS to shape the battle and support the main effort. The defensive SOM uses fires and air support to execute the single battle concept. Not only do they conduct shaping actions as the enemy advances, but even as the battle moves into the MBA, indirect fires and air support continue to target and defeat critical enemy assets, reserves, and follow-on forces throughout the battlespace—conducting simultaneous actions that defeat the attacker's bid for victory while contributing to the success of the defender's main effort. As is true across the ROMO, indirect, joint, and air delivered fires provide the commander the ability to generate effects across the entire enemy force at once—not just provide sequential responses to their advance.

Indirect fires have the greatest impact on the enemy when they are synchronized with air delivered fires, direct fires, and the defensive SOM. Such integration must occur from the very beginning of planning. To accomplish this, the defending force ensures that all elements of the fire support chain—from joint fire observers to naval gunfire liaison officers—understand the commander's intent for fires and the defensive SOM. The force distributes fire support assets throughout the AO, closely linking weapons systems with redundant target acquisition means (e.g., UAS, ground reconnaissance assets). Fire support control measures are permissive and placed as close as possible to friendly positions to facilitate engagement. High-payoff targets and high-value targets along with their engagement priorities are determined through the lens of the single battle.

Air and ground delivered fires contribute significantly to the commander's shaping actions because of their range and flexibility. Commanders use fire support assets to disrupt the enemy's preparations, such as attacking likely enemy AAs, logistic hubs, and interdicting enemy movement. Fires support friendly reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance efforts and high-payoff targets are attacked continuously and as early as possible.

Commanders use counterfires against enemy fire support assets as shaping actions, and the timing of counterfires requires consideration. The advantages of engaging in the counterfire battle early

usually outweigh the risks to the defending force, especially when the defender enjoys a qualitative edge in fire support. However, when commanders are forced to balance limited fire support resources against other shaping requirements or are concerned about the survivability of those assets, they may choose to delay counterfires until the enemy enters the MBA. The ability of friendly fire support assets to rapidly shoot and move and the success of counterreconnaissance efforts are other important considerations in counterfire timing.

The commander plans fires to support not only counterreconnaissance operations but the security force in general. These fires should assist in the destruction of enemy reconnaissance assets, deceive the enemy regarding the location of the MBA, and support the security force commander's SOM—specifically supporting canalization, disruption, delay, and the security force's withdrawal criteria and plan. The latter, to include battle handover to units in the MBA, requires detailed consideration and rehearsal. To deconflict battlespace geometry, commanders use NFAs over reconnaissance and security force elements.

Indirect, joint, and air delivered fire planning for the close battle in the MBA focus on disrupting the enemy's attack (e.g., breaking tempo, fragmenting combined arms efforts), preventing the enemy from massing combat power, and creating vulnerabilities for the main effort to exploit. Commanders accomplish this by integrating fire support with direct fires and achieving combined arms effects at critical points, such as choke points, obstacles, and EAs. Fires in the MBA support both rearward passage of lines for the security force, and forward passage of lines for reserves. Fire support assets may close obstacle gaps and reseed breached obstacles. Other fire planning considers—

- Suppressing enemy direct and indirect fire systems and air defense assets to support friendly defensive maneuver, especially counterattacks, disengagements, and repositioning.
- Isolating enemy forces that have penetrated the defensive area from their reserves and follow-on forces.
- Allowing for flexibility in reallocating and reprioritizing fire support assets and targets to respond to the enemy's main effort, counter unexpected enemy actions or success, and support friendly exploitation of opportunities.

Air and Missile Defense. As in the offense, the GCE's primary means of air defense is the employment of passive air defense measures and the ACE's execution of antiair operations in accordance with the joint force air component commander's counterair plans. Such plans seek to develop an environment in which the defender can operate without prohibitive interference from enemy air, missile, and unmanned threats. When conducting an area defense, commanders can more easily integrate the defensive SOM with air defense planning, usually prioritizing the main effort. When conducting mobile or retrograde defenses in the presence of an enemy air threat, commanders must choose if and when to prioritize air defense coverage of supporting effort, main effort, and reserves.

The GCE's active antiair measures are the use of small arms and are most effective against unmanned aircraft or enemy rotary-wing aircraft. However, the primary contribution of the GCE to antiair operations are passive air defense measures. There are two types of passive air

defense—attack avoidance and damage limiting measures—both rely on cover, concealment, and deception.

Attack avoidance focuses upon not being seen and, therefore, not targeted by enemy air threats. Avoiding aerial observation requires the same skills and principles as avoiding ground observation—hiding, blending, and disguising positions through the selection of advantageous positions, the exercise of camouflage discipline, and the construction of additional material to augment naturally existing concealment. Damage limiting methods of passive air defense are similar to those used to protect against indirect fire threats—dispersion, protective construction, and cover. See MCTP 3-01A, Scouting and Patrolling, for more information on camouflage and concealment.

Note: See MCTP 10-10B for more information on air defense.

Intelligence

During planning, the commander uses the IPB process and implements an intelligence collection plan to learn and understand the terrain, identify probable enemy objectives and approaches, and develop appropriate NAIs and TAIs. (See MCRP 2-10B.1 for a detailed discussion of terrain analysis.) Commanders study how the enemy tends to operate, to include patterns they may have established. Commanders consider enemy capabilities, such as their ability to conduct air attacks, infiltrate forces behind friendly units, and the presence of follow-on enemy forces capable of continuing or exploiting attacks. Commanders also consider enemy vulnerabilities to friendly actions such as counterattacks, interdiction, information operations, and canalization by obstacles.

The commander's IPB and intelligence collection plan seeks early identification of as many of the following requirements as possible:

- Locations, dispositions, composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the advancing enemy force.
- Location of critical enemy capabilities—C2 nodes; engineer units and assets; indirect fire weapon systems and artillery control/counterbattery assets; air defense units; IO assets; and logistic resources and units.
- Likely enemy operational points of interest—reconnaissance objectives or goals, possible AAs, potential air assault or airborne areas, staging areas for follow-on forces, withdrawal and reinforcement routes.
- Potential enemy weaknesses, including timetables for most likely COAs, gaps between enemy formations, assailable flanks, and other enemy vulnerabilities.
- Civil considerations—location, numbers, and intentions of civilian populations to include likely routes and directions of movement for dislocated persons.
- Effects of weather and terrain on current and projected operations.

Because commanders must "see" the enemy throughout defensive operations, commanders ensure that their intelligence collection plan will survive contact with the enemy and provide the information necessary for them to fight the defensive battle. This requires that some planning goes into establishing redundancy among ISR resources and providing for their resupply and reconstitution.

Logistics

The logistic priorities for the defending force are normally ammunition and the materials needed to construct obstacles and defensive positions. Commanders ensure that their logistic officers and supporting logistic units understand the commander's intent, the defensive SOM, and branches and sequels—especially rapid transitions to offensive operations. To both limit the risk to CSS units and increase logistic responsiveness, the commander considers stockpiling and caching critical supply items within the security area and MBA—including destruction plans, if necessary, to deny their use to the enemy. Commanders may apply this concept to maintenance as well—using well-supplied, forward-positioned, multifunctional maintenance contact teams to minimize the risk to logistic units while enabling the quick repair and return of many types of equipment without the need for evacuation.

Units err on the side of maintaining full stocks of supply items in case enemy actions disrupt resupply. They conduct resupply during times when an enemy attack is least likely. This may or may not be during periods of limited visibility depending on enemy capabilities. While logistic commanders remain responsible for the defense of their units, defending commanders consider infiltration of logistic units, camouflage, and even smoke to aid resupply and reduce the chances of detection, targeting, and destruction.

The defending force must not underestimate the transportation, manpower, and lead times associated with supplying construction materials for defensive preparations and actually constructing those positions and obstacles. Planners may have to factor logistic limitations into their defensive SOM. If a commander must retain critical terrain and a strong point is not logistically feasible, then other defensive types and methods must be developed to accomplish the mission.

Defending forces generally receive more rapid and responsive medical support than attacking forces because of the advantage of preparation time. Medical planning includes robust use of ambulances and ambulance exchange points to quickly evacuate casualties to places of safety. Depending on the nature of the enemy threat (e.g., a significant air defense capability that hinders air evacuation), higher levels of trauma care may be pushed forward to stabilize patients before further evacuation to definitive care is possible. Commanders consider building in "reserve" capacity to allow for rapid response to mass casualties—such as extra, pre-staged ambulances.

As in all operations, placement and movement of logistic resources in the defense is a balance between responsive support and exposure to risk. Commanders incorporate not only the placement of CSS units into the defensive plan, but also rear area terrain management, movement planning, and traffic control. Ideally, commanders seek to maximize the capabilities of CSS units while minimizing their security requirements. A combat logistics battalion that is spending most of their time defending themselves will not have the time and resources to efficiently exercise their various functions. Conversely, trying to create a risk free environment for that battalion will require either the assignment of combat power away from the defense or the positioning of the battalion so far away from potential threats as to be ineffective.

In the area type of defense that seeks to check or limit enemy advances in terms of terrain, logistic functions may be placed closer to the FEBA (though still deconflicted from the movement requirements of maneuver units). In the mobile type of defense that uses terrain as maneuver

space, commanders must simultaneously protect logistic functions from enemy penetrations and support a very active, maneuver-based defense. This requires a combination of task organizing and pushing specific logistic functions forward in direct support of maneuver elements, while placing higher echelon support deeper into the rear area. Retrograde types of defense require the maneuver units receive the maximum resupply and support possible before the operation commences, and then fall steadily back on logistic units safeguarded far to the rear in the new, planned defensive positions. Conversely, in a manner similar to the way some artillery batteries provide fire support while others displace, CSS units can displace rearward in echelon with maneuver forces, providing continuous support though accepting greater risk.

Force Protection

Unit survivability is critical to defensive success no matter what type of defensive operation is performed. Force protection preserves subordinate unit capabilities so that the commander can use those capabilities to apply maximum combat power at the desired times and places. Commanders remain attuned to changes in enemy tactics and adapt force and individual protective measures accordingly. In the defense, commanders consider—

- Executing personnel recovery in accordance with METT-T. Commanders ensure there are reasonable plans—rally points being simple examples—for units and personnel to execute unassisted recovery operations in chaotic and rapidly changing ground situations.
- Complete integration of the elements of battlespace geometry into the defense SOM to avoid friendly fire incidents—especially during counterattacks and mobile and retrograde types of defense.
- Operational security from information protection to counterreconnaissance and from camouflage to antiterrorism.
- The requirements to mitigate and operate in a CBRN environment depending on METT-T.
- General safety issues, to include conducting daily battle rhythm activities in conditions of limited visibility and in the presence of construction operations for defensive positions.
- Incorporation of explosive ordnance disposal, with a special emphasis on force awareness of unexploded munitions that may be in large quantities in and around defensive positions as a result of enemy indirect fire.

The survivability portion of assured mobility in the defense focuses on enabling units to move rapidly between positions, engage the enemy from those positions, while mitigating and safeguarding their detection and destruction by the enemy. This is particularly true of units assigned terrain-focused missions. Beyond the construction of rudimentary individual and single weapon fighting positions, the defense relies heavily on engineer support. In defensive planning, commanders must carefully consider engineering priorities—to include the consideration of construction and material limitations—in prioritizing not only between mobility, countermobility, and survivability tasks, but within those tasks as well. It is very possible that a battalion commander's priorities could be an obstacle in an EA, the BP of the main effort overlooking that EA, and route improvement for a counterattack force, addressing other positions and other obstacles only if time permits.

Survivability tasks include using engineer equipment to assist in preparing and constructing trenches, CP shelters, as well as radar, artillery, and combat vehicle fighting positions. They

address protecting supply stocks against blast, shrapnel, incendiaries, and CBRN contamination. Commanders provide guidance on the level of protection—such as hull defilade or overhead cover, system priorities, and early use of specialized engineer systems that can construct survivability positions. Commanders also address standards—such as overhead protection against 82 mm mortars—while engineers advise the commander on the costs in terms of time and material to meet those standards. The commander's priority in engineer survivability planning during defensive operations is determining the most appropriate locations and standards for the construction of survivability positions. MCTP 3-34C provides additional information concerning the construction and maintenance of survivability positions.

In accordance with METT-T, units can conduct survivability moves between their primary, alternate, and supplementary positions. A survivability move involves rapidly displacing a unit, CP, or facility in response to direct and indirect fires, the approach of an enemy unit, a natural phenomenon, or as a proactive measure based on intelligence, meteorological data, and risk analysis of enemy capabilities and intentions (including weapons of mass destruction).

DEFENSIVE METHODS

As in all operations, the employment and arrangement of forces to solve the tactical problem is up to the commander. The defensive methods provide commanders with the tools they need, in the combinations they see fit, to execute the area, mobile, and retrograde types of defense. Each defensive method—sector, BP, strong point, linear, perimeter, and reverse slope—has its own purpose and unique considerations.

Defensive Methods
Sector
Battle Position
Strong Point
Linear
Perimeter
Reverse Slope

Sector Defense

Commanders incorporate sectors into their defensive SOM when they wish to provide subordinate commanders maximum latitude to accomplish assigned tasks. For instance, a battalion commander might task a company with delaying the enemy and then provide them a defensive sector in which to generate that effect. The designated company commander might choose to use a combination of ambushes and BPs within the assigned sector to create the delay. The extent of the assigned sector is based on METT-T, but should be no larger than what can be influenced by the unit. Sectors are not the same as AOs because units that are assigned sectors possess none of the responsibilities associated with AOs. For this reason, defensive sectors are normally assigned only to companies and below.

Battle Position and Strong Point Defenses

As discussed earlier in this chapter, BPs are both a defensive method and an intent graphic that depict the location and general orientation of a defending force. Commanders employ this defensive method when their defensive SOM requires the force, or a portion of the force, to orient relative to terrain. For example, a company may occupy a BP to disrupt, delay, or block enemy movement along an avenue of approach to set the conditions for the rest of the battalion to counterattack. Or that same company might occupy a BP as the battalion's main effort to

concentrate fires in an EA. Commanders employing BPs as part of their SOM must consider the time and material necessary to prepare them.

A strong point is a defensive method that is employed by commanders whose mission requires the retention of terrain indefinitely and when it is possible that the defending force may be isolated for periods of time by enemy action. The physical position of a strong point is considered a type of BP, but its unique purpose makes it a valuable tool when the defending force must maintain control of key terrain. Strong points are labor and material intensive, requiring significant investment in engineering resources and support. They may be linked together to form fortified areas, or they may serve as the anchor for a mobile defense.

Linear Defense

Commanders use the linear defensive method in conjunction with linear obstacles (e.g., ridgelines, rivers, valleys), either with or without manmade obstacle augmentation. While the linear defensive method may be incorporated into any type of defense, it is most normally associated with area defenses because the commander accepts less risk by not allowing the enemy to cross the obstacle. Forces conducting this defensive method either defend along or behind the obstacle depending on the larger defensive SOM.

An area defense will generally defend forward along a linear obstacle. Security forces would conduct shaping actions forward of the obstacle, conducting a rearward passage of lines while units in the MBA would use the linear method to conduct the decisive action. Any enemy attempts to penetrate or seize a bridgehead would be isolated and counterattacked. A mobile defense will generally defend behind a linear obstacle. The commander will task minimal forces to conduct the linear method. They will act as a fixing force, using the obstacle itself to help them delay, disrupt, and canalize the enemy advance, leaving the enemy vulnerable to a counterattack by the main effort. The commander may counterattack penetrations or bridgeheads quickly, or may lure the enemy further into the defensive battlespace to generate greater destruction.

Because it is extremely difficult to deploy in strength along the entire length of a linear obstacle, the defending force must conduct economy of force measures in some areas. Consequently, the linear method is most effective when used in conjunction with others methods. For example, commanders might use sector defensive methods in the security area to disrupt and attrite the enemy, the linear method to fix the enemy, and a defense in depth to contain and eliminate penetrations. Failure to work in these types of communications leaves the defending force vulnerable to enemy penetrations or bridgeheads the defending force cannot contain.

Perimeter Defense

The perimeter defensive method is a tool applied to all types of military operations, from ORPs and AAs to the strong point defensive method. In terms of the defense, it is useful in all three types of defense and may be used in conjunction with any of the defensive methods. A perimeter defense orients in all directions. It is usually employed by battalions or smaller, though larger units executing base security functions may also employ it. Commanders employ the perimeter defensive method in the following situations:

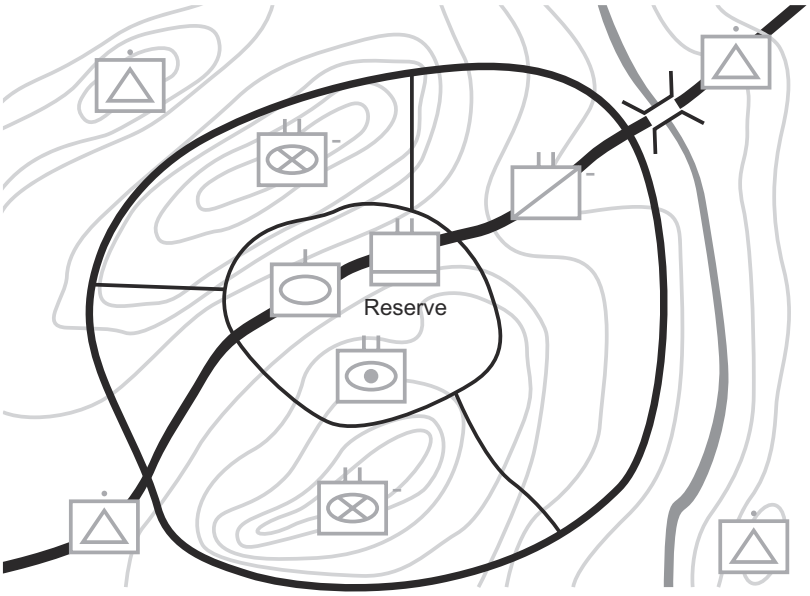
- When holding key terrain (e.g., a strong point) or protecting important assets.
- When providing for immediate self-protection or when bypassed by advancing enemy forces.
- When the defensive SOM does not tie in adjacent units physically.

A major characteristic of a perimeter defense is a secure inner area with most of the combat power located on the perimeter. The security area is maintained through aggressive patrolling and security operations. Another characteristic is the ease of access for resupply operations. The commander coordinates direct and indirect fire plans to prevent friendly fire with neighboring units and noncombatants. Normally, the reserve centrally locates to react to a penetration of the perimeter at any point.

Perimeters vary in shape depending on the terrain and situation. If the commander determines the most probable direction of enemy attack, the part of the perimeter covering that approach may be reinforced with additional resources. The perimeter shape conforms to the terrain features that best use friendly observation and fields of fire. The commander can increase the effectiveness of the perimeter by tying it into a natural obstacle, such as a river, which allows the defending unit to concentrate their combat power in more threatened areas (see fig. 8-9).

Organization of Forces. The characteristics of the defense apply to the perimeter defensive method in the same manner as any other type or method of defense. Commanders utilizing this defensive method possess security, main battle, and rear areas. They seek to shape operations in the security area and provide depth and mutual support within the MBA—the perimeter itself. The commander utilizes security forces, MBA forces, and a reserve. Depending on METT-T, the defending force either employs all of their combat power on the perimeter, or creates outer and inner perimeters.

In the first technique, commanders place all subordinate units in positions along the perimeter. The perimeter is divided into subordinate unit AOs with boundaries and contact points (see fig. 8-10). Each subordinate unit provides their own security force for patrolling and other security operations. The commander either constitutes a reserve in the center, or utilizes the least engaged unit for this purpose. This organization of forces maximizes combat power on the perimeter,



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 8-9. Perimeter Defense.

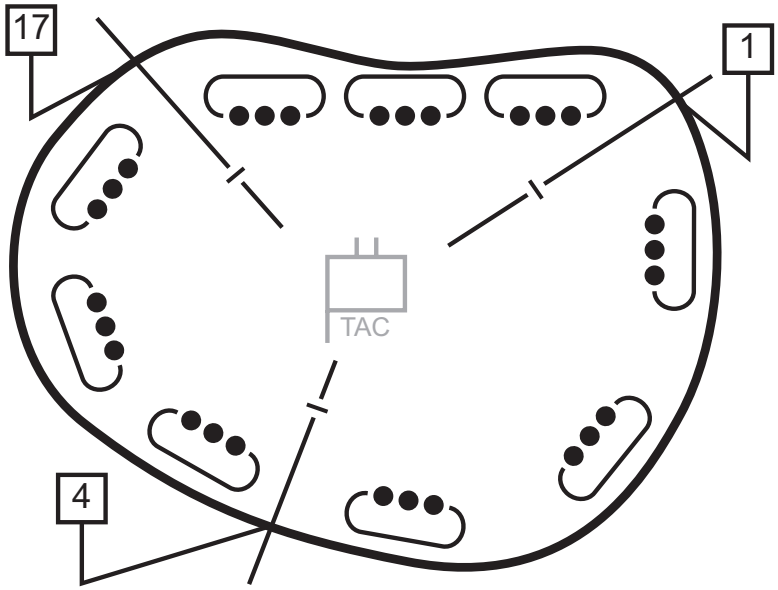


Figure 8-10. Combat Power on the Perimeter.

reduces the possibility of friendly fire incidents within the perimeter, and creates depth through operations such as ambushes and raids in the security area. Risks in this technique include a disjointed effort in the security area and ineffective reactions to penetrations of the perimeter.

In the second technique, commanders seek to create greater depth in the defense by employing inner and outer perimeters. As seen in figure 8-11 the regimental commander gives each battalion an AO, and directs them to employ their companies in a "two up, one back" technique that creates an inner and outer perimeter and provides depth within the position itself. The inner perimeter provides the reserve, the outer perimeter the main effort, and the regiment's third battalion can serve as the security force. Figure 8-12 offers another example—two battalions place their combat

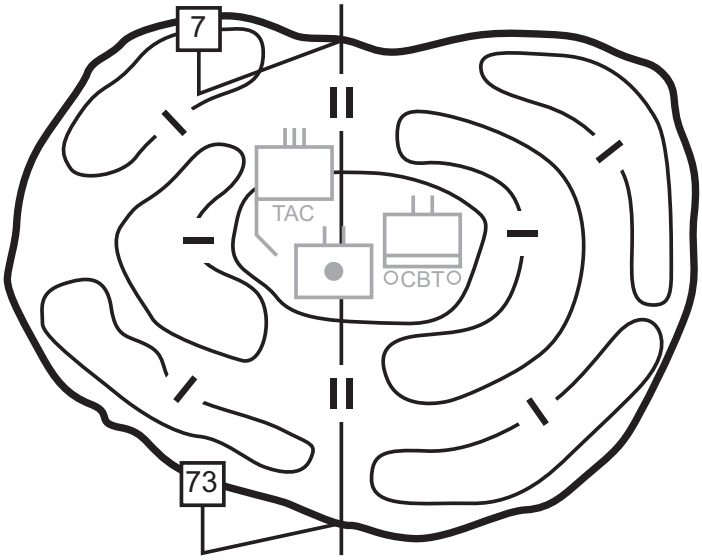


Figure 8-11. Inner and Outer Perimeters with Two Battalions.

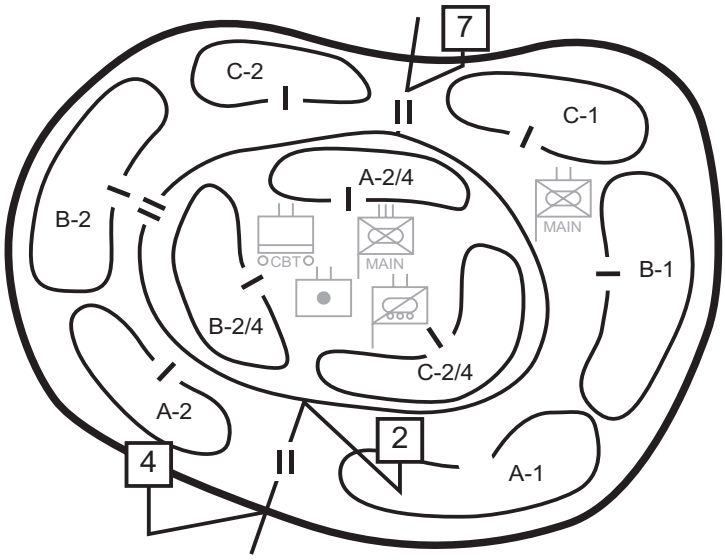
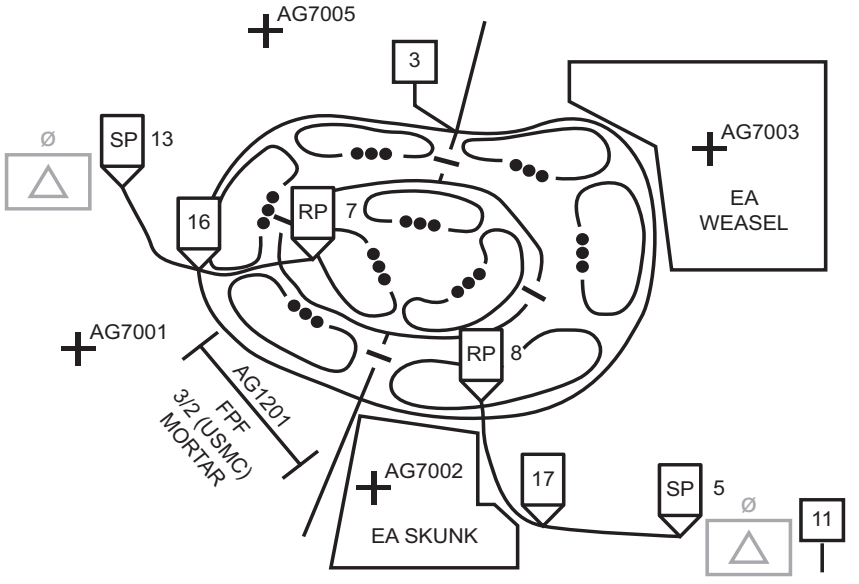


Figure 8-12. Inner and Outer Perimeters With Three Battalions.

power forward on the outer perimeter, while the third battalion constitutes the entire inner perimeter.

Control Measures. The commander in a perimeter defense designates the trace of the perimeter, BPs, contact points, and lateral and forward boundaries. The commander can use EAs, TRPs, FPFs, and principal direction of fire as fire control measures. The commander designates checkpoints, contact points, passage points, and passage routes for use by supporting efforts conducting reconnaissance and security operations (see fig. 8-13).



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 8-13. Engagement Area Control Measures.

Planning a Perimeter Defense. Defending commanders face four significant decisions when planning perimeter positions. First, placing the position where it accomplishes the mission. Second, determining the most likely enemy COAs, as the enemy is unlikely to attack from all directions at once. Third, creating the position making the best use of the terrain available. Fourth, locating the position where resupply—by whatever means—is possible. For example, a commander tasked with defending a critical highway junction may place a perimeter defense on high ground overlooking the junction. The position allows the junction to be controlled by fire while the high ground offers the best terrain available and provides a relatively secure LZ for resupply.

Commanders forming a perimeter do not merely cede the security area to the enemy. The success of a perimeter defense relies heavily upon the defensive depth, early warning, and shaping space the security area offers. At a minimum, commanders normally employ their organic reconnaissance assets, such as the scout-sniper platoon, to provide early warning and counterreconnaissance and to disrupt enemy plans (e.g., emplacing mortars). Commanders may augment this effort with sensors, target acquisition radars, aerial surveillance, squad-size or smaller OPs, ambushes along likely avenues of approach, and aggressive patrolling. Commanders may also choose to create independent security forces that operate outside of the perimeter to deny advantageous terrain to the enemy and create the conditions necessary for the main effort's decisive action.

Within the perimeter, the defensive SOM takes into account the terrain, internal tactical mobility, and likely enemy COAs. In open terrain, defending forces can cover physical gaps in the perimeter with fires. In restrictive terrain, defending forces compensate for restricted fields of fire and observation by narrowing frontages, shrinking the size of the perimeter, and physically linking adjacent units. This may require commanders to organize their forces with all combat power forward.

The commander considers tactical mobility requirements internal to the position to enable the rapid movement of forces and the reserve (especially when utilizing inner and outer perimeters), to create depth within the perimeter, and to enable the execution of basic logistic functions free from enemy observation and interference. This is especially applicable to units employing combat vehicles that will need to consider the creation of alternate, supplementary, and hide positions.

The defending force decides upon the most likely enemy COAs to create a defensive SOM and allocate combat power accordingly. While the perimeter defensive method provides for all around security, the defender accepts significant risk by trying to defend equally, everywhere. As in all defensive methods, the force uses METT-T to determine likely enemy actions, counter them, and seek opportunities for offensive action. Accordingly, commanders integrate obstacles with fires and observation and seek to enable enough space within the perimeter for defensive maneuver, such as alternate positions for antiarmor weapons and proper placement for the reserve. Fire support planning is typical of the defense. If the defending force is isolated, commanders seek to utilize external fire support assets before internal resources. Defensive positions within the perimeter are placed to decrease the ability of the enemy to simultaneously suppress them with the same fires (i.e., forcing the enemy to split their forces to deal with friendly positions vice allowing them to mass combat power).

Executing a Perimeter Defense. The defending force begins the defensive fight by executing shaping actions in the security area. Depending on resources that are available, the defender works to defeat enemy reconnaissance efforts, disrupt enemy movement, and deny the use of likely support-by-fire and assault positions. As the attack progresses, reconnaissance and security assets utilize supporting arms and the commander employs information operations to further break up enemy formations and tempo.

Actual attacks against the perimeter are dependent upon the operational environment and may consist of anything from enemy long-range sniper, mortar, and rocket fire attacks to suicide demolition squads and attacks by major enemy ground and air forces. Regardless, friendly supporting arms, tanks, antiarmor, and crew-served weapons leverage natural and reinforcing obstacles to engage the enemy at long ranges. If the attack comes within small arms range, other weapons on the perimeter engage the enemy and FPFs are used, if required. Friendly forces maneuver within the perimeter, using other positions to increase survivability, limit enemy options, and counter threats. Should the enemy penetrate the perimeter, the reserve blocks the penetration or counterattacks to restore the primary defensive positions. If the commander uses an unengaged force to constitute a new reserve, the commander must retain sufficient forces to defend the vacated sector, unless the situation forces the commander to assume that degree of risk.

Upon successfully defending the perimeter, the commander pursues withdrawing enemy forces, as able, either physically or through fires. If the defending force does not transition to the offense, they immediately begin to reconstitute the defense and reestablish the security area. The commander takes steps to modify the defensive SOM as much as practicable to present the enemy a different tactical problem should they choose to attack again.

Reverse Slope Defense

The reverse slope defensive method is utilized in conjunction with other defensive methods when the commander wishes to mask the main defensive positions from enemy observation and fires. Normally employed at the battalion and below, defenders use this method when the enemy possesses a qualitative or quantitative advantage that makes a forward slope defense untenable, when the defender seeks to use surprise in conjunction with the decisive action, or both. Additional considerations are—

- The crest and forward slope offer little or no cover and concealment, was lost, or was not seized.
- Friendly units on the flanks can adequately cover the forward slope.
- The defending force is in contact with the enemy and is forced to assume a hasty defense.

The successful reverse slope defense relies upon denying the enemy the topographical crest. Although the defender may not occupy the crest in strength, controlling the crest by fire is essential for success. The goal is to force the enemy to try and cross the exposed crest while denying them effective use of their supporting arms against a defender located on the reverse and counter slopes (see fig. 8-14). Firing from covered and concealed positions in these areas, using obstacles to maximize effects, and possessing a freedom of maneuver that a forward slope defense would deny them, the defending force maintains a distinct advantage over enemy forces exposed on the topographical crest. Enemy forces that do push forward of the crest remain exposed, disoriented, and canalized into unfamiliar terrain, kill zones, and EAs.

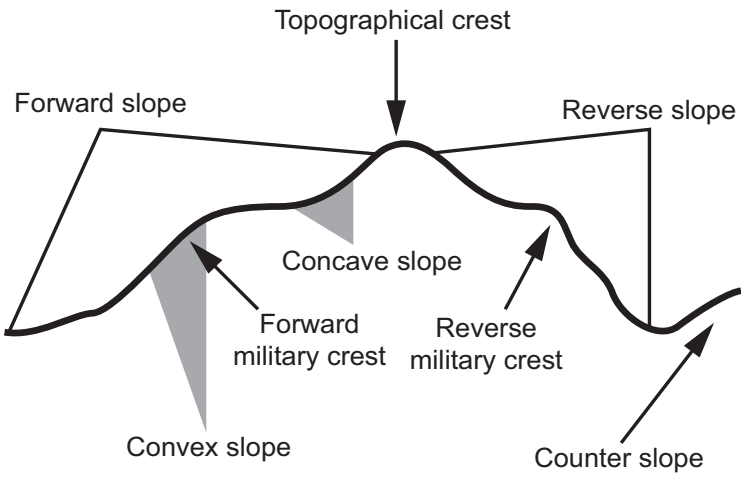


Figure 8-14. Slope Terminology.

Commanders choosing to use the reverse slope defensive method accept risk in limiting their observation and ability to engage the enemy forward of the topographical crest. Often, the best terrain to employ obstacles and create EAs is forward and once security forces withdraw, the enemy is largely unimpeded in conducting maneuver and preparations for their assault. Commanders must also consider that surprise is one of the fundamental advantages of this defensive method, and once the enemy overcomes that effect, the defending force may be at a considerable disadvantage. Finally, a reverse slope defense allows the enemy the advantage of attacking downhill.

Organization of Forces. The commander utilizes the security and MBA forces and reserve generally associated with the defense when executing the reverse slope defensive method. The security force executes reconnaissance tasks placing elements where they can observe the forward slope, the terrain forward of it, and likely enemy avenues of approach. Other security elements destroy enemy reconnaissance assets, delay the enemy, disorganize the enemy's attack, and deceive the enemy regarding the exact location of the main defense. Available combat power dictates the resources available for security tasks. At a minimum, the defending force may source assets from the reserve to occupy OPs located near or forward of the topographical crest to provide long-range observation of the enemy's flanks and front.

The MBA forces orient themselves to mass fires on the enemy as they attempt to cross the topographical crest. These forces employ the characteristics of the defense, maneuver, terrain, and multiple positions to prevent the enemy from penetrating or effectively targeting friendly positions. Figure 8-15 depicts the use of an oblique defilade to ensure coverage of the crest. The force in the MBA assists the security force in maintaining observation and fires over the forward slope as long as possible to disrupt enemy attempts to seize and push beyond the topographical crest. Whenever possible, commanders use other maneuver elements to support units in reverse slope positions by placing them where they can observe and generate effects on the forward slope.

The reserve counterattacks enemy penetrations, maneuvers against exposed enemy flanks, and can serve as the decisive action of the defense. Depending on METT-T and acceptable risk, the defending force can employ the reserve in limited attacks across the topographical crest to disrupt

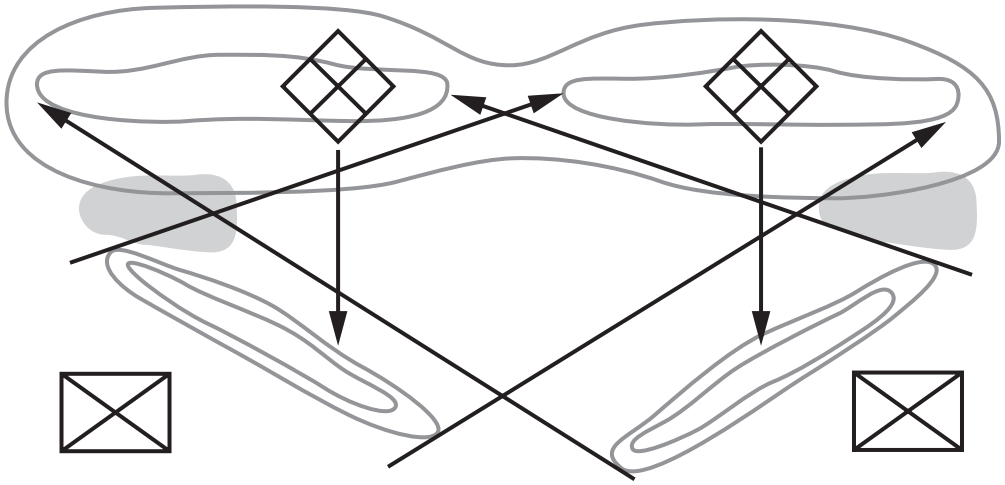


Figure 8-15. Oblique Defilade.

enemy forces on the forward slope. Terrain dependent, commanders may place the reserve on the counter slope where they can support the main battle force by fire or by maneuver.

Control Measures. Defensive control measures introduced in previous chapters apply equally to the reverse slope defense. The commander places EAs and obstacles on the reverse slope. The topographical crest normally marks the far edge of the EA. The defending force must dominate the topographic crest by fires to prevent the enemy from successfully engaging it.

Executing a Reverse Slope Defense. As with any impending attack, friendly security forces seek to observe and disrupt enemy preparations while at the same time denying the enemy the ability to do the same. As the enemy advances, security forces use any combination of maneuver and observation to disrupt, delay, and canalize the enemy through fires and combat. Security force commanders seek to operate in a manner that does not disclose the main defensive positions and make a determined effort to leave forces in place to observe the forward slope.

As the enemy advance reaches the forward slope, if not already accomplished by the security force, the main battle forces establish observation of the enemy and use indirect fires to delay, disrupt, and attrite the enemy. Depending on METT-T, commanders may use forward slope positions followed by a withdrawal to engage the enemy deep and as a tactical ruse to further mislead the enemy as to the location of the main defensive positions. As the enemy reaches the topographical crest, commanders use integrated obstacles and direct and indirect fires to prevent enemy occupation and use of the crest. Observers use indirect fires on the forward slope to further break up the enemy's momentum and attempts to recover and reorganize.

As the enemy attack stalls and hesitates on the topographical crest, commanders may choose to employ the reserve. The reserve may: provide additional fires from the counter slope to support the main effort; maneuver to enemy flanks and attack by fire; or counterattack and expel the enemy from the topographical crest. Commanders may also use the reserve to prolong the effectiveness of the reverse slope defense, using the reserve to counter enemy attempts to bypass the defense.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions occur when there is a change to the mission, a change in the enemy's actions or TTP, additional functions are added to a unit, there is a change to the environment (e.g., urban to rural), a change of AO, a change to task organization, or some combination of these. Successful defensive operations either transition to offensive operations or stability activities. Unsuccessful defenses transition to other types of defense, such as a retrograde.

Transition to Offensive Operations

A unit transitions from the defense to the offense because they are ordered to do so, have planned to do so after some defensive criteria is met, or unexpected events present an opportunity to do so. Ideally, commanders consider a transition to the offense as part of their defensive planning, anticipating when and where the enemy will reach a culminating point or will become vulnerable to offensive action. While guarding against enemy deception, indicators of such conditions include—

- Enemy forces begin to transition to the defense.
- Enemy forces suffer heavy losses.
- Enemy forces are committed piecemeal in continued enemy attacks.
- Enemy reserve forces are identified among attacking forces.
- Examination of captured or killed enemy personnel and captured or destroyed enemy equipment and supplies show that the enemy force is unable to adequately sustain itself.
- A noticeable reduction in the tempo of enemy operations.
- Local counterattacks meet with unexpected success.

To successfully transition to the offense, the friendly force must achieve initial success, establish momentum, and capitalize on both the psychological boost that friendly forces receive and the despair and confusion enemy forces endure. While there will be an inevitable pause during the transition, commanders must minimize it or risk the enemy successfully establishing an effective defense. Commanders seek to do so by pushing security forces forward during the transition to maintain contact with the enemy, maintain pressure on them, and avoid enemy deception operations. Simultaneously, commanders redeploy and reorganize for the attack, such as moving fire support assets forward and transitioning engineer priorities from countermobility and survivability to mobility.

Commanders also plan to transition their logistic effort, shifting focus from supporting the defense of a known location to supporting advance and maneuver (e.g., shifting from stockpiling construction materials to pushing forward fuel). Proper planning for the transition from defense to offense also allows CSS assets to take advantage of the time available to conduct tasks such as deferred equipment maintenance and medical treatment that further aid the offense.

A commander can use two basic techniques when transitioning to the offense. The first, and generally preferred, is to attack using forces not previously committed to the defense. These forces may come from the reserve, be pulled from units not in contact, or consist of reinforcements. Being uncommitted, they are likely to be well-organized, rested, in a position to plan and prepare,

and possess sufficient combat readiness for offensive action. Their use mitigates delays in transition likely to be encountered by the main battle force which may still be decisively engaged when the commander makes the transition decision. If using units not in contact with the enemy, the commander will have to adopt economy of force operations or temporarily abandon AOs and accept risk to generate sufficient combat power.

The second technique is to transition to offensive operations using the currently defending forces. This technique generally has the advantage of being more rapidly executed and thus more likely to catch the enemy by surprise. Speed of execution in this technique results from not having to conduct an approach or tactical road march from reserve AAs or, in the case of reinforcements, move from other AOs and reception, staging, organization, and integration locations. Speed also results from not having to conduct a forward passage of lines (see chap. 15). The primary disadvantage of this technique is that the attacking force generally lacks stamina and must be quickly replaced, if friendly offensive operations are not to culminate quickly.

Transition to Stability Activities

Civil considerations are inherent to all military operations. Just as a force conducting offensive operations must plan to interact with a potentially hostile population, forces conducting defensive operations can expect to deal with friendly civilians seeking aid or trying to flee the area. Beyond this, however, are situations when stability activities become a unit's primary focus of effort.

Units change their focus of effort from defensive to stability activities due to a change in mission (e.g., ordered to conduct rear area security), a change in situation, or the end of hostilities (e.g., friendly territory is successfully retained). If the latter, this transition should be the execution of previous planning efforts—stability activities that support transition to civil authority cannot be afterthoughts. It follows that setting these transition conditions have significant impact on the planning and execution of the defensive operations leading up to them. As the unit transitions from the defense to stability, the commander—

- Maintains contact and surveillance of any remaining enemy or hostile elements.
- Maintains the combat power necessary to conduct security operations.
- Establishes AOs, either contiguous or noncontiguous, for subordinate forces.
- Prepares to transition some or all combat support units to other roles such as provisional infantry, mobility operations, or critical infrastructure reconstruction.
- Conducts command and control and task reorganization to support stability activities functions to include adding and integrating new functions and enablers.
- Seeks to integrate operations with proper civil authority, whether an occupational government, international organization, or HN authority.
- Consolidates, reorganizes, and requests logistic support for stability activities, and seeks to maximize opportunities for reconstitution of the force.
- Readdresses risk assessment assumptions and ROE.
- Conducts necessary training and reorientation of the unit's personnel to combat complacency and reinforce the shift in emphasis from the defense to stability.

CHAPTER 9
AREA DEFENSE

An area defense capitalizes on the strength inherent in closely integrated defensive organization on the ground. The conduct of an area defense facilitates the consolidation and reconstitution of forces necessary to transition to offense operations or stability activities. Commanders may assign subordinate units area defense missions as part of a larger type of defense.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of all defenses is to defeat the enemy and transition to the offense. All defenses use terrain to their advantage. The area defense, however, focuses more heavily on terrain as it relates to the enemy, seeking to either retain or deny specified terrain, or when terrain significantly impacts the ability to conduct operations. A commander conducts an area defense when the following conditions occur:

- When directed to defend or retain specified terrain.
- When terrain limits maneuver space, restricting the movement of the defending force but also affording natural lines of resistance and limiting the enemy to a few, well-defined avenues of approach.
- When the commander cannot resource a reserve or the employment of the reserve is constrained by terrain, lack of mobility, or enemy air superiority.
- The forces available have less mobility than the enemy and when the depth of the AO is limited.
- There is enough time to organize the position and terrain enables mutual support.
- The employment of precision weapons or weapons of mass destruction by the enemy is possible.
- Conducting force protection while transitioning from offense operations or stability activities.

Forms of Area Defense
Defense in Depth
Forward Defense

There are two forms of area defense: defense in depth and forward defense. Both demonstrate that area defenses are not merely static, but also employ all characteristics of the defense including maneuver. Static actions in the area defense usually consist of fires from prepared positions. Maneuver actions include repositioning units between prepared positions (or forward operating bases), counterattacks, and spoiling attacks (see chap. 5).

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

Regardless of whether commanders choose a spatial- or purpose-based battlespace framework, they organize the force into security, MBA, and reserve forces to execute the defensive SOM (see fig. 9-1). See chapter 2 for discussion of battlespace frameworks.

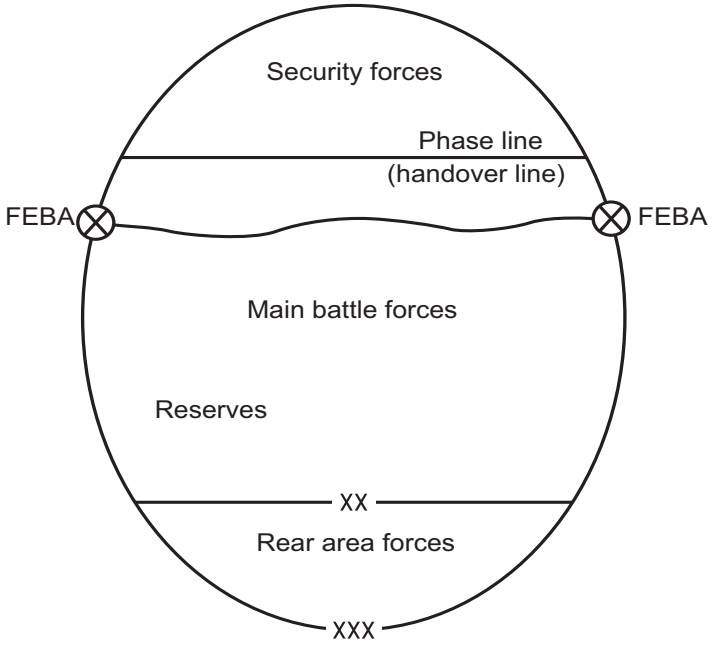


Figure 9-1. Organization of Forces for an Area Defense.

Security Forces

Security forces in the area defense conduct those reconnaissance, counterreconnaissance, and security tasks discussed in chapters 8 and 12. With the area defense's focus on terrain, the security force adds depth to the overall defensive effort and provides the commander the ability to interrupt enemy preparations through spoiling attacks and employment of supporting arms and defensive actions to delay, disrupt, and attrite their advance. Ideally, the actions of the security force compel the enemy to conduct a movement to contact. The commander places a high priority on an early identification and attack of the enemy's main effort. Commanders may assign screen, guard, or cover missions depending on METT-T and the resources available (see chap. 13). While commanders must balance combat power requirements between the security force and MBA forces, they ensure that the security force possesses, at a minimum, the resources necessary to provide early warning of enemy action and to protect themselves from unexpected enemy contact. Commanders must state the acceptable risk to the security force or the disengagement criteria in quantifiable terms, such as friendly strength levels, time, or event. The assignment of a force to conduct rear area security is a function of METT-T, the size of the unit's rear area, and available combat power.

Main Battle Area Forces

The MBA is where the main effort executes the decisive action. Main battle forces consist of the main effort and necessary supporting efforts to execute the defensive SOM—halting and defeating or destroying the enemy. In the area defense, the commander builds the MBA force around key terrain and high-payoff targets, using fires from mutually supporting, prepared positions supplemented by counterattack and the repositioning of forces to retain terrain. The main effort in the area defense often involves close combat given the priority on terrain retention.

Reserve

In the area defense, commanders plan to succeed without using the reserve. Indeed, a reason commanders may choose to execute an area defense is because they lack a reserve or mobility is constrained by terrain. The reserve is primarily created to exploit opportunities to seize the initiative from the enemy, counter unexpected enemy actions, or restore the integrity of the area defense against enemy success. Examples of this include—

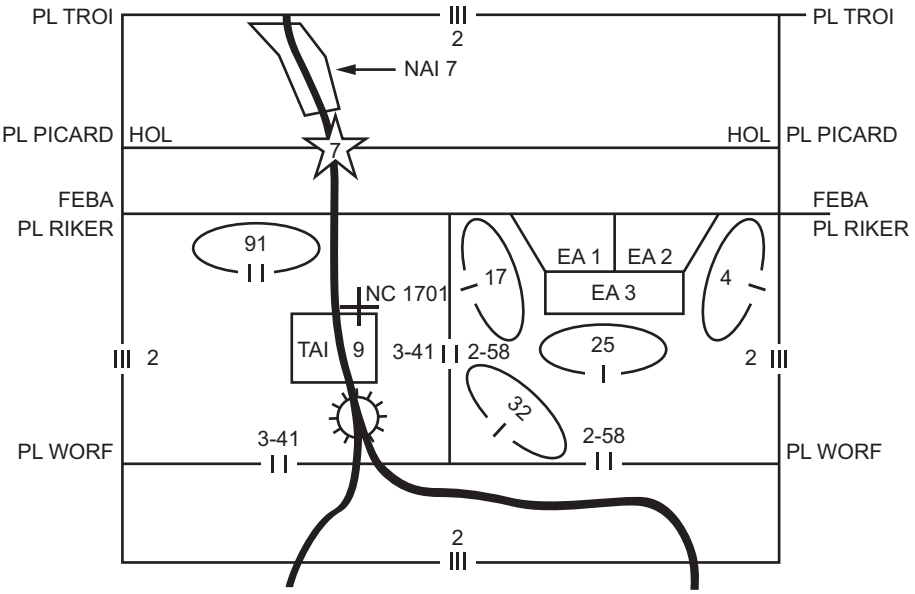
- Reinforcing the defense of committed forces such as extending their flanks to prevent envelopment.
- Relieving depleted units and providing for continuous operations.
- Reacting to threats directed against the friendly force's rear area.
- Covering a retrograde movement.

It may prove difficult for commanders executing an area defense to constitute a reserve given the demands on combat power that terrain retention entails and the fact that attackers will seek to overmatch combat power against defenders. While tempting to either forgo a reserve (company commanders and below form reserves based on METT-T) or use the "least engaged unit," these options end up being self-defeating since they rob commanders of crucial flexibility. In the area defense, commanders can resolve this by placing their most mobile assets in reserve. This not only provides the reserve with the mobility they need to perform their mission, but allows commanders to accept risk elsewhere in the battlespace since they possess a force that can rapidly respond to enemy threats.

Other alternatives include using the security force as a reserve once they retrograde back through friendly lines, though commanders accept considerable risk to both the security force mission (i.e., the security force must withdraw in time to reconstitute themselves as a reserve) and the reserve mission (i.e., enemy action may significantly degrade the security force rendering them ineffective). Another option is to divide the reserve into smaller units spread throughout the battlespace. This is effective when terrain significantly impacts reserve mobility, but it invites risk since it becomes difficult to mass the reserve if necessary. Finally, commanders accept prudent risk and place the reserve where they feel the reserve is most likely needed. This is also effective when terrain impacts reserve mobility and when commanders need the impact of the entire reserve if committed. This last option is similar to others in that in restrictive terrain the reserve will be unable to rapidly respond to opportunity or crisis elsewhere.

CONTROL MEASURES

Commanders organize an area defense by, at a minimum, using boundaries and AOs to establish security, main battle, and rear areas and assign responsibilities to subordinate units. When possible, the boundaries of the security force coincides with those of the MBA force. The security area should be deep enough to require the enemy to displace their combat support and CSS assets (e.g., artillery and maintenance units) forward in order to carry the attack into the MBA. This makes those assets vulnerable to friendly maneuver and supporting arms. Other area defense control measures include EAs, the FEBA, handover line, strong points, TRPs, NAIs, TAIs, and other fire coordination control measures. Figure 9-2 depicts the most common control measures. Chapters 2 and 8 define these control measures.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 9-2. Typical Control Measures for an Area Defense.

Commanders ensure the plans of their subordinates support the overall defense and are deconflicted from each other by using control measures such as contact points and PLs. Commanders are responsible for overall battlespace geometry and movement planning between the positions of subordinate units—especially when planning passage of lines for security forces and reserves. See chapter 16 for information on rearward and forward passages of lines.

PLANNING AN AREA DEFENSE

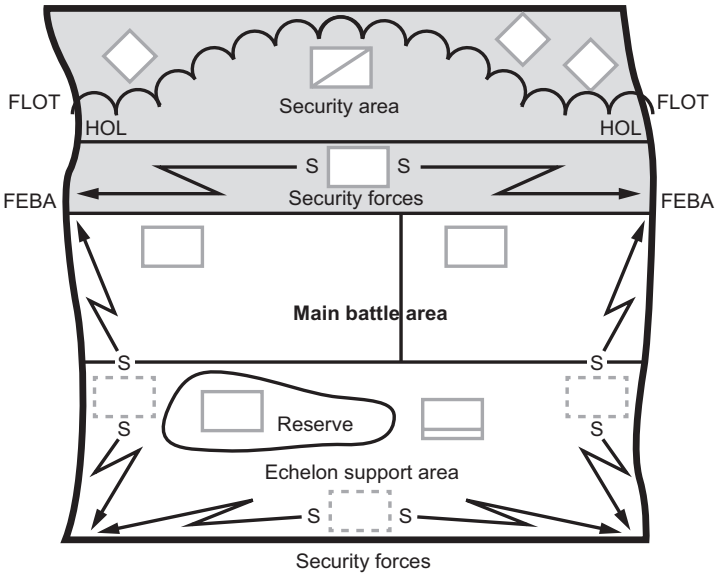
The driving factor behind planning for the area defense is the centrality of terrain—the nature of the terrain, the balance of forces that dictates its use, a terrain driven mission. In planning, the commander determines how to integrate available forces, fires, and obstacles with the existing

terrain to isolate and defeat the enemy. The second factor is gaining the time necessary to prepare a coherent, coordinated, and effective defense that allows selected defensive positions to defeat the enemy by fire, absorb the enemy attack, and launch local counterattacks. Once dug, defensive positions cannot be moved. Without proper time to prepare, the commander risks committing to a faulty defensive SOM. See chapter 8 for general defensive planning considerations.

The keys to addressing these two factors are the ability of selected defensive positions to provide mutual support and concentrate fires; to build depth in the security and MBAs; to create maneuver within the defense; and to take full advantage of the terrain. Another important consideration is the ability to eventually transition to some sort of offensive operation— remaining static in an area defense over time provides the enemy opportunity to better prepare and eventually overwhelm the defender.

Commanders assigning the defensive mission define the area to defend. The ideal area defense is one in which effective mutual support exists throughout the width and depth of the defender's tactical positions. This allows commanders to use multiple defensive methods and increase flexibility, such as utilizing sectors and BPs. However, this is sometimes not the case. Commanders assigned the defense over broad fronts often must conduct noncontiguous operations (see figs. 9-3 and 9-4). Commanders assigned shallow AOs experience reduced flexibility and must fight well forward.

Therefore, commanders planning an area defense may be given, or may choose, between two forms of area defense—defense in depth or a forward defense. The two are not exclusionary—part of a unit may conduct a forward defense while another part conducts a defense in depth. Commanders choose the defense in depth when the mission and METT-T enable the defending force to allow terrain and space to absorb the momentum of the enemy attack. Commanders choose a forward defense when the mission and METT-T do not allow for significant enemy penetration into the defensive area.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 9-3. Area Defense—Contiguous Area of Operations.

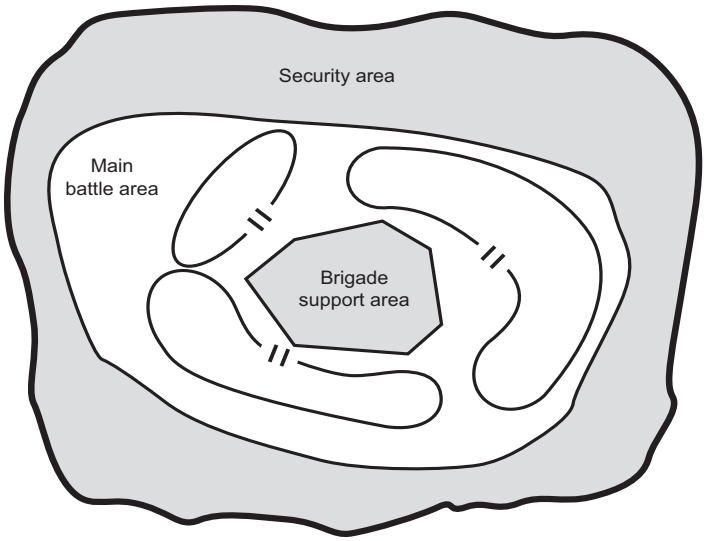


Figure 9-4. Area Defense—Noncontiguous Area of Operations.

Defense in Depth

The defense in depth form of the area defense is normally the commander's preferred option. Forces using this form of defense absorb the momentum of the enemy's attack by forcing the enemy to attack repeatedly through mutually supporting positions arranged in depth. Figure 9-5 depicts a division conducting a defense in depth with subordinate regiments deployed in noncontiguous areas of operations with enemy avenues of approach. Along with the general considerations for an area defense, commanders select the defense in depth form when the—

- Mission is not restrictive and allows the commander to fight throughout the depth of the battlespace.
- Terrain does not favor a defense well forward, and there is better defensible terrain deeper within the AO.
- AO is deep compared to its width, and there is significant depth available.
- Cover and concealment on or near the FEBA is limited.
- Enemy has several times the combat power of the defender.
- Enemy possesses precision munitions or is likely to use weapons of mass destruction.

The use of the defense in depth requires significant engineer and other resources dedicated to survivability and countermobility. But the depth of the defense gives the commander's fire support assets time to deliver destructive effects throughout the battlespace and affords the defending commander multiple opportunities to concentrate overwhelming combat power against the attacking enemy. The defense in depth also provides more reaction time for the defending force to appropriately respond to the attack. Between the time the security force provides their first warning and the time the enemy commits to a COA, the commander is able to receive and process continuous information on the attacker's intentions and capabilities and respond accordingly, reducing the risk of an enemy force penetrating the defense from an unexpected direction.

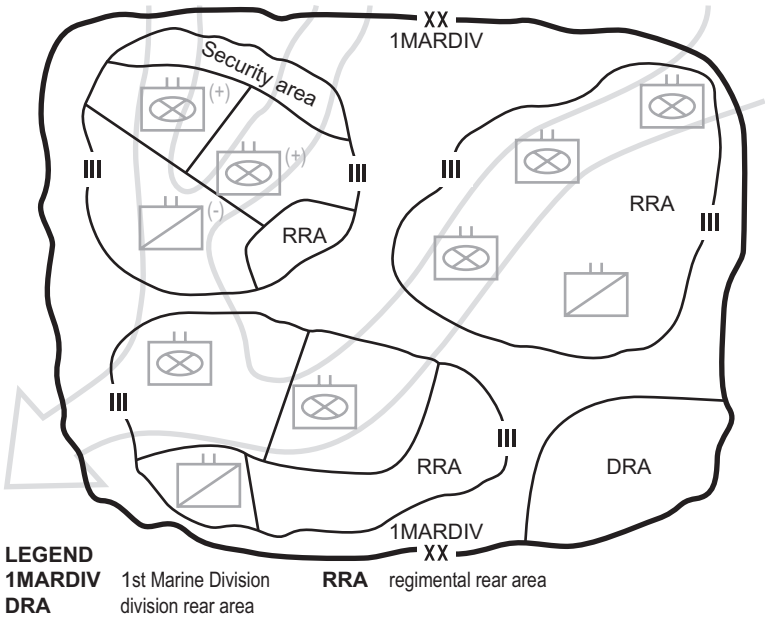


Figure 9-5. Division Conducting a Defense in Depth.

Forward Defense

When utilizing the forward defense form of the area defense, commanders concentrate significant portions of their available combat power into EAs along the FEBA. Figure 9-6 depicts a regiment conducting a forward defense in a contiguous area of operations. The intent is to prevent significant enemy penetration into the defensive area. Commanders conducting a forward defense fights to retain these positions along the FEBA and violently counterattacks any enemy penetration. Commanders except risk in that, if the enemy penetrates the defense, the lack of depth may enable the enemy to rapidly exploit success. In general, commanders execute the forward defense when terrain must be retained for political, military, economic, or other reasons. In addition to the general considerations for use of an area defense, commanders select the forward defense form when—

- The best defensive positions are located along the FEBA.
- Strong natural obstacles are located near the FEBA.
- Natural EAs occur near the FEBA.
- Cover and concealment in the rear portion of the AO are limited.

Logistic Considerations

In addition to the normal logistic considerations for the defense discussed in chapter 8, there are two that commanders must plan for in the area defense. The first is that, even more than defensive operations in general, area defenses require prepared defensive positions that demand significant construction time and material support. The second is that since area defenses are tied to terrain, and may take place in restrictive terrain where mobility is a concern, logistic functions may be pushed forward to enable rapid CSS. Against this, logistic planners must ensure they do not place so many supplies and functions forward that they are considerably vulnerable to destruction or capture in instances of successful enemy advances.

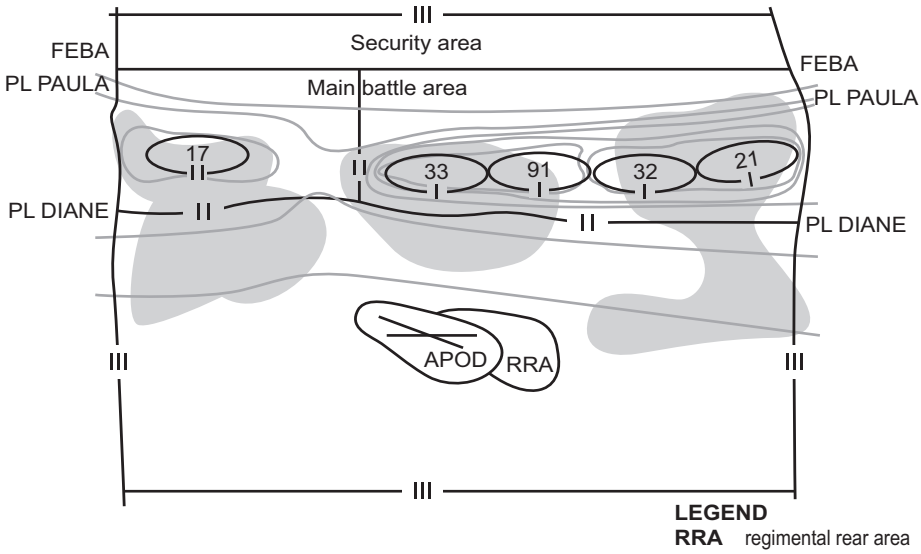


Figure 9-6. Regiment Conducting a Forward Defense.

PREPARING AN AREA DEFENSE

When assigned or transitioning to a defensive mission, the commander employs the elements of design as they consider the tactical problem and provide the staff with initial planning guidance for problem framing. If not immediately, then early in the planning process the commander will make the decision to employ an area defense. This early decision allows all elements of the MAGTF to begin to plan and simultaneously prepare—such as obtaining and pre-positioning ammunition and barrier material.

While a commander may execute the area defense in a hasty or deliberate manner, effective area defenses require the maximum amount of time a commander can obtain. Consequently, initial preparations after the commander's decision to execute an area defense involve significant reconnaissance and security efforts that seek to provide information to help refine planning and preparation and conduct shaping actions that physically gain preparation time. Extensive use is made of all available ISR assets to answer the commander's critical information requirements. Within the force's capability, OPSEC guidelines, and METT-T, security forces and supporting arms seek to delay and disrupt enemy attack preparations by targeting and attacking them. If a commander determines that it is likely the enemy will attack before the defending force is prepared, the commander may have to commit substantial forces to security operations or conduct a spoiling attack—especially if conducting deliberate operations.

Defending units conduct some type of reconnaissance upon receiving their warning orders, whether a simple map reconnaissance or a more detailed leader's reconnaissance on the ground of their assigned defensive areas and positions. As soon as practical, units establish their security areas and then occupy their defensive positions. Once security is established, units may begin to receive and pre-position supplies such as construction and barrier materials. Units rely upon

their SOPs and METT-T to establish and refine their defensive priorities of work. Those priorities may be—

- Establishing local security and deploying a security force.
- Identifying EAs where the commander wants to engage and destroy the enemy.
- Planning fire control measures, such as TRPs, trigger lines, and FPFs to support the EAs.
- Positioning key weapon systems to engage the enemy in the EAs and develop range cards and sector sketches.
- Positioning observers who can see both targets and trigger lines.
- Positioning obstacle groups to support the effects generated by various weapon systems.
- Designating and clearing fields of fire.
- Preparing primary fighting positions based on the anticipated fighting conditions, such as the time of day and weather conditions.
- Emplacing obstacles and surveying indirect fire targets to support those obstacles.
- Providing concealment and camouflage for fighting and survivability positions as they are constructed.
- Positioning CFZs over friendly positions by establishing sensor coverage and quick fire links between the sensor and shooter.
- Installing night and limited-visibility aids, such as thermal hot spots and chemical lights on TRPs.
- Updating range cards and sector sketches as required.
- Preparing alternate fighting positions.
- Designating and preparing supplementary positions.
- Designating hide positions and rehearsing movements to and from fighting positions. (Units may place their combat and tactical vehicles in hide positions at any time while preparing the defensive position.)
- Positioning the reserve.
- Establishing contact points with any adjacent units so that the defensive efforts of both units can be tied together.
- Deconflicting the plans and fires of adjacent units.
- Emplacing communications assets in order to support the unit's primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency communications for each primary, supplementary, and alternate position.
- Improving mobility on counterattack routes and other routes to be used by the reserve.
- Pre-stocking ammunition in revetments or bunkers where it can survive the enemy's preparatory fires.
- Rehearsing movements under daylight and limited-visibility conditions to include forward and rearward passage of lines.
- Establishing sleep and rest plans.
- Continuing to improve the defense.

Just as reconnaissance and security operations begin even as planning and preparation continue, so do OPSEC and counterreconnaissance activities. Commanders employ camouflage, tactical ruses, military deception, and even smoke to confuse and deceive enemy reconnaissance assets. Units quickly establish wire communications among various subordinate elements to reduce their electromagnetic signature. The conduct and evidence of preparation and rehearsals are mitigated by hiding or camouflaging spoil from digging, as well as by altering when individual units conduct rehearsals and how they conduct them (e.g., armored units moving by foot instead of by vehicle, or by only one vehicle per platoon). Since the location, composition, and movement of the reserve are critical elements of information for the enemy, commanders work diligently to camouflage, conceal, and avoid detection of the reserve.

As time and resources allow, the defending unit improves communication routes throughout their defensive positions to ease movement of supplies and forces, particularly the reserve. The leadership conducts combined arms rehearsals of the overall plan. Individual elements rehearse how to move from their hide positions to their primary positions and how they will occupy alternate and supplementary positions to continue to engage the enemy if the enemy's attack progresses into the unit's defensive positions. These rehearsals establish the time necessary to conduct these movements under different environmental conditions. Commanders modify their existing plans based on the results of rehearsals and changes in METT-T.

Commanders integrate logistic leadership into the maneuver rehearsal to verify that routes for support do not cross or conflict with routes used by reserve forces or other maneuver elements. Commanders should balance the use of ammunition caches against the defending unit's ability to guard them. Also, commanders should ensure that alternate MSRs are adequate to accommodate contingency plans and that changing MSRs can be accomplished effectively.

EXECUTING AN AREA DEFENSE

The successful area defense relies upon actions in the security area to disrupt and attrite the enemy, and static, mutually supporting defensive positions arranged in depth that concentrate combat power to fix and defeat the enemy. The reserve is used to reinforce these efforts, exploit opportunity, or defeat unexpected enemy actions. Commanders use alternate and supplementary positions and local counterattacks to add further depth and flexibility to the defense (see fig. 9-7).

As in the offensive chapters of this publication, this chapter divides execution into five phases for discussion purposes. These phases are—

- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Disrupt the enemy.
- Fix the enemy.
- Maneuver.
- Follow through/counterattack.

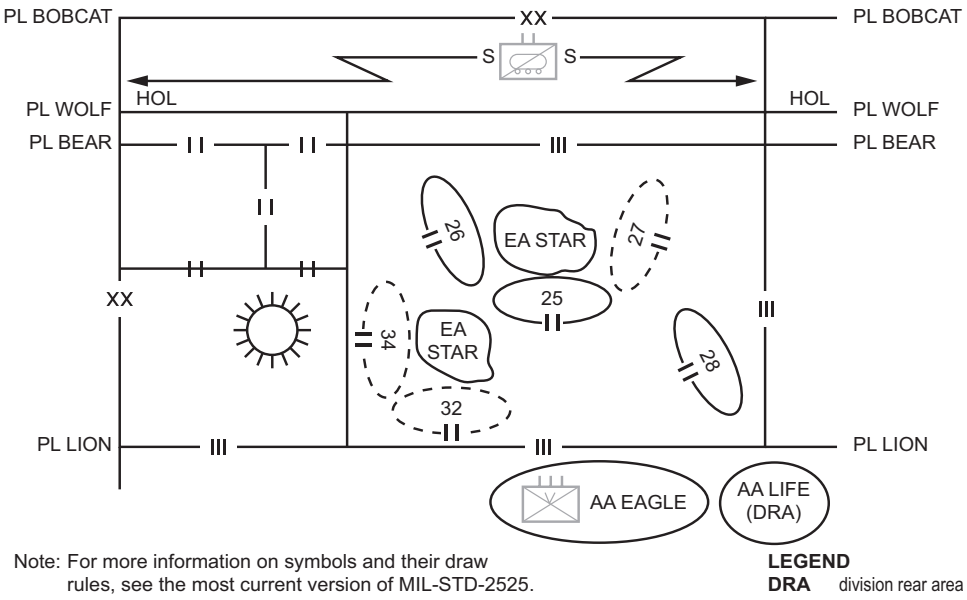


Figure 9-7. Area Defense Using Static and Mobile Elements.

This does not mean that these phases occur sequentially; they may occur simultaneously. The first three phases listed are almost always shaping actions. Depending on the circumstances, either of the last two phases may be the commander's decisive action.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Depending on METT-T and planning considerations, the commander may or may not have assigned the security force with both reconnaissance and security tasks. Regardless, as operations begin, the initial focus of friendly forces in the security area and beyond is to win the reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance fight. This fight begins immediately, even as preparations and planning continue elsewhere in the AO. Friendly ISR assets employ stealth, supporting arms, technical means, and standoff to gain and maintain contact and observation of the enemy in the face of the enemy's determined efforts to destroy them. At the same time, security and aviation forces hunt and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements to hide the defending force's dispositions, capabilities, and intent. Doing so forces the enemy to attack with limited information, making them susceptible to deception and canalization, and to fight on the ground of the defensive commander's choosing.

As the enemy prepares to attack, friendly reconnaissance efforts identify enemy AAs, units and capabilities, C2 nodes, and critical assets such as breaching resources. The commander uses this information to modify the defensive SOM, finalize planning and preparation, and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves. As the enemy's attack begins, reconnaissance focuses on identifying enemy units committed to the attack and their capabilities; the enemy's intent and direction of attack; locations of supporting arms, air defense assets, and command and control; and the depth and nature of follow-on forces. As more information becomes available and multiple source reporting increases reliability, the commander uses the information, experience, and military judgment to address decision points and determine when the enemy commits to a COA.

The concept of the single-battle underscores the importance of gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy throughout a military engagement. Even as the enemy attack presses through the security area and into the MBA, designated reconnaissance and security forces remain forward, providing the commander continuous information on enemy actions and enabling the commander to support the main effort by executing precision engagement against enemy C2 and logistic nodes and identifying enemy flanks for counterattack. In the planning phase, the commander determines which elements remain forward, under what conditions, and their displacement criteria. The commander retrogrades reconnaissance assets with the security force, replacing them with technical means of ISR depending on METT-T and if the resources are available.

Disrupt the Enemy

The commander begins disrupting the enemy as soon as possible after gaining and maintaining contact. This is not a "phase" of the battle as much as an ongoing activity that occurs throughout planning and preparation and into execution. At a minimum, the defending forces employ supporting arms and information operations against enemy critical vulnerabilities. During this time, commanders may choose to commit combat power to spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations to further delay and disrupt—and perhaps even dissuade—enemy attack preparations. If commanders do so, they do so with the planning and execution considerations discussed in chapters 3 and 5. Additional considerations include when and how to phase forces conducting these types of activities back into the defensive SOM.

As the enemy's attack enters the security area, the security force executes operations designed to gain information, disrupt the enemy's tempo and formations, limit their options, and ideally, compel them to conduct a movement to contact against a prepared defense. The security force employs fire support and IRCs to disrupt enemy decision-making and their ability to coordinate and synchronize actions. Using ambushes, limited counterattacks, BPs, and other defensive methods, the security force compels the enemy to repeatedly deploy, breaks up their formations, disrupts their ability to mass combat power, and neutralizes their initiative. Once the process of disrupting the attacking enemy begins, it continues throughout the defensive operation.

As the battle in the security area unfolds, the commander faces one of three outcomes. First, the security force experiences unexpected success, so severely disrupting and degrading the enemy that they either retreat or become effectively fixed. Either case presents the commander with an opportunity to conduct offensive action with the commitment of the reserve and security forces. Second, the security force accomplished their mission, delaying and disrupting the enemy, and setting them up for defeat by the main effort in the MBA. Third, the security force fails in their mission, and the enemy attack advances into the MBA organized and possessing significant momentum. In this case, the commander still expects to win in the MBA, but employs the reserves against the enemy in ways that directly support the main effort.

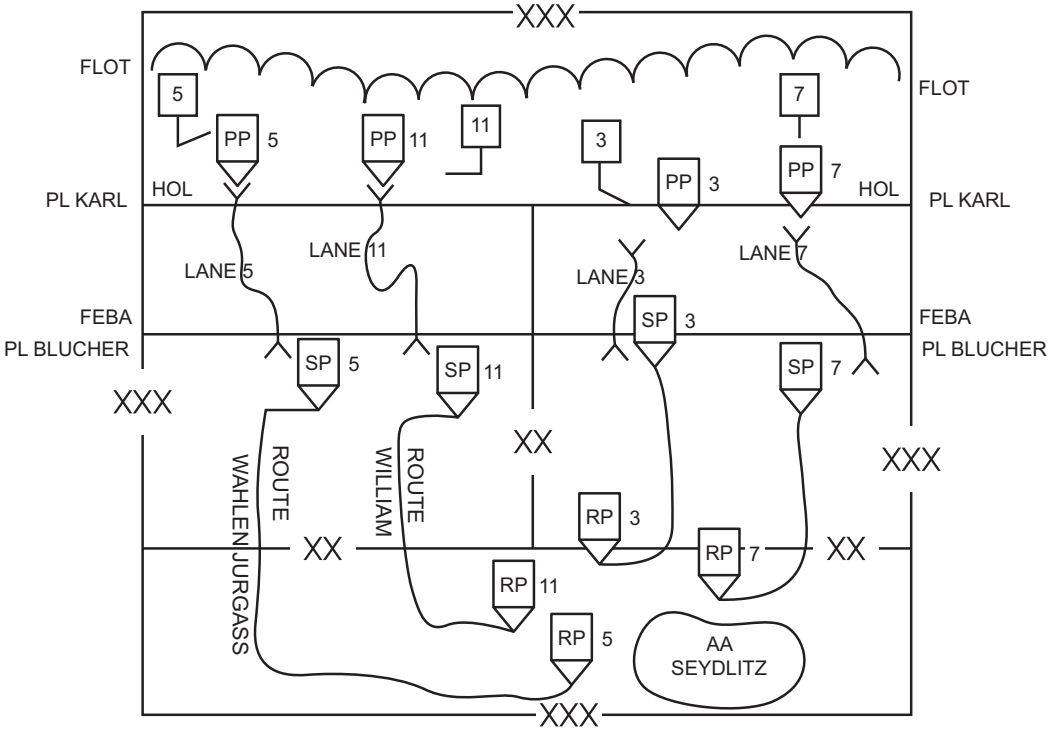
Excepting the case of unexpected success, when the security force accomplishes their mission or reaches their displacement criteria, the security force (including reconnaissance elements), or designated elements of, conduct a rearward passage of lines and battle handover with main battle forces. The displacement and retrograde occurs as quickly as possible to minimize the security force's vulnerability to enemy fire, using multiple passage points, gaps, or lanes along the FEBA. Engineer assets close obstacle lanes as the security force completes their retrograde while maintenance and recovery assets position themselves to rapidly remove vehicle casualties from passage lanes.

Depending on enemy pressure, the security force's withdrawal may occur in mass or in sequence. The employment of fires, smoke, and information operations helps the security force break contact and facilitates the passage of lines. Combat support and CSS elements of the security force leave the security area early to avoid hampering the movement of maneuver forces. Transfer of responsibility between the security force and MBA forces occurs forward of the FEBA at the handover line (see fig. 9-8). (See chap. 16 for more information on passage of lines.) If forces are left in the security area to continue shaping and disruption actions, the commander must ensure fires and maneuver are deconflicted between the security areas and the MBAs.

As the security force completes the battle handover they prepare for their subsequent tasks. The nature of those tasks depend upon the defensive SOM. When the defending force is critically short of combat power, the security force may move immediately to pre-designated positions within the MBA, such as those associated with flank security, or they may immediately form the commander's reserve. In both cases, the lack of resources forces the commander to accept the risk associated with employing a disorganized and potentially degraded force in such important roles. Most often, the security force moves to an AA that allows them to reconstitute and reorganize prior to executing their subsequent tasks and follow-on missions. The presence of the security force in the AA allows the commander to immediately employ the existing reserve if desired, relying on the security force to become the new reserve as they reassemble, resupply, and reorganize. However, it may be some time before the security force is ready for commitment.

Fix the Enemy

In the area defense, the commander fixes the enemy by beginning with shaping actions that serve to delay, disrupt, and attrite the main enemy force, isolate them from support, and disrupt follow-



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 9-8. Handover Line.

on forces. The commander completes fixing the enemy by the use of obstacles and defensive positions in the MBA that pin the enemy in one or more EAs for destruction. The main effort defeats the enemy in these EAs either by fires, by counterattack, or both.

As the security force hands over the battle to the MBA force, direct and indirect fires and information operations synchronize to continue the disruption and attrition begun in the security area. Fixed defensive positions and obstacles utilizing turn, disrupt, and block effects canalize the enemy, removing their options for maneuver while breaking up the enemy's main force into isolated segments incapable of mutual support. Friendly supporting efforts occupy these defensive positions and associated EAs, displace between them when required, and conduct local counterattacks to set the conditions necessary for the main effort's success. The commander may employ the reserve to prevent the enemy from executing an unexpected COA. Concurrently, forces remaining in the security area employ supporting arms and maneuver to continue to attack and disrupt enemy command and control, follow-on forces, and logistic resources.

Maneuver

As the enemy attack approaches the MBA, friendly forces prepare to execute the decisive action. In the area defense, the decisive action is normally the massing of combat power in an EA against the enemy main body. The defender uses the strength of prepared positions, camouflage, concealment, and hide positions to offset attempts by the attacker to suppress and neutralize friendly positions. The defender's main effort uses a combination of obstacles and massed fires to defeat the enemy while supporting efforts in the main battle and security areas continue to attack and disrupt enemy follow-on forces, command and control, and logistics.

As the enemy advances deeper into the MBA, if the defending commander has not done so already, he/she makes a decision as to the enemy's intent and selected COA. The enemy will seek to place overwhelming combat power against what they perceive as weaknesses in the defense (a general attacker to defender ratio of three-to-one could easily become a local six-to-one ratio or higher), and the defensive SOM hinges on placing the main effort and combat power in a position to restore a more favorable force ratio. Consequently, if the enemy is taking unexpected actions or friendly shaping efforts fail to compel the enemy to maneuver in the desired manner, the commander considers committing the reserve to restore the situation, execute branch plans, and displace the main effort to supplementary and subsequent positions. When committing the reserve to reinforce a position or restore the situation, the defending forces must deconflict traffic priorities, establish control measures, delineate command relationships, and mitigate battlespace geometry—the reserve cannot merely arrive in the midst of a defensive position and expect to have any positive effect.

As the enemy commits their main effort, defending forces continue to execute the SOM. Gaps between defensive positions are kept under surveillance, covered by fire, or when necessary, covered by displacing units. Units respond to enemy penetrations in their BPs and sectors with local counterattacks or by repositioning to alternate positions. A unit does not abandon a position unless it is in accordance with the defensive SOM or a higher commander grants permission to do so. Enemy gains that threaten the overall integrity of the defense are not allowed to consolidate. The commander destroys the enemy either by committing the reserve directly against them or at exposed flanks that isolate the enemy penetrations for later defeat. The security force completes

their reorganization and resupply and becomes available as a reconstituted reserve. The defensive force continues to attack the enemy throughout the depth of the AO.

With the enemy main body fixed, the defensive main effort executes their mission, massing combat power to defeat the enemy. The main effort may execute local counterattacks to enhance the destructive effects of fires and information operations on the enemy. In general, the lowest possible echelons conduct these local counterattacks, though commanders remain wary of piecemeal commitment. The maneuver phase in the MBA resolves itself in one of three ways. First, the defensive effort is successful and the commander must determine how to best exploit the enemy's defeat. Second, the defensive effort is stalemated and the commander must determine how to best adjust to the new enemy advance or how to restore the original defense through reinforcement and counterattacks by higher units. Third, the defensive effort fails and the commander must determine if the situation can be stabilized and if not, how to transition to retrograde operations. Only the commander who ordered the defense can designate a new FEBA and authorize a retrograde operation.

Follow Through/Counterattack

If the defense is successful, the commander counterattacks with the reserve and other available forces to maximize the damage inflicted by either attacking the enemy remaining in the MBA or pursuing a retreating enemy. Depending on METT-T, the commander uses this counterattack to restore the defense, to transition the defending force to offensive operations, or to establish security and cover the passage forward of other forces committed to the offense by higher command. The commander does not counterattack as an automatic response to an enemy penetration, nor does the commander commit the reserve solely because the enemy has reached a particular PL or other location—a counterattack is an instrument used to support the main effort and the defensive SOM as a whole. The defending force relies upon prior planning to best utilize a counterattack and to seize the initiative and tempo before the enemy has time to recover. The enemy is vulnerable immediately after the failure of an attack because—

- Defensive preparations are hasty.
- Enemy forces are dispersed, extended in depth, weakened, and not organized for defense.
- Enemy attacks rarely culminate on ground ideally suited for defense.
- Physical fatigue and the psychological effects of defeat and sudden vulnerability to attack.

There is a difference between local counterattacks designed to restore the defense and a broader action designed to wrest the initiative from the enemy force and then defeat them. If the commander commits to wresting the initiative away from the enemy and transitioning to the offense, friendly forces must set the conditions necessary for success by establishing favorable, relative combat power.

If the defensive battle leads to a stalemate with both forces left in contact, the defending force commander seeks to retain the initiative and set the conditions for the next encounter. Since the area defense focuses on terrain retention from prepared positions, the defending force relies upon the construction and depth of their defenses and maintains their positions. The commander uses repairs and improvement of defensive positions; tactical shifts in positions to confuse the enemy; attacks against enemy command and control, fire support, and logistic resources; and follow-on

units to neutralize the enemy's efforts to reorganize and assault again. Since there is considerable risk in moving out of prepared positions while still in contact with the enemy, the defending force only considers major shifts to the SOM when METT-T indicates a significant change in the enemy's posture. For example, the introduction of fresh enemy forces and the ability to generate high force ratios could require a change to the defensive SOM to counter.

Since an area defense focuses on terrain retention, the commander possesses only limited options if the defending unit is unable to maintain the integrity of their defense. Only the commander ordering the defense can authorize a retrograde, and permission may only come if the force risks destruction. However, contingency planning for a retrograde should be part of the general defensive plan since a retrograde, already a risky operation, becomes very dangerous if conducted ad hoc—the difference between a retreat and a rout. Chapter 11 addresses retrogrades in detail.

CHAPTER 10
MOBILE DEFENSE

The mobile defense destroys the attacking enemy through maneuver and offensive action. The commander retains the majority of available combat power in a reserve as the main effort, a major counterattack. The commander commits the minimum possible combat power to the security and MBA forces to shape the enemy's advance and set the conditions for the counterattack. In the mobile defense, terrain is only retained relative to its value in defeating the enemy through maneuver and offensive action. This is what distinguishes it from the area defense, where the focus is on retaining terrain and then denying the enemy that terrain by fixing them in a series of interlocking positions and destroying them largely by fires.

OVERVIEW

Commanders choose to use the mobile defense when they possess equal or greater mobility than the enemy, they are free to use terrain as maneuver space, and the depth of the assigned AO allows for a battle of fire and maneuver (see fig. 10-1). Defenders may conduct a mobile defense in any environment. Additional considerations are—

- The assigned defensive frontage is too great for an effective area defense.
- Time and resources for preparing defensive positions are limited.
- Sufficient direct, indirect, and aviation fires are available to support the rapid concentration of combat power.
- The defender seeks security from weapons of mass destruction through maneuver and dispersion of forces.
- The mission does not require denying the enemy specific terrain.
- The AO lacks well-defined, or many, avenues of approach.
- The commander deliberately seeks to use a defensive battle to quickly transition back to offensive operations.

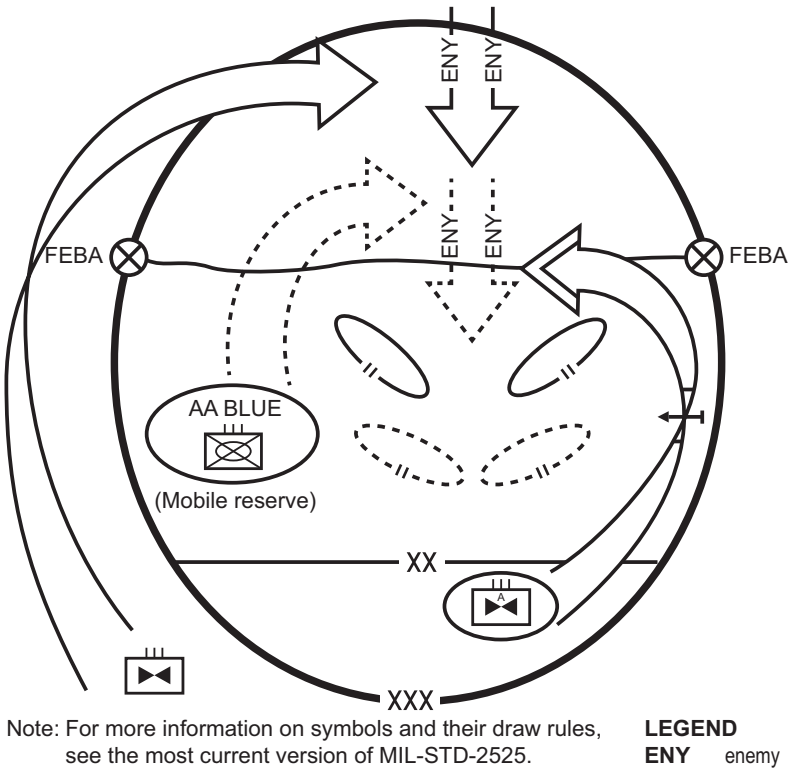


Figure 10-1. Mobile Defense Example.

Commanders conducting a mobile defense accept enemy penetration into their AO and use shaping actions, obstacles, local counterattacks, and even BPs to control such penetrations, deceive the enemy as to the nature of the defense, and create conditions for the counterattack by the main effort. However, the attacker possesses the initiative and determines the time and place to attack. Risks associated with the mobile defense are—

- Supporting efforts in the security area and MBA may be isolated and defeated due to unexpected enemy actions or under resourcing in favor of the main effort.
- A mobile defense conducted in a noncontiguous AO provides the enemy with exceptional amounts of maneuver space that can prove difficult to effectively counter.
- The enemy may interdict, delay, or disrupt the reserve's ability to strike at the decisive point.
- The enemy may successfully defeat shaping actions, entering areas not intended by the defensive commander and possessing significant momentum as they enter the MBA.
- The defending force may not gain an accurate picture of the enemy's intent and dispositions until it is too late to effectively react.
- The decentralized operations required by the mobile defense increase the potential for friendly fire incidents.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

The mobile defense uses security, fixing, and reserve forces—the reserve, acting as the main effort, may consist of one-half to two-thirds to the defender's combat power (see fig. 10-2). While the mobile defense may be executed at any level, it is typically employed at the regiment and above given the combat power requirements necessary to resource it.

The security and fixing forces receive the minimum amount of combat power necessary to accomplish their missions. For the security force, they conduct those tasks normally associated with the security area—reconnaissance, counterreconnaissance, and shaping actions in the face of an enemy advance (the commander may create a separate reconnaissance force). The fixing force acts across the MBA to create the conditions necessary for the commitment of the reserve—shaping or containing the enemy advance by turning, blocking, and delaying the attacking enemy force. The fixing force executes their portion of the battle by combining elements of an area defense with defensive methods associated with delaying actions. The reserve is the defender's main effort. They deliver the decisive action when the effects generated by the security and fixing forces make the enemy vulnerable to offensive action and defeat. The reserve is the commander's bid for success and must possess greater combat power and mobility than the force they seek to defeat. For this reason, the reserve contains the preponderance of combat power available to the commander and relies upon the security and fixing forces to reduce the enemy force to a manageable level.

Resourcing a reserve in a mobile defense is difficult and requires the defending unit to assume risk. The commander's most critical decisions are when, where, and under what conditions to commit the reserve. The commander normally accompanies the reserve to place himself/herself at friction points that may delay or impede the reserve's employment.

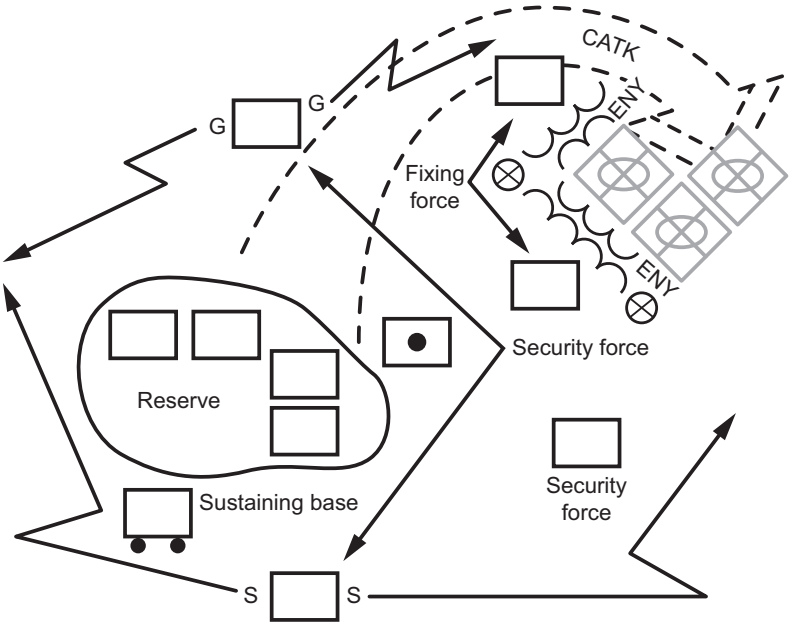


Figure 10-2. Organization of Forces for a Mobile Defense.

CONTROL MEASURES

The minimum control measures necessary to execute the mobile defense are the AOs of the security and fixing forces and the reserve's LD or LC, objective, LOA, and axis of advance or AO. Additional control measures for the security and fixing forces depend on the defensive SOM and may include BPs, PLs, EAs, TRPs, and FPFs. The commander may designate attack-by-fire and support-by-fire positions, passage points, contact points, and passage lanes to support the reserve. Because the mobile defense combines elements of the defense and the offense, those basic control measures discussed in chapters 2, 3, 5, and 8 may apply (see fig. 10-3). The commander may have to determine and transmit these control measures rapidly while the commander, staff, and subordinates move to take advantage of an opportunity to commit the reserve in a decisive counterattack.

PLANNING A MOBILE DEFENSE

The two fundamental planning concerns in the mobile defense are creating the conditions to successfully commit the reserve and committing the reserve. The following paragraphs address

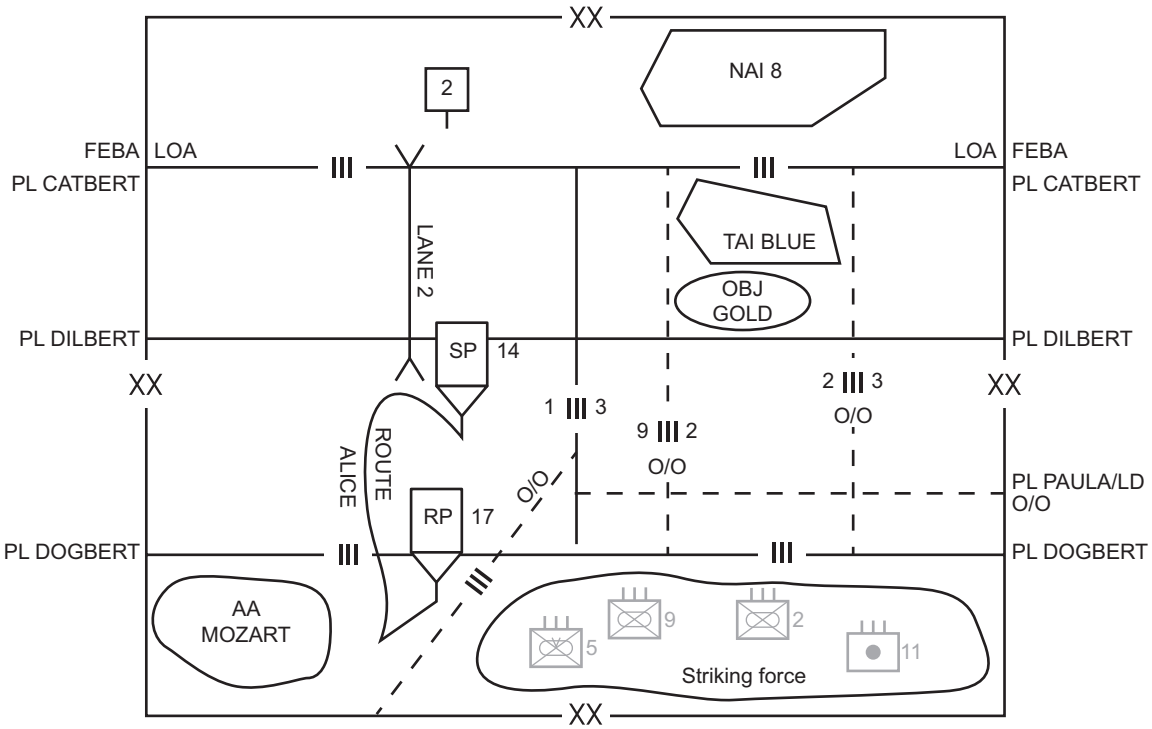


Figure 10-3. Mobile Defense Control Measures.

specific planning considerations by warfighting function for the mobile defense in addition to those addressed in chapter 8.

Maneuver

A mobile defense is only viable if friendly forces possess equal or greater mobility than the enemy. The commander gains and maintains relative mobility advantages over the enemy by possessing the necessary resources (e.g., vehicle and assault support) and/or by limiting the enemy's mobility through the use of obstacles, attrition, and suppression. Most of the commander's countermobility assets support the fixing force while most of the commander's mobility assets support the reserve. Situational obstacles provide a tremendous advantage to the defender in the conduct of a mobile defense because they enable economy of force measures. The defender uses situational obstacles to exploit enemy vulnerabilities, exploit success, separate enemy follow-on forces, and provide flank protection.

In planning, the commander determines the follow-on tasks and mission of the security force once the enemy passes through the security area. After conducting shaping operations to disrupt and delay the enemy, the security force—or elements of them—may withdraw back through the fixing force and reconstitute as an available maneuver force, or may remain in the security area continuing to disrupt and harass the enemy reserve, follow-on forces, logistic elements, and C2 assets. The amount of combat power available to the commander will be a key element to this decision; however, the commander must remember that the security force will be returning from actively engaging the enemy and may remain unavailable for some time until reconstituted and reorganized.

While civil considerations are basic to all operations, the status and movement of civilians are critical in the mobile defense given its reliance on maneuver and tempo. In the area defense, with the focus on terrain retention, civil considerations apply largely to the rear area. In the mobile defense, civilian attempts to avoid advancing enemy formations and locations where combat occurs can have immediate and negative impacts on the ground maneuver of defending units, unless steps are taken to account for their presence and provide them alternative routes. Ideally, HN civilian or military organizations will provide civilian traffic regulation and immediate essential services along designated civilian evacuation routes. However, if the host nation cannot perform these tasks, the defending unit will have to perform them.

Fires

The planning for fires and information operations in the mobile defense entail offensive and defensive considerations. Fire support assets and IRCs must support the shaping operations of the security and fixing forces. They must support the security force's actions to disrupt, delay, and break the enemy's tempo and cover the withdrawal of security forces and reconnaissance assets. Fire support assets and IRCs must also support the fixing force's SOM that will likely entail displacement between positions, use of BPs and EAs, while still maintaining the ability to effect enemy follow-on forces, C2 nodes, and logistics resource in the deep area.

Conversely, the placement of fire support assets, the employment of aviation, and the use of information operations must support the rapid shift to the offense as the reserve is committed. It is unlikely that the battle handover between the fixing force and the reserve will be final or complete. Elements of the fixing force will likely still be engaged throughout the MBA while the commander may still have requirements for shaping actions in the security area and deeper. The

fire support and IO plans must take into account all of these various phases and requirements, prioritize support, carefully determine placement and the movement of assets, and deconflict battlespace geometry. The combined arms rehearsal is an essential priority that should be conducted even during hasty operations.

Logistics

Just like the issues facing fire support and IO planners, logisticians must consider how to support a defense that will be characterized by a deep AO, considerable dispersion of forces, and constant displacement of those defensive forces. Logisticians must compare these requirements against the offensive demands of the reserve as they commit to the attack. The designation of the reserve as the main effort assist logistic planning—just as the commander accepts risk elsewhere to provide sufficient combat power to the reserve, so to do logisticians accept risk to other parts of the force to maximize support to the reserve.

Combat service support to the security force is minimal and in accordance with general logistic planning considerations contained in chapter 8. Logisticians attach critical logistic elements (e.g., maintenance) to the security force, pre-position limited essential supplies, and rely on the security force to self-haul the supplies they need to operate. The fixing force relies on similar measures, stockpiling supplies in known defensive positions and along movement routes. Equipment and personnel casualty evacuation, likely to be greatest in the fixing force, is executed along predetermined routes and phased according to how the engagement proceeds. Determining which routes and ambulance exchange points are active and when will be an important function of information management. The fixing force does receive, however, priority of material support and resources for countermobility operations.

The focus of the logistic effort is the success of the main effort. Planning for logistics is similar to that of any attack. As the engagement unfolds, commanders must carefully weigh any changes to the logistic plan that risks weakening the reserve.

PREPARING A MOBILE DEFENSE

The priority of work in preparing the mobile defense is to the defensive positions, routes, and countermobility requirements of the fixing force—these must be in place if the defending unit hopes to create the conditions in which the counterattack can succeed. This is closely followed by route improvement for the reserve to speed and support their attack when committed. Simultaneously, the defending commander aggressively employs ISR assets to track enemy positions, preparations, and indicators of intent. The security force deploys and begins counterreconnaissance operations.

The reserve assembles in one or more areas depending on the width of the AO, the terrain, enemy capabilities, and the commander's intent. Before the enemy attack begins, the reserve may deploy some or all of the reserve elements forward in the MBA to—

- Deceive the enemy regarding the purpose of the force.
- Occupy dummy BPs.

- Create a false impression of unit boundaries.
- Conduct reconnaissance of routes between the reserve's AAs and potential objectives.

EXECUTING A MOBILE DEFENSE

This publication divides the execution of a mobile defense into the five phases, introduced and described in chapters 4 and 9. These phases are gain and maintain enemy contact, disrupt the enemy, fix the enemy, maneuver, and follow through. The first three phases listed are normally shaping actions within a mobile defense. The maneuver phase is normally the mobile defense's decisive action, while the follow through phase is normally a branch or sequel operation.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Even before the defending unit begins to prepare and occupy the defense, reconnaissance forces—either independent of or subordinate to the security force—move forward, gain contact with the enemy, and focus on discovering the enemy's strength and capabilities, locations, and intent. The commander tasks other ISR assets to determine the location of follow-on forces, critical assets, command and control, and enemy reserves. Determining the enemy's intent and when they commit to a COA is a critical element of information for the commander and enables adjustments to the defensive SOM and changes to the plan.

Simultaneously, the security force moves forward and establishes the security area to conduct their assigned mission of screen, guard, or cover depending on resourcing. The security force focuses on impeding the ability of the enemy to conduct reconnaissance and observe friendly preparations. Information operations during this period support the security force by jamming enemy communications, deceiving the enemy regarding the nature of the defense, and introducing hesitation into the enemy's C2 decision and planning processes.

Disrupt the Enemy

The commander may decide to disrupt enemy preparations by executing spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations in conjunction with information operations and fires. If the commander decides to preserve combat power for use elsewhere, they still disrupt enemy preparations through the employment of supporting arms and information operations. These two elements of fires continue to support delaying and disrupting the enemy as the enemy begins their advance into and through the security area.

Security forces engage the enemy as they penetrate the security area. In conjunction with ISR assets, they seek to determine or confirm the enemy's main effort and selected COA. The security force conducts shaping actions designed to disrupt and delay the enemy's advance through the use of fires coordinated with ambushes, local counterattacks, BPs, and obstacles. Fires and information operations provide support to the security force's fight while continuing to engage the enemy in the deep area, targeting C2 assets and interdicting enemy reserves and follow-on forces.

As the enemy advance continues through the security area and into the MBA, the security force executes one of two actions. They may use the AO as maneuver space and remain in the security area, supporting the actions of the fixing force in the MBA by continuing to disrupt and harass enemy reserves, follow-on forces, C2 assets, and logistic resources. The security force may withdraw from the security area, passing through the fixing force to reconstitute and reorganize in the rear to become another maneuver asset for the commander. It is probable that it may take some time for the security force to reorganize itself.

Fix the Enemy

The commander monitors the fight in the security area, and as the enemy enters the MBA, makes any necessary changes to the plan to either take advantage of security force successes or mitigate failures. If not already evident, the defending commander makes a determination as to the enemy's main effort and intended COA and makes adjustments to the defensive plan as needed. The fixing force, compromised of one or more elements, begins to engage the enemy to generate the conditions necessary for the commitment of the main effort. The commander utilizes the entirety of the AO to allow the enemy to advance and become vulnerable to the decisive action (see fig. 10-4). The various supporting efforts that comprise the fixing force use combinations of different defensive methods (e.g., BPs, sectors, strong points) to canalize, delay, disrupt, and attrite the enemy's advance. Fires and information operations support the defensive SOM by reinforcing the efforts of the fixing force, deceiving the enemy as to the nature of the defense, and by disrupting the enemy's ability to command and control.

The fixing force retains terrain only when—and only for the time necessary—they aid the defensive SOM, such as blocking one avenue of approach to compel the enemy to use another. Fixing forces withdraw and reposition as necessary, not only to continue to engage the enemy, but also as tactical ruses to encourage enemy advances along the routes preferred by the defending commander. The fixing force uses obstacles to reinforce their operations, also making use of prepared routes to efficiently and effectively conduct displacements, maneuver, and local counterattacks to shape the enemy's attack.

If the commander placed any reserve forces forward to assist in tactical ruses and deception, they retrograde to the reserve's AA as the enemy enters the MBA. If left forward, the security force—or elements that remained in place—continues to support the efforts of the fixing force by harassing, disrupting, and destroying enemy resources and units in the security area. If withdrawn, the security force becomes an additional reserve that the commander can commit to the assistance of the fixing force in the event of unexpected enemy actions or success. Since the success of the mobile defense depends upon the striking power of the reserve, the commander only considers pulling elements from the reserve when the fixing force is threatened with defeat. But even in this case, the commander's best choice would be to accommodate the new situation and commit the reserve—as a whole—to new objectives. The enemy cannot be strong everywhere, and what appears to be failure can still be translated into success by aggressive, offensive action at the right place.

Maneuver

Throughout the battle, ISR assets and combat reporting provide the commander with the situational awareness and understanding necessary to initiate the reserve's movement and attack. The defending commander and commander of the reserve remain collocated to facilitate

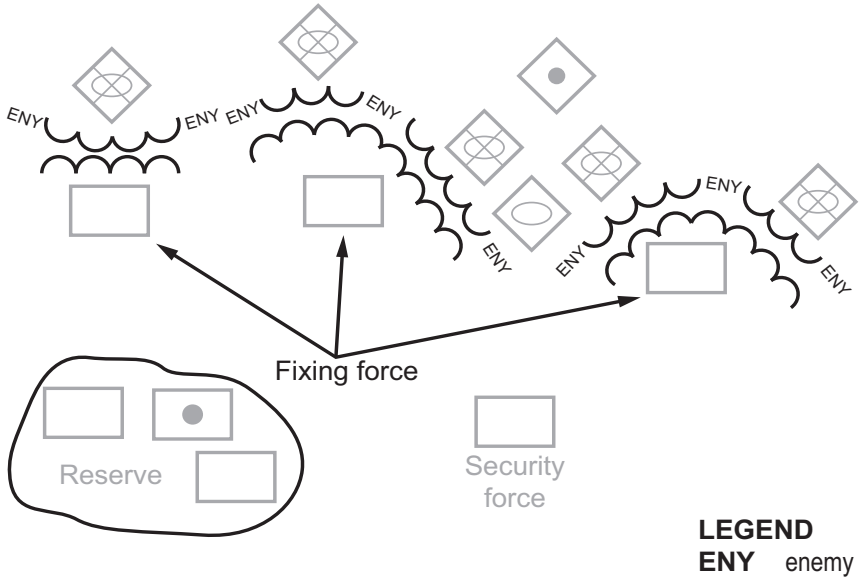


Figure 10-4. Mobile Defense Before Commitment of the Reserve.

communication and understanding. As the fixing force's fight in the MBA unfolds, the commander makes any changes to the force-oriented objectives (or terrain-oriented if needed to provide orientation) of the reserve based on the new situation. As planned decision points occur and the combat power of the reserve becomes overwhelming relative to the targeted enemy force, the reserve departs the AA and begins their attack (see fig. 10-5).

The reserve executes the counterattack rapidly and violently, avoiding piecemeal commitment and employing all combat power necessary to ensure success. Both the security and fixing forces continue to conduct shaping actions designed to delay the enemy's response to the attack and thwart or disrupt attempts to react. Continued defensive actions and local counterattacks by supporting efforts present the enemy commander with multiple problems and dilemmas that support the reserve's decisive action.

The reserve conducts the attack in accordance with those considerations and TTP associated with offensive operations (see chap. 5). When committed against a force-oriented objective, the reserve normally executes the approach march method of a movement to contact. The reserve commander may utilize follow-and-support and follow-and-assume forces (a withdrawn and reconstituted security force may play one of these roles). Relying on the presence and actions of the fixing and security forces, speed and momentum, and supporting arms for security, the reserve commander accepts risk and attacks rapidly and aggressively. The reserve capitalizes on the psychological and physical paralysis and hesitation the enemy will feel from a sudden, massive assault and the forced transition from attacker to defender.

Engineers travel well forward to enhance the mobility of the reserve. A competent enemy will be aware of threats to their flank and conduct countermobility actions to mitigate those threats. The reserve's obstacle clearing detachment searches for existing obstacles and clears the route as much as possible within their capabilities. Follow-on combat or general engineers expand breach lanes,

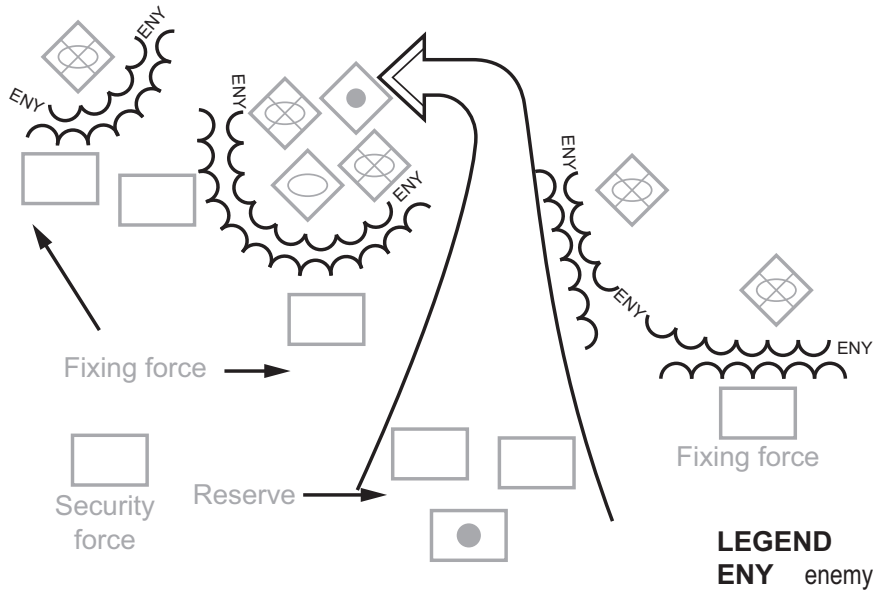


Figure 10-5. Mobile Defense After Commitment of the Reserve.

improve trafficability, and may replace assault bridges with more permanent structures. As able, combat engineers with fixing forces transition their focus from countermobility to mobility operations (e.g., reopening passage lanes through friendly obstacles to support maneuver).

Follow Through

In a successful area defense, local counterattacks restore the defense. Prior planning, preparation, and normally the commitment of outside forces are required to translate the success of the area defense into an offensive transition. In a mobile defense, success translates much easier, much more quickly, and much more effectively due to the combat power associated with the reserve. As the reserve overwhelms the enemy's attack, the commander considers the options for exploitation and pursuit (see chaps. 6 and 7). A reconstituted and reorganized security force often provides the commander with a readily available force to compel the enemy into a defensive posture. In those cases where a higher commander ordered the mobile defense as a means to return to the offense, other forces will be poised to pass through the reserve and continue the attack.

If the mobile defense ends in a stalemate with both forces left in contact (e.g., the attacker successfully withdraws under pressure from the reserve), the defending force commander seeks to retain the initiative and set the conditions for the next encounter. The commander does so by maintaining pressure on the enemy through the use of supporting arms, information operations, and attacks against limited objectives. The defending commander faces difficult choices if forced to restore the defense. The mobile defense is predicated on maneuver, surprise, and offensive action. It will be difficult to replicate these against a renewed attack by the enemy who will be appropriately wary and prepared. If the same conditions continue to exist that led to the choice of a mobile defense in the first place, the commander must significantly change the defensive SOM to present the enemy a new tactical problem. Other options include requesting reinforcements, changing the type of defense, or maneuvering to defend on different ground.

If unable to maintain the integrity of the mobile defense, the defending unit retrogrades. Only the commander ordering the defense can authorize a retrograde and permission may only come if the force risks destruction. However, contingency planning for a retrograde should be part of the general defensive plan since a retrograde, already a risky operation, becomes very dangerous if conducted ad hoc—the difference between a retreat and a rout. Given the nature of the mobile defense, the blending of enemy and friendly forces, and the relative lack of prepared positions, retrograde operations will be difficult. The contingency planning conducted for the retrograde should be thorough if the commander expects to execute a withdrawal successfully. Chapter 11 addresses retrogrades in detail.

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CHAPTER 11
RETROGRADE

The enemy may force these operations or a commander may execute them voluntarily. In either case, the higher commander of the force executing the operation must approve the retrograde. Retrograde operations are transitional operations; they are not considered in isolation. There are three core methods for conducting a retrograde: a delay, withdrawal, or retirement. There are two unique, associated methods: denial measures and stay-behind operations.

OVERVIEW

There are two primary reasons a commander conducts a retrograde. The first is to disengage from operations to preserve the force or avoid combat under undesirable conditions. The second is to reposition forces to create a more favorable environment for a resumption of operations. Both reasons are fundamentally tied to changing existing circumstances to create a more advantageous situation. The following other considerations are fundamentally associated with one of the two primary reasons:

- Gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.
- Resist, exhaust, and damage an enemy in situations that do not favor an area or mobile defense.
- Draw the enemy into an unfavorable situation or extend the enemy's LOCs.
- Conform to movements of other friendly troops.
- Simplify logistics by shortening LOCs.
- Position the force where they can safely conduct reconstitution.
- Adjust the defensive scheme, such as to secure more favorable terrain.
- Deceive the enemy.

In each core retrograde method, a force moves to the rear, using combinations of combat formations and marches. (Chap. 3 discusses combat formations; chap. 14 discusses troop movement.) The commander may use all three methods singularly or in combination with other offensive or defensive operations. There are two associated methods, employed in specific circumstances, denial measures and stay-behind operations. The determination of main, supporting, and sustaining efforts in the retrograde is based on determining what action allows the force to change existing circumstances to more favorable ones. It is often associated with the actions of the security force or reserve.

Retrogrades may negatively affect the attitude of a unit more than any other type of operation because it may be viewed as a defeat. A commander must not allow retrograde operations to

reduce or destroy unit morale because a retrograde demands discipline and aggressiveness. The commander's personal involvement, focused task and purpose, proper planning, and efficient execution will help counter any negative effects of the operation on unit morale. After completing a retrograde operation, the commander may reconstitute the force.

DELAY

A delaying operation is an operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. A delay wears down the enemy so that friendly forces can regain the initiative through offensive action, buy time to establish an effective defense, or determine enemy intentions as part of a security operation. Normally in a delay, inflicting casualties on the enemy is secondary to gaining time. For example, a flank security force conducts a delay operation to provide time for the main body to reorient and establish a viable defense. Commanders may execute delays when they do not possess enough combat power to effectively attack or defend. Units may conduct delays when ordered to do so as part of a shaping operation or economy of force effort.

The delaying force generally seeks to avoid decisive engagement, but the ability to do so is based upon the amount of time they seek to delay the enemy and the importance of the delay to the overall situation. Conducting a delay as one of a number of shaping operations is different than conducting a delay to support a parent unit's ability to complete a retrograde across a major river. Associated with either accepting or avoiding decisive engagement and the ability of a unit to trade space for time is the depth of the AO assigned to the delaying force. The amount of depth required depends on several factors, including the following:

- Amount of time to be gained and degree of acceptable risk.
- Relative combat power and mobility of friendly and enemy forces.
- Nature of the terrain and the ability to shape the AO with obstacles and fires.

Ordinarily, the greater the available depth, the lower the risk involved to the delaying force and the greater the chance for success. A delay succeeds by forcing the enemy to repeatedly deploy their force, fight through a series of defensive positions, and consolidate and reorganize before continuing their advance. To succeed, the delaying force must offer a significant enough threat to force the enemy to repeatedly deploy and maneuver vice merely bypass. Delaying forces displace to subsequent positions before the enemy is able to decisively engage and defeat the delaying forces in their current position. The length of time a delaying force can remain in a position without facing the danger of becoming decisively engaged is primarily a function of relative combat power and METT-T.

Organization of Forces

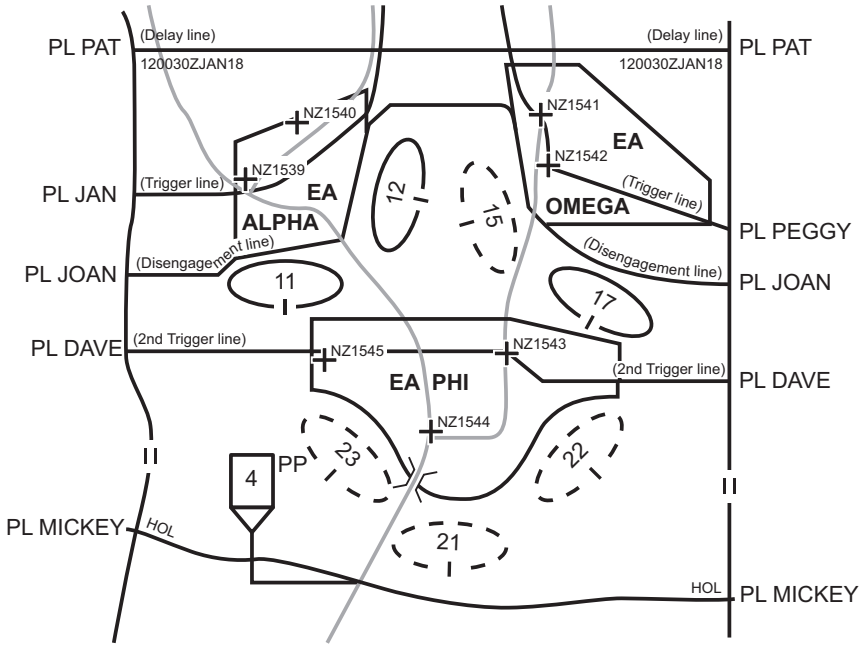
Units of all sizes conduct delays. The delaying force organizes into a main body, a security force, and a reserve. The security force usually conducts a screen forward of the initial delay positions. The main body, which contains the majority of the delaying force's combat power, employs one of

the two forms of delay—subsequent or alternate positions. When utilizing subsequent positions, the main body deploys as a complete unit. When utilizing alternate positions, the main body divides into two, roughly equal parts and occupies sets of positions. (See chap. 8 for more information on the types of positions.) The commander uses the reserve to contain enemy penetrations between positions, to reinforce fires into an EA, or to help a unit disengage from the enemy. All of these missions require that the reserve has the mobility and strength to strike with such force that an enemy has no option but to react to it.

Control Measures

The primary control measure for the delaying force consists of the defending commander's delay criteria (e.g., create a delay of 24 hours). The minimum control measures for a delay consist of an AO with associated boundaries, coordination or contact points, and passage points or lanes. Additional control measures consist of those normally associated with the defense (e.g., PLs, BPs, trigger lines, disengagement lines) depending on the defensive SOM (see chap. 8 and fig. 11-1 control measures). The commander designates contact points in front of, between, and behind units to assist coordination, ensure continuity of the delay, and draw attention to enemy avenues of approach into unit flanks. Chapter 16 addresses passage points and passage of lines.

The defending commander or the delaying force commander may use one or more delay lines. A delay line is a PL forward of which the enemy must be delayed for a specified time or until a specified event. Designating delay lines imposes a high degree of risk on the delaying unit. The delaying unit must do everything in their power—including accepting decisive engagement—to prevent the enemy from crossing that line before the time indicated. A delay line may also be event driven. For example, a commander can order a delaying unit to prevent penetration of the delay line until supporting engineers complete construction of a rearward obstacle belt.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 11-1. Control Measures for a Delay.

Forms of Delay

The two forms of delay are subsequent and alternate (successive) positions. The delaying force and the subordinate elements may employ the forms of delay separately or in combination. For example, the individual elements of the main body may use alternate positions when conducting the main body's larger execution of a subsequent position form of delay. Which form a commander uses is driven by available combat power, the nature of the terrain, and the amount of time associated with the delay (see table 11-1). The more limited the combat power in relationship to the size of the AO, and the less time the enemy must be delayed, the more likely a commander will keep the main body together as a single element, using subsequent positions. Conversely, the greater the amount of combat power available relative to the size of the AO, and the greater the length of time required to delay the enemy, the more likely a commander will divide the main body into two or more elements using alternate positions.

Table 11-1. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Forms of Delay.

Form of Delay	Use When	Advantages	Disadvantages
Delay from Subsequent Positions	• AO is wide. • Forces available do not allow themselves to be split.	• Masses fires of all available combat elements.	• Limited depth to the delay positions. • Less available time to prepare each position. • Less flexibility.
Delay from Alternate Positions	• AO is narrow. • Forces are adequate to be split between different positions.	• Allows positioning in depth. • Allows more time for the rest of personnel and equipment maintenance. • Increases flexibility.	• Requires continuous coordination. • Requires passage of lines. • Engages only part of the force at one time.

The commander uses a delay from subsequent positions when the assigned AO is so wide that available forces cannot occupy more than a single tier of positions (see fig. 11-2). This tier may be one set of mutually supporting BPs occupied by the entire main body along a single avenue of approach. The tier could consist of a set of BPs, each along a different avenue of approach, generally arranged across the AO along the same PL. Regardless, the entire main body is committed forward and retrogrades as a whole from one tier back to the next. The risk a commander accepts in the form of delay is that a single enemy penetration can rapidly disrupt the integrity of the delay effort due to the lack of depth and flexibility.

The preferred form of delay is alternate positions, where two or more elements in a single AO occupy delaying positions in depth, because it allows for greater flexibility and maneuver. The commander uses alternate positions when adequate combat power and depth of maneuver space are available. As the first unit engages the enemy, the second occupies the next position in depth and prepares to assume responsibility for the operation. The first force disengages and passes around or through the second force. They then move to the next position and prepare to reengage the enemy while the second force takes up the fight (see fig. 11-3). Alternate positions are normally used when the delaying force operates on a narrow front. A delay from alternate positions is particularly useful on the most dangerous avenues of approach because it offers greater security

than a delay from successive positions. However, it requires more forces and continuous maneuver coordination. Additionally, the delaying forces risk losing contrct with the enemy between delay positions.

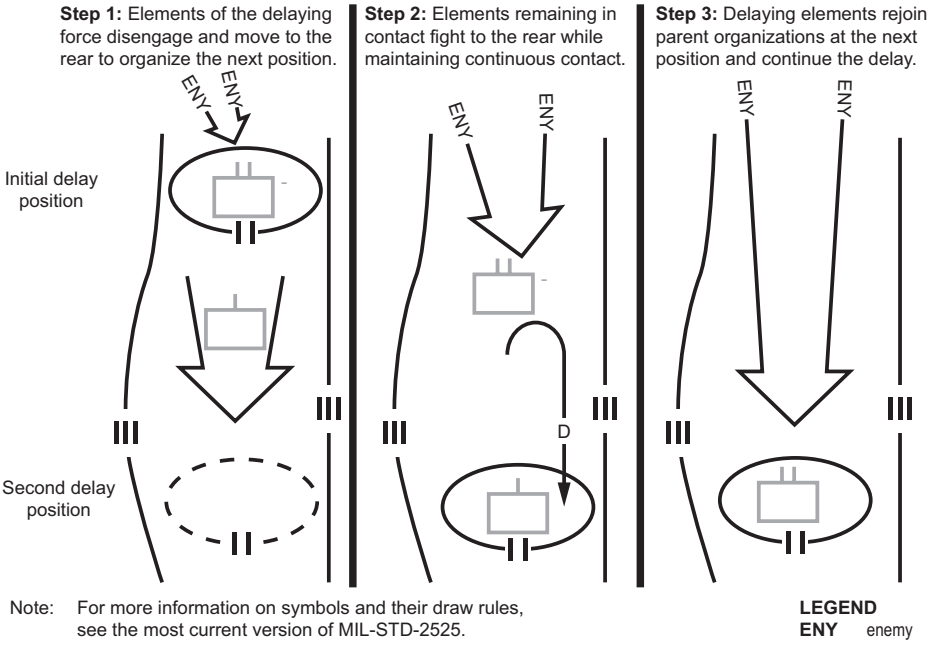


Figure 11-2. Delay From Subsequent Positions.

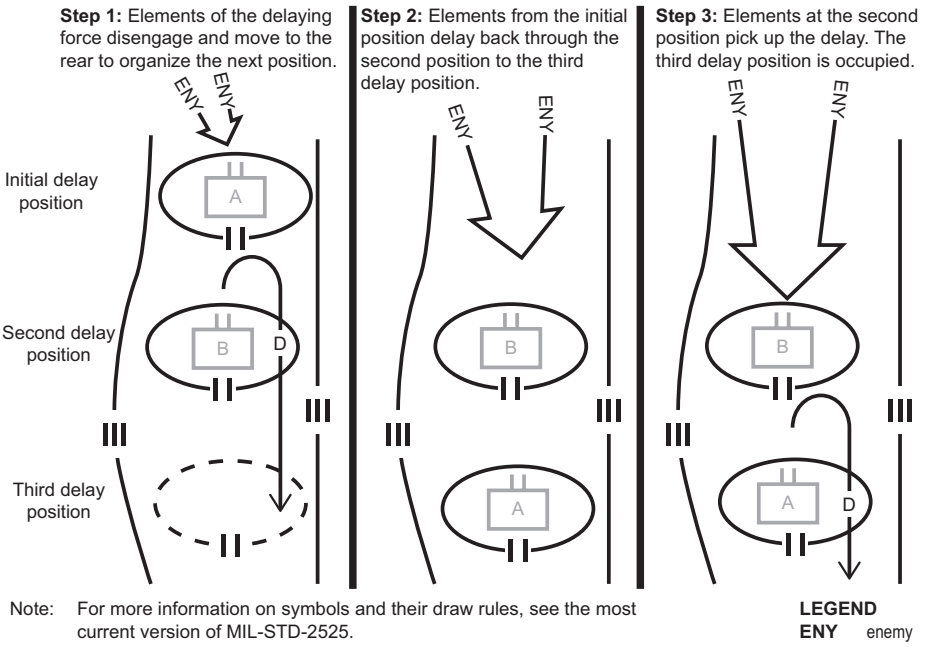


Figure 11-3. Delay From Alternate Positions.

Planning a Delay

A successful delay includes all the planning factors for the defense discussed in chapter 8. Beyond these, the delaying force commander must plan for decentralized execution and dispersal of friendly forces, the requirement to maintain a mobility advantage over the attacker, operating on extended frontages and in immediate proximity to the enemy, and the complications that may come when the delaying force is acting as the rear guard—such as casualty and equipment evacuation, closing obstacle lanes, etc. Subordinate commanders must have the flexibility to take immediate action to both inflict maximum destruction on the enemy but also retain the integrity of their forces.

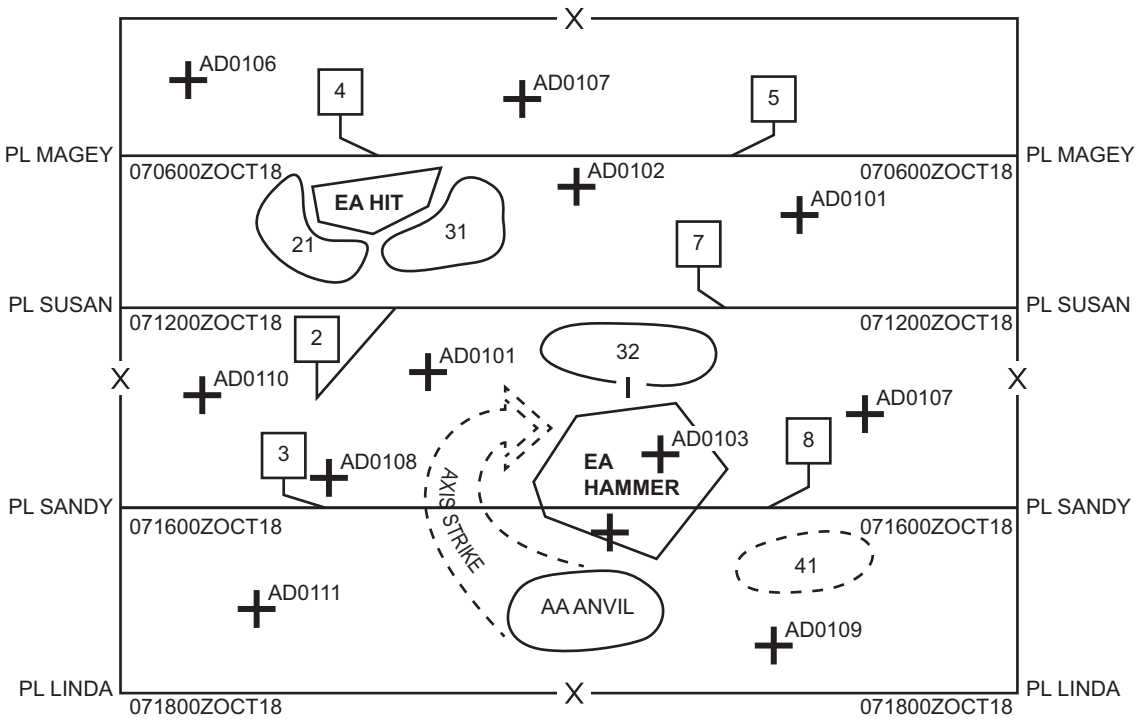
The nature of the delaying force's mission is central to all other planning. When tasking a force to conduct a delay, the commander provides them with specific guidance on the following:

- Is the delay time or event driven?
- What is the level of acceptable risk to the delay force?
- How much freedom of maneuver does the delay force possess?

This guidance allows the delaying force commander to determine how to act to create the required effect. Using design and problem framing, the commander can determine how best to arrange obstacles and forces to actually delay the enemy physically. Obstacles covered by fires in choke points force the enemy to deploy and create the conditions necessary for a breach, then execute the breach, and then regroup on the other side before recommencing their advance. Engaging the lead elements of an enemy column may force them to deploy, but inflicting casualties will force them to consolidate and evacuate equipment and personnel, resulting in a delay. For these reasons, the task to delay is normally given to battalions and is only rarely given to units below the company. Companies and below normally receive defend tasks coupled with displacement criteria—for example, "destroy four vehicles then conduct a displacement to position X."

In general, when force preservation is critical, commanders provide the force with broad tasks and purposes and greater freedom of maneuver to accomplish them. This is most evident when a force conducts a delay as part of a shaping action in support of an area or mobile defense. In this case, the delay is part of a larger series of shaping actions and the commander likely has subsequent tasks for the delaying force. The delaying force delays the enemy as long as possible while avoiding decisive engagement, displaces upon meeting some criteria such as the enemy reaching a disengagement line, and then retrogrades for follow-on missions.

Conversely, a delaying force given very specific task and purpose, defined BPs and control measures such as delay lines, is indicative of mission accomplishment taking precedence over force preservation. In this case, the success of the delay may be crucial to other critical events occurring, such as enabling the friendly main body to escape over a bridge over a major river. The delaying force accepts the risks associated with decisive engagement to provide the defending commander either a specific period of time or until a particular event occurs (see fig. 11-4). The delaying forces does not displace until the mission is accomplished, they are ordered to displace, or they are overwhelmed.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 11-4. Delay Forward of a Specified Line for a Specified Time.

The delaying force commander plans to operate in an ISR scarce environment, especially when conducting the delay in support of a retrograde (when conducting a delay in the security area of an area or mobile defense, it is likely the higher commander will leave ISR assets forward). The commander ordering the delay considers the best ways to echelon organic and supporting ISR systems rearward while maintaining at least partial coverage of the AO during the delay. The delay force's intelligence priorities are to detect the enemy's advance and determine their intent and likely COAs. This allows the delaying force commander to adjust the SOM if necessary— for example, the enemy recognizes the delay and attempts to circumvent or bypass it. Next, ISR resources focus on detecting enemy attempts to bypass, envelop the flanks, or strike the rear of the delaying force. The ISR resources also focus on detecting any attempts by the enemy to cut off the delay force through use of airborne, air assault, and attack aviation units.

When planning how to command and control the operation, commanders do not underestimate the difficulties in coordinating an operation that requires repeated combat with enemy forces across multiple avenues of approach without becoming decisively engaged. But commanders do not attempt to over control the operation by trying to direct the details of the fight—doing so risks losing the flexibility and rapid reaction inherent in maneuver warfare and necessary for both mission accomplishment and force preservation. Rather, commanders rely upon control measures, triggers, information feedback, and their judgment and that of their subordinates to conduct command and control. Defensive commanders consider assigning delays to their more experienced and capable subordinates.

A delaying operation normally makes use of multiple displacements that force the enemy to deploy over and over against potential threats. The defending and delaying force commanders develop displacement criteria—the first for the delaying force as a whole, the second for subordinate elements of the delay force. The mobility of the enemy and the mobility of the friendly force provide the baseline consideration for realistic displacement criteria. An infantry force operating in complex terrain will engage the enemy at shorter ranges, displace more often, and displace shorter distances than an armored force in open terrain. After considering relative mobility, other considerations for displacement criteria are the nature of the terrain upon which the delaying operation will occur; the combat power available to the delaying force in terms of maneuver units, engineering support, and fires; and the effects the delaying force must generate on the enemy.

Once disengagement criteria are set, subordinate units consider how to execute this difficult evolution in the face of the enemy. Disengagement plans include the following:

- A maneuver plan for tactical elements after disengagement—who moves along which route and when?
- Fires and information operations to cover the disengagement by suppressing and disrupting the enemy (e.g., smoke, aviation delivered fires, tactical deception).
- Adequate control and FSCMs such as FSCLs, handover lines, start times, and contact and passage points if moving back through friendly lines (executing the alternate position form of delay).
- The earliest time for CPs, combat support, and CSS elements to move.
- Designation of units responsible for closing lanes through obstacles and executing reserve obstacles.

The delaying force commander uses the IPB process and METT-T to identify ground and air avenues for enemy attacks and friendly counterattacks. Using AOs or sector defensive methods, each likely enemy avenue of approach is assigned to one subordinate unit. The commander either accepts risk or covers other avenues with ISR assets. The cross coordination between units on different avenues of approach is critical, not only for battlespace geometry issues, but to ensure that units do not get cut off when one or the other withdraws or displaces. The commander helps mitigate this, if necessary, by assigning initial and subsequent delay positions along the avenues of approach and any other control measures (e.g., phase lines, trigger lines) to ensure coordination and synchronization across units that may be widely separated.

Executing a delay calls for creativity in tactical problem solving. Commanders should not underestimate the ability of the ACE to not only support delaying operations, but conduct them as well. Utilizing reconnaissance abilities and available firepower, elements of the ACE can create considerable delays among enemy forces, to include spoiling attacks and counterattacks depending on enemy air defense capabilities and the availability of friendly supporting arms to suppress them. In addition, assault support can provide the delaying force commander increased options in the rapid displacement and repositioning of maneuver units, logistic resources, and reconnaissance assets. The ability to engage the enemy with maneuver units and aerial delivered fires, withdraw ground forces to an LZ, and move them to another position to again engage the enemy provides significant mobility advantages to infantry forces (see MCTP 3-01B).

Similarly, defending commanders consider assigning delay missions to their most mobile forces. Motorized and mechanized units provide superior tactical mobility in most terrain—even restrictive terrain since, in the case of the defense, the defender possesses the advantage of selecting and improving the ground upon which to conduct the delay. In cases where terrain or resources dictate committing dismounted infantry to a delay mission, the defending commander still provides some sort of motorized or mechanized resource to the delaying force that they can use to constitute a reserve that can rapidly intervene to extract elements of the force from unfavorable positions.

Beyond methods of movement, the delaying force commander also creates greater mobility than the enemy by making significant use of engineering, fire support, and IO resources. The priority of effort is countermobility—bridges prepared for demolition, obstacles covered by massed fires—and IO measures that degrade and disrupt enemy command and control. Second to the countermobility effort is mobility operations, such as route improvement between delay positions and traffic control plans to properly prioritize the displacement of combat, combat support, and CSS elements. The delaying force should be capable of constructing numerous obstacles and delivering long-range fires that, time and again, force the enemy to deploy into assault formations, delaying their movement. The only exception to this is when the delaying force is conducting shaping actions in support of an area or mobile defense, vice retrograde. In these cases, the engineering assets and fire support available will be a function of the needs of the larger defensive operation. Finally, given the priority of engineering efforts to countermobility and mobility operations, elements of the delaying force address survivability by relying on organic means (e.g., digging individual fighting positions), coupled with well-chosen terrain (e.g., using the reverse side of a slope to provide hull defilade), covered and concealed egress routes, and avoidance of decisive engagement.

While critical to the delaying force, the extended frontages and ranges common to retrograde operations make the provision and massing of fires difficult. Therefore, units assigned to delay in support of a retrograde often have more than the normal allocation of fire support assets. The robust employment of the ACE is critical in providing this support and helping offset risk to towed artillery systems being overrun by a mobile enemy. The overall defending commander balances this risk against anticipated requirements for subsequent operations. The exception to this is when a delaying force is conducting shaping operations for an area or mobile defense. In these cases, the combat power available to the delaying force will likely be subordinate to the larger defensive plan.

Logistic planning faces many of the same concerns as that of fires planning—a balance between the need for the delaying force to accomplish their mission and the risk to logistic assets being overrun by a mobile enemy. Complicating the delaying force's mission is the evacuation of personnel and equipment casualties, the latter requiring careful consideration of priorities and disciplined execution. Combat service support organizations should plan to echelon their assets throughout the AO, allowing the delaying forces to fall back on support, which then signals CSS elements to echelon rearward. The presence of CSS elements operating along the same movement routes as C2, combat, and combat support units places a premium on traffic control, availability of alternate routes, and prioritization planning.

Prepare a Delay

The general defensive preparations outlined in chapter 8 also apply when conducting a delay. Resources—including the time available—determine the extent of preparations. The delaying force commander assigns the highest priority to reconnaissance—gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy is fundamental to delaying their advance. Simultaneously, the preparation of positions is a priority for the force. Except in the rare circumstance where the delaying force will accomplish their mission from just one set of positions, the preparation of subsequent positions receives a higher priority than it would in either an area or mobile defense. Engineers base their priorities of work on the defensive SOM—the positions closest to the enemy may only support shaping actions that allow the commander to create the delay effect elsewhere. It is not always possible to complete all preparations before starting the delay operation. Consequently, delaying units continue to prepare and adapt plans as the situation develops.

The commander uses BPs in the delay as in any other defense. The difference is not in task and purpose—BPs in the delay focus on an avenue of approach—but in preparation. In other types of defenses, a BP is likely the primary fighting position from which a unit will accomplish their task and purpose, whereas any given BP in a delay is just one of a number of positions. And while a delay SOM also has its supporting and main efforts, general position preparation places more emphasis on reconnaissance, flank and rear security, and preparing routes for displacing than it does on protective obstacles, FPFs, and ammunition stockpiling. In the delay, BPs are sometimes referred to as delay positions.

While rehearsals are always important in any military operation, the delay operation's requirement to repeatedly engage the enemy and displace rearward to do it again, coupled with branches and sequels that could include local counterattacks and commitment of the reserve to exploit unexpected opportunities, places a premium on rehearsals. At a minimum, the commander and subordinates execute a combined arms rehearsal that focuses on timing, triggers, and the employment of combined arms. Small units and crews should practice moving to their various positions in both daylight and limited visibility conditions.

Execute a Delay

The security force deploys well forward to gain and maintain contact with the enemy, executing reconnaissance and security tasks (especially when other ISR resources are scarce). The security force seeks and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements, blinding the enemy and forcing them to hesitate and move more cautiously. As the enemy's advance guard enters the security area, the security force disrupts and delays them without becoming decisively engaged, seeking to determine the enemy's intent and COA. Supporting arms and information operations engage and influence the approaching enemy as far forward of the delay positions as possible.

Once the security force makes contact with the enemy, they maintain contact. As the enemy approaches, the security force moves by bounds back towards and through main body positions, keeping the enemy under observation until the handover with the main body is complete. They avoid compromising friendly positions by moving through the flanks of delay elements, avoiding friendly EAs and TRPs unless terrain and the tactical situation make it absolutely necessary. Depending on the SOM, the security force either halts and reorganizes behind the main body for follow-on tasks or they continue their withdrawal back to and through the main defensive lines where they begin reconstitution and await the rest of the delaying force.

As the security force hands over the battle to the main body, the delaying force commander makes any final decisions or adjustments to the SOM based on enemy actions and their apparent intent. The main body executes the SOM using either alternate positions, subsequent positions, or a combination of both. Actions by the main body include ambushes, local counterattacks, employment of supporting arms and information operations, BPs, and at higher levels, use of area and mobile defenses within assigned AOs (e.g., the main effort for a regiment conducting a delay might be the area defense of a subordinate battalion).

The commander of the delay force preserves the force's freedom to maneuver by engaging the enemy with sufficient force to temporarily stop the enemy's advance. Unless the mission demands it, the delaying force avoids decisive engagement. The delaying force uses obstacles, fires, information operations, and defensive positions in depth to slow and canalize the enemy while exploiting their own mobility to confuse and defeat the enemy. Once a delay starts, units displace rapidly between positions. Whenever possible, the commander grasps any fleeting opportunity to seize the initiative, even if only temporarily. Doing so avoids passive defensive patterns that favor the enemy while robbing the attacker of tempo and momentum. The delaying force may conduct strong counterattacks from unexpected directions to temporarily confuse the enemy commander and force unplanned actions or commitment of enemy reserves and follow-on forces.

As in other types and methods of defense, the delaying force commander employs the single-battle concept to continually and simultaneously engage the enemy throughout the AO. All manner of fires and IO activities occur throughout the delay operation and across the enemy force. Depending on the nature of the enemy's air defense capabilities and the friendly ability to suppress them, the ACE conducts wide ranging operations to attack, disrupt, and delay the enemy throughout the battlespace. Fires and information operations assist delaying forces by—

- Introducing hesitation and confusion into enemy decision-making and execution by degrading their ability to move, communicate, and conduct reconnaissance.
- Suppressing enemy overwatch, support-by-fire, and attack-by-fire positions.
- Supporting the disengagement and displacement of maneuver forces through fires, obscuration, closing breaches and lanes, and emplacing reinforcing obstacles.
- Destroying highpayoff targets.
- Supporting limited counterattacks.

The aggregate effect of all these actions, however, remains focused on massing the combat power of the delaying force.

Within individual positions, subordinate commanders rely primarily on massed, surprise fires to create maximum damage and disruption amongst the enemy force. As the enemy recovers, reorganizes, and begins to maneuver against the delaying force, the friendly commander continues to direct destructive fires against them, tracking the enemy's actions and the progress of the engagement against displacement criteria. When the displacement criteria is met, or the delaying element risks decisive engagement or destruction, the element displaces under displacement fires using terrain and cover and concealed routes to break contact. The fires of supporting arms target the vacated positions after the departure of the friendly force.

The delaying force commander remains flexible as the battle unfolds. Elements having unexpected success may still have to withdraw depending on the effectiveness of the delay elsewhere. The commander shifts combat power, to include the reserve, to enable the successful disengagement of elements threatened with defeat or to counter unexpected enemy moves (e.g., the bypassing of a delay position). If retained in the AO, the withdrawn security force becomes the new reserve. Just like that security force, whenever possible, retrograding elements of the main body pass to the flanks of positions rather than through them. This can prove expedient when time is a factor—for example, by avoiding the delay of attempting to move through passage lanes when hard pressed by enemy forces.

Throughout the operation, friendly forces fall back on to logistic support. Combat service support elements remain one step ahead of the delay force's retrograde movement using maintenance contact teams and small stockpiles of critical supplies to meet the immediate needs of elements in contact. Priorities of support are casualty and equipment evacuation, ammunition, and petroleum products. Maintenance operations focus on evacuation over repair.

Termination of a Delay

A delay operation terminates when one of the following occurs:

- The delaying force conducts a rearward passage of lines and battle handover with the defending force.
- The defending force experiences unexpected success and becomes the basis for an area or mobile defense on appropriate terrain.
- The defending force experiences unexpected success and becomes the basis for a transition to the offense.

Regardless, the outcome of the delaying force's actions should be accounted for in the senior commander's main plan or in appropriate branches and sequels.

WITHDRAWAL

A withdrawal is a planned method of retrograde in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force and moves in a direction away from the enemy. It consists of two forms: under pressure or not under pressure. Subordinate units may withdraw without the entire force withdrawing. A unit conducts a withdrawal method for any of the reasons listed at the beginning of this chapter. Withdrawals may be used in conjunction with other methods of retrograde—a delay may cover a withdrawal and a withdrawal may precede a retirement. Ideally, commanders seek to withdraw not under enemy pressure, though this is not always possible when an aggressive enemy becomes aware of a friendly force's withdrawal or intention to withdraw. A unit withdraws to an AA or a new defensive position.

Withdrawals are inherently dangerous because they involve moving units to the rear and away from what is usually a stronger enemy force. The heavier the previous fighting and the closer the contact with the enemy, the more difficult the withdrawal. Therefore, OPSEC is extremely

important to the conduct of a successful withdrawal since competent enemy forces will attempt to exploit the withdrawal, using all available capabilities to try to turn the friendly force's withdrawal into a rout (OPSEC can be very difficult amongst a civilian population that is likely migrating rearwards as well). The attacking enemy may have ground and air superiority and continuously attempt to pursue, encircle, and destroy the withdrawing force. In the same manner as a friendly force exploits or pursues, the attacking enemy commander will try to use a combination of direct pressure and enveloping forces and fires to isolate the withdrawing friendly force for later destruction. See chapters 6 and 7.

Organization of Forces

The commander typically organizes the withdrawing unit into a security force, a main body, and a reserve. On occasion, commanders may employ stay-behind forces. Unless there is sufficient planning time for the withdrawal, or circumstances dictate rapid changes (e.g., preventing an encirclement), commanders avoid changing or creating new task organizations to avoid complicating the operation.

The security force maintains contact with the enemy, simulates the continued presence of the main body, and covers the main body's withdrawal. To accomplish these tasks, the security force usually receives additional combat power and combat support, often serving as the main effort of the withdrawing force. The commander may create additional security forces to protect the flanks of the main body and to lead rearward movement, preventing enemy attempts to cut off or block it.

When withdrawing, especially under pressure, the commander generally finds it difficult to resource a reserve, but makes every effort to do so. The reserve provides the withdrawal force the flexibility to respond to unexpected enemy actions, extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces, and take advantage of enemy mistakes to conduct local counterattacks that disrupt and delay the enemy. The main body of the withdrawing force consists of all elements remaining after the commander resources the security force and the reserve.

Control Measures

The withdrawing force must balance the requirement to move combat power away from the enemy for a follow-on purpose with protecting itself. The commander must closely coordinate and deconflict the rearward movement of combat, combat support, and CSS units while maintaining the ability to generate decisive combat power at key times and places. Similar to a delay, the minimum control measures for a withdrawal consist of an AO with associated boundaries, coordination or contact points, and passage points or lanes. Additional control measures consist of those normally associated with the defense (e.g., PLs, BPs, handover lines, trigger lines, disengagement lines), depending on the defensive SOM. See chapter 8 and figure 11-5.

Forms of Withdrawal

A withdrawal may be under or not under enemy pressure. In addition, a withdrawal may be assisted or unassisted. These factors combined produce the four variations, shown in figure 11-6 along with their associated tactical mission graphics. Assistance that the withdrawing force may receive from another force consists of support such as additional security and occupation of choke points and key terrain along withdrawal routes, management of movement and traffic control, fires, information operations, and logistics.

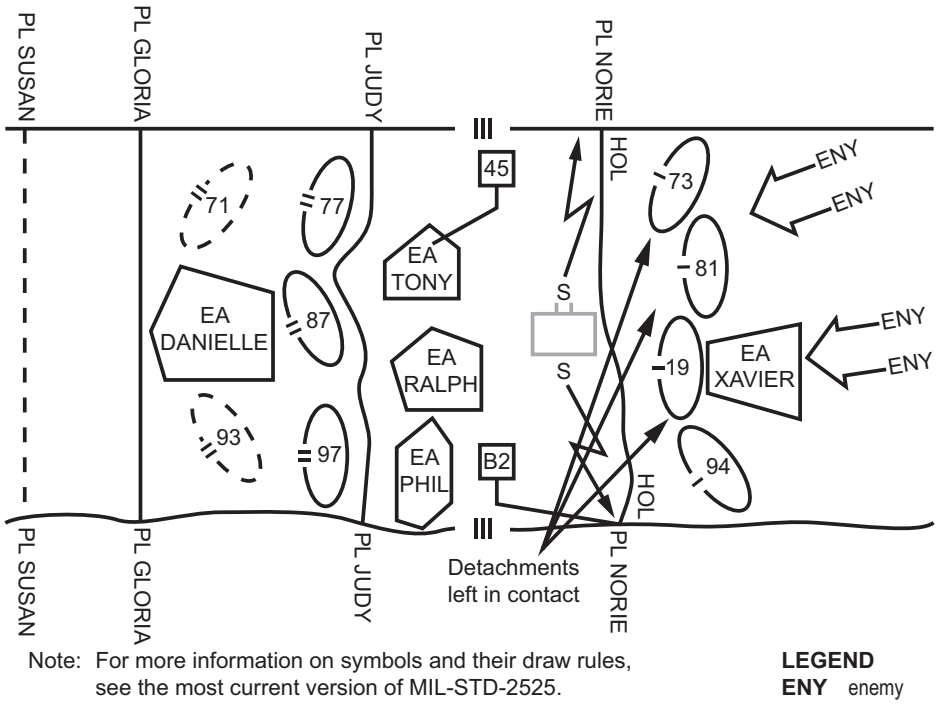


Figure 11-5. Withdrawal Control Measures Defense.

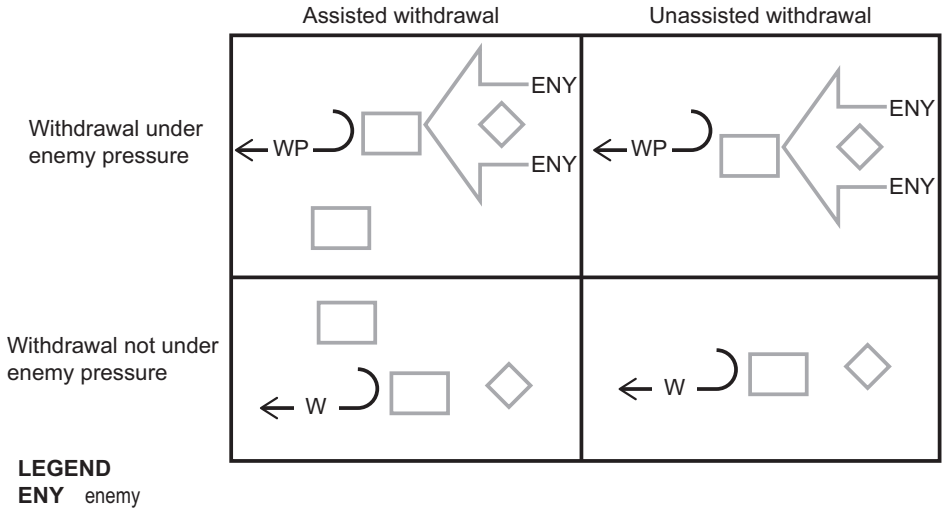


Figure 11-6. Forms of Withdrawal.

The preferred method is to conduct a withdrawal not under enemy pressure either with or without assistance. This provides the commander the simplest tactical problem, the easiest coordination requirements, and the most time to plan, execute, and establish new, more favorable positions. The commander can accept prudent risks, such as ordering the main body to move by road march instead of in tactical formations. The commander also possesses time to properly plan for stay-behind forces if appropriate. This is the least likely method when already in contact with a capable and competent enemy.

The least preferred method is to conduct a withdrawal under enemy pressure. This evolution forces the commander to weigh and balance force preservation against subsequent missions in the context of the level and nature of the enemy pressure. Will the force have to fight their way clear of the enemy every step of the way? How much may they lose doing so? Is the requirement to preserve the main body for follow-on missions so great as to warrant risking the destruction of the security force? A withdrawal under enemy pressure generally indicates a compressed decision and planning cycle that entails risk that the commander will seek to offset through the assistance of outside forces.

Planning a Withdrawal

The planning and coordination of a withdrawal is very similar to that of a delay. In both cases, the commander begins design and problem framing with the assumption that the enemy will attempt to interfere with the withdrawal. Unlike a delay, where the lack of enemy action may mean the delay force stays in place, in the withdrawal the friendly force is still leaving. Accordingly, the withdrawing commander plans for enemy interference, but also develops decision points and triggers that allow the force to transition to a "not under pressure" withdrawal if enemy interference does not manifest itself. Further, the commander avoids any premature actions that would indicate to the enemy that a withdrawal was being contemplated. Regardless of whether or not the withdrawal is under pressure, the commander plans to—

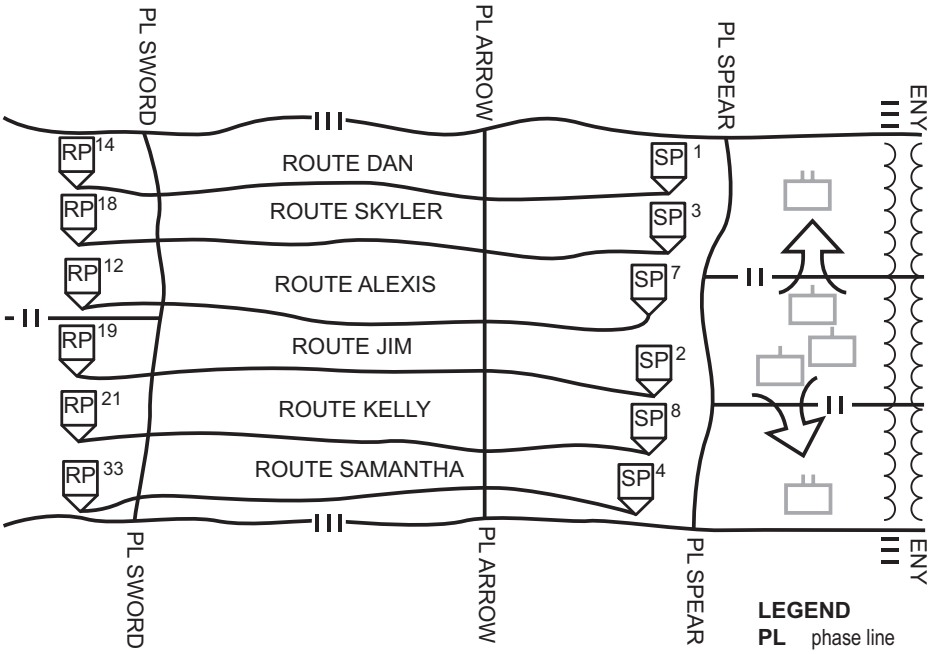
- Break away deliberately from the enemy.
- Create a situation where the main body can displace rapidly, free of enemy interference.
- Retain sufficient combat power and logistic resources to support security forces throughout the operation.

In creating the SOM for a withdrawal, the commander decides whether the entire force will attempt to withdraw simultaneously or by phases. While a simultaneous withdrawal allows for a rapid and deliberate break from the enemy, the variables of METT-T, lack of sufficient routes, and compliance of the enemy do not often allow for it. Therefore, the commander normally conducts the operation in phases, determining an order of withdrawal by element that balances speed of movement against the force's overall ability to still protect itself.

The first factor the commander considers is follow-on missions. Why is the force withdrawing in the first place and what must they be able to do once the withdrawal is complete? This helps the commander determine and prioritize what combat power and resources must complete the withdrawal successfully. The second consideration is how far must the force withdraw and what lies between them and the withdrawal position? The commander analyzes the availability of transportation assets and routes, how many combat support and CSS elements must also withdraw, and how their movement and the movement of the maneuver elements of the main body can be phased. The third consideration is a determination of how hard the enemy will press the withdrawing force. These three factors enable the commander to make three interrelated key decisions: when to start the movement of selected combat, combat support, and CSS elements; when forward elements should start thinning out; and when the security force should begin their disengagement operations.

The security force—specifically the rear, as opposed to flanks or forward security force—is normally the commander's main effort in creating the space needed by the main body to withdraw successfully. The first consideration for security force planning is whether a security area exists between friendly and enemy forces. The existence of a security area greatly eases the ability of the main body to break contact. If the enemy is in close contact with friendly forces, they are more likely to see through deceptions and recognize the indicators of a withdrawal. A security area makes such intimate knowledge of friendly positions and actions less likely. Commanders create an autonomous security force when a security area exists, such as a regiment designating one battalion to serve as the security force. This simplifies command and control and OPSEC is little affected. When no security area exists or enemy and friendly forces are in close contact, commanders mitigate OPSEC concerns by creating an ad hoc security force under a designated commander. In this case, each battalion in the withdrawing regiment would leave a company forward, continuing expected and known routines to simulate the presence of the main body.

Assigned tasks and resources determine whether the entire security force, or just portions of them, simulate the presence of the main body. Elements left in contact with the enemy employ IO activities and techniques to deceive the enemy until it is too late for them to react (see fig. 11-7). Regardless of how successful deception is, the security force commanders must expect to have to fight to provide the withdrawing force the time they need. Consequently, they develop disengagement criteria and instructions, while also ensuring that recovery, evacuation, and transportation assets are in place to aid disengagement and speed rearward movement. Planning for when and how to begin rearward movement centers on selecting times and conditions when the enemy cannot observe the activity, to include electronic emissions and being observed by enemy or neutral satellites. If possible, habituating the enemy to the conduct of friendly activities during periods of limited visibility—for example, routinely conducting resupply at night



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 11-7. Detachment Left in Contact.

will likely inure the enemy to the sounds of withdrawing vehicles at night. Operations security is most critical in the early stages of the operation, when most combat support and CSS elements begin displacing.

Similar to the delay, the primary decision a commander must make is how to both support the withdrawing elements while minimizing the loss of logistic resources to enemy action. By concealing supplies along movement routes, CSS units can simplify support requirements and reduce the enemy's ability to interfere with logistic operations. This allows logistic units to withdraw earlier than they otherwise could. The commander carefully considers whether to place supplies in caches. Once cached, supplies are difficult to recover if the operation does not go as planned. Other than medical items, the withdrawing unit evacuates or destroys all supplies that they are unable to evacuate to prevent capture. The commander establishes destruction criteria, which is time- or event-driven, for each class of supply.

Preparing a Withdrawal

The withdrawing force dispatches forces and resources (e.g., advance parties and engineers) to prepare the new positions for occupation. The commander institutes the deception and associated IO plans. In accordance with these activities and OPSEC guidance, CSS elements begin phasing functions rearwards. If using caches to support the withdrawing force, they begin deploying them. Other nonessential activities, across the warfighting functions, phase rearward as well.

Planning for the withdrawing force's follow-on mission continues and the commander modifies the withdrawal as necessary to support it. In an unassisted withdrawal, the withdrawing unit establishes their own security force and reserve. They reconnoiter and secure the routes they will use during rearward movement while sustaining themselves during the withdrawal. When conducting an assisted withdrawal, withdrawing commanders determine their shortfalls or risks and seek to mitigate them through the employment of the assisting force or resources. As preparations begin, the commander makes initial liaison with the assistance, brings them into the planning process, determines tasks, and as required moves the assisting elements forward for employment.

Executing a Withdrawal

The security force is formed either based on a single unit or an ad hoc blend from the forward most units. They begin functioning as the rear guard, executing assigned tasks such as counterreconnaissance, tactical deception, delay operations as required, and limited offensive operations such as spoiling attacks or feints. Elements to conduct flank and forward security (direction of movement) begin their tasks if the SOM mandates. The command forms and locates its reserve in positions—generally to the rear in close support of the security forces—that enable them to reinforce and assist the security forces by extricating heavily engaged elements, and take advantage of opportunities to use offensive action (e.g., counterattacks) to prevent enemy interference with the withdrawal. If an assisted withdrawal, those forces and resources so assigned begin their missions to provide security, aid movement, and support other activities.

On order, the main body utilizes conditions of limited visibility, smoke, and deception to move rapidly rearward on multiple routes to intermediate or final positions. They may utilize multiple intermediate positions to phase and coordinate movement while enhancing protection. If under enemy pressure, the least-engaged units retrograde first, while the security force and reserve act to

support the movement of heavier engaged units. Movement is disciplined and traffic management centralized even in the face of enemy pressure—units move along designated routes at given times. Designated combat support units maintain their positions to offer indirect fires, mobility, and countermobility support to the withdrawing force, while the rest move with CSS elements to their new positions. Remaining combat support units use various techniques to echelon rearward while providing support to the security, main body, and reserve forces. (See chap. 14 on movement techniques.) The ACE uses aerial delivered fires in the close and deep areas to prevent or disrupt enemy interference with the operation and employs assault support assets as required for the security, main body, and reserve forces.

After the main body withdraws a safe distance, the security force begins their rearward movement. If using a DLIC, that detachment remains in contact until a designated time or event. Even if the enemy does not pursue the withdrawing force, the security force continues to act as the rear guard unless the commander assigns that mission to another element. If not pursued by the enemy, the security force may transition to more effective and speedy means of movement, such as a march column.

If the security force and the reserve cannot prevent the enemy from closing on the main body, the commander commits some or all of the main body to delay or defend and prevent the enemy from further interfering with the withdrawal. In this event, the actions of the main body focus on creating the conditions that will allow for resumption of the retrograde at the earliest possible moment. The enemy endeavors to fix friendly forces for their envelopment and destruction, and the commander disrupts these attempts by using alternate routes to avoid enemy attacks using a forward security element to hold open checkpoints or fight through enemy blocks.

Terminating a Withdrawal

Once the withdrawing force successfully disengages from the enemy, they execute one of three options. They either withdraw to new positions that are part of the overall defense or they conduct a rearward passage of lines and occupy AAs for subsequent missions. In these two cases, they conduct reconstitution tasks and activities to rapidly regain effectiveness. Or, in the third case, once beyond the influence of enemy action, the withdrawing force transitions to a retirement and continues their rearward movement and next mission.

RETIREMENT

A retirement is an operation in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy. Units conduct the retirement method of the retrograde to reposition forces for future operations or to accommodate the current concept of operations. Figure 11-8 shows the retirement tactical mission graphic. A retiring unit organizes for combat, but does not anticipate interference from enemy ground forces. The retiring unit has either successfully completed a withdrawal or, more likely, their security is being provided by another unit. Still, since the enemy may employ unconventional forces, vertical envelopment, and air strikes or long-range fires to interdict the retiring unit, commanders plan for enemy actions and organize the unit to fight in self-defense. Units conduct retirements as tactical road marches where security and speed are the most

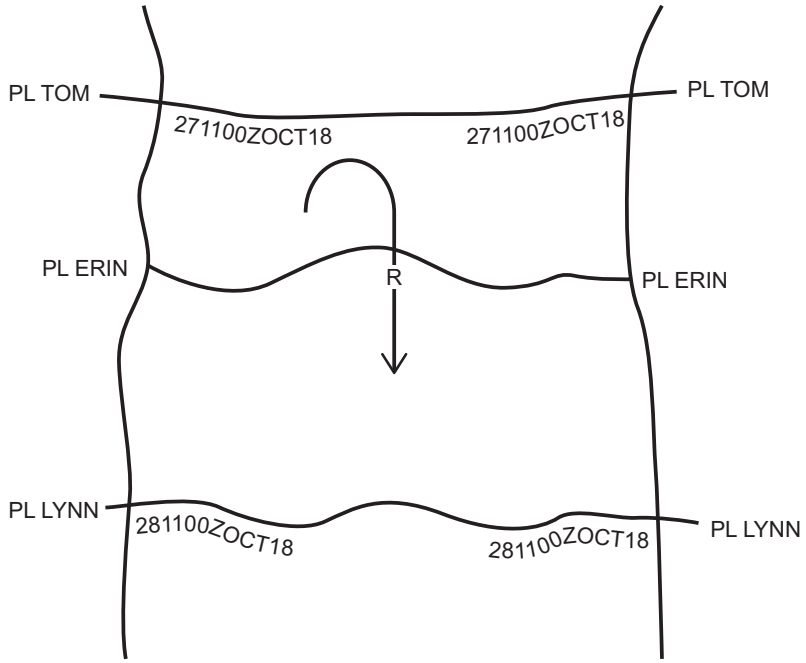


Figure 11-8. Retirement Example.

important considerations. If the force is transitioning from a withdrawal, the retirement begins when the security force completes their disengagement and can organize into a march formation. The retiring unit generally moves toward an AA, which should support the preparations for the unit's next mission. Routes used by the retiring force should support speedy and efficient movement, but should also allow for effective defensive measures if required. One high-speed route may best support fast movement, but two, slower parallel routes might also support fairly rapid retrograde while providing more defensive options to respond to enemy actions.

Organization of Forces

The commander normally designates security elements and a main body in a retirement. There is no reserve (see fig. 11-9). Elements of the force organize into march columns—the formation and number of columns depending upon the number of available routes and the potential for enemy interference. The commander typically moves major elements to the rear simultaneously. However, a limited road net or a flank threat may require the unit to echelon their movement in terms of time and ground locations.

The factors of METT-T dictate the size and composition of the security forces. The primary security concern will be to the rear. Rear security acts to protect the rearmost columns from surprise, disruption, and attack. They also conduct control of stragglers and equipment evacuation. Commanders may establish flank security if necessary, and will normally establish an advanced guard augmented by a combat engineer detachment to focus on mobility operations. In a manner similar to the delay and withdrawal, the commander may use single units to conduct these security tasks, or may require each march column to provide their own forward, flank, and rear security.

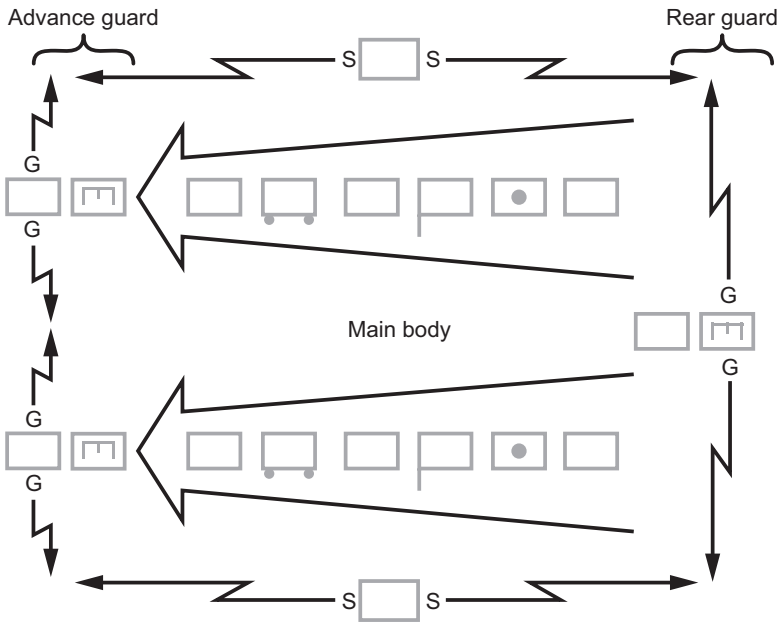


Figure 11-9. Organization of Forces for a Retirement Operation.

The main body organizes in a manner opposite that of an approach march (see chap. 4). The movement of combat support and CSS units precede the movement of combat forces. When necessary, elements of the main body can reinforce the rear guard or any other security element. Commanders rely upon the ACE and the organic fire support systems of the security forces to provide the first source of fire support. Combat support units within the main body can always be pulled and retasked if necessary. Information operations in support of the retirement are the responsibility of the overall commander of the retiring unit.

Control Measures

The control measures used in a retirement are the same as those in a delay and a withdrawal. As in a withdrawal, thorough planning and strict adherence to routes and movement times facilitate an orderly retirement. The commander controls movement using movement times, routes, and checkpoints. See chapters 2 and 3 for movement control measures.

Planning and Execution of a Retirement

Units executing retirements try to begin them from some state of stability. Transitioning directly from the withdrawal to retirement without allotting time for the reestablishment of command and control, resupply, and reorganization is the least preferred method and is avoided if possible. Once an element assumes a march formation, they are prepared to initiate the retirement. The initial action is to move combat support, CSS units, and CSS resources to the rear. During the initial phase, the force retires in multiple small columns. As the distance from the enemy increases, smaller columns can consolidate into larger ones for ease of movement control. Where the force begins retirement, the factors of METT-T, and the availability and status of road nets influence the commander’s decision regarding the size of various columns and when they might consolidate.

Commanders generally place engineer assets with the advanced guard to support mobility requirements from road and bridge repair to route clearance. If there is a countermobility requirement, other engineer resources may travel with flank and rear security elements. Traffic management and equipment evacuation remain priorities in planning. The lack of an enemy presence does not lessen the requirement for smooth, efficient, and rapid execution of the movements necessary to complete the retirement. In a similar manner, the retiring force still uses periods of limited visibility, windows in satellite observation, and deception to complicate enemy attempts to gain information on or influence the force.

Just like a delay and withdrawal, the command must anticipate and plan for the effects of retrograde movements on logistic support for the operation in terms of considerations such as maintenance, resupply, and evacuation of equipment and casualties. Retirements increase the demand on transportation assets and MSR space. This results in greater demand for effective route management, consumption of Class III (and possibly Class V) supplies, and pre-positioned services and supplies. The amount and location of caches depends upon the nature of the retirement—if the area is being abandoned, then commanders must prevent the buildup of unnecessary resources accumulating there and develop comprehensive plans for the complete evacuation of supporting functions. The commander establishes maintenance, recovery, and evacuation priorities and destruction criteria for inoperable equipment.

During a retirement, CSS units echelon their movements to maintain adequate support to the committed force—priority of support goes to the rear guard which is likely falling back through a logistic gap created by the needs of the main body. The commander keeps MSRs open and decontaminated as necessary. Logistic units maintain maximum dispersion consistent with control and local security. Their goal is to provide uninterrupted support and maximum protection during the time it takes to conduct the retirement operation. Recovery and evacuation vehicles position themselves at critical locations to keep disabled vehicles from blocking movement routes. By echeloning support, the commander reduces the amount of time each CSS unit spends moving, preventing them from performing their primary support tasks. High-priority assets may require added protection to prevent their loss or capture.

UNIQUE RETROGRADE SITUATIONS

Conditions that require conducting denial measures and stay-behind operations can arise during retrograde operations. These two methods of retrograde have their own unique planning and execution considerations.

Denial Measures

A denial measure is an action to hinder or deny the enemy the use of territory, personnel, or facilities to include destruction, removal, contamination, or erection of obstructions. (*DOD Dictionary*) Denial measures are not countermobility activities. Denial measures limit the enemy's benefits of occupying an area; countermobility limits the maneuver of the enemy. There are times when an enemy unit will capture or threaten the capture of friendly equipment and supplies, most often during retrograde and defensive operations. This may or may not be associated with the purpose

of the enemy's operation and captured supplies (e.g., POL) can ease the enemy's logistic burden, increasing the efficiency of their operations. The fundamental reason to conduct denial measures is to avoid providing the enemy any assistance. The principles of denial include the following:

- Destruction of military equipment and supplies only occurs when friendly forces cannot prevent them from falling into enemy hands.
- Responsibility for conducting denial measures rests with the user of the equipment and supplies.
- If practical, denial measures should not preclude their later use by friendly forces (e.g., hiding vice destroying).
- It is unlawful to deliberately destroy medical equipment and supplies or make food and water unfit for consumption.

The definition of a unit's military equipment and supplies could expand to include military installations and any civilian equipment and supplies used by the friendly force. Under the law of war, the destruction of civilian property is only permitted when required by immediate military necessity. The determination of whether there is sufficient necessity to justify destruction is a complex decision that requires consideration of moral, political, and legal considerations. Additionally, civil instability increased by the destruction of civilian property, material, and equipment could have adverse effects on friendly operations. The commander involves the staff judge advocate and civil affairs staff officer in planning denial measures. The commander who orders the execution of denial measures must consider the potential value of the military equipment and supplies to an enemy when determining the priorities and the extent of the denial. High priorities for denial include—

- Classified equipment, materiel, and documents.
- POL.
- Sophisticated weapon systems or electronic equipment.
- Heavy weapons and associated ammunition.
- Communications equipment.
- Ferrying and bridging equipment.
- Air, sea, and land transport systems.

The commander issues detailed instructions to deny military equipment and supplies to prevent the enemy from directly using them. Denial must also prevent an enemy from repairing a system through the cannibalization of several systems. The unit must destroy the same parts in each type of system.

The commander ensures that executing the denial plan does not adversely affect the unit's future operations. This includes carefully considering the force's demolition policy in relation to the purpose of the rearward movement and the contemplated subsequent actions of the force. During a friendly retrograde, widespread demolitions during the retrograde may become a greater hindrance to a friendly force moving back into the area than to the enemy. For example, destroying the transportation infrastructure increases friendly logistic difficulties once the area is recaptured. Removing or destroying militarily significant supplies and equipment (e.g., fuel,

obstacle materials, rail cars) from an area requires friendly forces to bring similar assets with them when they reoccupy the area.

The commander can expand a denial operation to prevent the enemy from exploiting resources (e.g., fuel, minerals, the indigenous population); routes of communication (e.g., river locks, railroad switching yards, road interchanges, and bridges); and facilities (e.g., telephone exchanges, radio/television stations, the industrial plants of a region). The defending force can assist civil authorities in evacuating the civilian population. The defending force either removes the resources, supplies, and facilities from the area being abandoned to the enemy or destroys them in place. Such denial measures may be either total or limited.

Total denial measures can produce longterm political, economic, military, and environmental effects. Total denial measures have operational, and possibly strategic, level impact. Total denial measures consume large quantities of transportation and engineer resources and require considerable time to plan and execute. Limited or partial denial measures are particularly suitable if the defending force expects to regain control of the area within a short time. The removal or destruction of only a few key components can reduce a facility to limited utility, yet it allows for the facility's quick restoration of all functions once it is returned to friendly control. Marine Corps units only destroy discrete targets of significant military value. While limited denial measures may not affect the advance of properly supported enemy combat formations possessing cross-country mobility, they can seriously impede an enemy's road bound and rail bound logistic efforts if executed with skill and imagination according to an overall plan.

Stay-Behind Operations

A stay-behind operation is an operation in which a unit is left in position to conduct a specified mission while the remainder of the forces withdraw or retire from an area. Units are either assigned a stay-behind mission, are inserted to conduct a stay-behind mission, or default to a stay-behind mission due to enemy actions that result in their bypass. The force should consist of enough combat, combat support, and CSS elements to protect and sustain their fighting capability for the duration of the mission. Stay-behind operations are not suicide missions and occur only when the commander possesses reasonable confidence that the stay-behind force will rejoin the main body, extract themselves in alternative ways, or that the main body will fight their way forward to linkup with the them. Examples of short duration stay-behind missions include units continuing shaping operations in the security area of an area defense or units holding on to key terrain from strong points in a mobile defense.

The main purpose of a stay-behind force is to destroy, disrupt, and deceive the enemy by attacking enemy combat forces, command and control, combat support, and CSS resources (see fig. 11-10). The longer the mission, the greater the risk to the force because of the danger that they will be located, encircled, and destroyed by the enemy. Resupply and casualty evacuation also become extremely difficult as the length of time associated with the mission increases. Commanders consider these factors, and METT-T, when creating disengagement criteria or formally assigning this mission.

Any type of force can conduct stay-behind operations depending on METT-T. Dismounted infantry can be inserted via infiltration, air assault, or waterborne methods (a stay-behind operation is not a raid). The primary differences in the composition of a stay-behind force is

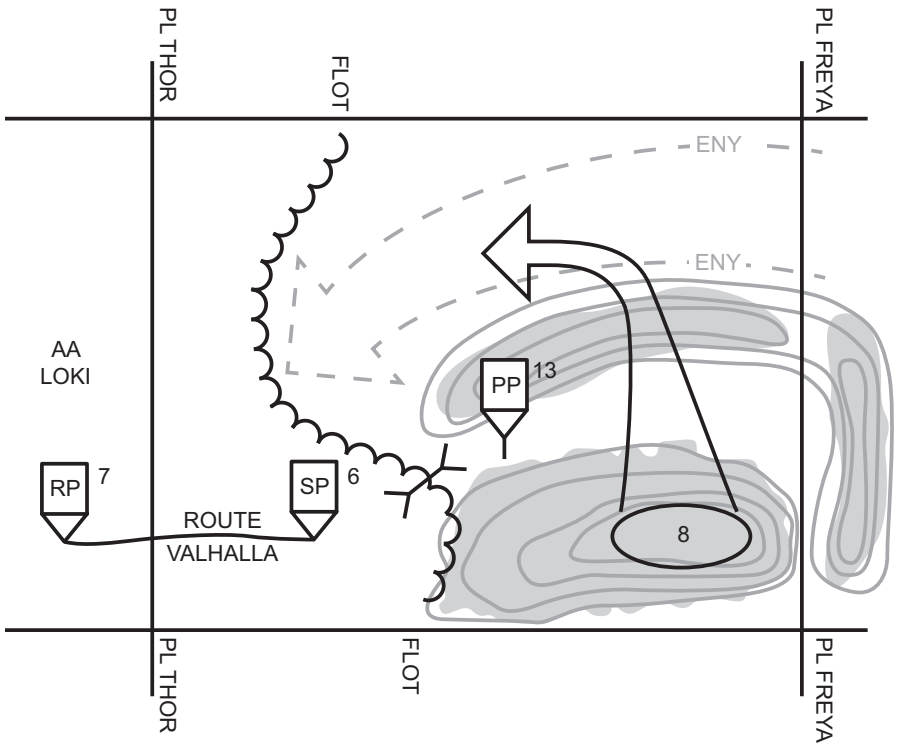


Figure 11-10. Stay-Behind Force.

terrain, logistic, and duration of the mission. An armored force may remain behind, but their effectiveness will be limited by their ability to be resupplied. A dismounted infantry force may have a comparatively smaller logistics requirement but will have survivability issues in open terrain.

Stay-behind operations eventually require the force to reenter friendly lines or linkup with other elements, often in more than one location. The stay-behind force may have to conduct a breakout from encirclement to do so (see chap. 18). The commander must carefully coordinate reentry and linkups to prevent friendly fire incidents. The return routes for the stay-behind force are the best covered and concealed routes available.

Part Four
Reconnaissance and Security Operations

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CHAPTER 12
RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS

Reconnaissance is a mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographical, or geographical characteristics of a particular area. (JP 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*) Reconnaissance, as it relates to ISR, primarily relies on the human dynamic rather than technical means. Reconnaissance is a focused collection effort. It is performed before, during, and after other operations to provide information used in the IPB process as well as by the commander in order to formulate, confirm, or modify a COA. The four types of reconnaissance missions are route, zone, area, and force-oriented.

OVERVIEW

Reconnaissance identifies terrain characteristics, enemy and friendly obstacles to movement, and the disposition of enemy forces and the civilian population, so commanders can develop the understanding to execute operations freely and rapidly. Reconnaissance supports and protects the force during movement and prior to the occupation of AAs. Reconnaissance supports maneuver by keeping units free from contact as long as possible and allowing the concentration of combat power at the decisive point in offensive and defensive activities. Reconnaissance enables commanders to understand the environment and potential adversaries when conducting stability weighted operations.

RECONNAISSANCE OBJECTIVE

Commanders orient reconnaissance assets by providing them reconnaissance objectives. Reconnaissance objectives result from the identification of priority information requirements during IPB. Reconnaissance objectives may be a terrain feature, geographic area, enemy force, adversary, or other mission or operational variable, such as specific civil considerations or the trafficability of a specific area. The reconnaissance objective is tied directly to a reconnaissance mission end state—and while the unit may have multiple tasks, they are subordinated to that end state—it represents the information that must be gathered.

The commander issues warning orders, FRAGOs, and operation orders to create a framework for managing ISR assets during execution of the intelligence collection plan and throughout operations. This process helps planners differentiate between surveillance requirements (i.e., the systematic observation of an area) and reconnaissance needs (i.e., a mission undertaken to obtain

specific information). This method also enables reconnaissance resources to act in concert, covering all of the commander's reconnaissance objectives, while acting according to their strengths. Air reconnaissance can reach objectives beyond the range of ground reconnaissance. Conversely, ground reconnaissance units can conduct missions in weather that would preclude aerial reconnaissance. Similarly, if a division G-2 uses technical sensors and human intelligence sources to determine that the enemy is not in an area and that the terrain there appears to be trafficable, then reconnaissance units may be reprioritized to other missions within the framework.

RECONNAISSANCE FUNDAMENTALS

There are seven fundamentals of successful reconnaissance operations. Commanders—

- Ensure continuous reconnaissance.
- Do not keep reconnaissance assets in reserve.
- Orient on the reconnaissance objective.
- Report information rapidly and accurately.
- Retain freedom of maneuver.
- Gain and maintain contact.
- Develop the situation rapidly.

Ensure Continuous Reconnaissance

Effective reconnaissance is continuous. The commander conducts reconnaissance before, during, and after all operations. Before an operation, reconnaissance fills gaps in information about the enemy, the terrain, and civil considerations. During an operation, reconnaissance provides commanders with updated information that allows them to make decisions. The information could orient on the enemy, such as verifying disposition and intentions, or it might orient on civil considerations. It might even orient on friendly activities, such as locations and status of units and resources during a chaotic CBRN event. After an operation, reconnaissance elements maintain contact with the enemy to determine the enemy's next move and collect information, to include terrain and civil considerations necessary for planning subsequent operations.

Administrative and logistic considerations aside, reconnaissance elements do not remain idle. Operational pauses occur only when making adjustments to the pace of commitment or preparing for a planned, maximum effort. When current operational information is adequate, reconnaissance elements gather information for branches and sequels to current plans. Reconnaissance occurs continuously as part of all security missions, including the conduct of local security for forces not in contact. As operations transition between the various elements of offense, defense, and stability, the nature of the commander's information requirements may change, but not the need to collect on them.

Do Not Keep Reconnaissance Assets in Reserve

Reconnaissance assets, like artillery assets, are never kept in reserve. When committed, reconnaissance assets use all of their resources to conduct continuous reconnaissance against assigned missions. Commanders do not recover and sustain reconnaissance assets by placing them in the reserve. Commanders consider all reconnaissance assets as committed assets with specific missions at all times. Reconnaissance elements may conduct necessary administrative, training, and logistic actions to maintain their capability while recovering from and planning for assigned missions. Exceptions to this rule apply to unique assets, such as armor and LAR, that have numerous other potential means of employment beyond reconnaissance missions.

Orient on the Reconnaissance Objective

The commander uses the reconnaissance objective to focus reconnaissance efforts. Commanders of subordinate reconnaissance elements remain focused on achieving this objective, regardless of what their elements encounter during the mission. When time, unit limitations, or enemy action prevents a unit from accomplishing all the tasks normally associated with a particular form of reconnaissance, the unit uses the reconnaissance objective to focus the reconnaissance effort.

Report Information Rapidly and Accurately

Reconnaissance assets acquire and report accurate and timely information on the assigned reconnaissance objective. Information—especially tactical information—may quickly lose its value. Reconnaissance units report exactly what they see and, if appropriate, what they do not see. Seemingly unimportant data may be extremely important when combined with other information. Reports of pertinent negatives—such as no enemy activity—are as important as reports of enemy activity. Failure to report tells the commander nothing. The ability to report relies upon proper communications training and equipment to enable reporting.

Retain Freedom of Maneuver

Reconnaissance assets must retain battlespace mobility to successfully complete their missions. The enemy will actively seek to find and destroy friendly reconnaissance assets. If these assets are decisively engaged, reconnaissance stops and a battle for survival begins. Reconnaissance assets maintain relative mobility by possessing clear engagement criteria and employing proper movement and reconnaissance techniques, using overwatching fires (to include indirect fire support), and following SOPs. Stealth, initiative, and knowledge of the terrain and the enemy reduce the likelihood of decisive engagement and help maintain freedom of movement. The IPB process can identify anticipated areas of likely contact and help reconnaissance units craft appropriate routes.

Gain and Maintain Contact

Once a unit conducting reconnaissance gains contact with the enemy, they maintain that contact unless the commander directing the reconnaissance orders otherwise or the survival of the unit is at risk. This does not mean that individual scout and reconnaissance teams cannot break contact with the enemy, but rather that the overall effort of the reconnaissance unit results in maintaining contact. While there are different types of contact, reconnaissance units prefer to conduct surveillance utilizing stealth. Units conducting reconnaissance avoid combat unless it is necessary to gain essential information, in which case the units use fire and maneuver to maintain contact while avoiding decisive engagement.

Develop the Situation Rapidly

When a reconnaissance asset encounters an enemy force or an obstacle (either visually or physically), the nature of the threat must be quickly determined—opportunities to do so may be fleeting due to changes in the situation or enemy action. When facing an enemy force, the enemy's composition, disposition, activities, and movements must be determined and the implications of that information must be assessed quickly. For an obstacle, the type and extent of the obstacle and whether it is covered by fire must be determined. Obstacles can provide the attacker with information concerning the location of enemy forces, weapon capabilities, and organization of fires. If a reconnaissance unit physically encounters the enemy, they normally conduct actions on contact while gathering information. See chapter 4 for actions on contact.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

All Marines and units are sensors with an implied mission to report information about the terrain, civilian activities, and friendly and enemy dispositions. The act of reconnaissance does not solely reside with reconnaissance units. Troops in contact report critical information about their contact. Patrols observing hostile activity report information about that activity. Combat service support elements conduct route reconnaissance, report enemy contact, and describe changes in trafficability. Civil affairs teams report information on the local populace and decision makers. This basic truth aside, the Marine Corps does create units who have a designated mission to conduct reconnaissance—these units are force reconnaissance, reconnaissance battalion, the ACE, LAR, and Marine Corps special operations forces. While some occupational specialties, such as combat engineers and civil affairs, have specific reconnaissance tasks to perform, commanders primarily use their organic or attached reconnaissance elements—ground or air—and intelligence elements to conduct reconnaissance operations.

Commanders assign missions to ISR assets based on their capabilities. Which assets are available to which echelons of command is a function of the asset's organization, equipment, training, availability, and policy (see table 12-1). It is the responsibility of commanders to know the capabilities and limitations of available reconnaissance assets and employ them properly. Leaders of reconnaissance assets have a similar duty to educate and advocate for the proper employment of their units. Finally, both commanders and reconnaissance leaders ensure that reconnaissance resources do not become overtasked or overextended. The primary way to accomplish this, as discussed above, is for commanders to use all available resources to satisfy information requirements, not just ISR assets.

Ground reconnaissance elements are generally limited in the depth to which they can conduct reconnaissance. However, they can operate under weather conditions that prohibit air reconnaissance operations. Reconnaissance conducted by manned and unmanned aviation platforms complements ground reconnaissance by increasing the speed and depth at which reconnaissance operations can be conducted over an area. Air reconnaissance operates over terrain that hinders ground operations (e.g., swamps, extremely rugged terrain, deep snow). Aviation assets can operate at a considerable depth, far in advance of dedicated ground reconnaissance elements focused on the close fight.

TYPES OF RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS

The four types of reconnaissance missions are:

- Route reconnaissance.
- Zone reconnaissance.
- Area reconnaissance.
- Force-oriented reconnaissance.

A reconnaissance in force is a type of attack that may be used to accomplish reconnaissance tasks in certain circumstances. See chapter 5.

Table 12-1. Typical Intelligence,

	PLT	Co	Bn	Regt	Div	MEF
Observation post	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Reconnaissance patrol	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Combat outpost	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Scout platoon	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Light armored reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	
Chemical reconnaissance		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Artillery forward observation team	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX		
Artillery target acquisition systems		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Air defense target acquisition systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Ground surveillance radars	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Other military intelligence collection systems			AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Manned aircraft systems	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Unmanned aircraft systems	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Marine Corps special forces			AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX
Division reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	AAA
Force reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Technical surveillance platforms	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

KEY

XXX echelon controls or routinely tasks the asset.

AAA echelon can routinely expect the information from that source to be made available to it.

LEGEND

Bn battalion-sized element

Co company-sized element

Div division-sized element

Plt platoon-sized element

Regt regimental-seized element

Route Reconnaissance

Route reconnaissance is a type of reconnaissance mission that is a directed effort to obtain detailed information of a specified route and all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along that route. Route reconnaissance provides new or updated information on route conditions, such as obstacles and bridge classifications, and enemy and civilian activity along the route. The commander normally assigns this mission when wanting to use a specific route for friendly movement.

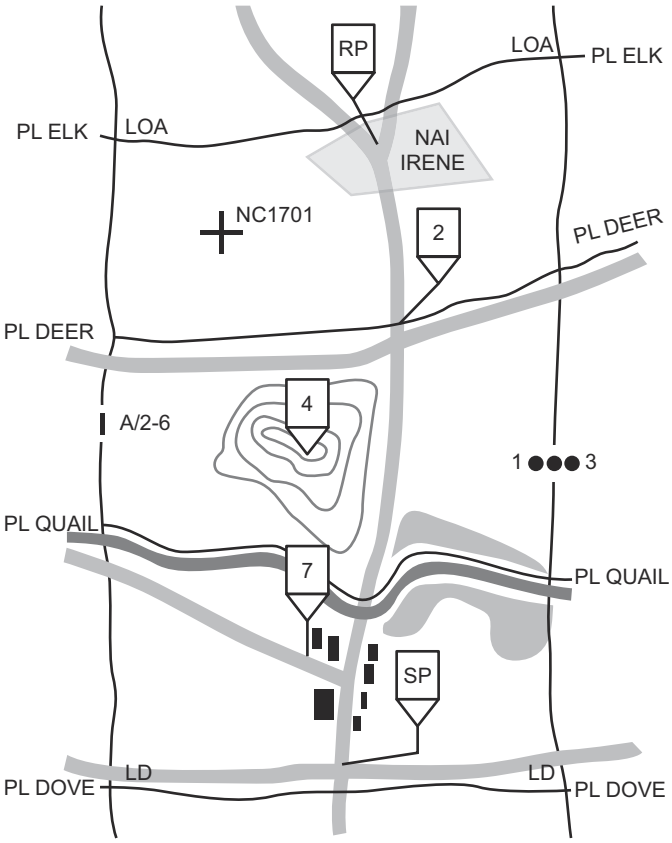
Organization of Forces. The commander assigns a route reconnaissance as a separate mission or as a specified task for a unit conducting a zone or area reconnaissance. A scout platoon conducts a route reconnaissance over only one route at a time. For larger organizations, the number of reconnaissance units available influences the number of routes that can be covered at one time. Integrating ground, air, and technical assets ensures a faster and more complete route reconnaissance—air and technical assets can help focus ground efforts, for example. However, a ground reconnaissance effort is essential if the mission is to conduct detailed reconnaissance of the route or clearing the enemy from the area around the route.

In task organizing reconnaissance units for route reconnaissance, commanders ensure they possess enough combat power to defeat smaller enemy units, to successfully break contact from similar or larger enemy units, or defend themselves long enough for reinforcement or extraction. Combat power includes access to effective and responsive fire support. The commander considers including special assets depending on the route reconnaissance mission such as engineer reconnaissance assets to determine classification of critical points, combat engineers to investigate obstacles, and CBRN assets to investigate contamination.

Control Measures. The minimum control measures necessary for a route reconnaissance are an AO, a start point, and a release point that define the section of the route upon which the unit will collect detailed information (see fig. 12-1). The AO should be wide enough and deep enough to allow the unit to conduct reconnaissance of all terrain from which the enemy could dominate the route. An LD and LOA create the rear and forward boundaries of the AO. The commander may add PLs and checkpoints to coordinate reconnaissance, control movement, or designate critical points.

Tasks. The requirement to conduct a route reconnaissance is established when a commander identifies the need to use a specific route to support maneuver, logistics, or both. The proposed purpose for the route determines the commander's information requirements that, in turn, define the mission and reconnaissance objective. The following are possible route reconnaissance tasks:

- Find, report, and—based on engagement criteria—clear within capabilities all enemy forces that can influence movement along the route.
- Determine if the route can support proposed usage requirements.
- Reconnoiter all terrain that the enemy can use to dominate movement along the route, such as choke points, ambush sites, pickup zones, LZs, and DZs.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 12-1. Route Reconnaissance Control Measures.

- Reconnoiter all builtup areas, contaminated areas, and lateral routes along the route.
- Evaluate and classify (engineers conduct classification) all bridges, defiles, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts along the route.
- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built-up areas) along the route.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Report the above route information to the headquarters initiating the route reconnaissance mission, to include providing a sketch map or a route overlay.

See MCRP 3-34.3, *Engineer Reconnaissance*, for additional information concerning route reconnaissance.

Zone Reconnaissance

Zone reconnaissance is a type of reconnaissance mission that is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, obstacles (including existing, reinforcing, and CBRN contamination), terrain, and enemy forces within a zone defined by boundaries. A zone reconnaissance normally is assigned when the enemy situation is vague or when information concerning cross-country trafficability is desired. Commanders assign zone reconnaissance

missions when they need additional information on a zone before conducting operations there. It is appropriate when the enemy situation is vague, existing knowledge of the terrain is limited, or combat operations have altered the terrain. A zone reconnaissance may include several route or area reconnaissance missions assigned to subordinate units.

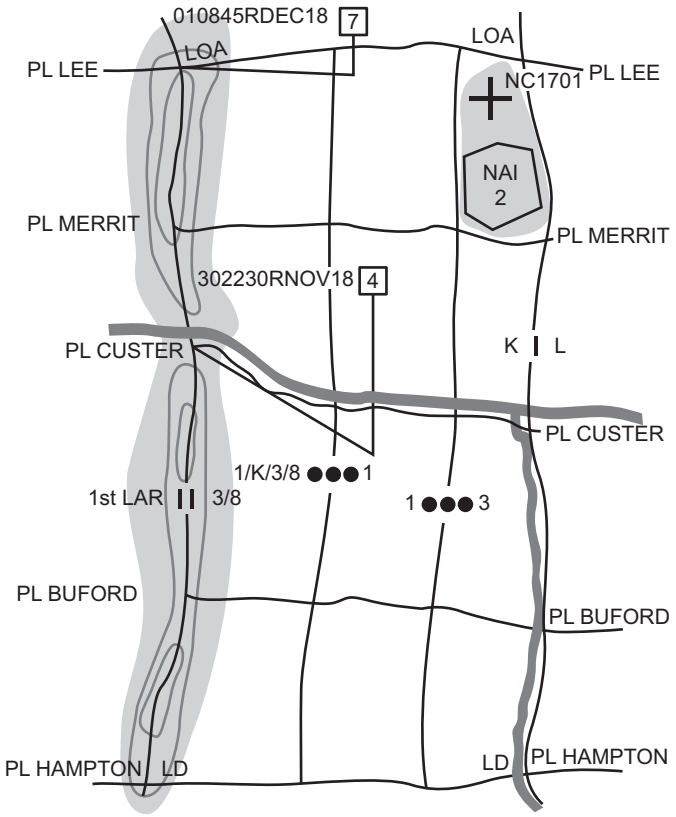
A zone reconnaissance is normally a deliberate, time-consuming process, occurring over extended distances. Since it takes more time than any other reconnaissance mission, commanders allow adequate time to conduct it. Normally, ground elements executing the zone reconnaissance move abreast of each other, with other ISR assets reinforcing their efforts and covering potential gaps. When the reconnaissance objective is an enemy force, commanders may choose to forgo a detailed sweep of the entire area and focus assets on NAIs within the zone that would reveal enemy dispositions and intentions, and terrain likely to affect movement and maneuver.

Organization of Forces. General task organization considerations for organizing a zone reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a route reconnaissance. The key difference is size and scope. Given the large size of a zone and the detailed reconnaissance required, the mission is normally assigned to a single commander employing a larger unit, such as a battalion, or a designated commander overseeing the actions of multiple, dedicated reconnaissance units. If the commander expects significant enemy forces within the zone, the commander provides the force conducting the zone reconnaissance with a reserve. This reserve should have adequate combat power to extract elements of the reconnaissance force from decisive engagement. For example, a tank company might perform this task for an LAR battalion. If a unit conducts a zone reconnaissance beyond supporting range of the main body, the commander ordering the zone reconnaissance provides the reconnaissance unit with adequate fire support assets that can move with the reconnaissance unit.

Control Measures. The minimum control measure necessary for a zone reconnaissance is an AO (see fig. 12-2). An LD and LOA create the rear and forward boundaries of the AO. The commander of the reconnaissance unit may subdivide the AO and employ control measures such as PLs and contact points to coordinate the movement and actions of subordinate units. The commander may further designate the time that this physical contact takes place.

Tasks. The requirement to conduct a zone reconnaissance is established when a commander determines they lack sufficient information regarding an area in terms of threat and terrain. These information requirements define the mission and reconnaissance objective. The following are possible zone reconnaissance tasks:

- Find, report, and—based on engagement criteria—clear within capabilities all enemy forces within the zone.
- Determine the trafficability of all terrain within the zone, including built-up areas.
- Locate and determine the extent of all contaminated areas in the zone.
- Evaluate and classify (engineers conduct classification) all bridges, defiles, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts in the zone.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 12-2. Zone Reconnaissance Control Measures.

- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built-up areas) in the zone.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Report the above information to the commander directing the zone reconnaissance to include providing a sketch map or overlay.

Area Reconnaissance

Area reconnaissance is a type of reconnaissance mission that is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area such as a town, ridgeline, woods, or other features critical to operations. The area may consist of a single point, such as a bridge or an installation. There are two primary differences between an area reconnaissance and a zone reconnaissance. The first difference is size and scale—areas are smaller than zones and are not usually contiguous to other areas targeted for reconnaissance. The second difference is that units conducting an area reconnaissance first move to the area in which the reconnaissance will take place whereas units conducting a zone reconnaissance cross an LD and investigate everything in front of them. An area reconnaissance typically takes less time to complete than a zone reconnaissance.

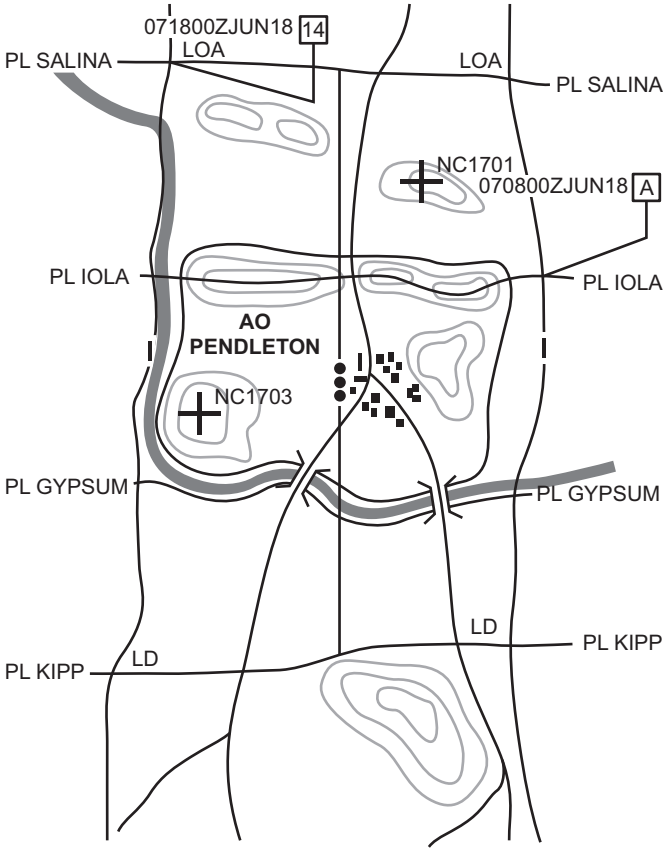
Organization of Forces. General considerations for organizing the area reconnaissance force is the same as for organizing a zone reconnaissance. The key difference is that larger forces are unlikely to receive area reconnaissance missions.

Control Measures. The commander assigning an area reconnaissance specifies the area for reconnaissance with a single continuous line to enclose the area to reconnoiter (see fig. 12-3). Alternatively, the commander may designate the area by using an AO. Commanders also designate a route into the area and a route from the area—ideally separate. The commander of the unit conducting the reconnaissance may use additional control measures to execute their assigned tasks.

Tasks. The tasks for an area reconnaissance are the same as for a zone reconnaissance.

Force-Oriented Reconnaissance

Force-oriented reconnaissance is a type of reconnaissance mission that is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning a specific enemy organization, wherever it may be or go. A force-oriented reconnaissance is normally assigned when commanders require additional, timely intelligence on a specific enemy or target unit. The ground reconnaissance element orients on that specific force, moving when necessary to observe that unit and report all required information as well as any other pertinent observed and collected information. The mobility of



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 12-3. Area Reconnaissance Control Measures.

assigned ground reconnaissance forces should match or exceed that of the target. Units assigned force-oriented reconnaissance missions may act as subordinates within larger reconnaissance efforts, such as a zone reconnaissance. Additionally, a force-oriented reconnaissance might employ a number of different ground reconnaissance units, technical resources, and sensors, passing observation responsibility from unit to unit as the target moves, enabling other units to reposition appropriately. Enemy targets requiring such a focus will likely also possess engagement criteria, and ground reconnaissance units should possess adequate fire support to engage such targets if engagement criteria are met.

Organization of Forces. General considerations for organizing a force-oriented reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a zone reconnaissance. The key difference is the distribution and maneuverability of assigned forces. Small forces focused on stealth and avoiding detection are appropriate for static enemy targets, while widely distributed, mobile reconnaissance units integrated with extensive technical support and sensors are necessary for highly mobile targets. In such situations, commanders will focus their ground reconnaissance units on areas where other assets and sensors are challenged (e.g., close or complex terrain). Commanders assigned force-reconnaissance missions should maintain a reserve that can extract elements of the reconnaissance force from decisive engagement or provide redundancy to target observation efforts.

Control Measures. The minimum control measure necessary for a force-oriented reconnaissance is an AO. The commander of the reconnaissance unit may subdivide the AO and employ control measures such as PLs and contact points to coordinate the movement and actions of subordinate units. However, overall control measures should be minimal to provide the reconnoitering unit maximum, safe, flexibility in the execution of their mission. Commanders may set engagement criteria for target enemy units and forces.

Tasks. The requirement to conduct a force-oriented reconnaissance is established when a commander determines a lack of sufficient information regarding a specific enemy force or unit. These information requirements define the mission and reconnaissance objective. The following are possible force-oriented reconnaissance tasks:

- Determine the location, disposition, and depth of enemy forces.
- Report patterns, readiness, and changes in status of targeted enemy units and forces.
- Maintain constant observation to include movement.

Maintain the ability to engage, direct the engagement, or a combination of both when engagement criteria are met.

PLANNING A RECONNAISSANCE OPERATION

By being fully integrated into the intelligence collection plan, reconnaissance operations contribute significantly to a commander's battlespace visualization. Reconnaissance planning ensures that reconnaissance assets are properly integrated, aggressively used, properly employed, and support the commander's decision-making requirements.

Intelligence Collection Plan

Through the MCPP, commanders and staffs determine information requirements, prioritize them, and assign available ISR assets to fulfill them. In terms of offensive and defensive tactics, such requirements may consist of reconnoitering avenues of approach that support friendly movement, investigating key terrain, locating obstacles, or finding exploitable enemy flanks. The requirements of the intelligence collection plan are the primary drivers of reconnaissance objectives, tasks, and all subsequent planning. See MCWP 5-10 and MCTP 2-10A, *MAGTF Intelligence Collection*, for more information on the MCPP and the intelligence collection plan, respectively.

Reconnaissance-Pull versus Reconnaissance-Push

The operations cycle of planning, executing, and assessing is continuous. While any particular operation may begin with a deliberate planning and intelligence collection effort, as it unfolds, continuous intelligence collection and reconnaissance efforts help assess the success of friendly actions, identify enemy intentions and reactions, uncover opportunities to exploit, and identify threats to avoid. Commanders use and interchange two reconnaissance methods to ensure that the operations cycle outpaces the enemy's ability to react.

Reconnaissance-pull is the reconnaissance method by which information derived from reconnaissance forces guides friendly force activities. As commanders obtain combat information from available reconnaissance assets, they use this information to recognize opportunities that drive COA selection and tactical choices. Reconnaissance-push is the reconnaissance method by which the information requirements of preplanned tactical operations guide the employment of reconnaissance forces. As commanders prepare to execute an operation or commence the execution of another phase, they employ reconnaissance assets to determine specific information requirements to support COA development.

Reconnaissance Management

No single reconnaissance asset can answer every information requirement, and there are rarely enough reconnaissance assets to cover every requirement. The staff uses a mix of reconnaissance management methods, such as cueing, redundancy, and task organizing, in an attempt to effectively collect the most critical information with the fewest assets as quickly as possible.

Cueing is external actions or inputs that cause a surveillance or target acquisition device to turn on and search a suspect area. (MCRP 1-10.2) Cueing uses technical assets conducting wide-area surveillance to focus the efforts of limited ground reconnaissance assets. For example, various airborne or electronic systems may identify portions of an enemy force or determine adversary or enemy C2 nodes. The commander may dispatch ground reconnaissance to verify and develop the information. Similarly, ground reconnaissance units can cue other ISR assets. Commanders employ reconnaissance assets based on their capabilities and use the complementary capabilities of other ISR resources to verify and expand information to provide the commander understanding and support decision-making.

In intelligence collection, redundancy is a collection strategy that employs the use of several same-discipline assets to cover the same target. Based on the priority of the information requirement, the commander must decide which NAI justifies having more than one asset covering it. For example, when more than one asset covers the same NAI, a backup is available in the event that one asset cannot reach the NAI in time, the first asset suffers mechanical failure, or

the enemy detects and engages the first asset. Redundancy also improves the chances of information collection.

To increase the effectiveness and survivability of a reconnaissance asset, the commander may task organize the asset by placing additional assets under the unit's control. For example, to conduct a long-range area reconnaissance of possible river crossing sites, an LAR company may receive an engineer reconnaissance element, additional infantry, and a logistic element. The engineers provide additional technical information on proposed crossing sites, the infantry provides additional combat power and protection for the vehicles, and the logistic element brings additional fuel and a self-recovery capability.

Reconnaissance Employment

Reconnaissance is characterized as either stealthy or aggressive. A key factor in reconnaissance execution is the time available to conduct the mission. The commander recognizes the increased risk to the reconnaissance element and the main body when accelerating the pace of reconnaissance. This risk can be somewhat offset by employing air reconnaissance and technical means to cover open terrain or areas of lower threat. Depending on how they are employed, attack reconnaissance helicopters and other aerial platforms, as well as mounted and dismounted ground reconnaissance, are characterized as either stealthy or aggressive.

Stealthy reconnaissance emphasizes avoiding enemy detection and engagement. It takes more time than aggressive reconnaissance. Stealthy reconnaissance takes maximum advantage of cover and concealment, limited visibility, and the reduced battlespace signatures associated with units that typically conduct stealthy reconnaissance (e.g., dismounted scouts). However, stealth cannot be guaranteed. As a result, units attempting to conduct stealthy reconnaissance must also be drilled to react correctly if the enemy makes contact, and they must have immediate access to supporting fires.

The speed and manner in which the reconnaissance force develops the situation once they make contact with an enemy force characterizes aggressive reconnaissance. A unit conducting aggressive reconnaissance uses both direct- and indirect-fire systems and movement to rapidly develop the situation. A unit requires firepower, aggressive exploitation of actions on contact, OPSEC, and training to survive and accomplish the mission when conducting aggressive reconnaissance. Mounted reconnaissance is normally characterized as aggressive.When determining whether to conduct mounted or dismounted reconnaissance, commanders consider METT-T. Conditions that may result in a decision to conduct mounted or aerial reconnaissance include the following:

- Time is limited.
- Detailed reconnaissance is not required.
- Air units are available to perform coordinated reconnaissance with the ground assets.
- The IPB process has provided detailed information on the enemy.
- Terrain is relatively open.
- Environmental conditions permit this type of reconnaissance (deep snow and muddy or swampy terrain greatly hinder mounted reconnaissance).

- Dismounted reconnaissance cannot complete the mission within existing time constraints, while mounted reconnaissance can.

The following conditions may cause a commander to direct a dismounted reconnaissance effort:

- Time is available.
- Detailed reconnaissance is required.
- Stealth is required.
- The IPB process indicates close proximity to enemy positions.
- The reconnaissance force encounters danger areas.
- Restrictive terrain limits the effectiveness of mounted reconnaissance.

MCIP 3-02.1i, *Combat Hunter*, and MCTP 3-01A provide further information on dismounted scouting, tracking, situational awareness, and patrolling.

Typically, air reconnaissance operates closely with ground reconnaissance units to maximize redundancy and provide mutual security. Assault support aircraft can insert surveillance teams at OPs. Aircrews can observe, conduct electronic surveillance, and provide security and responsive fire support. On rare occasions, it is even possible to dismount aircrew members to evaluate bridges, fords, or crossing sites. Aircraft units conducting air reconnaissance plan their missions in much the same way as ground units, utilizing the same graphics, considering the same tasks, and taking into account IPB. The routine participation of the ACE in creating the intelligence collection plan is critical to proper employment of aviation in support of reconnaissance.

Logistics

Determining how to sustain reconnaissance assets before, during, and after their commitment is a vital part of reconnaissance planning. Logistic planning must be flexible because how any particular reconnaissance asset is employed is dependent upon METT-T. Reconnaissance elements must either carry a large basic load, receive logistic assets as part of task organization, or a combination of both. Smaller reconnaissance elements, such as division reconnaissance teams, will likely blend large basic loads with aerial resupply to extend their operating distances and durations. Larger elements, such as LAR, may require additional refueling and maintenance capabilities to extend their ability to operate. Both examples must also take into account evacuation of first, personnel casualties, and second, equipment casualties. Blending logistic demands with operational capabilities is part of the reconnaissance planning necessary to support the intelligence collection plan.

CHAPTER 13
SECURITY OPERATIONS

The ultimate goal of security operations is to protect the force from surprise and reduce the unknowns in any situation. The "force" being protected may be the civilian population, civil institutions, and civilian infrastructure within the unit's AO. A commander may conduct security operations to the front, flanks, or rear of the friendly force. The main difference between security operations and reconnaissance operations is that security operations orient on the force or facility being protected, while reconnaissance is enemy and terrain oriented. Security operations are shaping actions. As a shaping action, economy of force is often a condition of security operations.

OVERVIEW

There are three (screen, guard, and cover) types of security operations:

- Screen is a type of security mission. The primary purpose of the screen is to provide early warning to the protected force. It is a friendly-oriented tactical task to observe, identify, and report information, and only fight in self-protection.
- Guard is a type of security mission. The primary purposes are to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information, and to prevent enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body by reconnoitering, attacking, defending, and delaying. It is a friendly-oriented tactical task to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information.
- Cover is a type of security mission. The primary purpose is to intercept, engage, delay, disorganize, and deceive the enemy to protect the covered force from surprise, develop the situation, and give the commander time and space in which to respond to enemy's actions. It is a friendly-oriented tactical task to conduct offensive and defensive actions independent of the main body to protect the covered force and develop the situation.

Additionally, forces can be assigned rear area and local security missions:

- Rear area security consists of the measures taken before, during, and/or after an enemy airborne attack, sabotage action, infiltration, guerrilla action, and/or initiation of psychological or propaganda warfare to minimize the effects thereof.
- Local security are those security elements, which are established in proximity of a unit, who are tasked to prevent surprise by the enemy and mitigate enemy actions.

The screen, guard, and cover security operations, respectively, contain increasing levels of combat power and provide increasing levels of security for the main body. However, more combat power

in the security force means less for the main body. Rear area security preserves the commander's freedom to move reserves, position fire support means, provide for command and control, and conduct sustaining actions. Local security is an inherent function of force protection, the responsibility of every leader, and consists of immediate, organic, self-protection (e.g., entry control points, perimeter security, internal guard). The commander designates the security area within which the security force operates.

> ***Note:*** When discussing security operations, the terms stationary and moving describe the actions of the main body, not the security force.

All elements of the MAGTF conduct local security and are capable of conducting rear area security with varying degrees of effectiveness depending on METT-T. While the ACE may conduct screens, the GCE is the one element of the MAGTF that is specifically capable of conducting all types of security operations. A commander should ensure that subordinate units perform those specific security operations required by the situation. Well understood and executed unit SOPs and the development of habitual support relationships with attachments develop necessary proficiency in the conduct of these operations.

The fundamental purpose of most security operations is to create the conditions for success by the secured force. Creating these conditions normally requires that security forces receive the maximum flexibility in execution possible. Reacting to an enemy, capitalizing on a fleeting opportunity, creating the condition(s) required—not just meeting the letter of the operations order—becomes difficult to do if the security force is provided too many constraints and restraints. So too if the security force commander limits subordinate elements with too many constraints and restraints.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SECURITY OPERATIONS

Successful security operations depend on properly applying five fundamentals:

- Provide early and accurate warning.
- Provide reaction time and maneuver space.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

Provide Early and Accurate Warning

The security force provides early warning by detecting the enemy force quickly and reporting information accurately to the main body commander. The security force operates at varying distances from the main body based on METT-T. At a minimum, they should operate far enough from the main body to prevent enemy ground forces from observing or engaging the main body with direct fires. The earlier the security force detects the enemy, the more time the main body has

to assess the changing situation and react. The security force does not replace, but is integrated with, the ISR collection efforts of the main body.

Provide Reaction Time and Maneuver Space

The security force provides the main body with enough reaction time and maneuver space to effectively respond to likely enemy actions by operating at a distance from the main body and by offering resistance to enemy forces. The amount of reaction time, the amount of maneuver space, and the distance at which the security force must operate are functions of METT-T. The main body commander accepts prudent risk in balancing the security needs of the force against the combat power necessary to accomplish the primary mission.

Orient on the Force or Facility to be Secured

The security force focuses all actions on protecting and providing early warning to the secured force or facility. They operate between the main body and known or suspected enemy units. The security force must move as the main body moves and orient on the main body's movement. The security force commander must know the main body's SOM to keep the security force between the main body and the enemy. The value of terrain occupied by the security force hinges on the protection they provide to the main body commander.

Perform Continuous Reconnaissance

The security force is not passive, but as a function of the mission, they aggressively and continuously seek the enemy and reconnoiters terrain (including human factors). They conduct any and all of the reconnaissance missions as required (see chap. 12). The ultimate goal is to determine the enemy's COA so that the main body can either mitigate or exploit it. Terrain information focuses on its possible use by the enemy or the friendly force. Stationary security forces conduct reconnaissance by using combinations of OPs, aviation resources, patrols, intelligence collection assets, and BPs. Moving security forces conduct reconnaissance by combining use of the various reconnaissance missions along with OPs and BPs.

Maintain Enemy Contact

Once the security force makes enemy contact, they do not break contact unless the main force commander specifically directs it. The security force commander uses the type of contact most appropriate to the mission—for example, a screen force would avoid engaging the enemy while maintaining visual contact. Whether stationary or moving, the security area assigned to the security force must be large enough to allow the security force to have the maneuver depth (in space and in time) necessary to maintain contact with the enemy while still providing the main body the time and space they need to react.

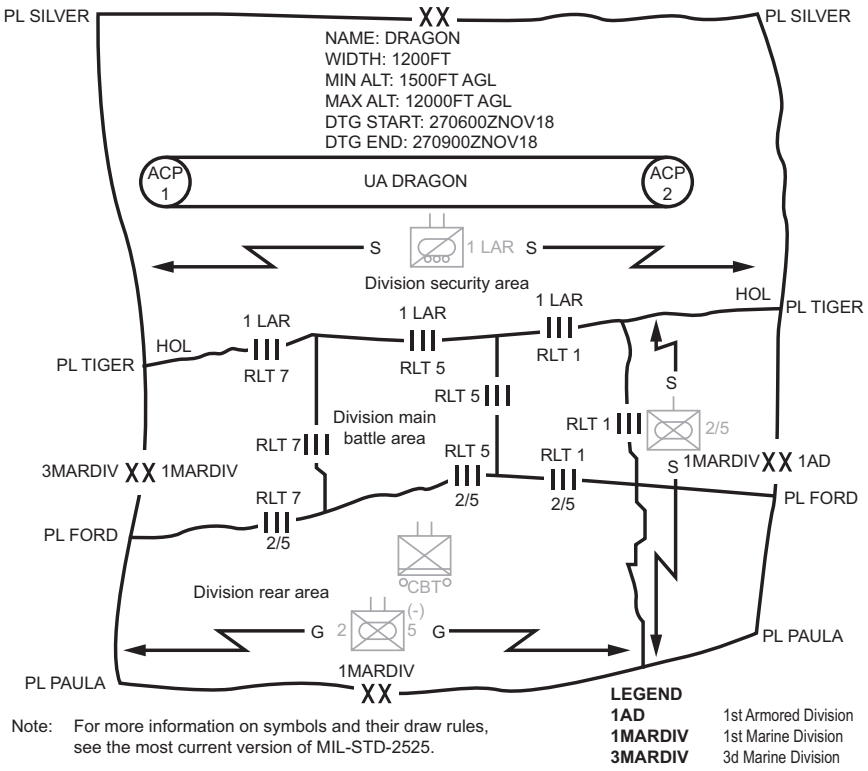
PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY OPERATIONS

The following paragraphs address general planning considerations that apply to all types of security operations.

Control Measures

The minimum control measures for security operations are the boundaries necessary to create a security area (see fig. 13-1). For a security force operating to the front of the main body, the lateral boundaries of the security area are normally an extension of the lateral boundaries of the main body. The security force's rear boundary is normally the handover line. Similarly, for a security force operating to the rear the main body, their lateral boundaries are also extensions of the main body's and security force's forward boundary is the main body's rear. Boundaries for flank security depend upon the SOM. As a general rule, the flank security force's responsibility normally begins with the trail element of the advance security force or lead combat unit, and extends to the lead element of the rear security force or main body rear boundary. The main body commander clarifies responsibilities as necessary.

Beyond the minimums, security force commanders may further subdivide the security area to coordinate the actions of subordinate units, use BPs and defensive sectors, and employ PLs for such things as screen or delay lines, displacement triggers, or handover lines. Given likely maneuver requirements, especially for a moving security force, security force commanders are likely to also employ checkpoints and contact points internal to the security force and with the main body.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-1. Common Security Control Measures.

Organization of Forces

Depending on the type of security operation, security forces generally utilize security, main body, and reserve elements. In organizing the security force, the preliminary consideration is the nature

of the force to secure. What type of force (moving, stationary, a military force) determines the limits of the security force's responsibilities, organizational requirements, and the amount of battlespace necessary to fulfill the security functions. Table 13-1 shows the typical size of security forces at various echelons. Since the security force must orient on the force they are securing, they must possess equal or greater mobility. If the main body moves, the security force also moves to maintain their position in relation to the main body. The creation of a security force often places demands for additional resources on the parent command—for example, an infantry company tasked with serving as an advance guard may require additional combat power and mobility assets.

Table 13-1. Typical Size of Security Forces for a Given Mission and Echelon.

Echelon	Security Mission			
	Screen	Advance Guard	Flank/Rear Guard	Cover
Battalion/Task Force	Platoon	Co/Tm	Platoon	
RLT	Co/Tm ACE	Bn TF	Co/Tm	Bn TF(+)
Division	Bn TF[1] ACE	Bn TF[1] RLT	Bn TF[1]	Bn TF (+)[1] RLT (+)
MEF	Bn TF[1] RLT MEU ACE	RLT(+) Div MEB	Bn TF[1] RLT Div MEU	RLT (+) Div (+) MEB
Echelons above corps (joint force land component/ numbered Army)	RLT(+) Div MEB	Div(+) MEF	RLT (+) Div MEB	Div (+) MEF

1. Unless specifically stated, Bn TF refers to infantry, armor, LAR, or reconnaissance battalions.

KEY
(+) reinforced

LEGEND
ACE air combat element
Bn battalion
Co/Tm company/company team
Div division
MEU Marine expeditionary unit
TF task force

Command and Control

Commanders place themselves where they can best impact the operation, often at most likely points of friction, or where they can observe the most dangerous avenue of approach. Commander placement, CP displacement, and combat train positioning are critical considerations when conducting moving security operations. Ideally, the security force seeks to place C2 and logistic assets behind masking terrain and along improved routes that provide good mobility laterally and in-depth.

Intelligence

Security operations are inherently integrated into the intelligence warfighting function. Protecting the force requires a tight link with intelligence efforts while what the security force sees and hears has immediate impact on the main body's intelligence picture. The main body commander should ensure that security forces can access higher intelligence systems to increase situational awareness

and reduce the risk of the security force having to wait upon the main body for information. If the main body commander feels it prudent to establish flank security, it is probably also prudent to focus ISR collection efforts on that flank to identify threats and to increase the effectiveness of the flank security force. Organic and inorganic ISR resources (e.g., remote sensors, UAS platforms, electronic warfare) expand the area under surveillance and cue the security force. The ACE can execute detection and reporting of enemy forces at extended ranges so effectively—and strike what they see—that they can often serve as a screening force themselves. Integrating the security force into the intelligence collection plan and providing the force with ISR resources allows the security force commander to concentrate limited combat power against likely enemy threats, react to enemy actions, and cover ISR gaps.

Maneuver

Security missions are usually time- or event-driven. The main body commander must determine the requirement for a security mission in advance to provide enough time for the security force to establish themselves and prepare to execute the mission. The end of a security mission is based on an action by the main body (e.g., completing a specific mission), a fixed-time period (e.g., not allowing enemy penetration of a PL for two hours), or criteria based on the enemy force (e.g., size). To terminate the security mission, the security force commander normally requires the permission of the main body commander to withdraw behind the security area's rear boundary. The main body commander may impose special requirements or constraints, including engagement, disengagement, and bypass criteria. The main body commander may order the security force not to become decisively engaged or fall below a certain combat strength. The main body commander may be willing to accept a lesser degree of security, which results from either the loss of more terrain or reduced preparation time by the main body, to preserve the security force for later use.

Countermobility plays a critical role in the security area. With properly integrated obstacles, the security force can maintain a mobility advantage over the enemy and delay and disrupt the enemy's plans in offensive and defensive situations. The commander may mass engineer support in the security area initially and then shift support to the MBA once those units are prepared to begin developing EAs. Engineering resources also enhance the mobility of the security force by identifying repositioning routes and task organizing engineers to provide breaching capabilities.

Security Area. The main body commander determines the location, orientation, and depth of the security area where the security force will operate. The commander identifies specific avenues of approach and NAIs to be covered. Depth in the security area provides the main body with time to react to approaching enemy ground units. Occupying a deep security area allows the security force to destroy enemy reconnaissance assets without compromising critical OPs or positions. It also prevents the enemy from penetrating the security area too easily and prevents gaps from occurring when OPs or units displace or are lost. The wider the area to secure, the less the security force can take advantage of the increased depth because it will have fewer forces to position in depth. A very shallow security area may require the commander to provide greater resources to the security force to provide needed reaction time—for example, a shallow security area may require the security force to guard the main body vice screen them

The security force commander conducts a detailed analysis of the terrain in the security area. That commander establishes the security force's initial dispositions (usually a screen line) as far forward as possible on terrain that provides good observation of avenues of approach. Next, the

commander assigns clear responsibility for identified avenues of approach and designated NAIs. When conducting screen or guard operations, the initial screen line must be within supporting range of the main body, yet provide the desired amount of early warning.

When deploying into the security area, the security force must deal with competing requirements: to establish the security area quickly to meet mission requirements, and to provide the necessary level of security for itself. The security force moves into the security area using one of three basic methods: tactical road march, movement to contact, or zone reconnaissance.

The fastest but least secure method of deploying is a tactical road march from the rear boundary of the security area to the initial positions. The security force moves to a release point on the rear boundary. From the release point, subordinate elements deploy to occupy initial positions, moving by the quickest means possible. This method is appropriate when enemy contact is not expected, time is critical, or the ACE is conducting a zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and has found no enemy in the security area.

In the second method, the security force conducts a movement to contact from an LD (usually the rear boundary of the security area) to the initial positions. This method is slower than a tactical road march but more secure. It is appropriate when enemy contact is likely, time is limited, terrain reconnaissance is not needed, or an aviation unit is conducting zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and enemy forces have been detected in the security area.

The most secure method for moving to the initial positions is for the security force to conduct a zone reconnaissance from the security area rear boundary to the initial security line positions or the forward limit of the security area. Given adequate time, this method is preferred because it allows the security force to clear the security area and become familiar with the terrain that they may have to defend. The security force reconnoiters potential subsequent positions and fire support system firing positions as they move to initial positions. A zone reconnaissance is appropriate when time is available and information about the enemy or terrain is unknown. While this technique provides information of tactical value on the enemy and terrain in the area, it may also be time consuming. Using air reconnaissance forward of the ground units increases the speed and security of the movement.

Employment of the Aviation Combat Element. The ACE is often critical to the success of security operations. The ACE can perform the following tasks:

- Employ assault support assets to increase the mobility of ground forces.
- Conduct screening operations in support of the main body and security forces.
- Cover gaps and conduct reconnaissance of areas between ground maneuver units.
- Assist in maintaining contact between the security force and the main body.
- Assist in clearing the area between the flank security element and the main body during moving flank security missions.
- Assist in disengaging ground units, especially when conducting battle handover and passage of lines with the main body.
- Monitor terrain that is hard to reach or would require too much time to cover with ground reconnaissance assets.

Observation Posts. An OP is a position that possesses appropriate communications from which military observations are made or fires directed and adjusted. An OP may be airborne. Observation posts are not inherently formal. While they may be a permanent concrete bunker, an infantry company will establish OPs as part of an overnight defense, and an LAR platoon may occupy an OP for only a few hours before leap frogging ahead as the security force continues to move. Fundamentally, OPs are positions occupied for a period of time to conduct observation over a specifically assigned area.

The security force commander determines tentative initial OP locations along or behind the screen line to ensure effective surveillance of the sector and designated NAIs. The unit or asset that occupies each OP may shift its exact location to achieve the commander's intent. A commander may place more than one OP along a high-speed avenue of approach to allow an enemy contact to be tracked from one OP to another, thus maintaining enemy contact without requiring security forces to displace. The security force commander tasks subordinate units to perform reconnaissance and combat patrols to cover gaps between OPs. To prevent friendly fire incidents, the commander places a restrictive FSCM around OP locations.

Observation posts may be either mounted or dismounted. Mounted OPs can use their vehicular optics, weapon systems, and tactical mobility to rapidly displace when necessary. However, an enemy can detect them more readily than dismounted OPs. Dismounted OPs provide maximum stealth but lack the speed of displacement, optics, and weapons of mounted OPs. It takes a minimum of two persons to occupy an OP, and then for no more than 12 hours. Observation posts crewed for more than 12 hours require, at a minimum, a squad-sized element to ensure continuous operation. In addition, OPs can be established as listening posts under limited visibility conditions or in complex environments.

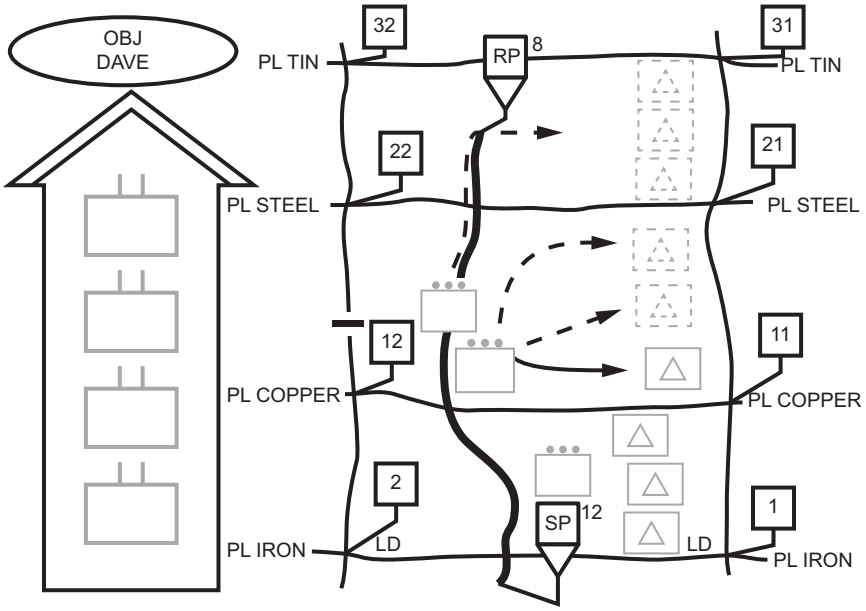
Conducting Moving Flank Security Operations. There are three techniques of occupying and moving in a flank security area for moving security operations based on how the security force crosses the LD:

- Security force crosses the LD separately from the main body and deploys to perform the mission.
- Security force crosses the LD separately from main body; lead elements conduct a movement to contact.
- Security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the limit of the security area.

The commander should not require the security force to make their own penetration when they face prepared enemy defenses. This may prevent or significantly delay the security force from assuming their duties. These three techniques are often combined.

In the first technique, illustrated in figures 13-2 and 13-3 the security force crosses the LD separately from the main body and deploys to perform the mission. The security force then conducts a tactical road march, a movement to contact, or tactical movements parallel to the main body and drops off OPs or occupies BPs along the flank of the main body. This technique keeps the two forces from interfering with each other during deployment. It is appropriate when another force penetrates the LC, the main body is not in contact with the enemy and is moving quickly,

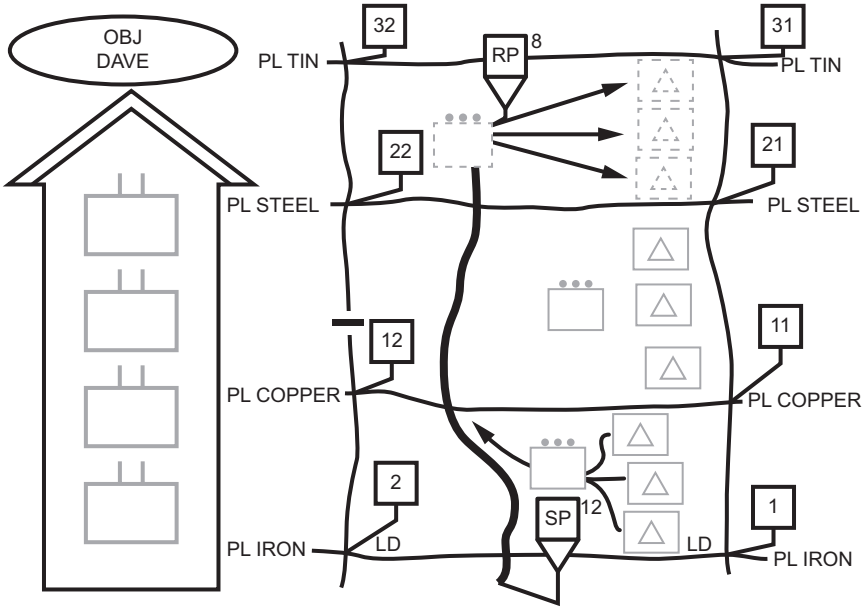
the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates that enemy contact is not likely in the area through which the security force is moving. It is the fastest but least secure technique.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
OBJ objective

Figure 13-2. First Technique: Security Force to Establish a Flank Screen.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
OBJ objective

Figure 13-3. Security Force Continuing to Establish a Flank Screen.

In the second technique, the security force crosses the LD separately from the main body, and the lead elements conduct a movement to contact. Follow-on elements occupy positions as they reach them (see fig. 13-4). This technique is appropriate when the main body is moving slower than in the first method, the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates possible enemy contact. It is slower than the previous technique but provides better security.

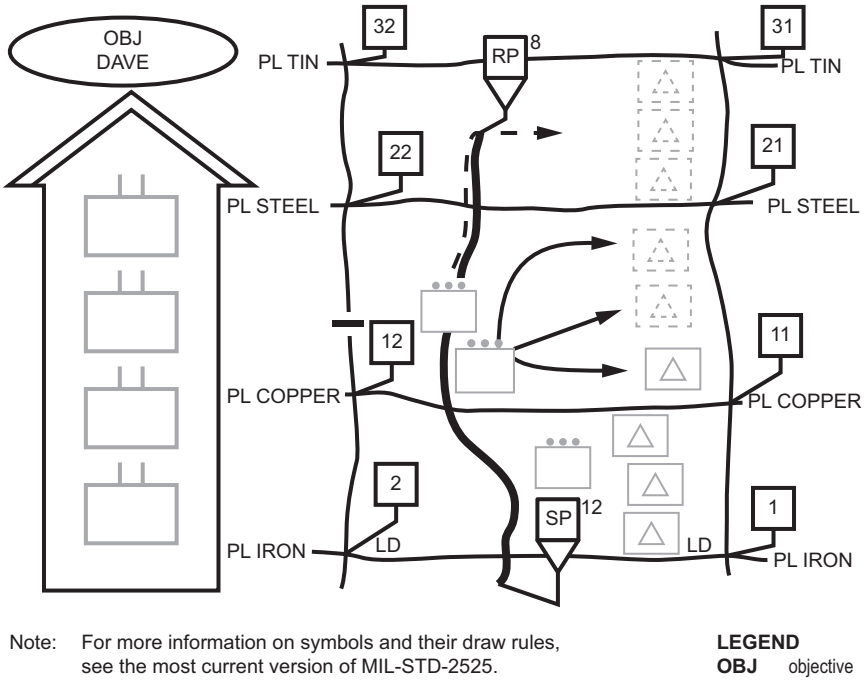


Figure 13-4. Second Technique: Security Force to Establish a Moving Flank Screen

Finally, in the third technique, the security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the far limit of the security area (see fig. 13-5). This technique is appropriate when the LD is also the LC, the main body makes their own penetration of the enemy defenses along the LC, the main body is moving slowly, and the enemy situation is not clearly understood. The security force may follow the lead element of the main body through the gap and deploy when the situation permits. This technique provides increased security for both the security force and the main body; it is also the most time-consuming.

Fires

The main body commander employs fire support to support screening and guarding forces. The main body commander allocates additional artillery to support a covering force, which is required to operate independently of the main body. If the security force is assigned a wide AO, the commander may have to position ground fire support assets to provide effective coverage of only the most likely enemy avenues of approach. This is particularly important for a screen because often the screening force relies on indirect and aerial delivered fires to delay or disrupt the enemy. Providing adequate fire support to the security force may require the main body to position artillery well forward in the formation and may impact MAGTF prioritization of ACE missions.

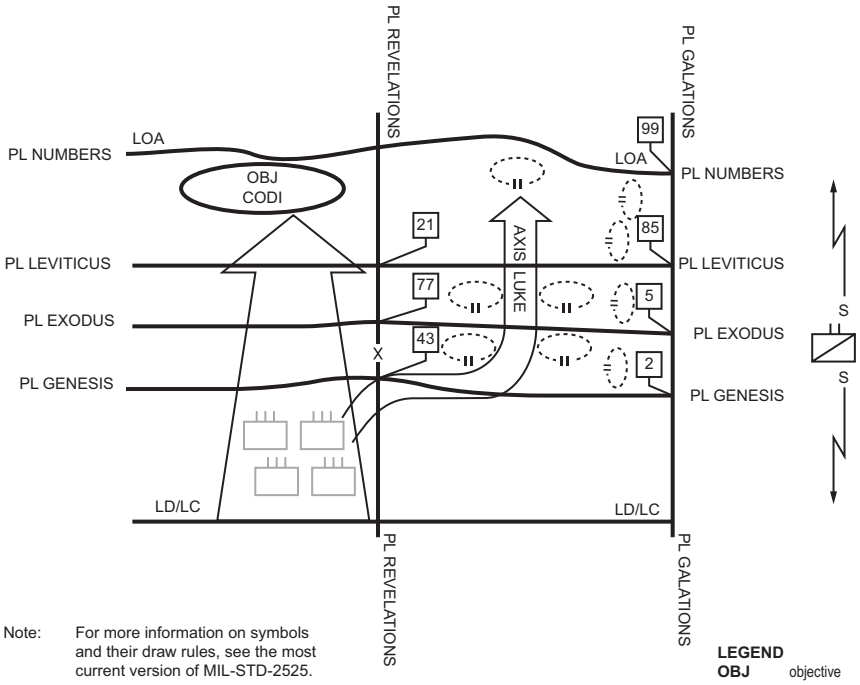


Figure 13-5. Third Technique: Security Force to Establish a Flank Guard or Cover.

SCREEN

The screening force is a security element whose primary task is to observe, identify, and report information; conduct counterreconnaissance; and fight only in self-protection. The screen has the minimum combat power necessary to provide the desired early warning, which allows the commander to retain the bulk of the main body's combat power for commitment at the decisive place and time. A screen provides the least amount of protection of any security mission; it does not have the combat power to develop the situation.

A screen is appropriate to cover gaps between forces, exposed flanks, or the rear of stationary and moving forces. A unit can normally screen an avenue of approach two echelons larger than itself, such as an LAR company screening a regimental-size avenue of approach. The commander can place a screen in front of a stationary formation when the likelihood of enemy action is small, the expected enemy force is small, or the main body needs only limited time, once they are warned, to react effectively. Designed to provide minimum security with minimum forces, a screen is usually an economy-of-force operation based on prudent risk. If a significant enemy force is expected or a significant amount of time and space is needed to provide the required degree of protection, the commander assigns and resources a task to guard or cover instead of a screen. The security element forward of a main body that is moving must conduct a guard or cover because a screen lacks the combat power to defeat or contain the lead elements of an enemy force.

A security force normally conducts a screen by establishing a series of OPs and patrols to ensure adequate surveillance of the assigned area. The commander uses reconnaissance patrols (mounted, dismounted, and aerial), relocates OPs, and employs technical assets to ensure continuous and overlapping surveillance.

Critical Tasks for a Screen

Within the limitations of METT-T and combat power, there are certain general tasks associated with units assigned a screening mission. Screen tasks are to—

- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the screen undetected and unreported.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of all avenues of approach larger than a designated size into the area under all visibility conditions.
- Destroy or repel all enemy reconnaissance patrols within its capabilities.
- In the defense, locate the lead elements of each enemy advance guard and determine their direction of movement.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report any activity in the AO.
- Maintain contact with the main body and any security forces operating on the flanks.
- Impede and harass the enemy within capabilities.

Organization of a Screening Force

Units executing a screen mission employ a main body and small reserve. The main body provides their own security, generally deploying abreast into various OPs determined by the number of avenues of approach and NAIs they must cover. The reserve is deployed to allow elements of the security force to break contact, extract endangered OPs, and take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

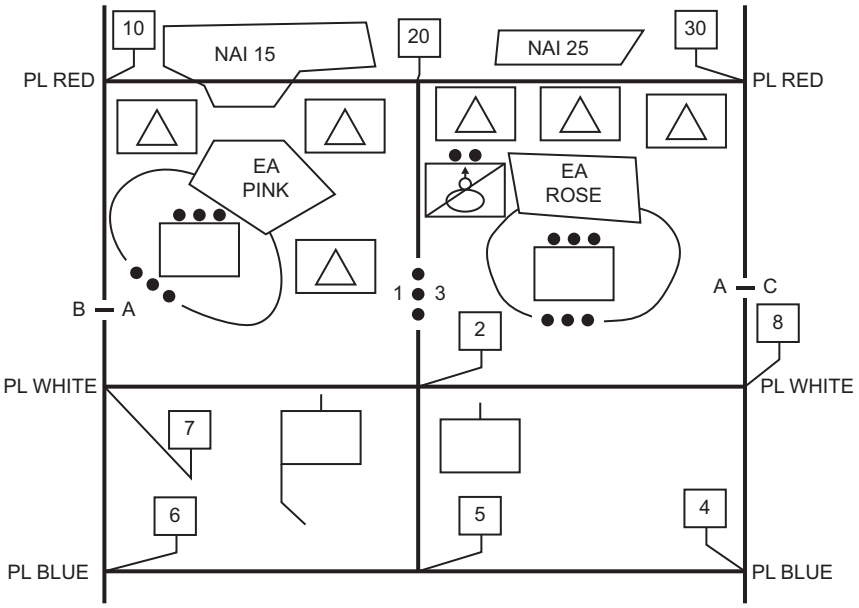
Screen Control Measures

The control measures necessary to conduct a screen were discussed earlier in this chapter. Figure 13-6 displays examples of control measures associated with a screen.

Executing a Stationary Screen

While a screening force may execute their mission against enemy forces up to two echelons above, a screening force covers operationally significant avenues of approach capable of use by enemy forces one echelon smaller. For example, a company may conduct a screen against enemy units up to a regiment in size but, when conducting IPB, the company will take into consideration avenues of approach down to platoon size. Which actual avenues of approach the company ends up observing depends upon METT-T and the commander's judgment.

Upon entering the security area, the screening force establishes screen lines consisting of OPs that, whenever possible, possess overlapping fields of observation and are integrated with higher-echelon sensors and collection assets. The screening force establishes patrols to cover areas that OPs cannot observe. The reserve is placed to respond to the most dangerous enemy COAs and to support the most vulnerable friendly positions. If forces are available and the depth of the security area allows, the screening force establishes OPs in-depth on high-speed avenues of approach. The commander plans for egress routes between the initial and subsequent screen lines to facilitate rapid movement. Disengagement criteria are established and displacement moves are rehearsed.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-6. Screen Mission Control Measures.

Observation posts remain undetected while those staffing them report the presence of enemy elements. Prompt, accurate reporting is essential to keep friendly forces manning the screen from being overrun or unknowingly bypassed. Once the enemy is detected, the OP employs fire support assets to remain undiscovered, engage the enemy at maximum range, and either delay or prevent the enemy from penetrating the screen line. Depending on METT-T, the screening force may destroy smaller enemy reconnaissance assets with direct fire, if fire support resources cannot accomplish this task.

As enemy pressure threatens the security of the OPs, subordinate units report and prepare to withdraw. The integrity of the screen line is not necessarily dependent upon the security of individual OPs. The commander of the screening force may allow some OPs to withdraw while others stay in place so that enemy intentions may be more clearly discerned. The screening force uses a combination of requests and withdrawal criteria to manage retrogrades erring on the side of force preservation.

As the screening force displaces from one screen line to another, they utilize rapid movement while maintaining contact with the enemy. This is most easily and safely accomplished by using OPs in depth and avoiding long distances between screen lines. The reserve remains in place as long as possible, ready to react and assist in the displacement of the main body. The commander may choose to divide the screening force and hand observation and reserve duties off between elements, utilizing one of the techniques discussed in table 13-2. The screening force's C2 and CSS elements displace as required to maintain control, keep from being overrun, and evacuate personnel and equipment casualties. The force repeats this procedure as often as necessary.

As the screening force executes movements from one screen line to the next, the commander maintains close communications with the main body. The main body commander decides when and if the screening force can move behind a handover line and hand over the battle to the main body. When planning, the screening force commander develops branch plans that take into account changes in mission—for example, transitioning from a screen operation to a guard operation to gain more time for the main body.

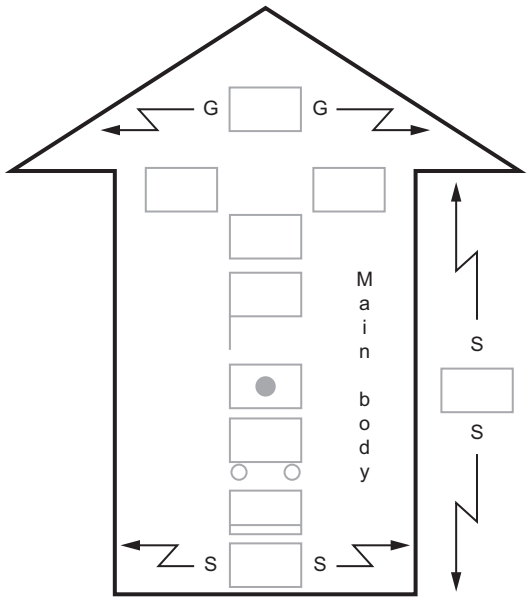
Executing a Moving Screen

The screening force may use several methods to move the screen (for either moving or stationary forces). Table 13-2 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Table 13-2. Screen Movement Methods.

Method	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Alternate Bounds by OP	• Main body moves faster. • Conducted by platoon or company. • Contact is possible. • Conducted from rear to front.	• Very secure method. • Maintains maximum surveillance over the security area.	• Execution takes time. • Disrupts unit integrity.
Alternate Bounds by Units	• Main body moves faster. • Conducted by platoon or company. • Contact is possible. • Conducted from rear to front.	• Execution does not take a great deal of time. • Maintains good surveillance over the security area. • Maintains unit integrity.	• May leave temporary gaps in coverage.
Successive Bounds	• Main body is moving slowly. • Conducted by platoon or company. • Contact is possible. • Conducted simultaneously or in succession. • Unit should maintain an air screen during ground movement.	• Most secure method. • Maintains maximum surveillance. • Maintains unit integrity.	• Execution takes the most time. • Unit is less secure when all elements are moving simultaneously. • Simultaneous movement may leave temporary gaps.
Continuous Marching	• Main body is moving relatively quickly. • Performed as a route reconnaissance. • Enemy contact is not likely. • Unit should maintain an air screen on the flank.	• Observation posts displace quickly. • Maintains unit integrity.	• Least secure method.

A screening force can maintain a moving screen along the flanks or rear of the protected force. The screen movement is keyed to time and distance factors associated with the main body's movement (see fig. 13-7). Responsibilities for a moving flank screen begin at the front of the main body's lead combat element and end at the rear of the protected force. Responsibilities for a moving rear screen begin at the rear element of the main body. A force executes a moving screen in the same way they conduct a stationary screen, except for the movement techniques.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

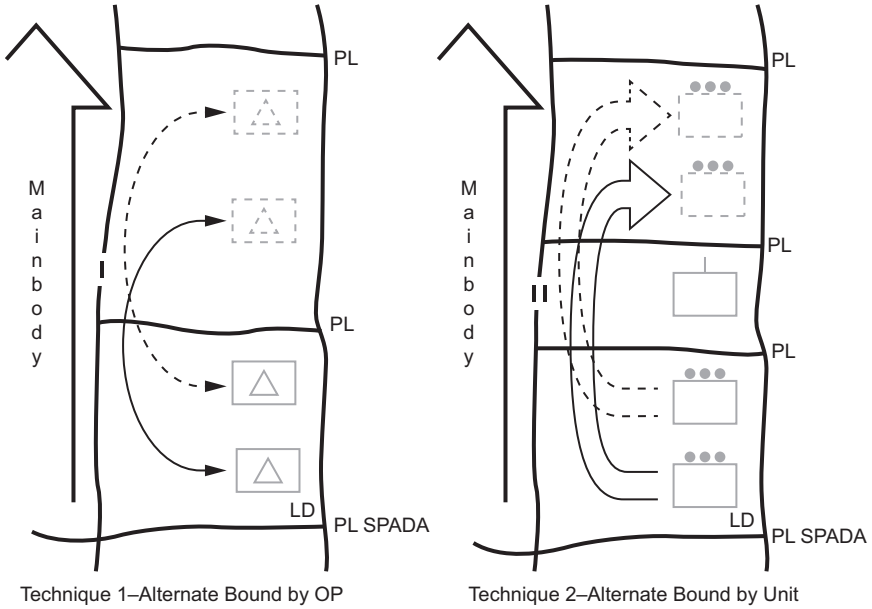
Figure 13-7. Moving Flank Screen.

The commander considers METT-T when deciding which movement method to employ. Figures 13-8 and 13-9 illustrate four methods of controlling movement along a screen line:

- Alternate bounds by individual OPs from the rear to the front. (This method is usually employed at the company level and below.)
- Alternate bounds by subordinate units from the rear to the front.
- Successive bounds by units along the screen line.
- Continuous marching along the route of advance.

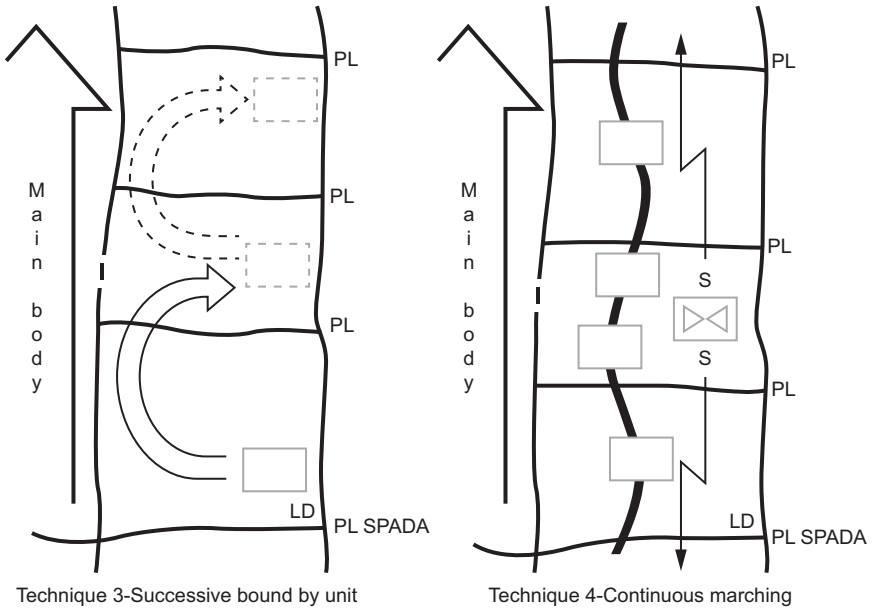
Screening Operations During Limited Visibility

During limited visibility, the screening force uses all available night and thermal observation devices and electronic surveillance devices. Although the screening force can use technical ISR assets to offset limited visibility, they should also adjust techniques and procedures to the conditions. For example, the screening force commander can establish more OPs—and listening posts—to cover avenues of approach that become masked in limited-visibility conditions. Rigorous noise and light discipline and the use of various warning devices (e.g., trip flares) prevents compromise and potential bypass of OPs by enemy reconnaissance forces.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-8. Displacement Methods for a Flank Screen.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-9. More Displacement Methods for Flank Screen.

GUARD

Methods of Guard Operations
(Stationary or Moving)
Advance Guard
Flank Guard
Rear Guard

The guard security mission differs from a screen in that the guarding force is expected to fight to accomplish the mission, not just protect itself. A guarding force is a security element whose primary task is to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. A guarding force routinely engages enemy forces with direct and indirect fires. A guarding force uses all means at their disposal, including decisive engagement, to prevent the enemy from penetrating to a position to observe and engage the main body. They operate within the range of the main body's fire support weapons, deploying over a narrower front than a comparable-size screening force to permit the concentration of combat power. Whether the main body is stationary or moving, the three methods of conducting guard operations are advance, flank, and rear guard.

Within the limitations of METT-T and combat power, there are certain general tasks associated with units assigned a guard mission. Guard tasks are to—

- Destroy the enemy advance guard.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report activity in the AO.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of avenues of approach into the AO under all visibility conditions.
- Impede and harass the enemy within its capabilities while displacing.
- Cause the enemy main body to deploy and then report the direction of travel.
- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the security area undetected and unreported.
- Destroy or cause the withdrawal of all enemy reconnaissance patrols.
- Maintain contact with the main body and any other security forces operating on the flanks.

A commander employs a guard when the significance of expected enemy contact requires additional security beyond that provided by a screen. The multiple requirements of the guard operation are often performed simultaneously over relatively large areas. While the guarding force's exact size is determined by METT-T, table 13-1 provides general guidance on the size of an echelon's guarding force.

Organization of a Guarding Force

Whether the main body is stationary or moving, the guarding force normally executes the guard task by employing an area defense, a delay, a zone reconnaissance, or a movement to contact within the security area and organizes accordingly.

Control Measures

The guard force employs the control measures associated with the technique they are employing in the security area (e.g., area defense, movement to contact). The guarding force may choose to combine and employ multiple techniques, such as having a subordinate element conduct a screen to the guard force's front. Consequently, the guarding force commander may subdivide the security area into multiple AOs to support the selected SOM.

Advance Guard

An advance guard for a stationary or retrograding force operates defensively. They defend or delay in accordance with the main body commander's intent. An advance guard for a moving force operates offensively (see fig. 13-10). The advance guard develops the situation so that the main body can use their combat power to the greatest effect.

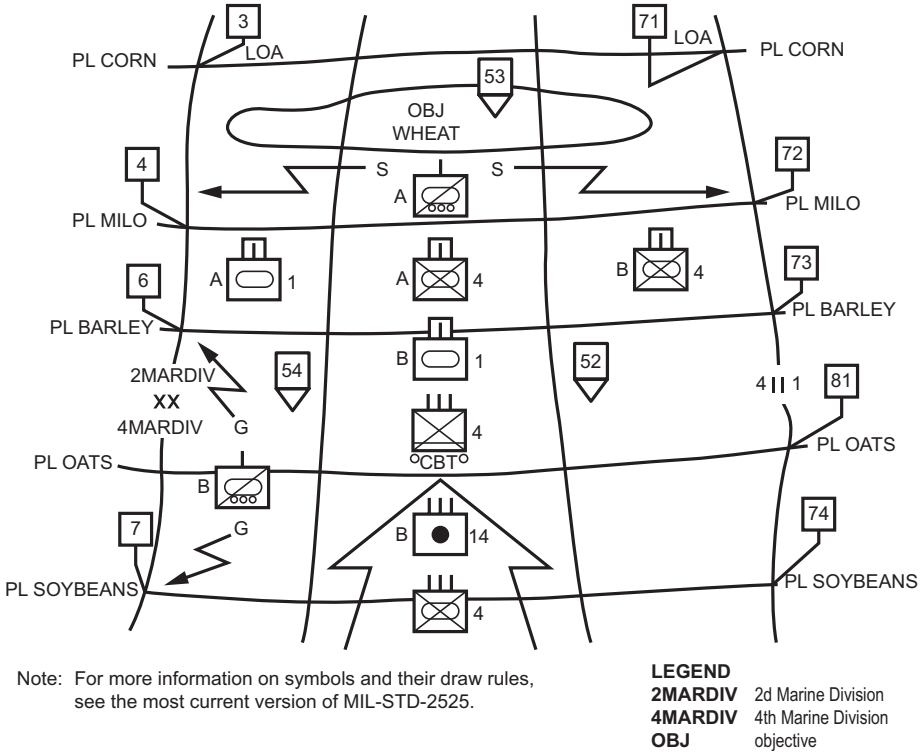


Figure 13-10. Advance Guard for a Division Shaping Attack With a Security Force to Establish a Flank Guard or Cover.

An advance guard for a moving force normally conducts a movement to contact clearing the axis of advance or designated portions of the AO of enemy elements. They organize and use the graphics of a movement to contact (see chap. 4). Ground subordinate elements of a guarding force are normally deployed abreast to cover the axis of advance or the main body's AO. This allows the main body to move unimpeded, prevents the unnecessary delay of the main body, and defers the deployment of the main body for as long as possible.

The advance guard may operate behind the security force of a higher echelon. For example, a division may use a reinforced LAR battalion as an offensive covering force, while each subordinate regimental column organizes one of the battalion task forces into an advance guard (see fig. 13-11). In these situations, the higher-echelon security force will initially develop the situation. The lower-echelon advance guards may—

- Coordinate and conduct the rearward passage of lines of the covering force.
- Reduce obstacles to create lanes or improve existing lanes as required to support the maneuver of the main body.

- Eliminate enemy forces bypassed by the covering force.
- Coordinate and conduct a forward passage of lines through the covering force and fix enemy forces in the enemy's main defensive positions to allow the friendly main body to maneuver.

The movement of multiple security forces and the handoff of a detected enemy force—in the offense or in the defense—from the higher-echelon security force to the lower-echelon security force are controlled using checkpoints, contact points, PLs, handover lines, and disengagement criteria, in addition to other graphic control measures. At a minimum, the covering force has a rear boundary that is also the forward boundary of the advance guard.

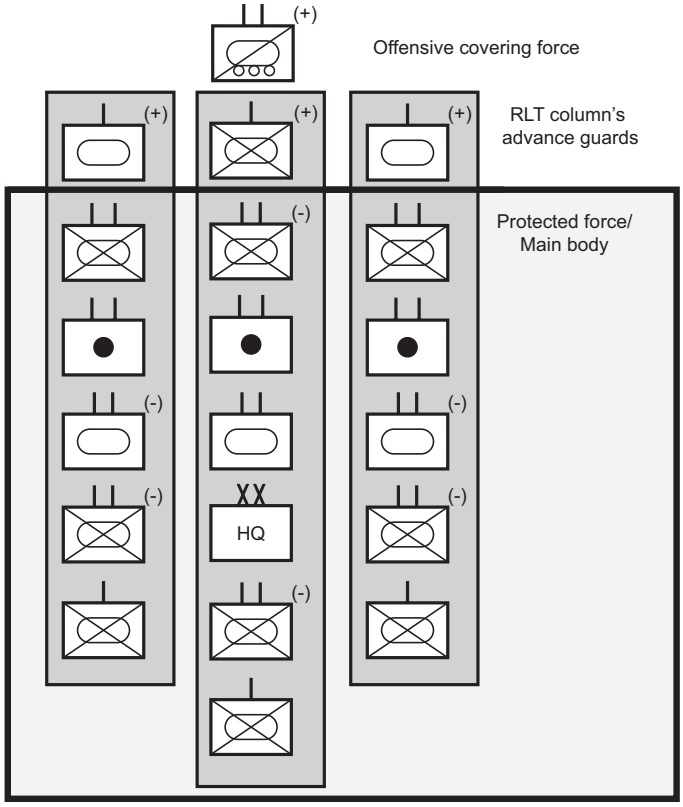
The advance guard engages in offensive and defensive operations when necessary to accomplish the mission. For example, in the offense, the guarding force may conduct hasty attacks if they possess sufficient combat power or may use a hasty defense on an exposed flank until relieved by the advance of the main body or flank security. Whereas in the defense, the guarding force may use counterattacks to exploit enemy weaknesses or various other defensive methods to disrupt and delay enemy advance. For more information on the employment of the advance guard in the various types of offensive and defensive operations, refer to the appropriate chapters of this publication.

Flank Guard

A flank guard is a security element operating to the flank of a moving or stationary force to protect them from enemy ground observation, direct fire, and surprise attack. A flank guard protects an exposed flank of the main body. A flank guard is similar to a flank screen except that the commander plans defensive positions in addition to OPs.

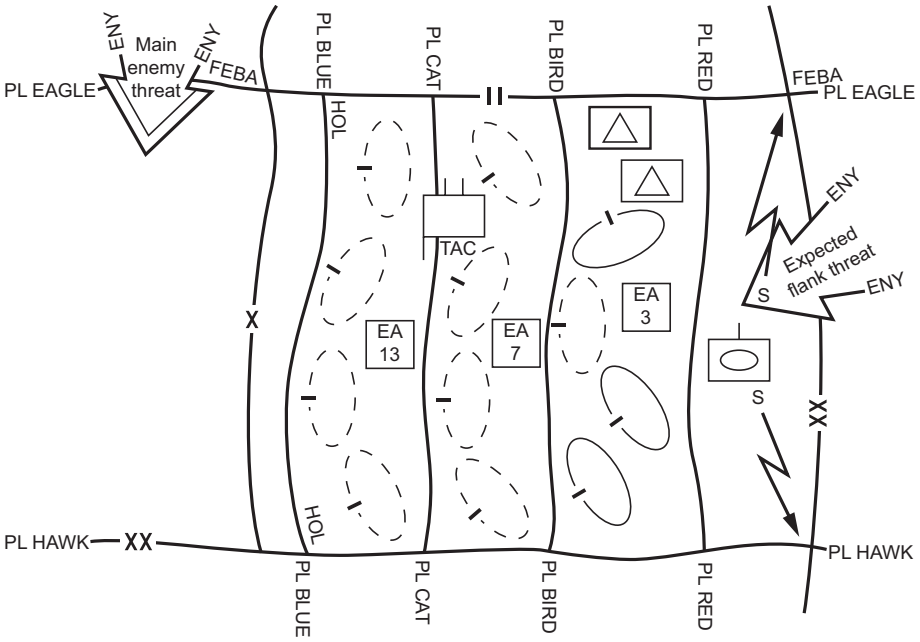
The commander of the main body designates the general location of the flank guard's positions. The commander assigns an AO to each flank guard that is sufficiently deep to provide early warning and reaction time. However, each flank guard must remain within supporting range of the main body. To determine the guarding force's exact initial positions, the flank guard commander considers the front and rear of the flank of the main body, the axis taken by the main body, the enemy's capabilities, and the available avenues of approach. Once the flank guard makes contact with the enemy, they can seek to defeat the enemy by attacking or defending, conduct a delay to develop the situation, or fix the enemy for destruction by the main body.

The flank guard moves to their initial positions using one of the movement techniques previously discussed in this chapter. On reaching their initial positions, the flank guard occupies defensive positions in assigned BPs or within the assigned AO and establishes a screening element forward of these positions (see fig. 13-12). In situations when knowledge about the enemy is vague, the flank guard maintains a large reserve.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-11. Multiple Security Forces.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND
ENY enemy

Figure 13-12. Stationary Flank Guard.

When conducting a moving flank guard, a commander occupies a series of BPs (instead of the OPs associated with a screen) that cover potential enemy avenues of approach as long as they threaten the main body. The lead element of the moving flank guard does not reconnoiter BPs or occupy them unless required when making contact. Instead, they maintain contact with the protected force's main body, reconnoiter the area between that main body and the flank guard's routes of advance, and reconnoiter the flank guard's route. They perform these tasks by conducting a zone reconnaissance (see chap. 12). The fundamental factors that affect the flank guard's lead element are their mobility, the speed of the main body, and the width of the security area as measured from the main body's boundary to the flank guard's screen line (see fig. 13-13). The size and combat power of the flank guard's lead element is based upon this width—the greater the width, the more resources they must possess to execute their tasks.

The rest of the flank guard marches along the route of advance and occupies BPs as necessary. Criteria for the route are the same as in a moving flank screen. The commander designates BPs parallel to the axis of the main body. The flank guard commander places these BPs outside the flank guard's route of advance and along avenues of approach into the flank guard. The flank guard occupies OPs along a screen line forward of these BPs (see fig. 13-13).

Since the flank guard is moving in one direction and orienting on providing protection to the secured force in another direction, the flank guard commander plans control measures to facilitate this dual orientation. These control measures are normally associated with the moving screen, as well as PLs that run parallel to the direction of movement of the main body. If the enemy attacks the protected flank, the guarding force commander uses these PLs to control the delay or defense (see fig. 13-13). The main body commander may also assign the flank guard an objective that secures the flank for the main body's objective or otherwise serves to orient the security efforts.

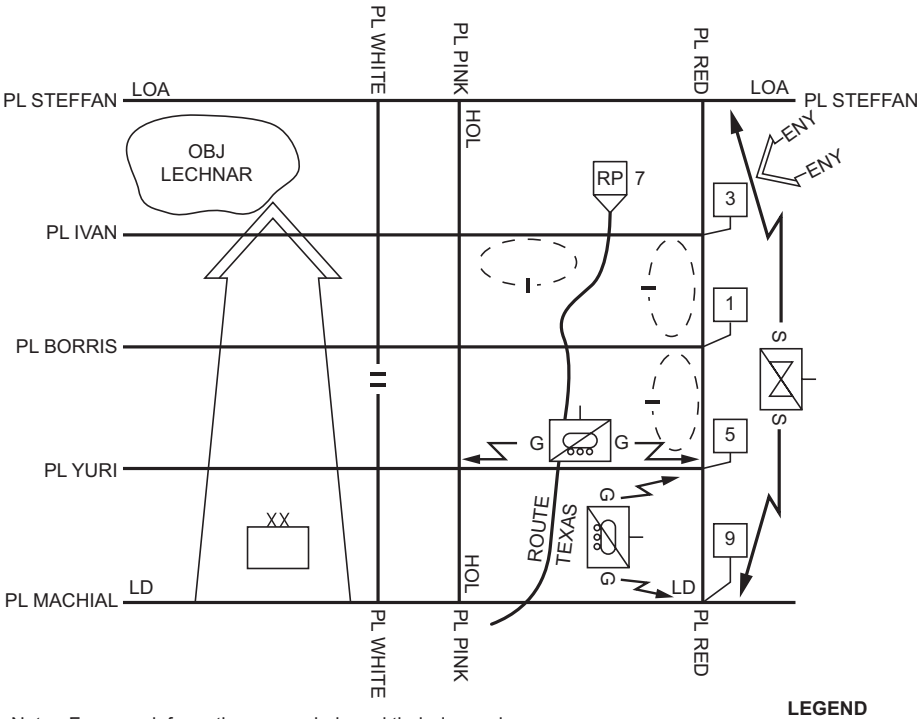


Figure 13-13. Moving Flank Guard Control Measures.

The flank guard regulates movement along the route of advance by the pace of the main body, the distance to the objective, and the enemy situation. The three methods of movement are successive bounds, alternate bounds, or continuous marching (see chap. 14). If the main body stops, the flank guard occupies blocking positions. As the speed of the main body changes, the flank guard changes movement methods. The guarding force commander must not allow the flank guard force to fall behind the main body or present a lucrative target by remaining stationary along the route. If the flank guard becomes overextended, the guarding force commander informs the main body commander and recommends one of the following COAs:

- Reinforce the flank guard.
- Reduce the size of the flank guard's AO.
- Screen a portion of the area and guard the rest.

Rear Guard

The rear guard consists of the rearmost elements of an advancing or a withdrawing force. They have the following functions: to protect the rear of a column from hostile forces; during the withdrawal, to delay the enemy; during the advance, to keep supply routes open. The rear guard may consist of a security detachment that a moving ground force details to the rear to keep them informed and covered. The rear guard protects the exposed rear of the main body. This occurs during offensive operations when the main body breaks contact with friendly forces defending the flanks or during a retrograde. The commander may deploy a rear guard behind both moving and stationary main bodies. The rear guard for a moving force displaces to successive BPs along PLs or delay lines in depth as the main body moves. The nature of enemy contact determines the exact movement method or combination of methods used in the displacement (successive bounds, alternate bounds, and continuous marching).

During a retrograde, the rear guard accomplishes their defensive mission in the same way as any other guard operation after the main body clears the security area. As the main body moves, the rear guard moves to subsequent PLs in depth. Contact with the enemy force may eventually be lost if the enemy does not pursue the retrograding friendly force. Fighting a defense or a delay is necessary if the enemy detects the retrograde movement and attacks. See chapter 11 for retrograde operations.

COVER

A covering force is a security element whose primary task is to operate independently from the main body to intercept, engage, delay, disorganize, and deceive the enemy before the enemy can attack the main body. They prevent surprise during the advance, protect the covered force, and develop the situation. They are usually a task-organized, independent maneuver force that operates beyond the range of indirect fires positioned with the main body. They possesses the necessary aviation, combat support, and logistic resources to operate as a self-sufficient unit and decisively engage the enemy. A covering force develops the situation earlier than a screening or a guarding force, fights longer and more often, and defeats larger enemy forces.

The covering force's distance from the main body depends on the main body commander's intentions and instructions, the terrain, the enemy location and strength, and the main body and covering force's rates of march. The covering force requires an AO in which to operate that must be at least as wide, or as long (depending on whether the force is covering to the front, rear, or flank), as that of the main body's. The covering force generally operates in the area forward of the FEBA.

While a covering force provides more security and more tactical options than a screening or guarding force, they also require more resources. Before assigning a cover mission, the main body commander must weigh and validate the requirement by balancing the combat power necessary to accomplish the decisive action against the combat power necessary for the covering force to operate. When the commander lacks the resources to support both, the main body commander must assign the security force a less resource-intensive security operation, either a screen or a guard.

A covering force performs all the tasks of screening and guarding forces. A covering force for a stationary force performs a defensive mission, while a covering force for a moving force generally conducts offensive actions. A covering force normally operates forward of the main body in the offense or defense, or to the rear for a retrograde operation. Unusual circumstances could dictate a flank covering force, but this is normally a screen or guard mission.

Organization of a Covering Force

Whether the main body is stationary or moving, the covering force normally executes the cover task by employing an area defense, a delay, a zone reconnaissance, or a movement to contact within the security area. The covering force commander employs and tasks subordinate forces, and uses the control measures, associated with those missions. In addition, the covering force prepares to conduct a passage of lines as part of the mission and maintains a sizable reserve to operate within the uncertainty they will likely encounter. See chapter 16 for more information on forward or rearward passage of lines.

Additional considerations for organizing the covering force involve the combat power necessary for them to accomplish their mission. While a commander can organize and resource any force to serve as a covering force, covering forces are normally built around battalions and above who possess the inherent capability and the C2 structure necessary to cover the geographical area typically assigned a covering force. A covering force is usually allocated combat support (e.g., artillery, IRCs, and combat engineers) and CSS (e.g., a specifically task-organized logistic detachment) beyond that normally given to a force of its size because they are operating beyond the main body's supporting range (MAGTFs are often ideal covering forces). The covering force will also need to rely on the ACE to extend the force's ability to observe, cover gaps, and react to events. The mobility of the covering force must at least equal, and preferably exceed, that of both the main body and the enemy. Depending on METT-T, the use of assault support assets can assist in achieving that mobility.

Offensive Cover

In the offense, the covering force normally seeks to seize the initiative and shape the battlespace for the decisive actions of the main body (see fig. 13-14). Within the limitations of METT-T and combat power, there are certain general tasks associated with units assigned a cover operation in the offense. These tasks are to—

- Perform zone reconnaissance along the main body's axis of advance or within the AO.
- Clear or bypass enemy forces within the AO in accordance with bypass criteria.
- Deny the enemy information about the strength, composition, and objective of the main body.

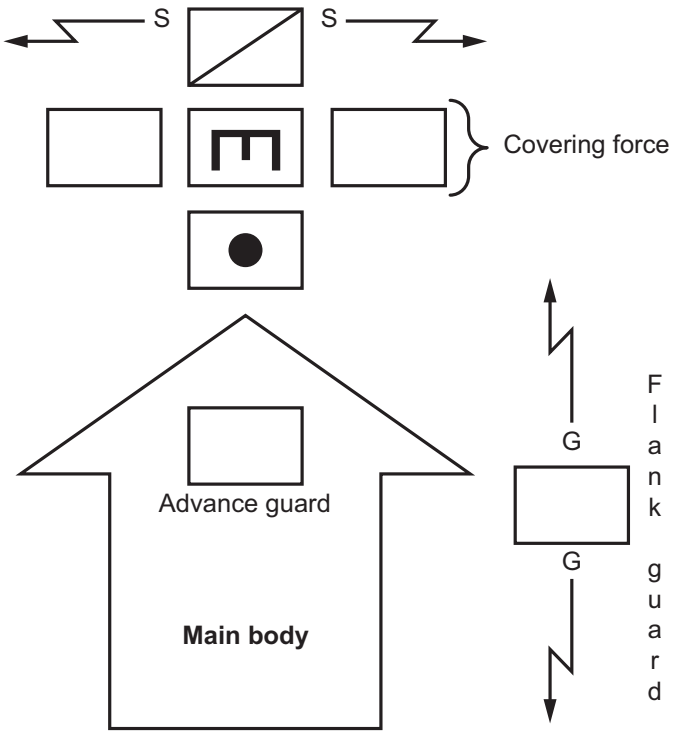


Figure 13-14. Attack Using a Covering Force.

Covering tasks against a defending enemy include—

- Penetrating the enemy's security area to locate enemy main defensive positions.
- Determining enemy strengths and dispositions.
- Locating gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive scheme.
- Defeating or repelling enemy forces as directed by the higher commander.
- Deceiving the enemy into thinking the main body has been committed and causing the enemy to launch counterattacks prematurely.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strengths or through weaknesses.

In a meeting engagement, covering tasks include:

- Destroying enemy's reconnaissance, advance guard, and lead elements of the main body.
- Determining the location of enemy assailable flanks.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strengths or through weaknesses.

The covering force executing offensive operations normally employs a zone reconnaissance or a movement to contact and plans accordingly. The key additional planning consideration is that of a passage of lines. In developing the situation for the main body, the covering force can plan on either the main body passing through them to execute the decisive action, or maneuvering around

them. Because there is an inherent uncertainty involved in executing the cover task, the covering force commander maintains a large reserve to either exploit or recover the situation.

The covering force advances on a broad front, normally with their subordinate ground maneuver elements abreast (except for the reserve). This force clears the enemy's security area, penetrates the enemy defenses, and fixes the enemy's main force in place for defeat by the main body. Unlike screening or guarding forces, the covering force does not bypass enemy forces unless ordered to do so by the main body commander.

If the covering force discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, they prepare to exploit the weakness and disrupt the integrity of that defense. The covering force commander immediately reports this to the main body commander, so the main body commander can divert main body follow-on forces to support the penetration. The main body commander synchronizes the covering force's penetration with the other arriving maneuver units, combat support, and CSS to prevent counterattacking enemy forces from isolating and destroying the penetrating elements of the covering force.

When the covering force cannot advance, they defend and prepare to assist the forward passage of lines of main body units. They continue to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks. The covering force may guide main body units as they attack through or around the covering force. If the covering force has accomplished the mission, the main body commander attacks the enemy's weak point with previously uncommitted main body forces at the appropriate time.

Flank Cover

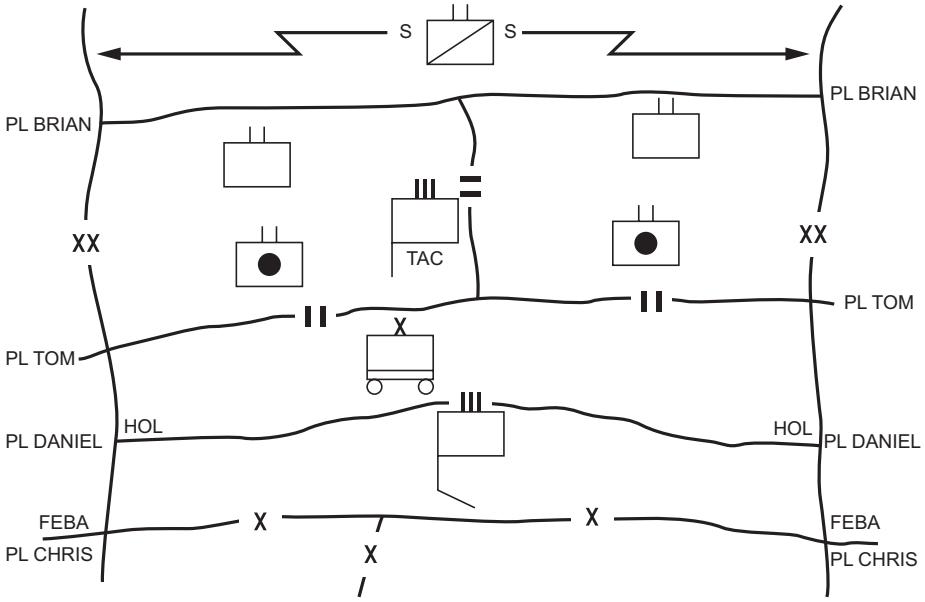
When the main body commander perceives a significant threat to a flank, the main body commander may establish a flank covering force. That force conducts their mission in much the same way as a flank guard performs their mission. The main differences between the two missions are the scope of operations and the expectation that the covering force will defeat an enemy assault, not just delay or disrupt them. Unlike covering operations to the front or rear of the main body where the covering force is normally beyond the support of the main body, the force covering the main body flank remains in contact with the main body—although this requirement does not take away from the requirement of the covering force to function independently.

Defensive Cover

In the defense, the covering force normally seeks to prevent the enemy from exercising the initiative and attacking at a time and place of their choosing (see fig. 13-15). Defensive cover gains time for the main body, enabling them to deploy, move, or prepare defenses in the MBA. Defensive cover accomplishes this by disrupting the enemy's attack, contesting the enemy's possession of the initiative, and establishing the conditions for friendly decisive actions. The covering force makes the enemy deploy repeatedly to fight through the covering force, and forces the enemy to commit their reserves and follow-on forces early to try to sustain momentum.

Within the limitations of METT-T and combat power, there are certain general tasks associated with units assigned a cover operation in the defense. These tasks include—

- Prevent the main body from being surprised and becoming engaged by direct-fire weapons.
- Defeat enemy advance guard formations.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 13-15. Depiction of Defensive Cover.

- Maintain continuous surveillance of high speed avenues of approach into the security area.
- Defeat all enemy reconnaissance formations before they can observe the main body.
- Cause the deployment of the enemy main body.
- Determine the size, strength, composition, and direction of the enemy's main effort.
- Destroy, defeat, or attrite enemy forces within its capacity.
- Deprive the enemy of fire support and air defense umbrellas, or require the enemy to displace these systems before attacking into the friendly MBA.
- Deceive the enemy regarding the location of main body and main defensive positions.
- Avoid being bypassed.

The defensive covering force defends, delays, and counterattacks as required. If the AO assigned to the covering force is not already occupied, the force may have to reconnoiter and clear the area before establishing the cover. As in offensive operations, the support of the ACE is necessary to extend the covered area. Aviation units can screen less threatened areas, rapidly deliver fires to seize opportunities to engage the enemy or support of the covering force, provide mobility to elements of the covering force, and support logistics.

The covering force is not expected to win the defensive battle on their own—that is the responsibility of the main body. There is an inherent expectation then that at some point, the covering force will hand the battle over to friendly units in the MBA by conducting a rearward passage of lines. The entire covering force need not conduct the passage of lines simultaneously, they may hand the battle over in stages depending on how the battle is unfolding. However, the covering force will do one of four things as they complete the battle handover: they will either

assume positions in the MBA, assume security responsibilities for the main body's flanks or rear, fall through the MBA to conduct reconstitution, or become part of the reserve. The defensive chapters of this publication discuss these options in detail.

REAR AREA SECURITY

Rear area security occurs in all military operations across the ROMO, focusing on securing the installations and functions necessary to continue operations; controlling and protecting the population (whether friendly, neutral, or hostile); and protecting other agencies and forces conducting stability related tasks. This is true even in situations when forces are liberating friendly populations. Military forces assigned to support civil authority perform activities related to the concept of rear area security. Protected forces range from higher headquarters through artillery and echelon reserves to the logistic base. Protected installations can be part of the logistic base or they can constitute part of the area's infrastructure. Areas to secure range from specific points (e.g., bridges, defiles) and terrain features (e.g., ridgelines, hills) to large civilian population centers and their adjacent areas. Populationcentric area security missions are common in all manner of military operations. For more information, see MCTP 3-30C, *Rear Area Operations*.

Any element of the MAGTF, except the command element (which is still responsible for local security), can conduct rear area security functions—this is particularly true in operations involving noncontiguous AOs. Depending on METT-T, the LCE and ACE may require augmentation from the GCE to undertake responsibility for rear area security. During conventional operations, rear area security is normally an economy-of-force measure to ensure the continued conduct of logistics in support of military action. All rear area security operations incorporate and take advantage of the basic local security activities of all units regardless of their location within the AO.

Since civilians are normally present within any given AO, units executing rear area security operations may utilize different ROE than the rest of the force. This requires control measures (similar to light lines) that delineate between rear and forward areas, superb discipline and leadership, and continual training. When addressing these considerations, commanders must remember that at the most basic level, their primary responsibility remains the protection of the force.

LOCAL SECURITY

Local security is continuous and an inherent responsibility of command. It includes any local measure taken by units to prevent surprise and mitigate enemy actions. It involves avoiding enemy detection or deceiving the enemy about friendly positions and intentions. It also includes finding any enemy forces in the immediate vicinity and knowing as much about their positions and intentions as possible. Local security prevents a unit from being surprised, and it is an

important part of maintaining the initiative. The requirement for maintaining local security applies to all operations.

Units use both active and passive measures to provide local security. Active measures include—

- Using OPs and patrols.
- Establishing specific levels of alert within the unit. The commander adjusts those levels based on METT-T analysis.
- Establishing stand-to times.
- Actively training to maintain proficiency, avoid complacency, and reinforce rules on the use of force if necessary.

Passive local security measures include using camouflage, movement control, noise and light discipline, and proper communications procedures. It also includes employing available ground sensors, night-vision devices, and daylight sights to maintain surveillance over the area immediately surrounding the unit.

COMBAT OUTPOSTS

A combat outpost is a reinforced OP that can conduct limited combat, stability, or other operations. It is also a security force established at the regimental level during defensive or stationary operations (see fig. 13-16). Using combat outposts is a technique for employing security forces in restrictive terrain that precludes mounted security forces from covering the area. They are also used when smaller OPs are in danger of being overrun by enemy forces infiltrating into and through the security area. The commander uses a combat outpost to extend the depth of the security area and to support and protect smaller OPs. Both mounted and dismounted forces can employ combat outposts.

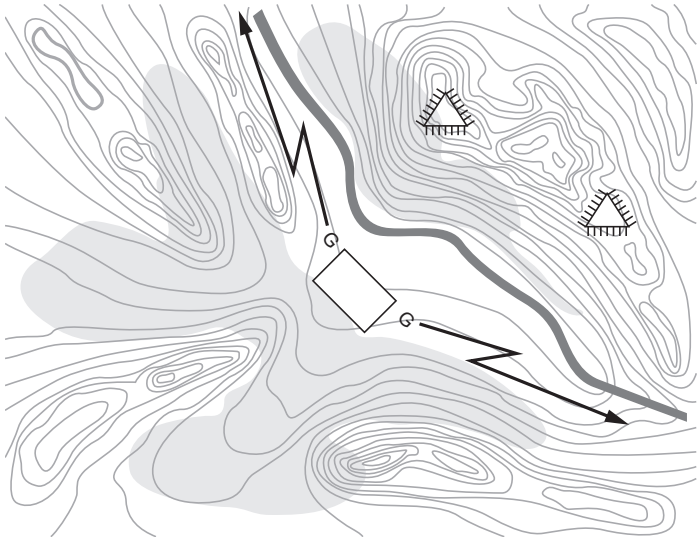


Figure 13-16. Combat Outposts.

While METT-T analysis determines the size, location, and number of combat outposts a unit establishes, combat outposts normally range from squad to platoon level in size. A combat outpost must have sufficient resources to accomplish the designated missions, but not so much as to seriously deplete the strength of the main body or create a significant support burden. It is usually located far enough forward of the protected force to preclude enemy ground reconnaissance elements from observing the actions of the protected force.

The commander organizes a combat outpost to provide an all-around defense to withstand a superior enemy force. When the enemy has significant armored capability, the commander may give a combat outpost more than the standard allocation of antitank weapons. Forces manning combat outposts can conduct aggressive patrolling, engage and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements, and engage the enemy main body prior to their extraction. The commander plans to extract friendly forces from the outpost before the enemy overruns them.

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Part Five
Other Tactical Operations

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CHAPTER 14
TROOP MOVEMENT

Commanders utilize other tactical operations to enable the conduct of offensive, defensive, and stability activities and tasks. As a sequence of tactical actions that serve a common purpose, they are operations vice TTP. Their purpose is to facilitate the execution of other types of operations. For example, units conduct a passage of lines to enable some other action to occur, perhaps an attack or a delay. Successful execution of other tactical operations is often a condition for success of the overall mission. Therefore, commanders ordering their execution ensure they are the subject of detailed planning, integration, and close coordination between all participants.

Troop movement is simply the movement of troops from one place to another by any available means in any environment. The ability of a commander to employ a force depends on the commander's ability to move that force. The essence of battlespace tempo is the capability to conduct rapid and orderly movement to concentrate combat power at decisive points and times. Successful movement places troops and equipment at the proper place, at the proper time, ready for combat. This chapter discusses the various methods of moving troops in differing threat environments.

METHODS OF TROOP MOVEMENT

Troop movements are made by dismounted and mounted marches using organic combat and tactical vehicles and motor transport, air, rail, and water means in various combinations. The method employed depends on the situation, the size and composition of the moving unit, the distance the unit must cover, the urgency of execution, and the condition of the troops. It also depends on the availability, suitability, and capacity of the different modes of transportation. Troop movements over extended distances have extensive logistic considerations. When necessary, dismounted and mounted marches can be hurried by conducting a forced march.

Dismounted March

Dismounted marches are the movement of troops and equipment mainly by foot, with limited support by vehicles. Dismounted marches increase the commander's maneuver options. Their positive characteristics include combat readiness—all personnel can immediately respond to enemy attack without the need to dismount—ease of control, adaptability to terrain, and independence from the existing road network. Their limitations include a slow movement rate and increased personnel fatigue—personnel carrying heavy loads over long distances or large changes in elevation get tired. A unit conducts a dismounted march when the situation requires stealth, the distance of travel is short, transport or fuel is limited, or the situation or terrain precludes using a large number of vehicles.

Mounted March

A mounted march is the movement of troops and equipment by combat and tactical vehicles. Armored, mechanized, and motorized units routinely conduct mounted marches. The speed of the march and the increased amounts of supplies that can accompany the unit characterize this march method. Heavy and motorized maneuver units are normally self-sufficient to conduct mounted marches over short distances. Light maneuver units and most combat support and CSS units are not completely mobile based on organic truck assets and require assistance from transportation elements to conduct mounted marches. Considerations for mounted marches over extended distances include—

- The ability of the route network to support the number, size, and weight of the tactical and combat vehicles assigned to or supporting the unit making the move.
- Available refueling and maintenance sites and crewrest areas.
- The need for recovery and evacuation assets.

Air Movement

Air movement is a continuous, progressive operation that transports successive elements of the deploying force to the objective area. The commander conducts air movements to move troops and equipment; to emplace systems; and to transport ammunition, fuel, and other high-value supplies. The commander may employ air movements as a substitute for ground tactical movements. Air movements are generally faster than ground tactical moves. The same general considerations that apply to air assault operations also apply to air movements. See chapter 17 and MCTP 3-01B for more information on air assaults.

Rail and Water Movements

Operating forces can use rail and water modes to conduct troop movement, if they are available within the AO (in this case, water refers to inland waterway traffic vice amphibious movement). Their use can provide flexibility by freeing other modes of transport for other missions. Their use normally involves a mixt of military and commercial assets, such as defense freight railway interchange railcars pulled by privately owned diesel-electric engines to transport tanks along railroad right of ways from one rail terminus to another. Responsibility for coordinating the use of railroads and waterways resides within the theater logistics command.

Forced March

In cases of tactical necessity, mounted or dismounted units can accelerate their rate of movement by conducting a forced march. Forced marches require speed, exertion, and an increase in the number of hours marched or traveled by vehicles each day beyond normal standards. Personnel and vehicles cannot sustain forced marches for more than a short period. In a forced march, a unit may not halt as often or for as long as recommended for maintenance, rest, feeding, and fuel. The commander must understand that immediately following a long and fast march, personnel and vehicles experience a temporary deterioration in their physical condition. The combat effectiveness and cohesion of the unit also temporarily decreases. The movement plan must accommodate the presence of stragglers and address increased maintenance failures.

Administrative Movement

Administrative movement is movement when there is little or no likelihood of enemy contact. It may use both military and civilian vehicles and places the priority on maximizing use of available vehicles and their cargo capacities. The commander only conducts administrative movements in secure areas. Examples of administrative movements include rail and highway movement within the continental United States. Since these types of moves are not tactical, the echelon logistic officer (i.e., G-4 or S-4) usually supervises them. Once units deploy into a theater of war, commanders do not normally employ administrative movements.

TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

A tactical road march is a tactical movement used to relocate units within the combat zone in order to prepare for combat operations. The primary consideration is not the method of movement (i.e., by foot or by vehicle), but the relative speed of movement. While units executing tactical road marches do not expect to encounter significant enemy ground forces, they conduct local security measures, maintain security against enemy air attack, and prepare to take immediate action against an enemy ambush (see fig. 14-1). Units expecting contact with significant enemy forces use other techniques, such as approach marches (see chap. 4) or mixtures of combat formations and movement techniques.

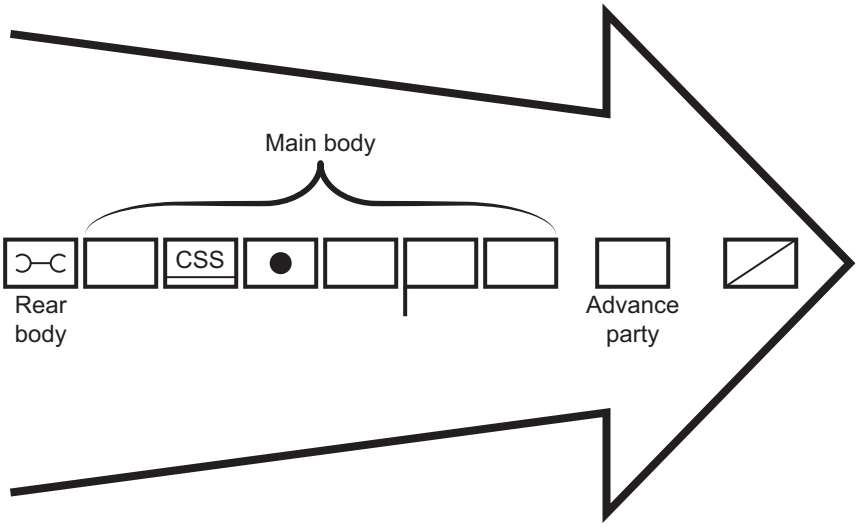


Figure 14-1. Tactical Road March.

Organization for a Tactical Road March

The organization for a tactical road march is the march column. A march column is a group of two to five serials using the same route for a single movement, organized under a single commander for planning, regulating, and controlling. The commander organizes a march column into four elements: reconnaissance, advance party, main body, and rear body. An RLT conducting a tactical road march is an example of a march column. The subordinate elements of a march column are a march serial and a march unit.

A march serial is a subdivision of a march column consisting of a group of two to five march units using the same route for a single movement, organized under a single commander for planning, regulating, and controlling. An example is a battalion serial formed from an RLT-size march column. A march unit is the smallest subdivision of a march column; a group of normally no more than 25 vehicles using the same route for a single movement organized under a single commander for planning, regulating, and controlling. An example of a march unit is a company from a battalion-size march serial.

A march column provides excellent speed, control, and flexibility, but sacrifices flank security. It provides the ability to deploy forces to the front of the column. The commander uses a march column when speed is essential and enemy contact is unlikely. However, the commander spaces combat support resources, such as air defense and engineers, throughout the column to protect and support the movement. Reconnaissance elements augmented by engineer, CBRN reconnaissance, and other resources, conduct a route reconnaissance of the march routes. This reconnaissance confirms and supplements the IPB conducted by the commander's staff.

An advance party is a task organization formed by the MAGTF commander that consists of personnel designated to form the nucleus of the arrival and assembly organizations. The primary tasks of the advance party are to arrange for the reception of the main body and provide force protection. They are also a team that coordinates the convoy's arrival at the destination. They may move with the main body initially but must arrive at the destination sufficiently ahead of the main body. A unit's advance party usually accompanies the route reconnaissance effort to the designated AA. Unit SOPs establish the exact composition of the advance party and the transportation, security, communications equipment needs, and specific duties—an advance party is not the same as a forward CP. The advance party secures, reconnoiters, and organizes an area for the main body's arrival and occupation. They typically reconnoiter and confirm the tentative locations selected by the commander of the parent element, based on a map reconnaissance. When necessary, the advance party changes previously assigned unit locations within the AA. The advance party guides the main body into position from the release point to precise locations within the AA.

The main body of the march column consists of the remainder of the unit, including attachments minus the rear body. The rear body is the last march unit in a march column and normally consists of primarily maintenance elements in a mounted march. They maintain communications with the main body. The function of the rear body is to recover disabled vehicles or control stragglers in a foot march. If the rear body cannot repair a disabled vehicle immediately, they tow the disabled vehicle and move the crew and passengers to a unit maintenance collection point located at a secure area near the movement route.

During extended road marches, halts are necessary to rest personnel, service vehicles, and adjust movement schedules. The march order or unit SOP regulates when to take halts. In motor movements, the commander schedules short halts for every 2 to 3 hours of movement and halts may last up to an hour. Long halts occur on marches that exceed 24 hours and last no more than 2 hours.

Long halts are not scheduled at night, which allows maximum time for night movement. During halts, each unit normally clears the march route and moves to a previously selected AA to prevent route congestion and avoid being a lucrative target. Units establish security and take other measures to protect the force. Unit leaders promptly notify commanders of the time and approximate length of unscheduled halts.

The commander must emphasize security during halts. Once a unit stops moving, there is a natural inclination for personnel to relax their vigilance. The commander addresses this by defining in the SOP unit actions for various types of halts, such as maintenance halts, security halts, and unexpected halts.

Graphic Control Measures

The commander directing a tactical road march often uses a strip map or overlay to graphically depict critical information about the route to subordinates. The overlay or strip map should show the route of march, start points, release points, checkpoints, critical points (e.g., bridges), light line, and traffic control posts (TCPs). Figure 14-2 shows an example overlay, and figure 14-3, on page 14-6, shows an example strip map. Other graphic control measures for a tactical road march include AAs and PLs.

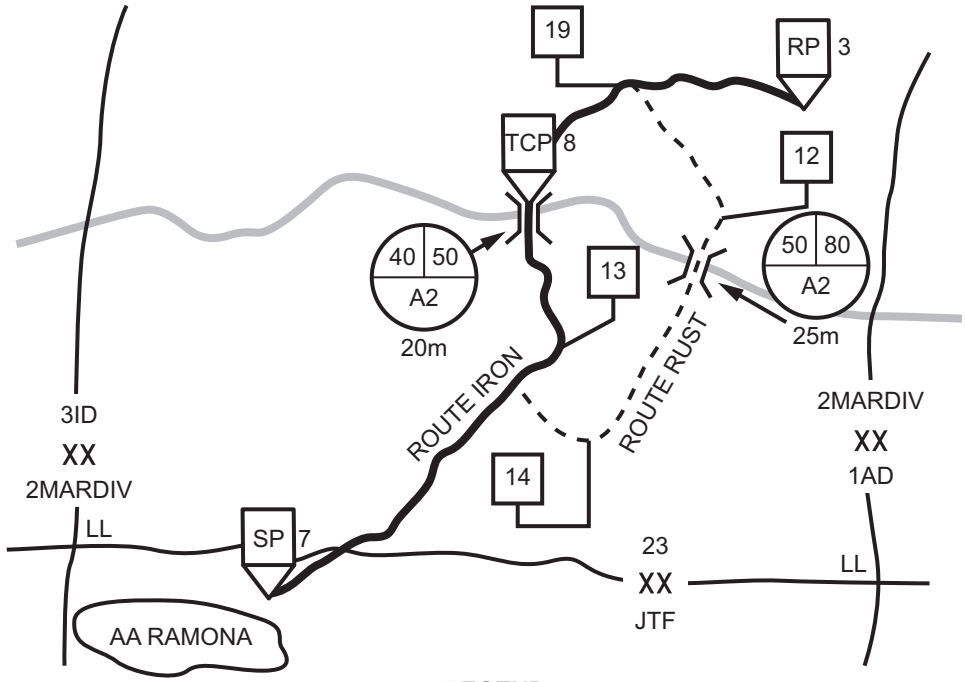


Figure 14-2. Overlay with Route Control Measures Example.

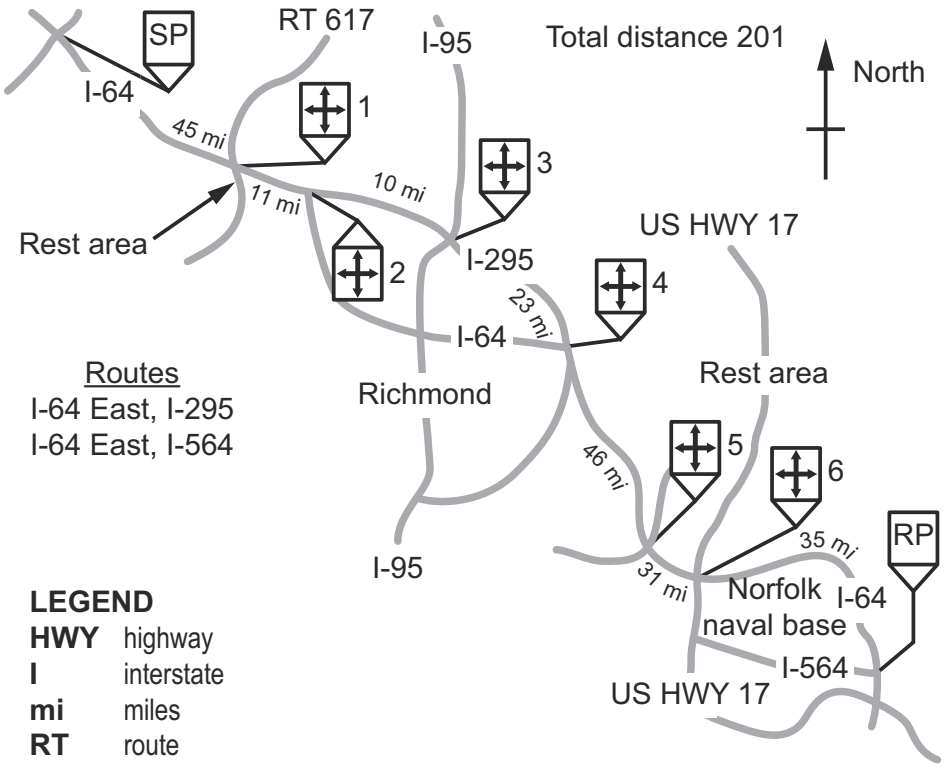


Figure 14-3. Strip Map Example.

The start point is a location on a route where the marching elements fall under the control of a designated march commander. Figure 14-4 depicts start point 7. All routes have a designated start point, and it is easily recognizable on the map and on the ground, such as a road junction. Units do not stop at the start point, but rather the start point is far enough from the AA to allow units to organize and be moving at the prescribed speed and interval as they cross it.

A release point is a well-defined point on a route at which the elements composing a column return under the authority of their respective commanders, each one of these elements continuing their movement toward their respective destination. Figure 14-5 depicts release point 3. Each start point must have a corresponding release point, which must also be easily recognizable on the ground. Marching units do not stop at the release point; instead, as they move through the release point, unit guides meet each march unit and lead them to AAs.

Figure 14-3. Start Point Symbol.

Figure 14-5. Release Point Symbol.

The commander designates checkpoints along the route to assist marching units in complying with the timetable. Also, the movement overlay identifies critical points along the route where interference with movement might occur. The commander positions TCPs along the route to prevent congestion and confusion (see fig. 14-2). The TCPs may be staffed by military police or unit personnel. These personnel report to the appropriate area movement control organization when each convoy, march column, and march serial arrives at and completes passage of their location.

A light line is a designated PL beyond which vehicles must use blackout lights during periods of reduced visibility. Commanders at either MEF or division levels establish it based on the risk that the enemy will be able to detect moving vehicles using white light. Figure 14-6 depicts the light line for the 1st Marine Division as the division rear boundary.

A movement corridor is a designated area established to protect and enable ground movement along a route. Units establish a movement corridor to set the conditions to protect and enable movement of traffic along a designated surface route. Units conduct synchronized operations within the movement corridor such as reconnaissance, security, mobility, information operations (for forces that require additional command and control), force protection, and support to enable their movement. A commander may establish a movement corridor to facilitate the movement of a single element or for a longer period of time to facilitate the movement of a number of elements along a route. The commander of an AO may establish a movement corridor within an AO along an established MSR or a route designated for a unit's movement. The movement corridor typically includes the airspace above it to allow the establishing unit to conduct aerial reconnaissance and fires (see fig. 14-7 on page 14-8).

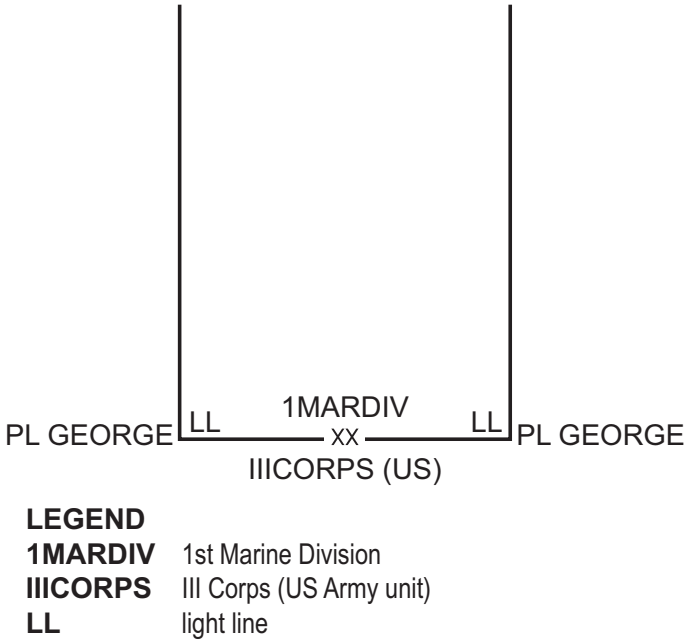


Figure 14-6. Light Line Example.

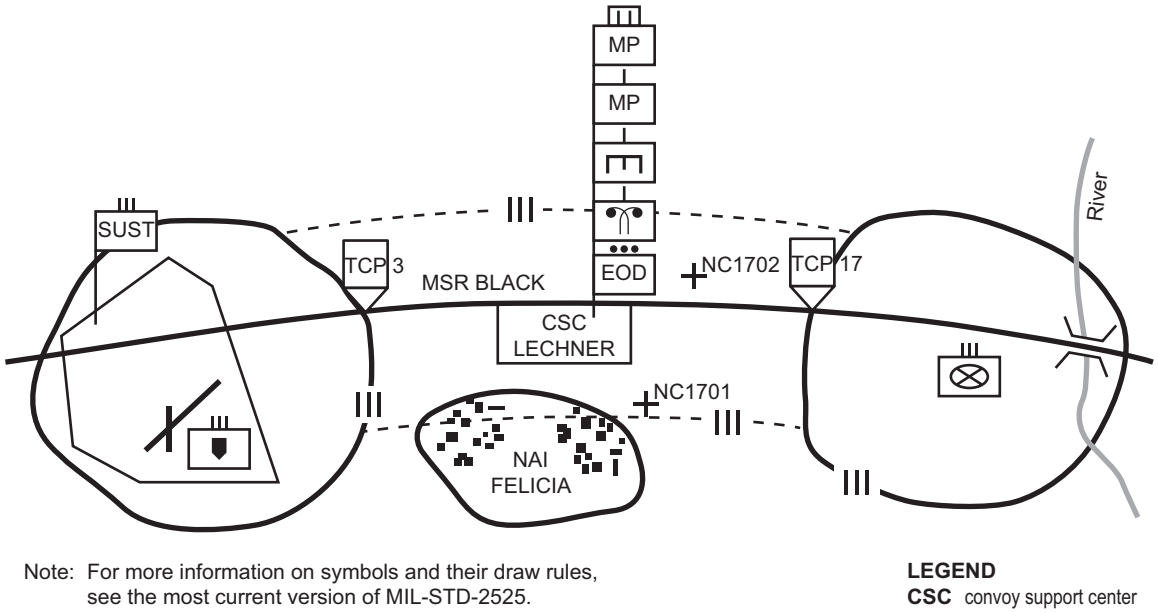


Figure 14-7. Movement Corridor.

Forms of Tactical Marches

Units conducting tactical road marches employ three different forms: open column, close column, and infiltration. Each of these techniques uses scheduled halts to control and sustain the road march. The METT-T analysis requires adjustments in the standard distances between individual Marines or vehicles. During movement, elements within a column may encounter many different types of routes and obstacles simultaneously. Consequently, parts of the column may be moving at different speeds that can produce an undesirable accordion-like effect. The movement order establishes the order of march, rate of march, interval or time gaps between units, column gap, and (for vehicles) maximum catchup speed. Unless the commander directs them not to do so for security reasons, march units report when they have crossed each control point. Throughout the movement, the commander maintains air and ground security.

Open Column. Open column is a technique normally used during daylight marches. It can be used at night with infrared lights and night vision equipment. Using an open column roughly doubles the column's length and thereby doubles the time it takes to clear a point when compared to a close column moving at the same speed. The open column is the most common movement technique because it offers the most security while still providing the commander with a reasonable degree of control.

Vehicle Distance. The distance between vehicles varies, depending on road conditions and weather, but is normally 50 to 100 meters with a vehicle density of 15 to20 vehicles per kilometer. See MCTP 3-40F, *Transportation Operations*, for more detail on vehicle distances.

Dismounted Distance. The distance between dismounted personnel varies from 2 to 5 meters to allow for dispersion and space for marching comfort. Any distance that exceeds 5 meters between dismounted Marines increases the length of the column and hinders control. A single infantry company, with intervals between the platoons, occupies roughly a kilometer of road or trail.

Close Column. The commander normally employs a close column for marches during darkness under blackout driving conditions or for marches in restricted terrain. This method of marching takes maximum advantage of the traffic capacity of a route but provides little dispersion. Limited-visibility marches are characterized by close formations, difficult command and control and reconnaissance, a slow rate of march, and good concealment from enemy observation and air attack.

Vehicle Distance. In a close column, the commander spaces vehicles about 20 to 25 meters apart with a vehicle density of 40 to 50 vehicles per kilometer. At night, vehicles are spaced so each driver can see the two lights in the blackout marker of the vehicle ahead.

Dismounted Distance. The dismounted equivalent to the close column is a limited-visibility march. The distance between individuals is reduced to 1–3 meters to help maintain contact and facilitate control.

Infiltration. The infiltration form of a tactical road march should not be confused with infiltration as a form of maneuver as discussed in chapter 3. Infiltration provides the best possible passive defense against enemy observation and attack. It is suited for tactical road marches when there is enough time and road space and when the commander desires the maximum security, deception, and dispersion. The commander dispatches vehicles and personnel in small groups, or at irregular intervals, at a rate that keeps the traffic density down and prevents undue massing of vehicles or personnel. The disadvantages of an infiltration are that more time is required to complete the move, column control is nearly impossible, and recovery of vehicles or stragglers by the rear body is more protracted. Additionally, unit integrity is not restored until the last vehicle or individual arrives at the destination, complicating the unit's onward deployment.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

A tactical road march is used to position units in the battlespace and places a premium on rapid movement. When the emphasis of movement is on security and readiness for contact, the commander uses the combat formations described in chapter 3 in conjunction with three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Figure 14-8, on page 14-11, illustrates when a unit is most likely to use each technique.

Movement techniques limit the unit's exposure to enemy fire and position them to react to enemy contact. The commander selects the appropriate movement technique based on the chance of enemy contact. While moving, individuals and vehicles use the terrain to protect themselves when enemy contact is possible or expected. They use natural cover and concealment to avoid enemy fires. The following rules apply:

- Do not present a silhouette against the skyline.
- Cross open areas quickly.
- Do not move directly forward from a concealed firing position.
- Avoid possible kill zones because it is easier to cross difficult terrain than fight the enemy on unfavorable terms.

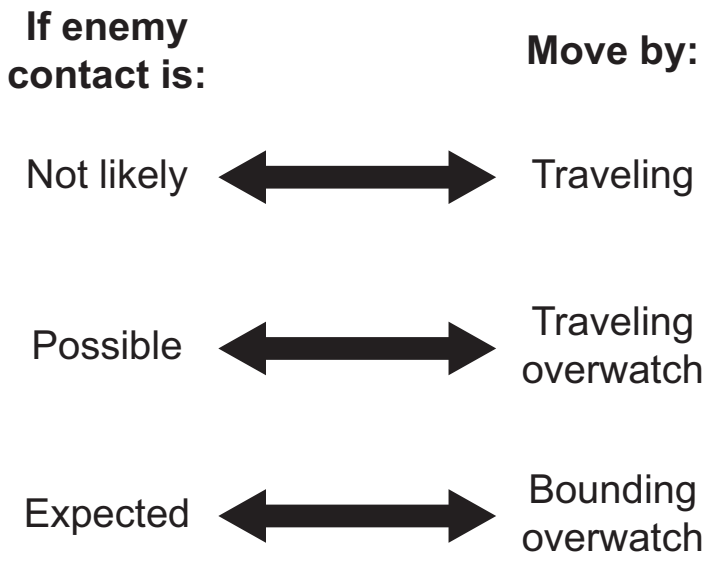


Figure 14-8. Movement Techniques.

- Avoid large, open areas, especially when they are dominated by high ground or by terrain that can cover and conceal the enemy.
- Take active countermeasures, such as using smoke and direct and indirect fire, to suppress or obscure suspected enemy positions.

Traveling

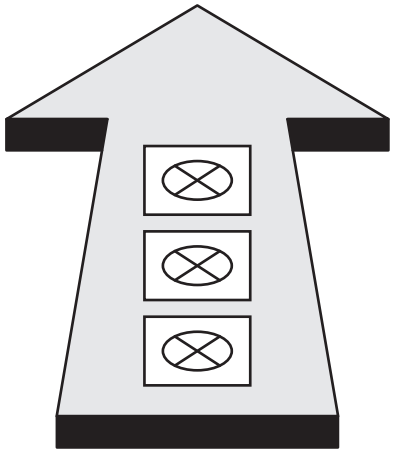
The commander uses the traveling movement technique when speed is necessary and contact with enemy forces is not likely. All elements of the unit move simultaneously. The commander or small-unit leader is located where he/she can best control the situation. Trailing elements may move in parallel columns to shorten the column and reaction time (see fig. 14-9). The traveling movement technique is similar to, but not the same as, a tactical road march. The commander executing the traveling movement technique is using it within a combat formation. For example, a company is traveling in a wedge, its platoons utilizing the traveling technique.

Traveling Overwatch

The commander uses the traveling overwatch movement technique when contact with enemy forces is possible, but speed is important. The lead element and trailing element are separated by a short distance which varies with the terrain. The trailing element moves at variable speeds and may pause for short periods to overwatch the lead element. The trailing element keys their movement to terrain and the lead element. The trailing element overwatches at such a distance that, should the enemy engage the lead element, it will not prevent the trailing element from firing or moving to support the lead element (see fig. 14-10).

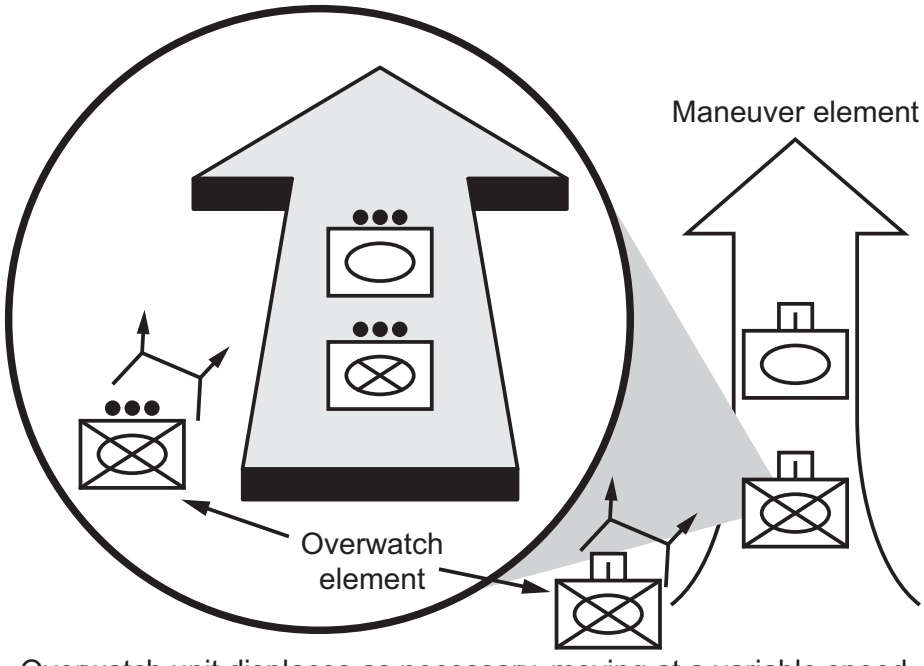
Bounding Overwatch

Bounding overwatch is a movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is expected. The unit moves by bounds with one element always halted in position to overwatch another element while they move. The overwatching element is positioned to support the moving unit by fire or fire and movement. The commander uses the bounding overwatch movement technique



Interval between elements is based on visibility, terrain, and weapons ranges.

Figure 14-9. Traveling.



Overwatch unit displaces as necessary, moving at a variable speed.

Figure 14-10. Traveling Overwatch.

when expecting to make contact with enemy forces. There are two forms of this technique: alternate bounds and successive bounds. The successive bound form is more deliberate, and offers more security. In both cases, the overwatching elements cover the bounding elements from covered and concealed positions with good observation and fields of fire against possible enemy positions. The length of any given bound is based on the terrain and the range of overwatching weapons.

When using alternate bounds, the lead element moves forward, halts, and occupies a support-by-fire position that is covered at all times by the rear overwatching element (see fig. 14-11). The former rear overwatching element advances past the former lead element and takes an overwatch position. The initial lead element then advances past the initial trail element and occupies a new support-by-fire position. One element moves at a time. This method is usually more rapid than successive bounds.

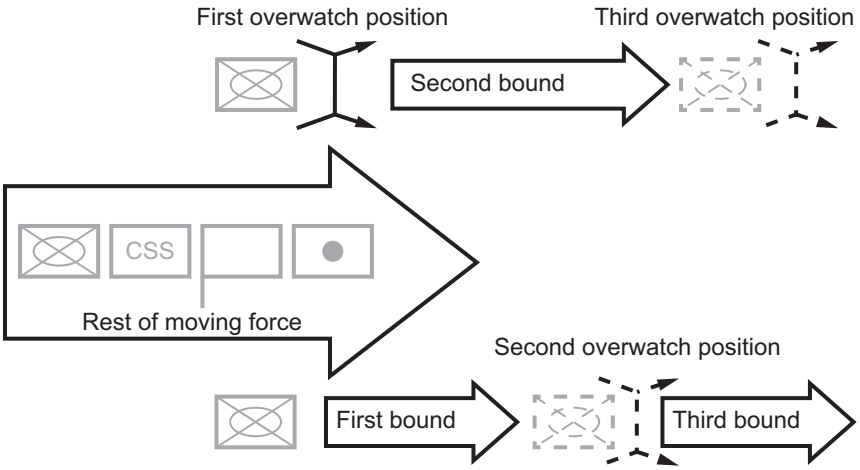


Figure 14-11. Bounding Overwatch Using Alternate Bounds.

When using successive bounds, the lead element, covered by the trail element, advances and occupies a support-by-fire position (see fig. 14-12). The trail element advances to a support-by-fire position abreast of the lead element and halts. The lead element moves to the next position and the move continues. Only one element moves at a time and the trail element avoids advancing beyond the lead element.

PLANNING A TROOP MOVEMENT

The objective of a successful move is for the unit to arrive at their destination ready to accomplish the mission. The goal of all movement planning is to ensure that the move occurs through a combination of discipline and flexibility in the context of METT-T. The commander ensures discipline in the conduct of the move through unit SOPs, rehearsals, and coordination measures. The commander allows for flexibility in the conduct of the move by changing movement methods, forms, and formations and through primary and alternate route selection.

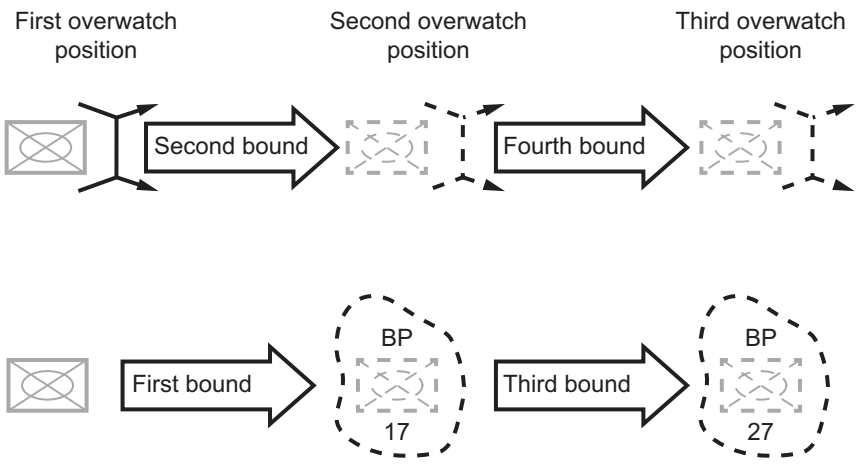


Figure 14-12. Bounding Overwatch Using Successive Bounds.

The movement order is the end result of the commander's planning process. Information normally found in the movement order includes the destination, routes, orders of march, rates of march, times that each serial (or march element for serial movement orders) will arrive and clear their start point, intervals, speeds, scheduled maintenance halts, communications, and location of the commander. Additionally, the order contains a strip map, logistic sites and services, and criteria for various battle drills and immediate actions such as activating an alternative route, utilizing a linkup plan, or reacting to contact. See MCRP 3-40F.7, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Tactical Convoy Operations (TCO)*, for information on tactical convoy operations.

For units that are not completely mobile with organic vehicles, such as a standard infantry battalion, the commander can either conduct a shuttle with organic vehicles or request assistance from transportation units. Shuttling requires transporting troops, equipment, and supplies by a series of round trips with the same vehicles. Units may also shuttle by carrying successive parts of a load for short distances while the remaining personnel continue on foot.

Whenever possible, the commander should use multiple routes to move the unit. This reduces the length of columns, the vulnerability to enemy air attack, and the amount of time the routes are unavailable to other units. Multiple routes provide the commander with the flexibility to react to unexpected situations and permit more rapid concentration of combat power. The two primary disadvantages of using multiple routes are difficulty in exercising command and control, and that the unit may not have enough resources to provide logistic and maintenance support on all routes.

The simplest troop movement scenario to plan and conduct is one where the commander directing the movement controls the entire AO. In this situation, the commander can use the unit's normal C2 system. The headquarters ordering the tactical road march schedules the movement times and approves the routes, while the movement control organization allocates the required space and time on the approved routes. Otherwise, a higher headquarters must plan and control the movement.

If the movement results in a unit going outside the parent headquarters' AO, both permission from the unit owning the other battlespace and coordination through various movement control centers is required. The designation, maintenance, route security, and control of movement along routes

within an AO are the responsibility of the owning unit unless the higher echelon's coordinating instructions otherwise direct.

The higher headquarters logistic staff normally coordinates the provision of CSS to moving units, although units carry sufficient fuel and lubricants in their unit trains to conduct local movements. In coordination with the engineers, the logistic staff ensures that routes are adequate for the types and numbers of vehicles and supplies projected. The commander knows the load-carrying capability of each route and the distances over which forces can be supported. Combat service support units determine if any logistic assets need to displace to support the mission. The commander also establishes halts for refueling as part of the movement plan. Halt times should be long enough and locations large enough to allow the entire march unit to refuel.

The staff depicts the echelon traffic circulation plan on overlays using transportation control measures. The traffic circulation plan considers—

- The most restrictive route features and route designations.
- Direction of movement over each route.
- Location of boundaries, units, highway regulation points, TCPs, and principal supply points.
- Major geographic features and light lines, if applicable.
- Routes designated for oneway traffic.
- Separate routes for logistic and tactical units.
- Current data on traffic regulation and control restrictions, obstructions, detours, defiles, capacities, surface conditions, and enemy activities that affect the highway net.

See MCTP 3-40B, *Tactical-Level Logistics*; MCRP 3-40F.7, and Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 4-16, *Movement Control*, for more information on movement planning and execution.

PREPARING A TROOP MOVEMENT

Reconnaissance precedes unit movement regardless of method or environment. Beginning with timing travel from the AA to the start point, the reconnaissance element examines the route's trafficability, including the impact of weather (e.g., ice, snow, and rain). Reconnaissance also includes alternative routes and choke points, such as defiles, bridges, and fords, which could slow the march. The information learned by the reconnaissance is factored into the movement order, especially the commander's consideration of necessary control measures at likely friction points. An advance party normally accompanies the reconnaissance element to perform tasks such as marking routes and BPs, placing guides, and establishing TCPs. Commanders may resource the advance party with enough combat power to establish a security area beyond the new positions.

As the reconnaissance is conducted, the moving unit prepares by ensuring that they are fully supplied prior to beginning the movement. Ideally, the unit is self-sufficient over the duration of the move. However, commanders ensure they do not sacrifice speed and mobility by overburdening vehicles or personnel with extra supplies. The commander may pre-position CSS

to support rapid and efficient refueling and resupply. The unit may change formations to facilitate these operations, such as using a column formation as they conduct a tail-gate resupply. Commanders also consider the impact of limited-visibility, not only on the movement itself, but on resupply evolutions where it is likely that large number of vehicles, equipment, and dismounted personnel will be intermingled.

EXECUTING A TROOP MOVEMENT

March discipline and following the standards and procedures contained in the unit's SOP and the movement order are fundamental to executing a movement. This includes staying on the route and maintaining start, passage, and clear times. Any deviation from the movement order may interfere with the movements of other units and may have serious consequences. However, march discipline can only be maintained when executing realistic movement plans that match conditions and unit ability.

The strength and composition of the moving unit's security elements vary, depending on METT-T. The commander employs organic assets and any supporting security assets to protect subordinate forces from enemy activities. The commander positions them to the front, rear, and flanks of subordinates' formations while moving and at halts to provide all-around security for the main body. The commander also enhances security by adopting a march formation and movement technique that facilitate applying combat power in the direction from which enemy contact is expected.

Higher-echelon logistic organizations may support some tactical movements. When the situation permits, logistic organizations establish maintenance, ambulance exchange, and supply points along the movement route of a supported tactical maneuver unit. While procedures, amounts, and types of external support vary among major commands, each logistic organization ensures that these sites are operational at the designated times and locations. External logistics along the route may include aeromedical evacuation, maintenance, water, and POL. Maintenance sites generally consist of unit maintenance collection points where disabled vehicles can be moved for limited maintenance and Class IX supplies. Vehicles unable to continue the movement remain at a unit maintenance collection point and join their parent organization when repaired. The troop movement is complete when the last march unit clears the release point.

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CHAPTER 15
RELIEF IN PLACE

A RIP is an operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. (*DOD Dictionary*) A commander conducts a RIP as part of a larger operation, primarily to maintain the combat effectiveness of committed units. The higher headquarters directs when and where to conduct the relief and establishes the appropriate control measures. Normally, the relieved unit is in a defensive posture during the relief, even if the purpose of the relief is to resume offensive operations. A relief may also serve to free the relieved unit for other tasks, such as decontamination, reconstitution, routine rest, resupply, maintenance, or specialized training.

OVERVIEW

There are three methods of conducting a relief: sequentially, simultaneously, or staggered. A sequential relief occurs when each element within the relieved unit is relieved in succession, from right to left or left to right, depending on how they are deployed. A simultaneous relief occurs when all elements are relieved at the same time. A staggered relief occurs when the commander relieves each element in a sequence determined by the tactical situation, not the geographical orientation. Simultaneous relief takes the least time to execute, but is more easily detected by the enemy. Sequential or staggered reliefs can take place over a significant amount of time. Like all operations, reliefs can be either hasty or deliberate depending on the amount of time available for planning and preparation. The mission task symbol for a RIP is depicted in figure 15-1.

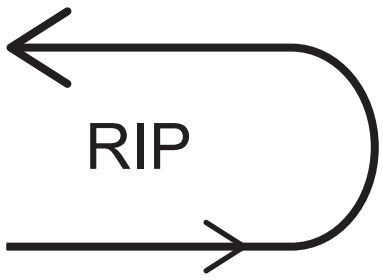


Figure 15-1. Relief in Place Symbol.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

While the mission ultimately dictates the purpose of a RIP, to maintain OPSEC both units involved in a RIP are ideally of a similar type, such as mounted or dismounted. The relieving unit usually assumes, as closely as possible, the same task organization as the unit being relieved. They are assigned responsibilities and deployed in a configuration similar to the relieved unit. The relieving unit establishes advance parties to conduct detailed coordination and preparations for the operation, down to the company level and possibly to the platoon level. These advance parties infiltrate forward to avoid detection. They normally include the echelon's forward CP, which collocates with the main CP of the unit being relieved. The commander may also attach additional liaison personnel to subordinate units to ensure a smooth changeover between subordinate units.

CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures associated with a RIP are generally restrictive to prevent friendly fire incidents. At a minimum, these control measures include an AO with its associated boundaries, BPs, contact points, start points, routes, release points, AAs, FSCMs, and direct fire control measures, such as TRPs and EAs (see fig. 15-2).

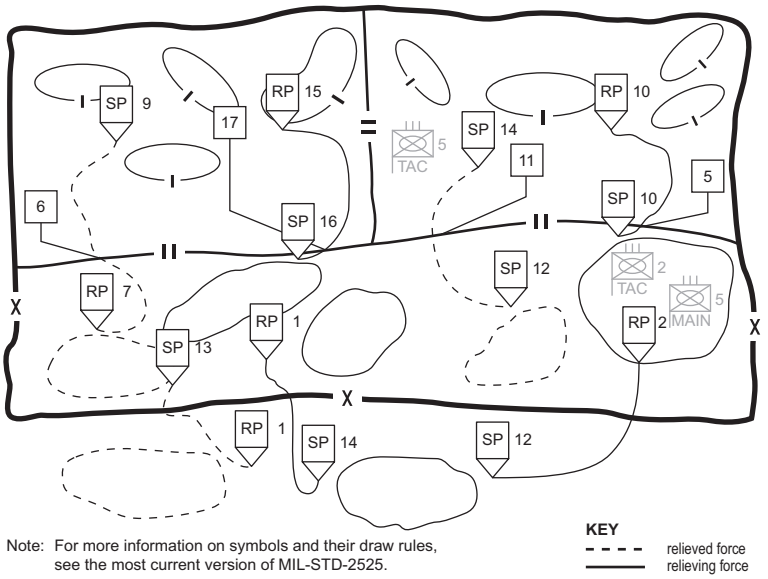


Figure 15-2. Overlay of a Regimental Landing Team Relief in Place

PLANNING A RELIEF IN PLACE

Once ordered to conduct a RIP, the commander of the relieving unit contacts the commander of the unit to be relieved. The fundamental planning considerations are the time available to conduct the relief, METT-T, and how to execute the relief while mitigating vulnerability. Upon receipt of the warning order, the commander of the relieving unit collocates a CP—main or forward—with the main CP of the unit being relieved (see fig. 15-2). If this proves impossible, at a minimum, the relieving unit sends forward an advance party to conduct communications and liaison. The warning order designates the time of relief, relieving and relieved units, and sequence of events.

In a deliberate relief, units exchange plans and liaison personnel, conduct briefings, perform detailed reconnaissance, and publish orders with detailed instructions. In a hasty relief, commanders abbreviate the planning process and control execution using oral and fragmentary orders. The relieving unit receives current intelligence, operations, and logistic information from the unit being relieved as well as from common higher headquarters, adjacent units, and subordinate elements. This information is pushed to the relieving unit as soon as a warning order is received to facilitate their planning. The relieving unit plans to leave a remain behind party for a period of time to assist the relieved unit after the relief is complete.

To mitigate tactical vulnerability, units concentrate on security throughout the operations process. The goal is to complete the relief without discovery by the enemy. Consequently, commanders typically plan reliefs for execution during periods of reduced visibility, such as night or fog. Concealment of the relief from the enemy is a greater concern when the friendly force is already vulnerable or might present an opportunity for the enemy to exploit—such as a stronger force being relieved by a weaker force as part of an economy-of-force measure. The enemy should perceive only one unit's command structure in operation—that of the unit being relieved—until the operation is complete. This requires a knowledge of friendly vulnerabilities and enemy collection attempts.

The two commanders must decide on a time or an event that initiates the smooth passage of command, the transition of command and control from one commander to another. This normally occurs when the incoming subordinate commanders have assumed responsibility for their respective AOs and the incoming commander possesses the necessary command and control to control operations. At any given moment all units in the AO, regardless of parent organization, fall under the operational control of a single, designated AO commander—whether that commander from the relieved or relieving unit. The intermingling of forces, inherent to the relief, places a significant demand on C2 information systems, which should inform the metric by which the relieving unit measures the ability to assume control.

The relieving unit generally adopts the tactical laydown, positions, and fire plan of the unit being relieved, even if both will be subsequently changed. This preserves OPSEC and limits vulnerability during the relief. The exception to this is fire support assets. The fire support assets of both units support the relief, so the artillery and mortars of the relieving unit occupy firing positions near those of the unit to be relieved and carefully integrate themselves into the fire support plan. This maintains fire support if the enemy detects the relief and tries to exploit the

situation. Units plan their fires to deceive the enemy and expedite the relief. Units maintain normal activity patterns. For example, a unit continues to expend the same average number of artillery rounds per day during the relief that they expended prior to the initiation of the relief. Commanders do not relieve fire support, combat support, or CSS units at the same time as the maneuver units they support.

Units conducting a RIP coordinate with the area air defense commander to obtain air and missile defense protection of identified choke points, BPs, routes, and AAs. This is very important since the presence of both relieving and relieved units in the same battlespace can lead to congestion and vulnerability. The commander coordinates with the air and missile defense unit providing area coverage of the relieving force to obtain IPB information, ROE, current air activity, present air and missile defense fire unit positions, airspace C2 information, and the area air and missile defense operation plan.

The relieving unit verifies the obstacle records of the unit being relieved. Handover of obstacles is a complex procedure. Initially, the engineer priority is on mobility to get the relieving unit into the AO. It focuses on those routes and lanes leading into the AO. Once the relief occurs, priority of the mobility and survivability effort transitions to support the relieving unit's continuing mission. The commander may require supporting engineers to assist with survivability tasks to support the relieving force.

The relieving unit is responsible for all logistic operations until the relief is complete. As the support elements of the unit being relieved displace, they leave their supply stocks to the relieving unit according to previously coordinated arrangements. If the units conducting the relief have different tables of organization and equipment or special support requirements, logistic planners must take this into account in planning the transition. Logistic planners ensure that both commanders know of any logistical limitations that might affect the relieving unit. The headquarters of the relieved unit coordinates traffic movement into and out of the AO.

When relieving coalition or multinational forces, commanders consider the following additional points:

- Dissimilar unit organizations may require special adjustments in assigned areas.
- Control of fire support may require special liaison.
- Language difficulties may require an increased use of guides and translators.
- Using relieved unit communications requires special signal arrangements and additional operators.
- Ammunition and equipment incompatibility may make exchanging assets more difficult.
- Impact of civilians on the operations.

Units conducting crisis response, stability operations, or defense support to civil authorities may conduct transfers of authority in conjunction with a physical RIP. The general planning, preparation, and execution considerations of a RIP apply to the transfer of authority as well. Time and OPSEC are not normally as important as they are in other operations, however timeliness and transparency are. Limiting vulnerability and maintaining OPSEC are always factors in any

environment containing an adversary and/or enemy. In the case of supporting civil authorities, the focus is on ensuring that the delivery of support and services is not adversely affected by the relief and transfer. Excessive delay and co-mingling of forces should be avoided in both cases.

PREPARING A RELIEF IN PLACE

When a relief is necessary, it is hidden from the enemy as long as possible. While the units involved plan, prepare, and execute the RIP, their common higher headquarters and other units undertake actions to mask the relief. These include using IO activities, demonstrations, feints, smoke, and harassing and interdiction fires. The common higher headquarters executes operations to attack and disrupt the enemy's uncommitted and reserve forces during the relief. Its intent is to fix or distract the enemy, so that the enemy does not detect or interfere with the relief.

Upon the receipt of a warning order, the relieved unit and the relieving unit review their OPSEC plans and procedures. Commanders impose light and noise discipline. To maintain security during the RIP, the relieving unit makes maximum use of the relieved unit's radio nets and operators. Both units involved in the relief operate on the command frequencies and encryption variables of the combat net radios of the relieved unit at all levels. Commanders may impose radio silence or radio-listening silence. The relieved unit's communications officer is in charge of communications throughout the relief operation.

Commanders and leaders from the relieving unit conduct reconnaissance of the area for which they will assume responsibility. This leaders' reconnaissance includes the lowest-echelon leader allowed by the tactical situation. The reconnaissance focuses on the route into the position the unit is to occupy, the positions themselves, the current disposition of the unit being relieved, and any obstacles that could affect troop movement. Both the relieving and relieved units conduct mutual rehearsals to discover any weaknesses in the plan and familiarize all elements of both forces with the plan.

If the relieving and relieved units are dissimilar (e.g., a mechanized battalion task force relieving an infantry task force), then the commanders should allocate time for the construction of additional routes and vehicle positions if necessary. This particular preparation is postponed to the last moment to maintain OPSEC.

EXECUTING A RELIEF IN PLACE

On order, the relieving unit begins moving from their current location to AAs in the AO of the unit being relieved. In staggered or sequential methods of a RIP, individual elements of the relieving unit are pulled forward from their AA to their new positions according to the SOM. In the simultaneous method of a RIP, all elements of the relieving unit move forward from their AAs and transition simultaneously (though there may be some variation for traffic control, movement, etc.).

Regardless of the method, the transition of individual elements happens as quickly as possible to avoid becoming vulnerable to enemy action.

As a subordinate unit of the relieving force moves forward from their AA to assume a position, using their lead element to establish a screen forward of the relieved unit's position (tactical situation permitting). The remainder of the relieving unit occupies positions behind the unit being relieved—ideally utilizing the alternate and supplementary defensive positions of the relieved unit to limit vulnerability. The relieved unit continues to defend during this process.

When ready, individual elements of the relieving unit move forward and occupy their assigned positions. Crew-served weapons of the relieved unit cover this movement and are relieved last after exchanging range cards. At the appropriate moment, the relieving and relieved element leaders announce the passage of command. The relieved unit withdraws directly rearward to rally points and then further rearwards to AAs, keeping delays to their movement at an absolute minimum. If appropriate, the relieving unit collapses their extra forward security and continues OPSEC measures. This general method is replicated from the lowest element to the relieving unit itself.

Relieving unit fire support assets occupy their positions near those of the relieved unit. The artillery and mortars of both units remain in place, mission capable, until all other elements of the relieved unit have displaced rearward. Similarly, CSS elements belonging to the relieved unit remain in place, providing support to the relieving unit until all elements of the relieved unit displace.

CHAPTER 16
PASSAGE OF LINES

Passage of lines is an operation in which a force moves forward or rearward through another force's combat positions with the intention of moving into or out of contact with the enemy. A commander conducts a passage of lines to continue an attack or conduct a counterattack, retrograde security or main battle forces, and anytime one unit cannot bypass another unit's position. The conduct of a passage of lines potentially involves close combat. It involves transferring the responsibility for an AO (i.e., battle handover) between two commanders. That transfer of authority usually occurs when roughly two-thirds of the passing force has moved through the passage point. If not directed by higher authority, the unit commanders determine—by mutual agreement—the time to pass command. They disseminate this information to the lowest levels of both organizations.

OVERVIEW

Commanders conduct a passage of lines to sustain the tempo of an offensive operation by passing fresh units forward, to free a unit for another mission or task, to pass counterattack forces forward, and to maintain an effective defense by passing the battle from one element to another. The headquarters directing the passage of lines is responsible for determining when the passage starts and finishes.

A passage of lines occurs under the two basic conditions indicated in the definition. A forward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through another unit's positions while moving toward the enemy. A rearward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through another unit's positions while moving away from the enemy. Ideally, a passage of lines does not interfere with the stationary unit's operations. Figure 16-1 shows the tactical mission graphic for both a forward and a rearward passage of lines. The arrow goes in the direction the passing unit is moving.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

A unit may participate in a passage of lines as either the passing or stationary force. Except for collocating CPs and providing for guides for the passing force, the conduct of a passage of lines does not require a special task organization. Both the passing force and the stationary force maintain their previous combat organization during the passage. If the passage of lines is conducted in the presence of the enemy, the stationary force is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the passing force to move forward successfully. In a rearward passage of

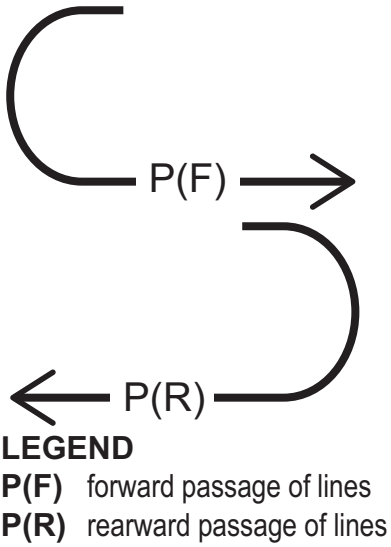


Figure 16-1. Forward and Rearward Passage of Lines Tactical Mission Graphics.

lines, after accepting the battle from the passing force, the stationary force is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the successful completion of the passing force's retrograde. See chapter 8 for more information on rearward passage of lines in the defense.

CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures associated with a passage of lines are generally restrictive to prevent friendly fire incidents. As a minimum, they include the AO; AAs for the passing force; a handover line; and necessary contact points, passage points, passage lanes, routes, PLs, and recognition signals. The headquarters directing the passage normally designates or recommends control measures and establishes start and end times for the passage. The force uses top-down planning and bottom-up refinement to coordinate exact placement of control measures since the stationary unit best knows the ground and the passing force best understands what they must do as they complete the passage. The parent unit commander may also use start points, release points, FSCMs (e.g., CFLs), and other control measures as necessary (see fig. 16-2). If such guidance is not received, then it is the responsibility of the stationary unit to establish necessary control measures for the passage.

A passage point is a specifically designated place where the passing units pass through the stationary unit. The location of this point is where the commander wants subordinate units to physically execute a passage of lines. In a forward passage of lines, the passage point marks the location where the passing unit is no longer bound by the restrictions placed on them by the stationary force. On the other hand, in a rearward passage of lines, the passage point marks the location where the stationary unit can restrict the movement of the passing force. Between the contact point and the passage point, the stationary unit controls the passing force's movement. Figure 16-3 depicts the graphic control measure for passage point 7.

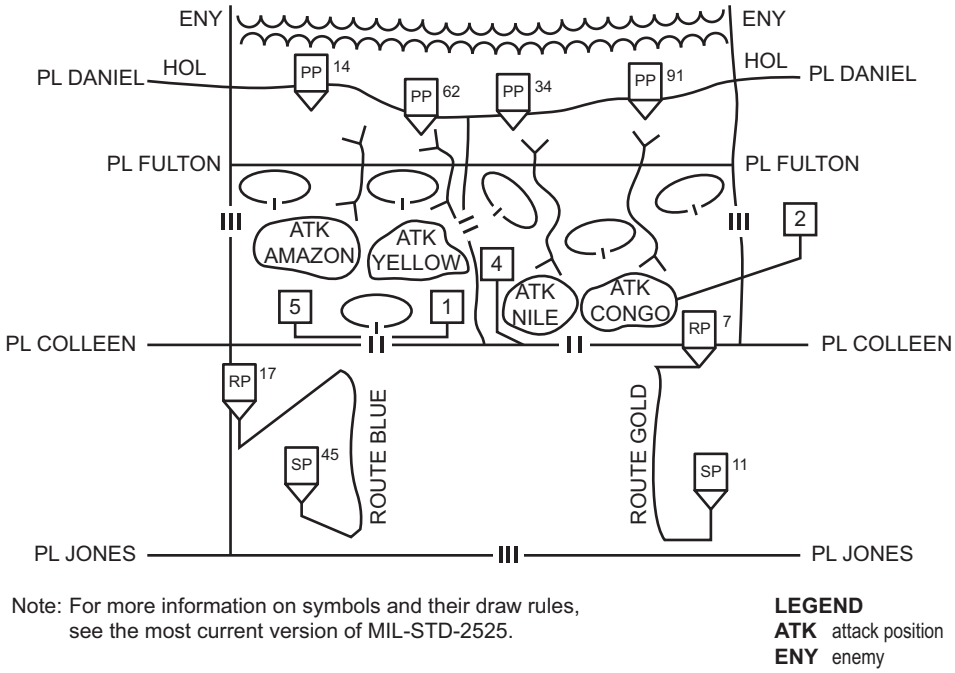


Figure 16-2. Control Measures Associated With a Forward Passage of Lines.

A lane is a route through, over, or around an enemy or friendly obstacle that provides safe passage of a force. The route may be reduced and proofed as part of a breaching operation, constructed as part of the obstacle, or marked as a bypass. It is a clear route all the way through an obstacle. In a passage of lines, the lane should allow the passing unit to move rapidly through the stationary unit's area. Figure 16-4 depicts the graphic control measure for a lane.

PLANNING A PASSAGE OF LINES

In ordering a passage of lines, higher headquarters is responsible for designating the subsequent missions for both forces, when and under what conditions the battle handover takes place, the time available, and the control measures mentioned above. Depending on the time available, a passage of lines may be conducted in a hasty manner using oral and fragmentary orders or in a deliberate manner using detailed planning, but neither should negatively impact the overall tempo of operations. The preferred manner is to conduct deliberate planning. This allows the stationary and

Figure 16-3. Passage Point Symbol.

Figure 16-4. Lane Symbol.

passing forces to publish written orders, exchange planning and intelligence information, conduct briefings and reconnaissance, and conduct rehearsals.

There are four critical, linked factors, in planning a passage of lines. The first is to create the conditions necessary for both forces to successfully complete their missions after the passage. Tied directly to this is the second factor, maintaining contact with the enemy and preventing their interference with the passage—a corollary to this is the what to do if the enemy attacks in the midst of the passage. Third is determining the moment, event, and conditions under which the battle handover between forces occurs. The last is creating the close coordination, control measures, and positive control necessary to mitigate the intermingling of forces during the passage.

If dissimilar units, such as infantry and mounted forces, are directed to conduct a passage of lines, the planning, preparation, and execution principles remain the same. However, in execution, the amount and type of support the stationary unit can offer may be different. In some cases, such as an infantry task force supporting the passage of a mechanized battalion task force, higher headquarters may need to provide additional resources to the stationary unit. In this example, the infantry battalion would need additional logistic support to widen and improve passage lanes and provide evacuation to vehicle casualties during the passage.

After receiving the passage of lines warning order, the passing unit's commander and key staff collocate with the CP of the stationary unit to facilitate planning and a common situational understanding. If the passing unit cannot collocate with the stationary unit, they conduct extensive liaison instead. Beginning with the end state, the two units coordinate the following:

- Intelligence and combat information.
- Current maneuver, fires, information operations, and logistic plans, dispositions, and statuses—and their impacts on battlespace geometry.
- The addition of maneuver control measures and FSCMs, and the refinement of those directed by higher headquarters.
- Communications, call signs, frequencies, and long-range and short-range recognition symbols and vehicle markings.
- When and under what conditions the battle handover occurs.
- Movement control details such as primary and alternate routes, priorities for using routes and facilities, and the provision of guides.
- Reconnaissance by elements of the passing unit.
- Security and risk mitigation of CRBN attack.
- OPSEC measures required before or during the passage to include the use of periods of limited visibility and the employment of smoke.
- Allocation of terrain for use by the passing force.
- Air defense cover—up to and forward of the handover line.
- CSS for the passing unit is provided by the stationary unit, especially fuel, maintenance, and medical treatment.

The stationary unit is normally responsible for coordinating and providing indirect fires during the passage of lines. Fire support elements must be far enough forward to avoid the need to redeploy during critical stages of the operation. The employment of additional indirect fire assets and their positioning must be planned and coordinated between the fire support coordinators of both the passing and stationary units. The movement, emplacement, and employment of additional assets are part of the battle handover criteria—for example, artillery units may emplace to support the forward passage of lines and then displace forward to continue their support of the passing unit.

Detailed air defense planning is essential for a passage of lines since the passing unit is particularly vulnerable due to congestion and the slowness of movement through passage lanes. The ACE supplies this primarily by generating local air superiority. Passive measures that the passing and stationary units take involve movement control measures, camouflage, and using limited visibility to mitigate risk. Related to this issue is the employment of friendly air in support of the passage of lines and risks of friendly fire incidents associated with fires coordination, intermingled forces, and a moving lead trace (either forward or rearward). The coordination and control of air support is part of the battle handover criteria.

Planners place a premium on speed of execution—once a passage of lines begins, it occurs quickly. The plan ensures that necessary elements—guides, vehicle recovery assets, lane marking—are in place before committing the passing unit to movement. Once begun, it becomes very difficult and dangerous to try to control movement after elements of the passing unit commit to their start points and designated lanes. The plan controls the passing unit by using event driven criteria to drive when elements leave, or do not leave, their AAs. Whenever possible, the passing unit uses gaps between the stationary unit's positions vice lanes within those positions—a unit passes between two hilltop BPs vice through lanes in those BPs. This method reduces the risk of friendly fire, reduces congestion, and since gaps are normally larger than lanes, may provide the passing unit more options in formations and deployment.

If forced to use lanes, a battalion task force requires at least two passage lanes to conduct a forward passage of lines, and one lane for a rearward passage of lines. An RLT requires a minimum of three passage lanes forward, and two rearward—assuming the battalions are conducting the passage one at a time. To provide increased speed of movement, flexibility, and redundancy, the passing and stationary forces should seek additional and alternative routes and lanes in case the primaries become blocked, contaminated, or otherwise untenable. If possible, routes and lanes provide cover, concealment, and rapid movement of the passing force. The passing unit normally has priority of route use to and within the stationary unit's AO. Clearing and maintaining passage routes up to the handover line are the responsibility of the stationary force. The passing unit prepares to help maintain these routes and positions any attached engineer resources accordingly. The stationary unit controls traffic within the AO, until the passing unit assumes control. During the passage, the passing unit augments the traffic control capability of the stationary unit as required.

FORWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

The purpose of a forward passage of lines is to sustain the tempo of offensive operations or to enable a counterattack. It maintains pressure on the enemy by passing fresh forces forward while allowing the relief of previously committed forces. The stationary force controls and secures the AO far enough to the front that the moving force can pass through and form into an appropriate combat formation prior to contact with an enemy force. Generally, the stationary unit supports the passing unit, until the passing unit masks the stationary unit's direct fires. The stationary unit continues to support the passing force with fire support systems, until the passing unit moves beyond the supporting range of the stationary force. The stationary unit is also responsible for the security of the LD of the forward passing unit, until they are able to assume that responsibility. After completing their passage, the boundaries of the forward passing force do not have to coincide with the boundaries of the stationary force (see fig. 16-5).

Preparing a Forward Passage

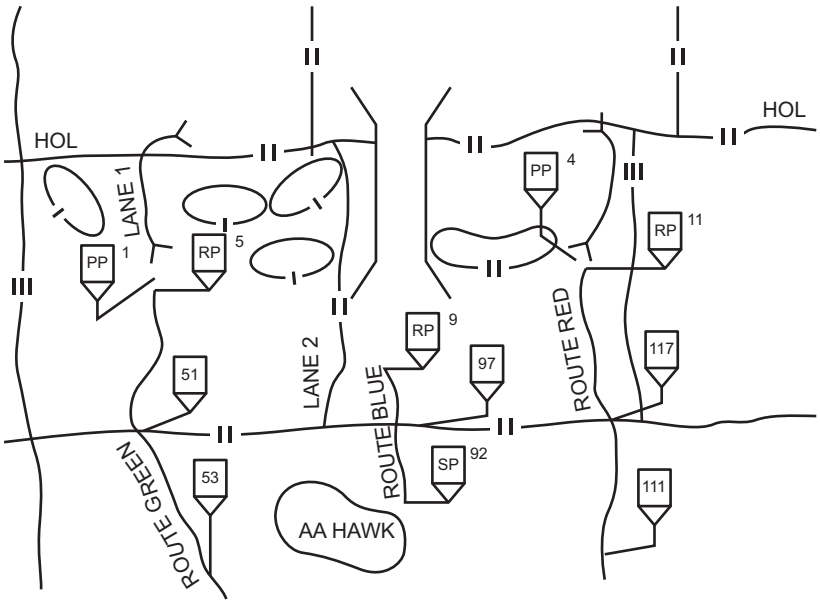
The passing unit conducts reconnaissance from their current location to the designated AAs and then moves to immediately occupy them. As that occurs, key leadership continues reconnaissance of the routes from the AAs to and through the stationary unit, and the terrain beyond the stationary unit. The passing unit task organizes for their primary mission, planning to pass their elements through the stationary unit in the appropriate order of movement to facilitate deployment and subsequent operations.

The passing unit collocates their CP with the stationary unit. Any additional fire support and IO assets designated for the passage deploy and prepare for operations. Routes, lanes, and gaps are marked as far as OPSEC allows, waiting until the last moment for final preparations, such as obstacle removal. Guides, vehicle recovery assets, and other movement mitigation measures are placed according to the plan.

Executing a Forward Passage

On order, the stationary unit and other supporting elements begin operations (e.g., suppression of enemy positions, readiness of air defenses, interdiction of enemy reserves, establishment of maintenance contact points). When the movement criteria are met, elements of the passing unit begin departing their AAs along designated routes to their start points and passage points. Once an element of the passing force departs the AA, they do not stop. If possible, they deploy into a combat formation as they pass through the stationary unit, but certainly does so as they reach the passage point and move to the designated area (e.g., attack position) for subsequent operations.

The passing unit's security element leads the passage. They press beyond the stationary unit's security and establishes a screen, guard, or cover to protect the deployment of the main body. Elements of the main body depart their AAs, pass through the stationary unit, and move to areas designated according to their mission—for example, attack positions if conducting an attack. The stationary unit continues to deliver direct and indirect fires, air support, and conduct IO activities in support of the passing unit (e.g., tactical deception and electronic warfare attack against enemy command and control). The passing unit may rely wholly on support from the stationary unit or, as previously mentioned, may augment that support with their own. If the latter, at a designated time



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 16-5. Forward Passage of Lines.

in the movement, combat support and CSS elements supporting the passing unit displace forward. Depending on the nature of the passing unit's mission (e.g., an attack versus a pursuit) and requirement for support, this displacement is phased.

The battle handover normally occurs upon approval of the higher headquarters, when the passing unit has established forward security, has the preponderance of their combat power forward, and the forward CP is prepared to assume control of the battle. While the passing unit commander assumes responsibility for operations forward of the handover line (e.g., security operations) as soon as the passage begins, in practice it is useful to complete the transfer of responsibility, including fire support, just before starting the subsequent operation. This allows the passing unit a moment to pause before committing to the follow-on mission.

Additional movement of combat power and support forward through the stationary unit may continue after the battle handover, but when the planned criteria are met, the passing unit establishes a new AO and owns the fight. Support by the stationary force continues as long as elements of the passing force, including the reserves, remain within direct-fire range. This includes support such as casualty and EPW evacuation, control dislocated civilians, and controlling routes and traffic management. But once forward of the handover line, these functions become the responsibility of the passing unit.

REARWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

A rearward passage of lines is used to pass the defense from one element to another and may or may not be conducted under enemy pressure. Commanders must place significant thought and

effort in determining the best way to allow the passing unit to either break contact with the enemy and pass through the stationary unit or pass that contact to the stationary unit and then conduct the passage.

Planning a Rearward Passage

The general planning principles discussed earlier in this chapter apply to the rearward passage of lines. However, rearward movement is likely to be more difficult and require additional planning considerations because—

- The enemy probably has the initiative, which reduces the time available to conduct passage reconnaissance, liaison, and planning.
- If the passing unit is in action, its elements are under enemy pressure, likely tired, and possibly disorganized.
- The stationary unit may face friendly recognition issues because enemy forces may be intermingled with the passing unit.

Communication between the commanders of the passing and stationary units is critical to the successful execution of a rearward passage and transfer of responsibility. Planning must take into account the worst case scenario and work from there. The worst case scenario is that the passing unit is in direct contact with the enemy and is passing in staggered or incremental elements through the stationary unit. In this case, at the battle handover the passing unit relinquishes control of their elements still in contact with the enemy to the stationary unit. This is normally after two-thirds of the passing force's combat elements move through the passage points. If the units plan for this, then if the passing unit successfully breaks contact with the enemy or is not under pressure, both units can easily modify command and control and other arrangements.

To facilitate the battle handover, whether the passing unit is or is not under enemy pressure, planners create a security area in which responsibility transitions from the moving force to the stationary force. Planning also takes into account the various means of maintaining contact with the enemy, such as visual contact over physical contact. Normally, the stationary unit plans a handover line to the front of the FEBA and within the direct-fire range and observed indirect-fire range of the stationary force.

Preparing a Rearward Passage

After receiving the warning order, the passing unit begins planning and coordination and establishes communication with the stationary unit. In accordance with guidance from higher headquarters, the commanders establish a probable time to initiate passage. The passing unit conducts route reconnaissance to the passage points, through the stationary unit, and to designated AAs to the rear. The stationary commander assigns responsibility for closing and executing obstacles, establishes guides and traffic control, and assumes general stationary unit responsibilities.

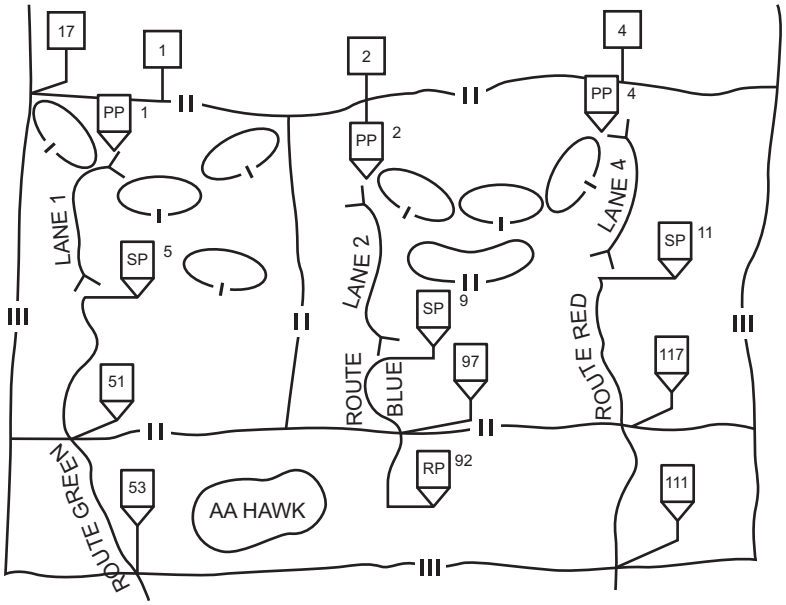
As soon as practical, the passing unit collocates the CP with the stationary unit. If circumstances prevent this, the units exchange liaison teams. Since the stationary unit is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the passing unit to move successfully, it is possible that some combat support and CSS elements will move forward of the stationary unit's primary positions to support

the passing unit (see chap. 11 for retrograde considerations of this nature)—examples include artillery, refueling, and maintenance. The stationary unit commander exercises prudent risk in balancing the increased number of friendly troops forward against the accomplishment of the mission and the survival of the passing unit.

Executing a Rearward Passage

On order, the stationary unit begins their support of the operation. This includes necessary repositioning of indirect fire assets, deployment of logistic elements and guides, and stationing combat engineers to improve passage lanes and close them after the last elements retrograde. The passing unit retains the task organization necessary for their retrograde and prepares to pass through the stationary unit leading with logistic elements, then the main CP (if not already collocated with the stationary unit), combat support, forward CP, and then maneuver units. As elements of the passing unit reach the passage point, they fall under the movement restrictions placed by the stationary unit (see fig. 16-6).

As the passage begins, the stationary unit continues to provide the passing unit with as much assistance as possible. The logistic resources of the stationary unit conduct personnel and equipment casualty evacuation as necessary. As required, the stationary unit commits refueling and maintenance support to the passing unit to ensure that vehicles do not stall or otherwise block passage lanes and routes between the passage point and the passing unit's designated AAs. The stationary unit's fire support assets answer calls for fire from the passing unit until battle handover occurs. The passing unit's fire support assets echelon rearward to provide continuous fire support for the passing unit until they successfully disengage. Once the passing unit hands over control of the battle to the stationary unit, the stationary unit initiates and clears calls for all fires forward of their location. The same procedure applies to the dedicated air defense assets of the passing and stationary units.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 16-6. Rearward Passage of Lines.

If the enemy force continues to press their attack during the passage, the passing unit controls the battle from collocated CPs until the battle handover occurs. At the battle handover, the stationary unit employs their own security force, and any elements of the passing unit still in contact with the enemy, to complete the transition. On order, all remaining units, not assigned to the stationary unit's security force, complete their passage and combat engineers close necessary passage lanes. The passing unit continues their rearward movement to the designated AAs where they conduct necessary reorganization and resupply before executing assigned subsequent tasks.

CHAPTER 17
VERTICAL ENVELOPMENT

Commanders conduct vertical envelopments—airborne or air assault operations—to gain a positional advantage or to envelop or turn the enemy. An enemy may or may not be in a position to oppose the operation. While the commander should attempt to achieve an unopposed landing when conducting vertical envelopments, the assault force must prepare for the presence of opposition. At the operational level of warfare, airborne and air assault operations, along with amphibious operations, constitute joint forcible entry operations.

OVERVIEW

The Marine Corps does not conduct airborne operations, though it possesses some small units that may conduct insertion by parachute. However, when operating in the joint environment, the requirement to defend against vertical envelopment and in the conduct of air assault, it is important that Marines understand that vertical envelopments allow commanders to—

- Threaten enemy rear areas, causing the enemy to divert combat elements to protect vital installations and hold key terrain.
- Overcome distances quickly, overfly barriers, and bypass enemy defenses.
- Extend the area over which the commander can exert influence.
- Disperse reserve forces widely for survivability reasons while maintaining their capability for effective and rapid response.
- Exploit combat power by increasing tactical mobility.

Factors common to vertical envelopments are the use of the reverse planning process, condition setting, and the impact of meteorological conditions (weather and light data). For more information on air assault, see MCTP 3-01B.

Reverse Planning Process

A reverse sequence of detailed planning and joint coordination characterizes vertical envelopment. At a minimum, vertical envelopment plans include the following:

•Ground tactical plan.
•Landing plan.
•Movement plan.
•Loading plan (air assault only).
•Marshalling plan (staging plan in air assault)

Intelligence regarding the enemy and terrain characteristics of the objective area is vital to this planning process. The ground tactical plan is the basis for planning—it is the decisive action that accomplishes the mission of the vertical envelopment, such as supporting a turning movement or isolating the battlespace. However, each plan affects the others and changes in one plan can require adjustments in the other plans. The commander determines if such adjustments entail acceptable risk. If the risk is unacceptable, the concept of operations changes. For example, the amount of lift available determines the feasibility of the ground tactical plan. If there are not enough lift systems to put all the required forces in place at the required time, the commander adjusts the ground tactical plan as well as the other plans. Therefore, vertical envelopment planning requires close coordination between all elements of the MAGTF, but especially the ACE and GCE.

Condition Setting

Setting the conditions for success is critical to vertical envelopments and form the basis for GO/NO-GO criteria. The right conditions apply across the operation—from the number of aircraft available to the presence and mobility of enemy forces in the objective area. As with all operations, the commander determines the acceptable degree of risk in accordance with the importance of the mission. To provide the commander the information needed, vertical envelopments require early and continuous intelligence collection. Since the assault force will, at least for portions of the operation, rely entirely on external combat support and CSS assets, the gathering of information applies across the warfighting functions in terms of friendly and enemy capabilities. It is not enough to know the location of enemy air defenses and target them, the commander must have an understanding of the assault force's supply requirements and the ability to deliver those requirements, the likelihood of ground relief, and the ability to extract the force if necessary.

Meteorological Conditions

Meteorological conditions impact vertical envelopments more than they affect any other type of operation. Long-range forecasts are vital to planning in terms of their impact on tactical operations and aircraft performance. To issue the execution order that initiates the operation, the commander must know the current weather information at departure sites and pickup zones, along approach routes, and in the objective area. Operations conducted during marginal weather conditions may enhance the element of surprise, but they also increase the risk of accidents and potential failure. The commander may have to postpone or cancel a planned operation or reduce the tempo of an ongoing operation when the risk becomes unacceptable because of deteriorating weather conditions.

AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS

An air assault is the movement of friendly assault forces by assault support aircraft to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. An air assault operation is an operation in which assault forces, using the mobility of rotary-wing or tiltrotor aircraft and the total integration of available firepower, maneuver under the control of a ground or air maneuver commander to engage enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. (*DOD Dictionary*) Joint doctrine regards air assault operations as a subset of airborne operations. An air assault is a deliberate, precisely

planned, and vigorously executed combat operation designed to allow friendly forces to strike over extended distances and terrain barriers to attack the enemy when and where the enemy is most vulnerable. The commander plans these operations using the previously described reverse planning process.

> ***Note:*** This is only an abbreviated discussion offered for inclusion within the context of offensive and defensive tactics. Readers should refer directly to MCTP 3-01B for primary information on air assault.

Commanders employ air assault operations in situations that provide the force a calculated advantage due to surprise, terrain, threat, or mobility. Air assault operations allow the commander to maneuver rapidly regardless of obstacles and without ground LOCs and can support offensive, defensive, or stability actions. These operations embody the combined arms concept through coordination and planning between the ACE and GCE. Infantry and air units are fully integrated with other members of the combined arms team to form a powerful and flexible Marine air assault task force (MAATF). These forces project combat power throughout the entire depth, width, and breadth of the unit's AO with little regard for terrain barriers. The MAGTF commander achieves the unique versatility and strength of an MAATF by combining the capabilities of assault support aircraft—speed, agility, and firepower—with those of the GCE to form tactically tailored organizations that can be employed in a wide variety of environments and missions.

An air assault operation generally takes place in the following sequence:

- Planning.
- Briefing.
- Loading.
- Air assault.
- Landing.
- Tactical ground operations.
- Sustainment.
- Ground linkup/air reposition.

Organization of Forces for an Air Assault

All elements of the MAGTF contribute to the creation of the MAATF. Infantry units from company through regiment normally form the nucleus of the MAATF. The ACE provides assault support aircraft for lift and sustainment, attack aircraft for escort and CAS—and with UAS—ISR. The LCE provides necessary CSS to sustain the MAATF across the entirety of the operation. The air assault normally falls under the command of the MAGTF commander who assigns a specific mission commander—often the supported GCE commander.

Air Assault Control Measures

The control measures that apply to an airborne operation also apply to an air assault operation. As a minimum, the commander assigns each subordinate unit an AO. The MAATF selects LZs that support the ground tactical plan and offer the best survivability for the MAATF. As in airborne operations, designating LZs within the unit's AO simplifies the provision of additional support to

the unit. The MAATF commander also uses assault objectives and the airhead line to focus subordinate efforts. As necessary, the commander uses those attack control measures introduced in chapter 5 to help control the force's maneuver once they enter the AO.

In air assault operations, the commander makes extensive use of ACMs to control the movement of the assault, attack, special electronic mission, and cargo aircraft. For example, figure 17-1 shows flight routes as depicted on an overlay. JP-52, *Joint Airspace Control*, describes the use of airborne C2 measures.

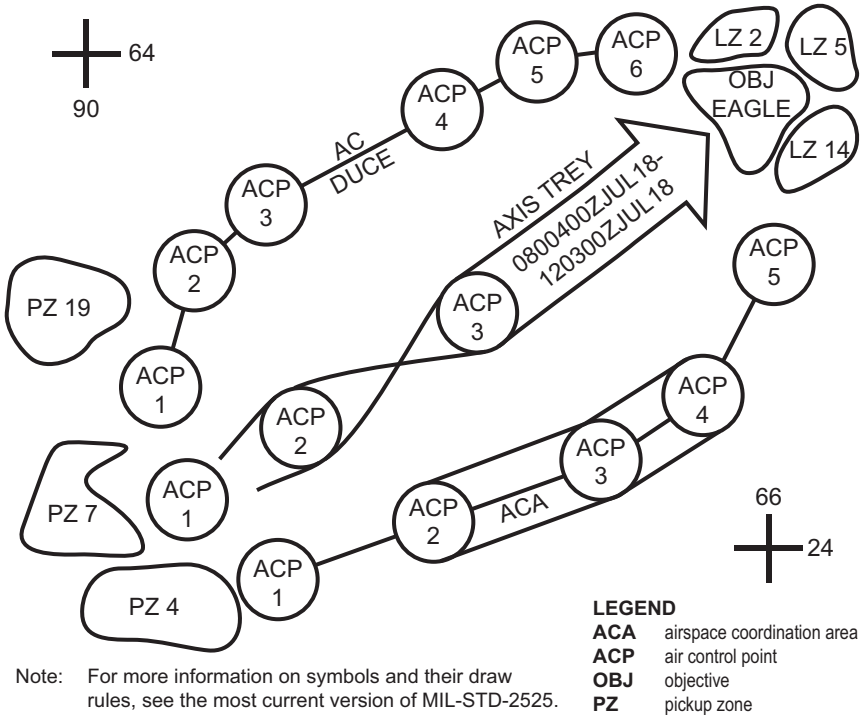


Figure 17-1. Flight Routes Overlay.

Air Assault Planning Considerations

Commanders assign missions to a MAATF that take advantage of its superior mobility. However, the commander should not employ a MAATF without a detailed resupply plan in operations that require sustained ground combat. There are several basic air assault planning operational guidelines. Commanders—

- Assign a mission that takes advantage of the MAATF's mobility.
- Task organize the MAATF as a combined arms team.
- Ensure the air assault plan supports the MAATF commander's intent.
- Allow extra time for planning and preparing for limitedvisibility and adverse weather air assaults.
- Maintain small-unit integrity throughout the air assault to ensure the ability to fight as a cohesive unit immediately upon landing.
- Plan and posture fire support to provide suppressive fires along flight routes, on LZs, and on enemy air defense systems.

The foundation of a successful air assault operation is the commander's ground tactical plan. The ground tactical plan supports the purpose of the vertical envelopment, whether offensive, defensive, or for some other purpose. The MAATF staff prepares this plan based on input from all task force elements. Commanders ensure that all aircrews are familiar with the ground tactical plan and the ground commander's intent. The plan places task-organized assault units on or near objectives and BPs so they are capable of seizing objectives immediately and consolidating quickly. If the commander cannot introduce adequate combat power into the objective area quickly, the air assault force must land away from the objective and build up combat power. This force then either assaults or occupies their positions like any other ground combat unit; however, this diminishes the effectiveness of the air assault operation.

Preparing for Air Assault Operations

During the preparation phase, the MAATF and its supporting units conduct ISR to confirm or deny the results of the unit's IPB. Commanders adjust plan components, such as air movement routes and tables and the fire support concept, to reflect the current situation. Subordinate elements complete any directed task organization changes, resupply actions, and pre-combat inspections.

Executing Air Assault Operations

At the prescribed time, the unit moves from the AA to the pickup zone. The maneuver element loads the assault support aircraft according to the prescribed time in the air movement plan or as directed by the pickup zone control officer. Once loaded, the assault support aircraft take off in accordance with the air movement plan. This movement is support by attack aircraft providing escort to the force. Other elements of the MAATF and MAGTF begin preparatory IO activities and fires as required.

After passing the release point, serials proceed to assigned LZs. The MAATF lands as planned unless last-minute changes in the tactical situation force the commander to abort or alter the landing. Aircraft crews keep personnel in their aircraft informed of the situation, especially of any changes to the original plan. The ground maneuver commander attempts to land the unit simultaneously to place the maximum amount of combat power on the ground in a given area in the shortest possible time. Units and aircraft are vulnerable in the LZ, and debarkation is conducted quickly. After the unit completes their consolidation of the LZ, the assault force executes the ground tactical plan.

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CHAPTER 18
ENCIRCLEMENT OPERATIONS

Encirclements are the loss of freedom of maneuver resulting from enemy control of all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. (MCRP 1-10.2) A unit can conduct offensive encirclement operations designed to isolate an enemy force or conduct defensive encirclement operations as a result of the unit's isolation by the actions of an enemy force. Encirclements occur because modern combat operations at all levels are often chaotic, extend across large areas relative to troop density, and involve continual maneuvering to obtain positional advantage.

OFFENSIVE ENCIRCLEMENTS

The commander conducts offensive encirclements to isolate an enemy force. Typically, encirclements result from penetrations and envelopments, or are extensions of exploitation and pursuit operations. As such, they are not a separate form of offensive operations but an extension of an ongoing operation. They may be planned sequels or result from exploiting an unforeseen opportunity. They usually result from the linkup of two encircling arms conducting a double envelopment. However, they can occur in situations where the attacking commander uses a major obstacle, such as a river, as an impassable base against which the enemy is trapped. Although a commander may use terrain objectives in an encirclement, isolating and defeating enemy forces are the primary goals. Ideally, an encirclement results in the surrender of the encircled force. This is less costly to friendly forces than sieges or having to reduce the encircled enemy force.

Organization of Forces for an Offensive Encirclement

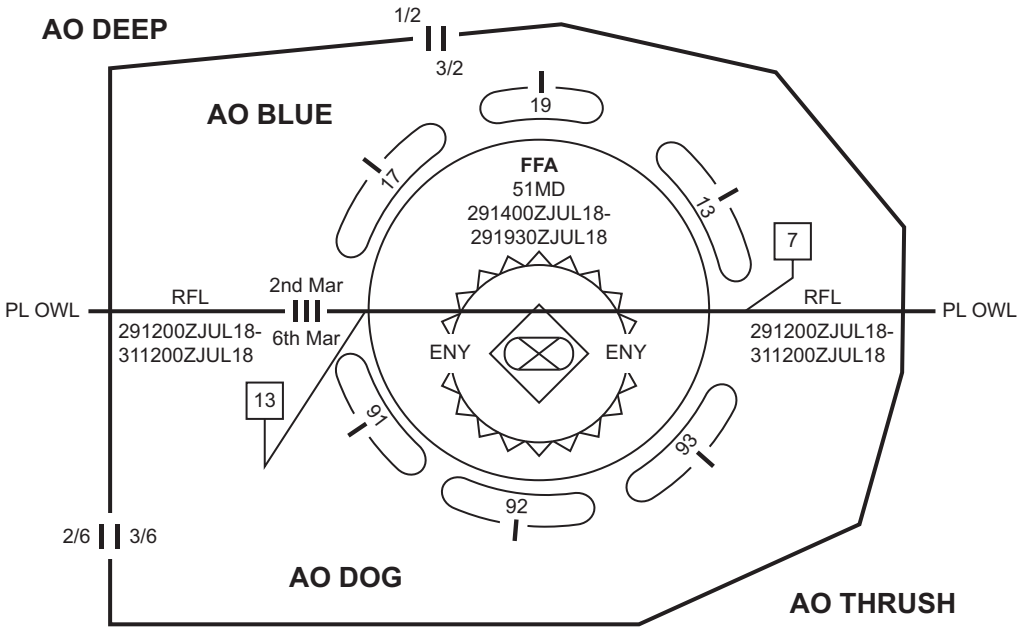
An encirclement operation usually has at least two phases—the actual encirclement and actions taken against the isolated enemy. Commanders task organize differently for each. Forces encircling the enemy force use task organizations similar to those of a movement to contact or envelopment (see chaps. 3 and 4) to include the importance of ensuring the tactical mobility of the enveloping force. Once isolation is complete, commanders either choose to fix and contain the enemy, or clear and destroy them. If fixing and containing, the friendly force changes task organization to establish a perimeter and prepare for defensive action (see chap. 8). If clearing and destroying the enemy, the friendly force organizes for offensive action (see chap. 3).

Offensive Encirclement Control Measures

Control measures for an encirclement are similar to those of other offensive operations, especially an envelopment, but with a few additional considerations (see fig. 18-1). If the situation requires the commander to employ both inner and an outer encircling arms, the commander must establish boundaries between them. The commander places the boundary so that each element has enough space to accomplish the mission. The inner force requires

enough space to fight a defensive battle to prevent the encircled force from breaking out. The outer force requires adequate terrain and depth to their AO to defeat any attempt to relieve the encircled force.

The commander who controls both converging forces establishes a RFL between them. The commander may also establish a free-fire area, which encloses the area occupied by a bypassed or encircled enemy forces (see chap. 2 for discussion of FSCMs). The commander may also establish contact points.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 18-1. Encirclement Control Measures.

Planning an Encirclement

The conditions under which an encirclement occurs are normally due to the planning and execution of a larger offensive plan. Commanders may possess developed sequel plans, but these will need to be modified according to the actual conditions on the ground. When an encirclement comes as an unexpected opportunity, planning time is at a premium. The first part of planning focuses on successfully completing the encirclement of the enemy force and preventing their relief. The second part of planning involves how to prevent the enemy force from escaping the encirclement and how to reduce them. Reduction may require fixing and containing until the enemy capitulates, or it may require friendly forces to clear and destroy the trapped enemy.

In determining how to complete the encirclement of the enemy, the commander must determine if there is any possibility of relief from enemy forces outside the encirclement. If such a possibility exists, then the commander uses inner and outer encircling arms. The inner encircling arms trap the enemy force and prevent them from escaping. The outer encircling arms prevent any enemy

relief from reaching the trapped enemy forces. The inner encircling arms receive defensive missions while the outer encircling arms conduct security, offensive, or defensive missions to prevent the enemy relief force from making contact with the encircled enemy. Once the encirclement is complete, the inner and outer encircling arms form a perimeter (see fig. 18-2).

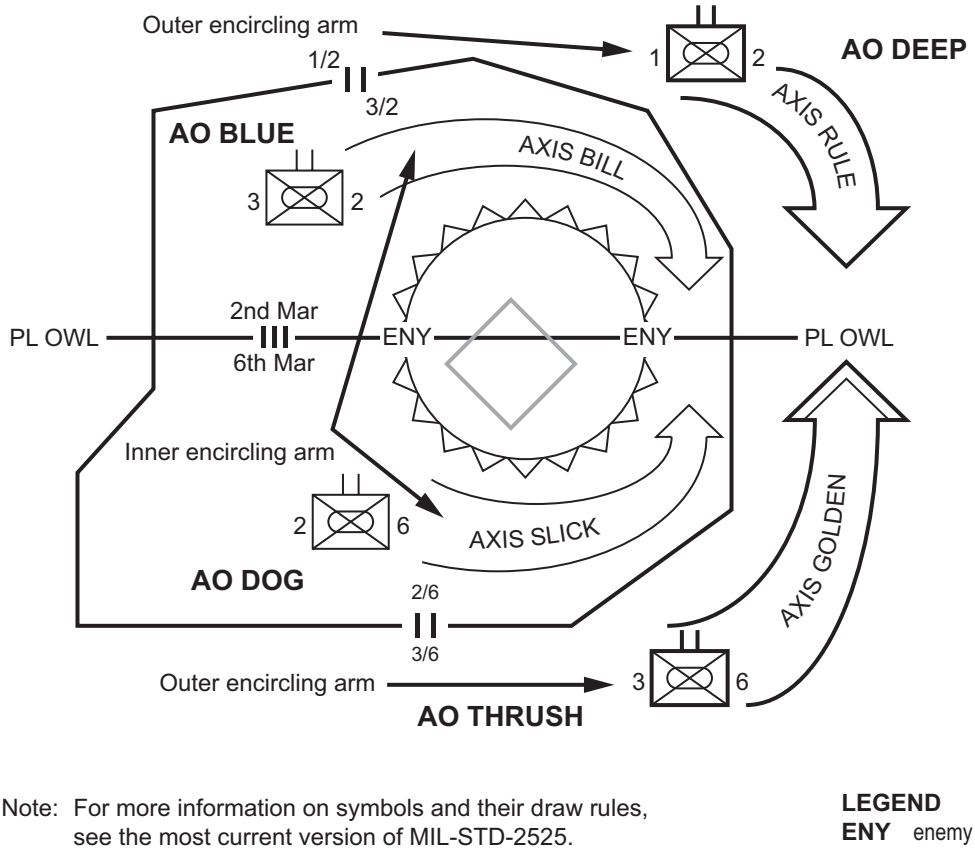


Figure 18-2. Inner and Outer Arms of an Encirclement.

The missions and orientation of inner and outer encircling arms require different forces, and commanders plan accordingly. In figure 18-2, a Marine division is conducting an encirclement while expecting an enemy attempt to relieve the trapped force. The two regiments conducting the double envelopment use distinctly different units to form inner and outer encircling arms. The division and regiments use the necessary control measures to deconflict the movement of each arm while still providing them sufficient maneuver space to conduct their missions.

The next step in encirclement planning involves what actions to take against the isolated enemy. Important aspects of this planning are the resources and time that will be available. Fixing and containing the enemy forces requires a less resource intensive, defensive posture. Clearing and destroying the enemy requires the greater expenditures associated with the offense. The resources to do either is dependent upon the mission of the higher headquarters. If the encircled enemy is considered bypassed, then local commanders may find themselves fixing and containing as part of an economy of force mission. If the encirclement was the decisive action, then commanders may find themselves receiving the assets and support necessary to complete the destruction or defeat of the trapped enemy force.

The other aspect of this planning calculus is the time available—while fixing and containing a bypassed enemy offers short-term resource savings, if the enemy force can be resupplied or has access to considerable supply stocks, then they remain a serious threat and require the constant presence of an encircling force that is at least equal in size. For example, each bypassed German division occupying a French fortress in World War II required a complete Allied division to maintain their isolation. Conversely, an enemy force isolated without adequate supplies either surrenders or faces containment by considerably smaller forces. In the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the isolated Egyptian 3rd Army was isolated by a single Israeli division.

If the mission of the encircling force is to maintain contact with a bypassed enemy force, commanders apply the general defensive planning considerations outlined in chapter 8 in addition to the following specifics:

- Determine the best use of available assets to maintain contact with the enemy and remain aware of their capabilities and intentions.
- Retain freedom of maneuver and develop limited offensive operations to maintain pressure on the enemy and prevent them from recovering and organizing attempts to exfiltrate or breakout from their encirclement.
- Keep the enemy isolated and incapable of receiving intelligence, logistic support, and fire support from enemy formations outside of the encirclement.
- Carefully control battlespace geometry to allow for maneuver while avoiding the increased dangers of friendly fire resulting from friendly forces facing inward on a surrounded enemy.

If the mission of the encircling force is to attack and destroy the encircled enemy force, the commander applies the general offensive planning considerations outlined in chapters 3 and 5 in addition to the following specifics:

- Maintain contact with the enemy and develop an aggressive intelligence collection plan to monitor enemy reactions to the encirclement, determine enemy intentions, identify enemy positions, and seek weaknesses to exploit.
- Carefully control battlespace geometry to allow for maneuver against the enemy while mitigating the increased dangers of friendly fire resulting from friendly forces facing inward on a surrounded enemy.
- Maintain constant pressure on the enemy to prevent them from consolidating positions, reorganizing, recovering their morale, or executing exfiltrations and breakouts.

Executing an Encirclement

As in an envelopment or turning movement (see chap. 3), the encircling force attempts to reach defiles, bridges, and other critical points before the enemy while other portions of the friendly force attack and fix the enemy. If the enemy cannot be outdistanced, than the enemy flanks are attacked to slow and disrupt them, creating the conditions for maneuver to cut off the enemy. Maneuver units receive additional engineer assets to both enable friendly mobility while creating obstacles to limit the enemy's maneuver options and disrupt and slow their movement. The commander may employ vertical envelopment to seize critical terrain that cuts enemy LOCs and escape options. The encircling force completes the encirclement when all enemy ground LOCs are

cut and the two arms of the double envelopment linkup (or when one arms physically ties in to an impassable obstacle, such as a river, against which the enemy is trapped).

As friendly forces maneuver, they focus on seizing key terrain that control routes and avenues the enemy might use to escape. It is inevitable that gaps and intervals will open up between maneuvering forces and between occupied positions and a competent enemy will seek to exploit them. The commander employs the ACE to monitor and screen these gaps and intervals and maintains a mobile reserve, such as an air assault force, that can rapidly close them. Once the enveloping force completes the linkup that actually creates the encirclement, forces move quickly to reasonably close intervals between elements. The purpose of the encirclement is not to create a seamless, physical barrier around the enemy, but to prevent significant enemy forces from escape by occupying key terrain and being able to react to enemy attempts to create or exploit gaps.

If the commander is employing inner and outer encircling arms, the outer encircling arms generally mimic the actions and considerations of the inner arms, though their orientation is focused outward and on the prevention of a relief force reaching the trapped enemy. At a minimum, the outer arms establish a security area and conduct a guard mission. Most likely, commanders of the outer arms conduct area or mobile defenses along likely avenues of approach (see chaps. 8 and 10) to physically prevent enemy intervention and contribute to the trapped enemy's isolation. If possible, forces executing outer encircling arm mission may conduct offensive operations designed to seize the initiative from enemy relief forces and create additional maneuver room for friendly forces. Regardless, the outer arms conduct the operations necessary to prevent enemy interference with the inner encircling arms.

Reducing the Trapped Enemy Force

Once the encirclement is complete, commanders reduce the trapped enemy forces. If they choose to do so by fixing, containing, and bypassing, they reorganize their units and resources to create a task-organized containment force that deploys to maintain the enemy's isolation, block breakout attempts, and prevent their interference with friendly operations. The rest of the force conducts necessary reorganization and prepares for subsequent missions.

If the commander decides to clear and destroy the encircled enemy force, it is done as rapidly as possible to free resources for use elsewhere—commanders avoid any pause between the completion of the encirclement and subsequent operations to reduce the trapped enemy. Combat power is massed and concentrated against the enemy without respite until the enemy's complete destruction or surrender. A commander may eliminate encircled enemy forces by fires alone or by a combination of fire and maneuver. The five main techniques for defeating an encircled enemy are massed and synchronized fires, squeeze, hammer and anvil, wedge, and escape route.

Reduction Methods

Fix and Contain	Clear and Destroy
	– Massed and Synchronized Fires
	– Squeeze
	– Hammer and Anvil
	– Wedge
	– Escape Route

The massed and synchronized fires technique is the preferred method for destroying an encircled enemy force as it relies on the strengths of precision munitions, indirect and aerial delivered fires, and information operations to defeat the enemy vice the use of personnel. Using normal targeting techniques, the commander systematically destroys targets that pose the greatest threat to friendly

forces, resources that enable continued resistance, and enemy command and control. Because fires without maneuver or the threat of maneuver are rarely decisive, the commander employs maneuver forces to maintain pressure on the enemy, exploit opportunities created by the massing of fires, and to fully clear the area of all enemy after their capitulation. The commander is prepared to switch to other reduction methods should enemy resistance continue or the nature of the environment require an extensive use of precision munitions beyond supply capability.

The commander uses the squeeze technique against enemy groupings of battalion size or smaller, utilizing simultaneous, coordinated blows on the enemy from various directions to affect their capture or destruction (see fig. 18-3). Shaping operations destroy the enemy's ability to conduct command and control, conduct air defense, distribute existing supplies, or employ indirect fires. The commander then uses fire and movement to attack enemy weaknesses systematically, and relentlessly, around their perimeter. This prevents the enemy from resting, employing their reserve effectively, or maintaining a coherent defense. As the enemy's perimeter contracts, the commander can remove units from the inner perimeter for other tasks. This technique can be time consuming.

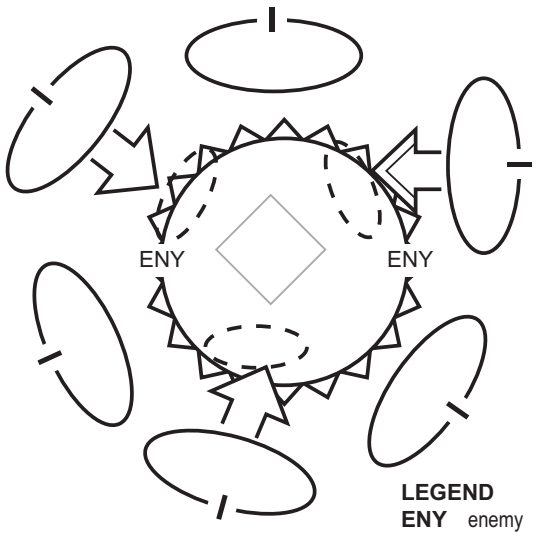


Figure 18-3. Squeeze Technique.

Commanders employ the hammer and anvil technique when time constraints dictate aggressive action to reduce the trapped enemy. The technique utilizes a stationary blocking force as an anvil on one or more sides of the inner perimeter (an impassable natural barrier will also suffice), while maneuver elements of the encircling force use offensive action as a hammer to force the encircled enemy force against the blocking force (see fig. 18-4). The maneuver force usually conducts the decisive action.

Commanders utilize the wedge technique when they need to divide the trapped enemy into smaller pockets that can more easily be reduced by the friendly forces available. The wedge technique concentrates combat power against a small portion of the enemy to divide enemy forces within the pocket (see fig. 18-5). The rest of the encircling force maintains pressure on other encircled enemy forces to prevent them from reinforcing or supporting the threatened area. In

general, commanders reduce one of the newly created pockets before driving another wedge into the enemy position to avoid creating multiple groupings of enemy forces that are beyond the capabilities of the friendly force to cope with.

Commanders employ the escape route technique when they wish to avoid the prolonged reduction operations or when they seek to entice an enemy to leave strong, fortified positions. The technique involves leaving one or more gaps in encirclement to entice the enemy to attempt a breakout. Once the enemy force leaves the shelter of their defensive positions, they become vulnerable to acquisition, attack, and destruction. The use of information operations is a critical component in the shaping operations for this technique.

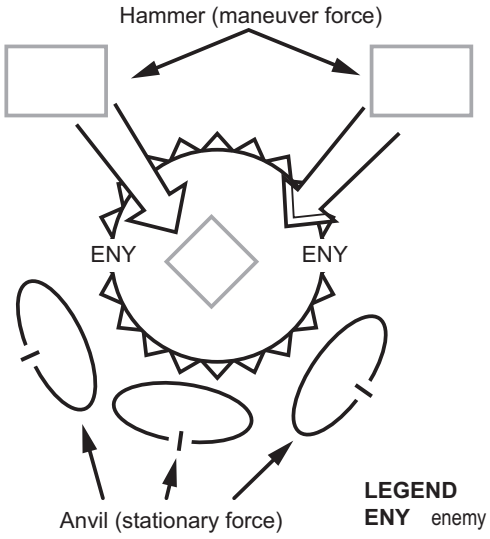


Figure 18-4. Hammer and Anvil Technique.

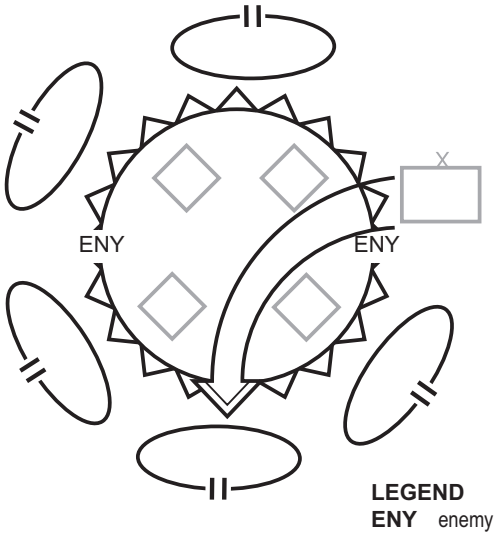


Figure 18-5. Wedge Technique.

DEFENDING ENCIRCLED FORCES

Encirclement of a friendly force is likely to occur during highly mobile and fluid operations, when operating in restrictive terrain, or due to a deliberate decision. Examples include encirclement because of offensive action or as a DLIC ordered to defend a strong point or tasked as a stay-behind force. Once encircled, the force possesses four options: defend, breakout, exfiltrate, or attack deeper into enemycontrolled territory. The commander's choice depends on the mission of the higher headquarters, METT-T, whether preparations for encirclement occurred (e.g., a strong point defense), the ability to conduct resupply and casualty evacuation, and the morale and fighting capacity of the force.

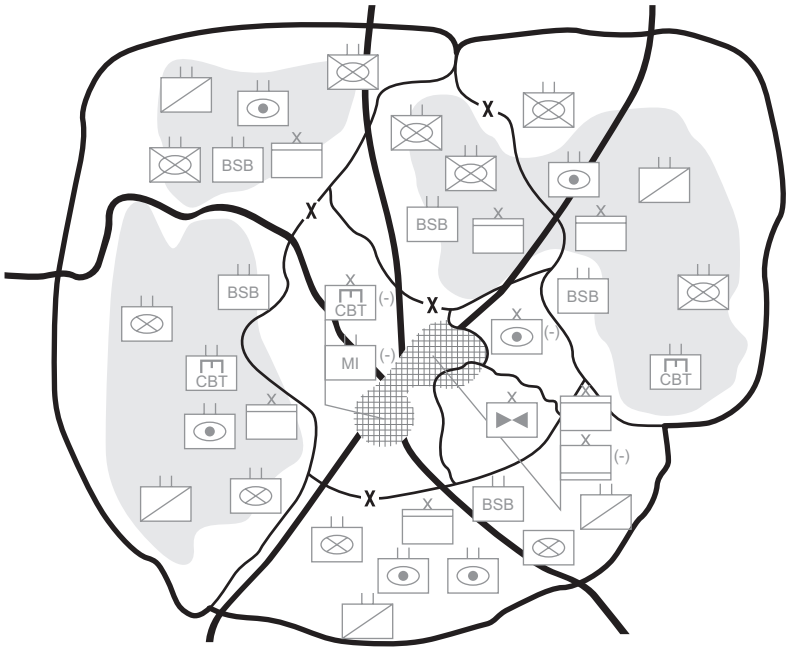
The senior commander within an encirclement assumes command over all encircled forces and takes immediate action to protect them. In the confusion leading to an encirclement, it may be difficult to even determine what units are being encircled, let alone identify the senior commander. However, the senior commander must be determined as quickly as possible. As it becomes obvious that the unit is about to be encircled, the commander must decide quickly what assets stay and what assets leave. The commander immediately informs higher headquarters of the situation. Simultaneously, the commander directs the accomplishment of the following tasks:

- Establish security.
- Reestablish a chain of command.
- Establish a viable defense.
- Maintain morale.

The commander positions security elements as far forward as possible to reestablish contact with the enemy, create maneuver room, and provide early warning. Each unit clears their position to ensure no enemy forces remain within the perimeter and begin immediate, vigorous patrolling. The commander reorganizes fragmented units and stragglers under the control of other units, changes task organization across the force if necessary, and reestablishes communication with units outside the encirclement. In situations where encirclement was not planned or was unexpected, the survival of the force is dependent on rapidly organizing and hardening itself prior to undertaking any other actions.

Organization of Forces for an Encircled Defender

The commander of the encircled force establishes a perimeter defense maximizing the capabilities of the available forces. Figure 18-6 depicts an armored division in a perimeter defense. Forward units establish mutually supporting positions around the perimeter and in depth along principal avenues of approach. Units occupy the best available defensible terrain. It may be necessary to attack to seize key terrain, so that it is incorporated within the perimeter defense. A reserve is established, centrally located, utilizing interior lines, and mobile enough to react rapidly to anywhere on the perimeter. Once the commander assigns defensive AOs and BPs, preparations are the same as in the defense. Encircled units make their defensive positions as strong as possible given time and resource constraints. The commander anticipates that the enemy will attempt to split the defenses of the encircled force and defeat them in detail. See chapter 8 for information on the conduct of perimeter defenses.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

Figure 18-6. Encircled Armor Division's Perimeter Defense.

Warfighting Functional Considerations for an Encircled Defender

The rapid establishment of command and control in unplanned or unexpected encirclements is a critical factor to the survivability of the force. In the case of strong points, combat outposts, and stay-behind forces, the maintenance of command and control while encircled has already been planned and prepared. Beyond the basic functions of command and control however, coherent and reliable command is instrumental to the morale and well-being of the force. Even when unexpectedly surrounded, Marines will naturally rise to the occasion when they are confident in their leadership—the encirclement becomes a temporary phase in the battle, or even an opportunity to hurt the enemy. However, even the most disciplined units will rapidly disintegrate if faced with both encirclement and poor or weak command.

As the situation stabilizes, the encircled commander must anticipate enemy attempts to reduce the pocket while locating enemy weaknesses that can be exploited either in a breakout or a linkup with friendly relief forces. This requires aggressive employment of the ISR assets that the encircled force possesses. Patrolling is the reconnaissance asset organic to every unit, and the commander employs it aggressively to maintain contact with the enemy and seek to discover their intentions. Reestablishing communications with units outside of the encirclement becomes important to gaining access to other ISR assets and awareness of enemy actions.

The commander centralizes control of fire support systems, such as artillery, to be able to rapidly shift and mass fires along threatened portions of the perimeter and to conduct counterbattery fires. The use of massed and synchronized fires is likely to be the enemy's preferred method to reduce a trapped force as it is the preferred method of friendly forces. Depending on the situation, commanders may choose to control the mortars of various units in the same manner, especially if the encircled force lacks artillery and is beyond the support of other friendly units. Similarly, the ACE is a central component of the MAGTF's defense and it is retained within the perimeter

until either enemy artillery can range the airfields or enemy air and air defense action makes support and survivability from within the perimeter untenable.

In considering maneuver and assured mobility, the encircled force prioritizes countermobility, survivability, and mobility in that order. Countermobility is essential to supporting the encircled force's perimeter defense and thus the force's survival. Survivability is a close second in prioritization because the enemy is likely to try and use massed and synchronized fires to reduce the friendly pocket, and it is difficult to disperse within a perimeter type defense.

Since encircled units must closely monitor their logistic resources, whether the encirclement was planned or unexpected, commanders conserve and centrally control available resources. This control applies to casualty and mortuary affairs as well. Commanders evacuate casualties whenever possible for humanitarian reasons and to reduce the logistical burden on the force. The commander may force units on the perimeter to cease all vehicle movement to allocate remaining fuel assets to the reserve. When possible, the commander positions CSS units and resources in protected and concealed locations out of the reach of potential penetrations. In situations where CSS elements can no longer perform their functions—such as maintenance personnel with no parts or tools—the commander may choose to employ them as maneuver units. Except in extreme circumstances, the commander maintains the integrity of logistic units serving in direct combat roles.

BREAKOUT FROM AN ENCIRCLEMENT

A breakout is an operation conducted by an encircled force to regain freedom of movement or contact with friendly units. It differs from other attacks only in that a simultaneous defense in other areas of the perimeter must be maintained. A breakout contains elements of the offense and the defense. An encircled force normally attempts to conduct breakout operations when one of the following four conditions exist:

- The breakout falls within the intent of a higher commander.
- The encircled force does not have sufficient combat power to defend itself.
- The encircled force does not have adequate terrain available to conduct their defense.
- The encircled force cannot sustain itself long enough to be relieved.

Organization of Forces for a Breakout

The commander organizes the force to conduct rupture, follow and assume, main body, and rear guard tasks (see fig. 18-7). The focus is on tasks because the encircled force may lack the strength to resource separate forces and, therefore, subordinate units are likely to receive multiple missions—such as the main body being prepared to conduct tasks associated with both follow-and-assume and the rear guard. If sufficient forces do exist within the encirclement, the commander organizes a reserve and a separate diversionary force. Regardless, the priority of combat power is to the force with the rupture mission. Above all, the encircled force maintains the momentum of the breakout attack; otherwise, they are more vulnerable to destruction than they were before the breakout attempt. Forces located outside the encirclement assist the breakout by conducting shaping actions.

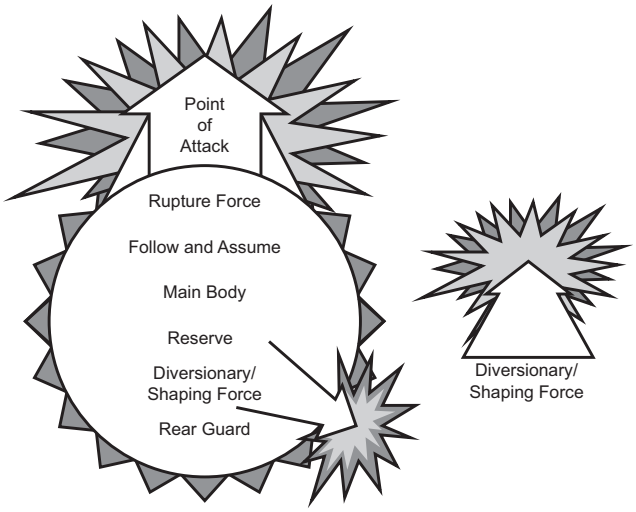


Figure 18-7. Organization of Forces for a Breakout Operation.

The encircled force attacks using the rupture force, which varies in size from one-third to two-thirds of the total force, to penetrate the enemy defensive positions in at least one location. The rupture force is the decisive action. The rupture force penetrates the enemy's encirclement, widens the gap, and holds the shoulders of the gap open until all other encircled forces can move through. The rupture force must have sufficient strength to accomplish these tasks, and receives the preponderance of combat power. See chapter 3 for discussion of the penetration form of maneuver.

The follow-and-assume force follows the rupture force, seizes objectives beyond the rupture, and maintains the momentum of the attack. They do so by opening up and improving the passage from the rupture towards friendly forces. It is often the force that conducts the linkup with relief forces. In tasking and resourcing the follow-and-assume force, the commander must weigh the need to open up the passage to friendly forces over other tasks such as clearing and improving routes or fixing bypassed enemy forces. If these types of tasks are essential to the success of the breakout, the commander must resource the follow-and-assume force appropriately or create another task force for this purpose.

The main body consists of the main CP, the bulk of encircled logistic assets, the unit's casualties, and combat support assets. The main body contains only the combat forces necessary for immediate security—typically, a flank security force that deploys once the main body passes through the rupture. The rear guard consists of units and equipment left on the perimeter to provide protection for the rupture and any shaping actions, such as diversionary forces. Forces left in contact must conduct a vigorous delaying operation on the perimeter, so that no portion of the rear guard gets cut off. Under a single commander, the rear guard protects the main body from attack. In addition to providing security, the rear guard deceives the enemy about the intentions of the encircled force, simulating its activities until the main body clears the gap.

The primary purpose of a reserve is to retain flexibility through offensive action. The commander makes every attempt to keep a small portion of the encircled force uncommitted, so they can be employed at the decisive moment to ensure the breakout's success. The commander may be

unable to establish a separate reserve force because of the need to resource either the rupture force, the follow-and-assume force, or the rear guard. In this event, the commander assigns and prioritizes various be-prepared missions to the follow-and-assume force.

Control Measures for a Breakout

At a minimum, a commander controls and synchronizes a breakout using an LD or LC, time of the attack, PLs, axis of advance or direction of attack, objectives, and a LOA assist in the linkup with friendly forces (see chaps. 2 and 3).

Planning a Breakout

In general, planning for a breakout reflects the planning associated with any type of offensive operation. Commanders conduct hasty planning to execute a breakout as quickly as possible after the encirclement, while the enemy is still disorganized and gaps exist to be exploited. It is unlikely that the encircled force will possess accurate information on enemy dispositions and capabilities at this time, but the commander seeks to capitalize on the fluid nature of the moment and the difficulty the enemy will have in executing a coordinated response to the breakout. Patrolling and available ISR assets seek to discover exploitable gaps in the enemy force, using the reconnaissance pull method to guide planning and execution.

Conversely, commanders conduct deliberate planning to execute a breakout when that breakout will occur in conjunction with the actions of a strong relief force. In this case, both the ISR assets of the encircled force and relief force combine to provide the commander greater situational awareness of the enemy's tactical disposition, intentions, and capabilities. Overall, COA development occurs in concert with those of the relief force.

Regardless of whether conducting a breakout quickly or after some period of time has elapsed, commanders seek to capitalize on routes and terrain the enemy is unlikely to defend or expect friendly forces to use. The commander must weigh the risks in choosing a slower but stealthier movement over a faster but more obvious movement, and directs some of the limited information collection capabilities available to help provide the information necessary to make a decision. The commander applies similar consideration in choosing whether to move during periods of limited-visibility.

The employment of information operations in the breakout is as important, if not more important, then the employment of other fires. Military and tactical deception are instrumental in misleading the enemy about the intentions of the encircled force, the location of the breakout attempt, and in the actual conduct of the breakout attempt itself—such as assisting the rear guard in maintaining the appearance of normal operations along the perimeter. Other IRCs can assist in introducing hesitation or delay into the enemy's decision-making cycle as they try to react to the breakout.

As always, information operations are coordinated and synchronized with maneuver and other fires. Shaping actions, such as diversionary attacks from either the encircled or relief forces, divert enemy attention and resources away from the rupture effort. Such diversions must be credible and present a real threat to the enemy—such as directing them at places where the enemy might expect a breakout attempt to occur. Diversionary forces from the encircled force are as mobile as available vehicles, fuel stocks, and trafficability allow, so they can reposition to take part in the breakout or maneuver elsewhere to support the breakout.

The success of a breakout attempt increases immeasurably if synchronized with the actions of a relief force. If the situation or factors of METT-T preclude an immediate breakout attempt, then as time passes the success of the breakout relies even more heavily on actions external to the encircled force. In this case, primary planning will be done by a higher headquarters that will conduct command and control for both the encircled and relief forces. The actions of the relief force will be in support of the larger plan.

The availability of combat support and CSS assets are a major factor in planning and COA development. The force organizes the breakout attempt around the resources that are available. For example, fuel and parts scarcity may mean the force can only move a limited number of vehicles. Priority of vehicles in this case may be limited to the rupture force and the rear guard, with the remaining force keeping only sufficient transportation assets to move the wounded and critical assets and supplies. The breakout plan outlines the commander's destruction criteria for equipment or supplies left behind. All vehicles, critical munitions, supplies, and equipment (except medical supplies) that cannot be moved should be destroyed as soon as possible.

Executing a Breakout

The unit takes all possible precautions to deceive the enemy about the location of the decisive action. Destruction of equipment comes at the last possible moment, or is done mechanically to avoid alerting the enemy. The preparation of wounded, critical assets, and similar items occur within the normal, daily movement of the force to mask the preparations from the enemy. As much as possible, units remain on their portion of the perimeter, limiting the RIPs that will occur as the encircled force reorganizes for the breakout. The rear guard conducts preparations. If the perimeter must be thinly held, or even shortened, to generate combat power for the rupture force, the rear guard uses DLICs to deceive the enemy (see chap. 11). Simultaneously, the rupture force assembles and occupies their attack positions, minimizing movement and visibility.

On order, the encircled force and any other friendly forces, such as a relief force, begin conducting shaping actions such as feints and demonstrations, mobility and countermobility operations, suppression of enemy positions, and isolation of the battlespace. When the conditions are set, the encircled force generates overwhelming combat power at the point(s) of penetration in support of the rupture force. The rupture force attacks and conducts a penetration, rapidly overwhelming enemy positions and expanding the penetration (see chap. 5). If not already in position, the follow-and-assume force moves from their place in the perimeter and begins to advance through the point(s) of penetration. The commander may accept risk in preparedness in favor of deception by having elements of the encircled force remain on the perimeter until the last moment before leaving and committing directly to their assigned tasks. Elements of the main body conduct necessary destruction of equipment, assemble in their order of march, and establish flank security. The rear guard continues to deceive the enemy as long as possible, and then begins conducting security operations in support of the breakout (see fig. 18-8).

The rupture force holds the shoulders of the penetration open and the follow-and-assume force moves through the penetration to exploit the success. In cases when the rupture force encounters weak or little enemy resistance, the commander may order the rupture force to transition to a movement to contact and the follow-and-assume force remains in trace. Otherwise the follow-and-assume force moves rapidly to secure objectives beyond the penetration, using any available

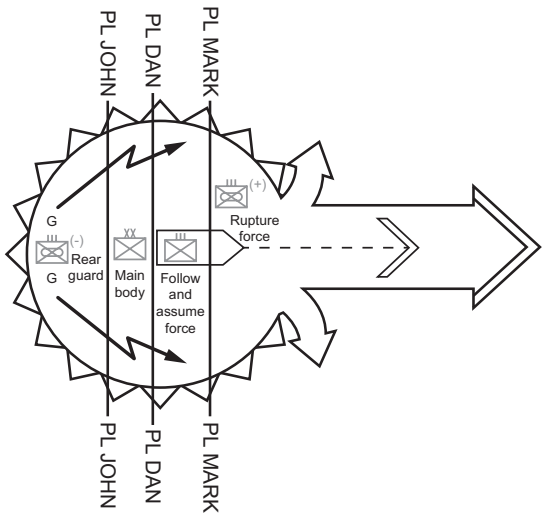


Figure 18-8. Breakout of an Encircled Division.

engineer assets to conduct route improvement and establish countermobility obstacles to the flanks. In addition to providing CAS, the ACE screens the flanks of the follow-and-assume force.

As the rupture force completes their mission and the follow-and-assume force advances, the main body moves immediately in trace. The rear guard and any diversionary forces provided by the encircled force disengage and conduct security operations to the rear of the encircled force. If engineering assets are available, they assist the rear guard in establishing countermobility obstacles to delay and disrupt enemy pursuit. If the rear guard is destroyed, they are immediately reconstituted out of other forces. Artillery and mortars begin echeloning forward, providing continuous fire support to elements of the force. As the breakout progresses, the commander retains centralized control of fires, shifting priorities to various elements of the force as needed. The ACE is employed in the same manner, aggressively attacking enemy threats (see fig. 18-9).

The main body moves rapidly on multiple routes in an approach or road march formation immediately behind the follow-and-assume force, utilizing available combat power to provide flank security. The follow-and-assume force advances until they either conduct a linkup with friendly forces, or are in a position that they can pass the main body through its positions to effect such a linkup. As the linkup occurs, the breakout force begins collapsing their defenses and security.

The main body passes through and into friendly forces, moving directly to AAs to the rear. The commander of the breakout force then conducts a series of battle handovers to allow friendly forces to follow in trace and reach the safety of friendly lines. The commander maintains centralized control of combat support assets (e.g., artillery, engineers) throughout the process—moving their priorities as needed. The rear guard evacuates the perimeter, handing off both the duties and additional combat power, to the rupture force, still holding open the shoulders of the penetration. The original rear guard moves directly through the follow-and-assume force, reenters friendly lines, and moves in trace of the main body to designated AAs. The former rupture force now assumes the duties of rear guard, delaying the enemy as they retrograde, while receiving priority of available support.

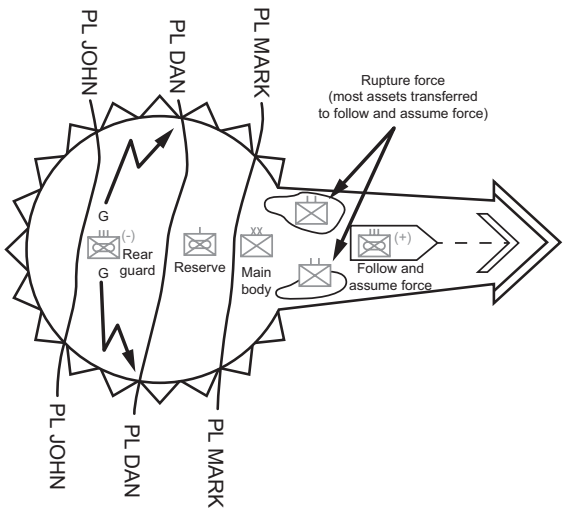


Figure 18-9. Continued Breakout of an Encircled Division.

As they reach the follow-and-assume force, another battle handover occurs. The follow-and-assume force becomes the last elements of the breakout force, allowing the rupture force to pass through, reenter friendly lines, and move to designated AAs. The follow-and-assume force assumes rear guard responsibilities, and conducts delaying and security operations until they finally hand the battle over to friendly or relief forces before rejoining the rest of the breakout force in designated AAs.

Normally, the rear guard initially conducts a withdrawal to break contact with the enemy forces around the perimeter. It contracts the perimeter as it delays behind the main body. If the enemy closely pursues the breakout force, the efforts of the rear guard may become the decisive action for the encircled force. The commander should position the reserve where they can also support the rear guard.

EXFILTRATION

If the success of a breakout attack appears questionable or if it fails, and a relief operation is not planned, one way to preserve a portion of the force is through organized exfiltration (see app. C).

ATTACKING DEEPER INTO ENEMY TERRITORY

Attacking deeper into enemy territory is a COA that the enemy is unlikely to expect, although friendly forces prepare for such an action when they encircle an enemy force. The encircled force may execute such a COA for a number of reasons:

- The encircled force occupies a strong point or combat outpost, or they are a stay-behind force executing an assigned mission.
- The encircled force can move to a more defensible location or to a place where they can be extracted by ground, naval, or air forces.
- The encircled force is executing an offensive action and deliberately continues forward to the objectives, or attacks in a new direction. Similarly, by attacking deeper into enemy territory the encircled force can create conditions favorable for a linkup with friendly forces by disrupting enemy plans through attacks against their rear areas and LOCs, or by attacking to support the offensive action of other friendly forces.

Attacking deeper into enemy territory is an offensive action (see chap. 3). It is only feasible if a unit can sustain itself while isolated, although those logistics can come from aerial resupply and enemy supply stocks.

LINKUP

A linkup is a tactical operation in which the coordinated meeting of two friendly ground forces occurs in a hostile area. A linkup occurs when an advancing force reaches an objective area previously seized by airborne or air assault forces, when an encircled element breaks out to rejoin friendly forces or a force comes to the relief of an encircled force, and when converging maneuver forces meet. Both forces may be moving toward each other or one may be stationary. Units may be as small as squads or as large as divisions. Whenever possible, joining forces exchange as much information as possible before starting the operation.

The headquarters ordering the linkup establishes—

- Command relationship and responsibilities of each force before, during, and after linkup.
- Coordination of fire support before, during, and after linkup, including control measures.
- Linkup method.
- Recognition signals and communications procedures, including pyrotechnics, armbands, vehicle markings, guntube orientation, panels, colored smoke, lights, and challenge and passwords.
- Operations to conduct following linkup.

Linkup Control Measures

The minimum control measures for a linkup are primary and alternate linkup points, an AO defined by lateral boundaries, a RFL that also acts as an LOA, a NFA around one or both forces, and a CFL beyond the area where the forces linkup. The NFA protects friendly forces from friendly fire while the CFL enables the expeditious attack of enemy targets approaching the linkup area.

Linkup Execution

There are two linkup methods—both involve one force moving and the other remaining stationary (even if that unit's halt is only momentary). The first is the preferred method—a moving force stops at an assigned LOA near the other force and advances security forces to conduct the linkup at predetermined linkup points. Units then coordinate further operations. The second is the least preferred, and occurs only in extraordinary circumstances during highly fluid operations such as when an enemy force is attempting to escape an encirclement, or when one of the linkup forces is at risk and requires immediate reinforcement. In this method, the moving force utilizes a RFL to deconflict fires but does not halt at it. Rather, they continue to move and conduct long-range recognition via radio or other measures, stopping only when they make physical contact with the other force.

Linkup points are normally located near the RFL/LOA and in close proximity to the stationary unit's security forces (see fig. 18-10). As discussed above, a RFL is still used in the second method of linkup (see fig. 18-11). When linking up with a stationary force, that force often facilitates the linkup and subsequent missions by opening lanes in minefields, breaching or removing selected obstacles, furnishing guides, and designating AAs.

The commander carefully coordinates linkup operations with forces of other nations. This is especially true if the two forces are not both members of an alliance with established internationally standardized procedures, or if the units involved have not previously established the necessary procedures.

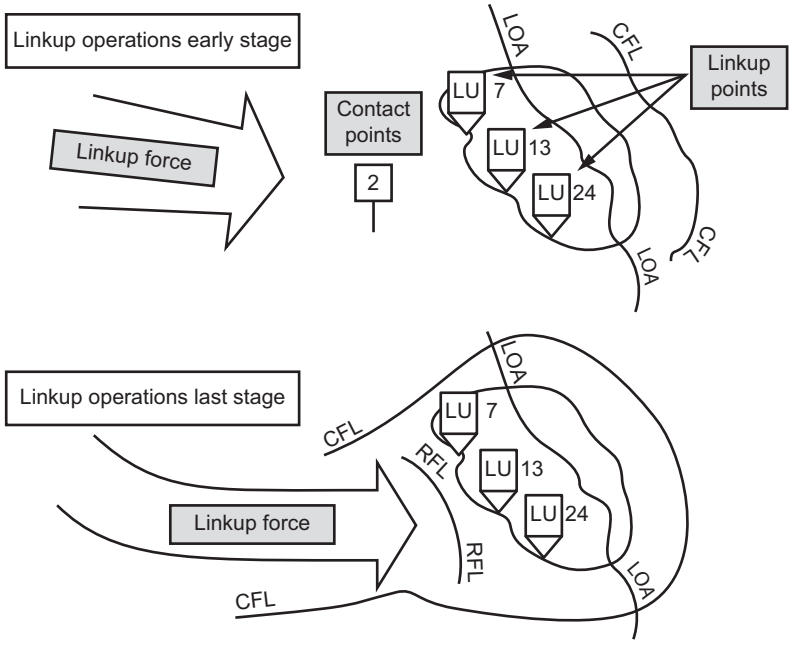
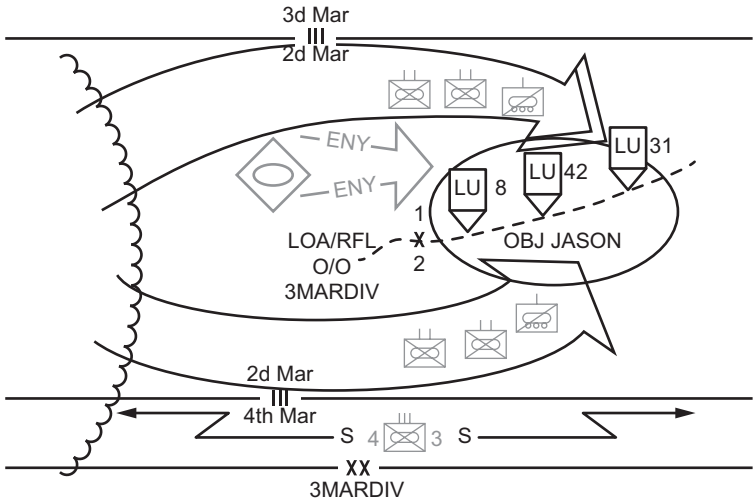


Figure 18-10. Linkup of a Moving Force and a Stationary Force.



Note: For more information on symbols and their draw rules, see the most current version of MIL-STD-2525.

LEGEND

2d Mar	2d Marine Regiment	**ENY**	enemy
3d Mar	3d Marine Regiment	**O/O**	on order
3MARDIV	3d Marine Division	**OBJ**	objective
4th Mar	4th Marine Regiment		

Figure 18-11. Linkup of Two Moving Forces.

CORDON

A cordon is a tactical operation in which a unit prevents withdrawal from or reinforcement to a position (see app. C). Commanders employ cordons as shaping actions to enable some other action to occur, such as a search, meeting, detainee release, etc. Commanders also provide additional guidance on what will occur within the cordon or what effect they would like generated. A company may be tasked with conducting a cordon around a city block to isolate the area, receiving appropriate support to execute that isolation. Similarly, the same company might establish the cordon as part of an operation to fix an adversary or enemy in place so that HN forces may conduct a reduction of the adversary or enemy. The cordon resembles an encirclement with both inner and outer arms in that the cordon force must establish security outward—to prevent reinforcement and support—and establish security inward—to prevent withdrawal.

The headquarters ordering the cordon establishes—

- The purpose and intent of the cordon.
- Command relationships with other elements participating in, supporting, or conducting actions within the cordon.
- Coordination of fires and IO support.
- Coordinating instructions to include control measures and linkup procedures.
- Operations to conduct following the cordon.

Organization of Forces for a Cordon

The commander of the cordon force organizes forces into inner and outer cordon elements, and a reserve (though this may be provided by higher headquarters). Each is weighted according to METT-T, though normally the inner cordon element, as they most directly supports actions within the cordon, receives greater priority. The inner cordon element prevents withdrawal of the enemy or adversary, or provides overwatch for ongoing activities—such as food distribution—and receives appropriate tasks such as contain, fix, provide security, etc. The outer cordon prevents external interference with actions within the cordon, such as reinforcement or relief and receives appropriate tasks such as block, deny, or interdict.

Cordon Control Measures

The minimum control measures for a cordon are an AA, LD, and objective area. Commanders may also employ control measures such as routes, checkpoints, PLs, rally points, and release points. The fundamental risk that a commander must mitigate is the battlespace geometry and coordination between the inner cordon element of the cordon force, and friendly forces conducting actions within the cordon. During small scale operations, such as the company and below, the inner cordon will physically tie-in with forces within the cordon, deconflicting positions and fires appropriately. During larger operations, the commander uses NFAs and RFLs to allow the inner cordon element to prevent enemy withdrawal without endangering friendly forces operating within the cordon.

Cordon Planning Considerations

The cordon is an operation that frequently occurs across the ROMO. The most important planning factor for the cordon is the environment in which it will occur. Most often, the cordon force will serve as an element within a larger operation. There are four fundamental planning considerations for cordons:

- *Purpose*. What are the actions occurring within the cordon and how is the cordon force supporting them?
- *Threat*. What is the nature of the threat and their capabilities? If the enemy can react with armor or technical vehicles, that changes the posture and tactics of the outer cordon. If actions within the cordon are likely to generate reactions from the civilian population, that complicates the mission of the inner cordon.
- *Time*. The cordon is a temporary operation. Depending on threat and purpose, how long the cordon force must provide security for actions in the objective area impacts tactical dispositions and sustainment. Although not a rule, cordons that exceed 24 hours in duration should be considered other operations such as bypasses or encirclements.
- *Movement*. How will the cordon force move into the objective area, how will they establish inner and outer cordons, and how will they deconflict movement with other friendly forces.

The cordon force may enter and depart the objective area through single or multiple routes. The commander weighs speed, trafficability, the employment of surprise, and the likelihood of enemy contact in choosing routes. If possible, the cordon force plans to depart on different routes than the routes they used to deploy. The commander determines if they will occupy the inner and outer cordons sequentially or simultaneously. The terrain is a large factor in this decision—determining when, where, and how the cordon force can move. The nature of the threat also affects the

commander's thoughts about balancing the surprise associated with simultaneous establishment of the inner and outer cordons, versus a more deliberate sequential occupation. If the cordon force faces or is likely to face significant resistance, they are no longer establishing a cordon but conducting an encirclement and must act and plan accordingly.

When the enemy threat is significant, the cordon force plans to execute appropriately, conducting the priority of work associated with the defense to include employing obstacles. The cordon force must receive the combat support and CSS resources required for this environment, to include planning for obstacle removal at the end of the operation. When the enemy threat is minimal, then the cordon force still must establish local security and prevent reinforcement of, or withdrawal from, the objective area. This may still require combat support and CSS resources necessary to set up TCPs and to control the movement of the population. Contingent upon METT-T, commanders may employ any combination of OPs, patrols, and static positions to conduct the cordon.

Cordon Execution

When tasked, the cordon force occupies an AA and begins planning in conjunction with higher headquarters and elements associated with the operation. On order, the cordon force departs the AA, crosses the LD (or passes through friendly lines), and follows the designated route employing appropriate formations for the threat. The cordon force is normally the lead element, and possesses the preponderance of combat power, given their tactical requirements. As the lead element, they likely to serve as the security element, conducting screen and guard missions to the front and possibly flanks.

Upon reaching the objective area, using either a release point or when ordered, the cordon force conducts either a simultaneous or sequential occupation of the inner and outer cordons. The cordon force executes priorities of work focused on establishing immediate control of likely avenues of approach and escape, improving positions, setting up OPs and patrol routes, and establishing a reserve that can react to threats. Depending on the higher headquarters plan, actions may begin with the cordon immediately, or may wait upon the cordon force's successful establishment of the cordon.

While actions occur on the objective, the cordon force continues to maintain inner and outer security. Depending on the threat and the length of time the cordon is to exist, this may consist of completely blocking off traffic routes, or merely observing them while preserving the capability to react to threats. The inner cordon maintains constant coordination with friendly forces within the cordon. It is appropriate for the cordon commander to either collocate themselves with friendly forces within the cordon, or allow the commander of the inner cordon element to do so.

When actions are complete within the cordon, the cordon force remains in place until friendly forces depart the objective area. Using either sequential or simultaneous methods, the cordon force collapses the cordon. In the reverse of movement to the objective area, the cordon force follows in trace of friendly forces, serving as a rear security element executing screen and guard missions, while also providing overwatch for stragglers and vehicle casualties. Since the cordon force normally possesses the preponderance of combat power, they may be tasked with providing all around security on ingress and egress from the objective area.

APPENDIX A
PRINCIPLES OF JOINT OPERATIONS

The Marine Corps warfighting philosophy of maneuver warfare is rooted in the long-standing principles of war. These original nine principles: mass, objective, offensive, security, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, surprise, and simplicity—known by the memory aid "MOOSEMUSS"—are part of the twelve principles of joint operations, which includes three principles specifically related to irregular warfare (perseverence, legitimacy, and restraint).

Principles of Joint Operations
Objective
Offensive
Mass
Maneuver
Economy of Force
Unity of Command
Security
Surprise
Simplicity
Restraint
Perseverance
Legitimacy

The principles of joint operations are useful aids to a commander when considering how to accomplish the mission. The principles assist the commander in organizing how to think about the mission, the enemy, the battlespace, and employment of forces. They should not be considered as prescriptive steps or actions that must be accomplished, but as tools to plan, execute, and assess operations. Successful application of the principles requires a commander's judgment, skill, and experience to adapt to constantly changing conditions and situations. The principles are explained in the following subparagraphs. See MCDP 1-0 and JP 3-0 for more information.

Objective

This principle advises the direction of every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective. The ultimate military objective of war is to defeat the enemy's forces or destroy the enemy's will to fight. The objective of each operation must contribute quickly and economically to the ultimate objective or purpose of the operation. The selection of an objective is based on consideration of the ultimate goal, forces available, the level of threat, and the AO. All commanders must clearly understand the overall mission of the higher command, their own mission, the tasks that must be performed, and the reasons for them. Commanders consider every contemplated action in light of its direct contribution to the objective. Commanders must clearly communicate the overall objective of the operation to their subordinates.

Offensive

This principle refers to seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative. Offensive action is the decisive form of combat. It is necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and to maintain freedom of action. It allows commanders to exploit enemy weaknesses, impose their will upon the enemy, and determine the course of the battle. A defensive posture should only be a temporary expedient until the means are available to resume the offensive. Even in the conduct of a defense, the commander seeks every opportunity to seize the initiative by offensive action.

Mass

Mass refers to the concentration of friendly capabilities at the decisive place and time to achieve decisive results. Commanders mass capabilities to overwhelm the enemy and gain control of the situation. Mass applies to fires, combat support, CSS, and numbers of forces. Proper use of the principle of mass, together with the other principles of war, may achieve decisive local superiority by a numerically inferior force. The decision to concentrate requires strict economy and the acceptance of risk elsewhere, particularly in view of the lethality of modern weapons that mandate the rapid assembly and speedy dispersal of forces.

Maneuver

Maneuver is the employment of forces in the operational area, through movement in combination with fires and information, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy. (*DOD Dictionary*) Maneuver allows for the distribution or concentration of capabilities in support of the commander's concept of operations. The Marine Corps maneuver warfare philosophy expands the concept of maneuver to include taking action in any dimension, whether temporal, psychological, or technological, to gain an advantage.

Economy of Force

The reciprocal of the principle of mass, economy of force allocates minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. Commanders allocate the minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts, requiring the acceptance of prudent risks in selected areas to achieve superiority at the decisive time and location with the main effort. Devoting means to unnecessary efforts or excessive means to necessary secondary efforts violates the principles of mass and objective. Economy of force measures are achieved through limited attacks, defense, deceptions, or delaying actions.

Unity of Command

Unity of command requires that, for every objective, there is unity of effort ensured under one responsible commander. Unity of command is based on the designation of a single commander with the authority to direct and coordinate the efforts of all assigned forces in pursuit of a common objective. The goal of unity of command is unity of effort. In joint and multinational operations where the commander may not control all elements in the AO, the commander seeks cooperation and builds consensus to achieve unity of effort.

Security

The goal of security is never to permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage. Security is those measures taken by a military unit, activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair effectiveness. Security measures are designed to prevent surprise, ensure freedom of action, and deny the enemy information about friendly forces, capabilities, and plans. Security is essential to the preservation of combat power across the ROMO, even in benign environments. However, since risk is an inherent condition of war, security does not imply over cautiousness or the avoidance of calculated risk. In fact, security can often be enhanced by bold maneuver and offensive action, which deny the enemy the chance to interfere. Adequate security requires an accurate appreciation of enemy capabilities, sufficient security measures, effective reconnaissance, and continuous readiness for action.

Surprise

Striking the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared is the element of surprise. It is not essential that the enemy be taken unaware, but only becomes aware too late to react effectively. Factors contributing to surprise include speed, the use of unexpected forces, operating at night, effective and timely intelligence, deception, security, variation in tactics and techniques, and the use of unfavorable terrain. Surprise can decisively affect the outcome of a battle and may compensate for numerical inferiority.

Simplicity

Preparing clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders to ensure thorough understanding follow the principle of simplicity. Plans should be as simple and direct as the situation and mission dictate. Direct, simple plans and clear, concise orders reduce the chance for misunderstanding and confusion and promote effective execution. In combat, even the simplest plan is usually difficult to execute, though usually the simplest plan is preferred. Multinational operations place great importance on simplicity, since language, doctrine, and cultural differences complicate military operations. Simple plans and orders minimize the confusion inherent in joint and multinational operations.

Restraint

In an effort to limit collateral damage and prevent the unnecessary use of force, restraint requires careful and disciplined balancing of security, the conduct of military operations, and the desired strategic end state. Excessive force antagonizes those friendly and neutral parties involved; hence, it damages the legitimacy of the organization that uses it while potentially enhancing the legitimacy of any opposing party. The ROE must be carefully matched to the strategic end state and the situation. Commanders at all levels ensure their personnel are properly trained in ROE and are quickly informed of any changes. Rules of engagement may vary according to national policy concerns, but unit commanders always retain the inherent right and obligation to exercise unit self-defense in response to a hostile act or demonstrated hostile intent. Restraint is best achieved when ROE issued at the beginning of an operation address a range of plausible situations. Commanders should consistently review and revise ROE as necessary. Additionally, commanders should carefully examine them to ensure that the lives and health of Marines are not needlessly endangered. National concerns may lead to different ROE for multinational participants; commanders must be aware of national restrictions imposed on force participants.

Perseverance

Ensuring the commitment necessary to attain the national strategic end state requires perseverance. Commanders prepare for measured, protracted military operations in pursuit of the desired national strategic end state, which even some joint operations may require years to reach. The underlying causes of the crisis may be elusive, making resolving it and achieving conditions supporting the end state difficult. The patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives often is a requirement for success, frequently involving diplomatic, informational, and economic measures to supplement military efforts. In the end, the will of the American public, as expressed through their elected officials and advised by expert military judgment, determines the duration and size of any military commitment.

United States military forces' endurance and commanders' perseverance are necessary to accomplish long-term missions. A decisive offensive operation may swiftly create conditions for

short-term success; however, protracted stability operations, executed simultaneously with defensive and offensive tasks, may be needed to achieve the strategic end state.

Legitimacy

A legitimate operation develops and maintains the will necessary to attain the national strategic end state. For US military forces, legitimacy comes from three important factors:

- The operation or campaign must be conducted under US law.
- The operation must be conducted according to international laws and treaties recognized by the United States, particularly the law of war.
- The operation or campaign should develop or reinforce the authority and acceptance for the host nation government by both the governed and the international community. This factor is frequently the decisive element.

Legitimacy is also based on the will of the US citizens to support the mission. The US population's perception of legitimacy is strengthened if obvious national or humanitarian interests are at stake. Their perception also depends on their assurance that American lives are not being placed at risk needlessly or carelessly.

Other interested audiences may include foreign nations, civil populations in and near the operational area, and participating multinational forces. Committed forces must sustain the legitimacy of the operation and of the host nation government, where applicable. Security actions must balance with the need to maintain legitimacy. Commanders must consider all actions potentially competing for strategic and tactical requirements. All actions must exhibit fairness in dealing with competing factions where appropriate. Legitimacy depends on the level of consent to the force and to the host nation government, the people's expectations, and the force's credibility.

APPENDIX B
WARFIGHTING FUNCTIONS

The warfighting functions encompass all military activities performed in the battlespace. Warfighting functions are a grouping of like activities into major functional areas that aid in planning and execution of operations. The seven functional areas are command and control, maneuver, fires, intelligence, information, logistics, and force protection. The key advantage of using warfighting functions is they allow the commander and staff planners to look at all aspects of the battlespace and not leave anything to chance if it is within their capability to coordinate, control, influence, and synchronize. By integrating the warfighting functions, the commander can increase the force's combat power, mass capabilities on the enemy, and aid in the assessment of the operation's success. As discussed in MCDP 1-2, *Campaigning*, the synchronization of all warfighting functions gives them their maximum impact on attaining the desired objective within the shortest time possible and with minimum casualties.

Marine Corps Warfighting Functions
Command and Control
Maneuver
Fires
Intelligence
Information
Logistics
Force Protection

Planners consider and integrate the warfighting functions when analyzing how to accomplish the mission, because integrating the warfighting functions helps to achieve focus and unity of effort. Planners think in terms of how each function supports mission accomplishment; moreover, they consider the coordination of activities not only within each warfighting function, but also among all the warfighting functions. By using warfighting functions as the integration elements, planners ensure all functions are focused toward a single purpose. The warfighting functions apply equally to traditional and irregular warfare.

Command and Control

Command and control is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces to accomplish a mission. Command and control involves arranging personnel, equipment, and facilities to allow a commander to extend influence over the force during the planning and conduct of military operations. Command and control is the overarching warfighting function that enables all of the other warfighting functions. Command remains a very personal function—professional competence, personality, and the will of strong commanders represent a significant part of any unit's combat power. Commanders go where they can best influence the action; where their moral and physical presence can be felt; and where their will to achieve a decision can best be expressed, understood, and acted upon. The focus of command and control is on each of the commanders—their intent, guidance, decisions, and how they receive feedback on the results of their actions. Commanders command while staffs coordinate and make necessary adjustments consistent with the commander's intent. Control allows commanders to adjust and modify command action as needed based on feedback. Feedback is the basic mechanism of control. It is the continuous flow of information about the unfolding situation returning to the commanders. This information indicates the difference

between the goals and the situation as it exists. Feedback may come from any direction and in any form—intelligence about how the enemy is reacting, information about the status of subordinate or adjacent units, or revised guidance from above based on developments. Accordingly, feedback allows commanders to adapt to changing circumstances—to exploit fleeting opportunities, respond to developing problems, modify schemes, or redirect efforts. In this way, feedback "controls" subsequent command action. Control is not strictly something that seniors impose on subordinates; rather, the entire system comes "under control" based on feedback about the changing situation. Command and control is an interactive process involving all the parts of the system and working in all directions. The result is a mutually supporting system in which complementary commanding and controlling forces interact to ensure the force as a whole can adapt continuously to changing requirements.

Maneuver

Maneuver is the employment of forces in the operational area, through movement in combination with fires and information, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy. (*DOD Dictionary*) Maneuver allows for the distribution or concentration of capabilities in support of a commander's concept of operations. The Marine Corps maneuver warfare philosophy expands the concept of maneuver to include taking action in any dimension, whether temporal, psychological, or technological, to gain an advantage.

Fires

Fires use weapon systems to create a specific lethal or nonlethal effect on a target. Fires harass, suppress, neutralize, or destroy in order to accomplish the targeting objective—whether to disrupt, delay, limit, persuade, or influence. Fires include the collective and coordinated use of target acquisition systems, direct and indirect fire weapons, armed aircraft of all types, and other lethal and nonlethal means. Fires are normally used with maneuver and help shape the battlespace, setting conditions for decisive action.

Intelligence

Intelligence provides the commander with an understanding of the enemy and the battlespace and identifies the enemy's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. It assists commanders in understanding the situation, alerts them to new opportunities, and helps them assess the effects of actions upon the enemy. Intelligence drives operations, is focused on the enemy, and supports the formulation and subsequent modification of the commanders' estimate of the situation by providing as accurate an image of the battlespace and the enemy as possible. It is a dynamic process used to assess the current situation and confirm or deny the adoption of specific COAs by the enemy. It helps refine the commanders' understanding of the battlespace and reduces uncertainty and risk.

Information

The management and application of information and its deliberate integration with other warfighting functions to influence relevant actor perceptions, behavior, action or inaction, and support human and automated decision making. The information warfighting function helps commanders and staffs understand and leverage the pervasive nature of information, its military uses, and its application across all operational phases and the ROMO. This function provides the Marine Corps with the ability to integrate the generation and preservation of friendly information

while leveraging the inherent informational aspects of all military activities and Service level operations to achieve Marine Corps objectives.

Logistics

Logistics encompasses all activities required to move and sustain military forces. At the tactical level, logistic functions are maintenance, transportation, supply, general engineering, services, and health service support to include their subfunctions. See MCTP 3-40B for more information on tactical-level logistics.

Force Protection

Force protection is the measures taken to preserve the force's potential so that it can be applied at the appropriate time and place. It includes those measures the force takes to remain viable by protecting itself from the effects of enemy and adversary activities and natural occurrences. Force protection safeguards friendly centers of gravity and protects, conceals, reduces, or eliminates friendly critical vulnerabilities.

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APPENDIX C
TACTICAL TASKS

Tactical tasks are the defined actions, based on unit capabilities, that a commander may take to accomplish the mission. Tactical tasks may be specified, implied, or essential. These tasks may be expressed in terms of enemy-oriented, friendly-oriented, terrain-oriented, or population-oriented. The tactical tasks in this appendix describe the results or effects the commander wants to achieve—the what and why of a mission statement not previously addressed in this publication. The what is an effect that is normally measurable. The why of a mission statement provides the mission's purpose or reason. These tasks have specific military definitions that are different from those found in a dictionary. In special circumstances, tasks may be modified to meet METT-T requirements—the commander must clearly state that they are departing from the standard meaning of these tasks. The commander is not limited to the tactical tasks listed in this appendix in specifying desired subordinate actions. However, both the commander and the subordinate must have a common understanding of what the commander is trying to convey in terms of the what and why of an operation.

Tactical tasks are assigned based on capabilities—commanders ensure that the tasks assigned to subordinate units are consistent with the SOM and the resources allocated to those subordinates. The GCE can execute all of the MAGTF's tactical tasks. The LCE can execute those tactical tasks essential for it to provide sustainment to the MAGTF. The ACE can execute many of the tactical tasks, but it cannot secure, seize, retain, or occupy terrain without augmentation by the GCE.

Table C-1Tactical Tasks.

Enemy-Oriented Tactical Tasks	Terrain-Oriented Tactical Tasks	Friendly-Oriented Tactical Tasks
ambush	breach*	cover
attack by fire	clear	disengage
block	control*	displace
breach*	cordon*	exfiltrate
bypass	occupy*	follow and assume
canalize	reconnoiter*	follow and support
contain*	retain	guard
corrupt	secure*	protect
deceive	seize	screen
defeat	**Population-Oriented Tactical Tasks**	
degrade		
deny	advise	enable civil authorities
destroy	assess the population	exclude
disrupt	assist	influence*
exploit	build/restore infrastructure	occupy*
feint	contain*	reconnoiter*
fix	control*	secure*
influence*	coordinate with civil authorities	train
interdict		
isolate		
neutralize		
penetrate		
reconnoiter*		
support by fire		
suppress		

*Tactical tasks with multiple classifications and applications.

ENEMY-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on generating effects against enemy forces. Most of these effects have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

Ambush

An ambush is fundamentally a type of attack, enemy-oriented, and is planned and executed accordingly (see chap. 5). It is also a tactical task. Figure C-1 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for an ambush. The arrow points at the targeted force or objective, and the commander places the base of the arrow in the general area from which the commander wants to deliver the ambush.

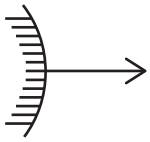

Figure C-1. Ambush Symbol.

Attack by Fire

Attack by fire is an enemy-oriented tactical task that uses fires (direct and indirect) in the physical domains and/or through the information environment to engage the enemy from a distance to destroy, fix, neutralize, or suppress. Commanders employ this task when the mission does not dictate or support close combat and the objective of the attack by fire does not require occupation by another friendly force. Units may use it in the offense, with an axis of advance or force-oriented objective, or in the defense in association with a BP, sector of fire, of an EA. The enemy may be stationary or moving. Figure C-2 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for attack by fire. The arrow points at the targeted force or objective, and the commander places the base of the arrow in the general area from which the commander wants to deliver the attack.

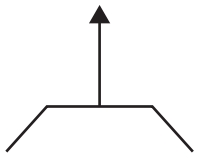

Figure C-2. Attack by Fire Symbol.

An attack by fire closely resembles the task of support by fire. The chief difference is that one unit conducts the support-by-fire task to support another unit so they can maneuver against the enemy. The attack-by-fire task includes—

- Assigning sectors of fire or EAs to each subordinate weapon system to include the enemy's defensive positions or avenues of approach.
- Designating control measures to allow massing, distributing, and shifting of direct and indirect fires.
- Designating BPs, AOs, or an axis of advance to allow the friendly force to engage the enemy.

Block

A block can be employed as an enemy-oriented tactical task and/or as an obstacle effect. As a tactical task, a block denies the enemy access to an area or prevents enemy advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. As an obstacle effect, a block integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent the enemy from passing through an EA. A blocking task requires the friendly force to block the enemy force for a certain time or until a specific event has occurred. A blocking unit may have to hold terrain and become decisively engaged. A block differs from the tactical task fix because a blocked enemy force can still move in another direction, they just cannot advance. A fixed enemy force cannot move. A force may employ blocking obstacles to assist in the execution of the task, but obstacles alone cannot accomplish the task. Figure C-3a depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for a blocking task. The top right symbol depicts block as a tactical task where the line

perpendicular to the enemy's line of advance indicates the limit of enemy advance. Figure C-3b depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for block as an obstacle effect graphic. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on blocking obstacles and their effects.

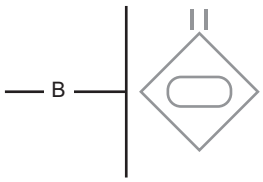

Figure C-3a. Block as a Task.

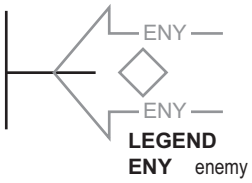

Figure C-3b. Block as an Obstacle Effect.

Breach

A breach is a synchronized combined arms activity under the control of the maneuver commander conducted to allow maneuver through an obstacle. (MCTP 3-34A) Breaching enemy defenses and obstacle systems is normally a commander's least preferred choice. It requires the employment of combined arms to be successful. (See chap. 3 and MCTP 3-34A). Figure C-4 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for breach. The area located between the arms of the graphic shows the general location for the breach. The length of the arms extend to include the entire depth of the area that must be breached.

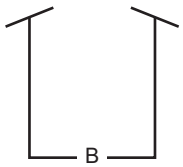

Figure C-4. Breach.

Bypass

Bypass is a tactical task in which units maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain the momentum of the operation while deliberately avoiding combat with an enemy force. A commander orders a bypass and directs combat power toward mission accomplish- ment. A bypass can take place in offensive or defensive actions. Figure C-5 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for a bypass. The arms of the graphic go on both sides of the location or unit that will be bypassed.

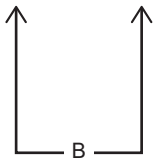

Figure C-5. Bypass.

The commander bases the bypass decision on—

- The requirement to maintain momentum and aggressive action.
- Knowledge of enemy strength, intent, or mission.
- The degree to which the bypassed enemy can interfere with the advance.
- The general state of the enemy force (weak versus strong).
- Any bypass criteria established by a higher headquarters.

The force conducting the bypass immediately reports any bypassed obstacles and enemy forces to higher headquarters. The force normally keeps the bypassed enemy under observation until relieved by another force, unless they are part of a raid. A senior commander does not normally delegate authority to bypass below the battalion level. Bypass criteria are established to limit the size of the enemy force that can be bypassed without the authority of the next higher commander. Before approving the bypass, the commander ensures that the bypassing force checks the bypass route for enemy presence and trafficability. At no time can the bypassing force allow the bypassed enemy force to interfere with the moving friendly force.

The two bypass techniques that the force can employ are—

- Avoiding the enemy totally.
- Fixing the enemy in place with fires and then conducting the bypass.

If the force cannot avoid the enemy, the bypassing force must fix the enemy with part of the maneuver elements and bypass with the balance of the force (see fig. C-6). Generally, a commander will not attempt to bypass an enemy force if more than a third of the unit's combat power is required to fix the enemy. The commander assigns one subordinate unit the mission of fixing the enemy in this situation, reinforcing the fixing force as required by METT-T. The fixing force coordinates with the unit assigned to relieve them as soon as possible and provides the

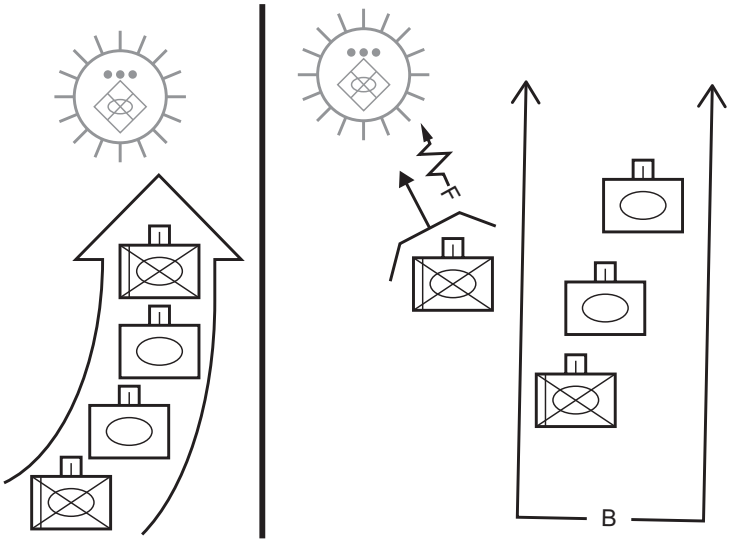

Figure C-6. Task Force Conducting a Fix and Bypass.

new commander with all available information about the enemy and terrain. The relieving unit is normally another unit assigned a follow-and-support task. Once relieved, the force fixing the enemy either rejoins the parent organization or becomes part of the following element and comes under its control.

Occasionally the commander may direct the fixing force to break contact with the enemy after the bypassing force completes the bypass. This occurs when the bypassing force has no requirement to maintain an uninterrupted LOC, such as in a raid. In this case, the fixing force fixes the enemy by employing defensive and limited offensive actions in synchronization with all available fire support until ordered to rejoin the bypassing force.

Canalize

Canalize is an enemy-oriented tactical task that restricts enemy movement to a narrow zone by the use of existing or reinforcing obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver. Figure C-7 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for canalize.

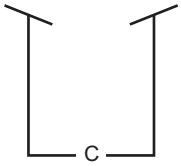

Figure C-7. Canalize.

Figure C-8 shows how successful canalization results in moving the enemy formation or individual enemy personnel and weapon systems into a predetermined position where they are vulnerable to piecemeal destruction.

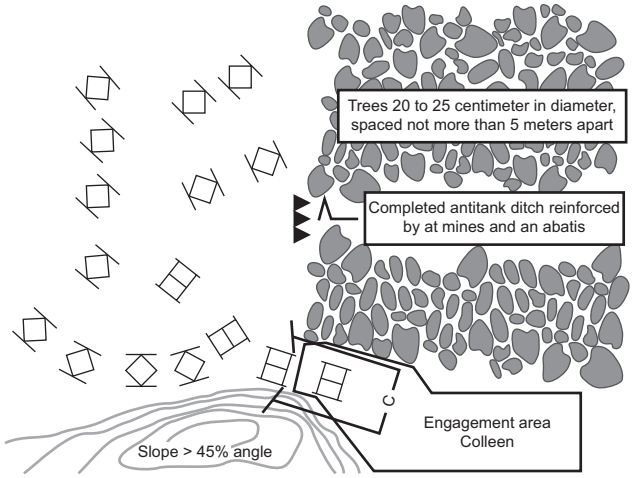

Figure C-8. Use of the Canalize Tactical Task.

Contain

Contain is an enemy-oriented tactical task to stop, hold, or surround the forces of the enemy or to cause the enemy to center activity on a given front and to prevent the withdrawal of any part of the enemy's forces for use elsewhere. Whereas the tactical task fix prevents enemy movement, the tactical task contain allows for some enemy movement within the designated area. It is a less resource intensive task than fix, since the friendly force does not have to prevent all enemy

movement, just enemy movement from the assigned area. Commanders assign limits in terms of geography or time. Figure C-9 depicts the shows the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for contain. The contain graphic encompasses the entire area in which the commander desires to contain the enemy during the development of alternative COAs.

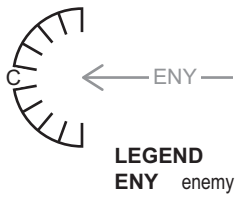

Figure C-9. Contain.

Corrupt

Corrupt is an enemy-oriented tactical task to change, debase, or otherwise alter information from its original or correct form or version by intentionally introducing errors or alterations, thereby rendering it useless.

Deceive

Deceive is an enemy-oriented tactical task to manipulate an enemy into believing and acting upon something that is not true for a selected period of time and/or at a particular location to create a friendly advantage.

Defeat

Defeat is an enemy-oriented tactical task to disrupt or nullify the enemy commander's plan and overcome the enemy's will to fight, thus creating the condition where the enemy commander is unwilling or unable to pursue the adopted COA and yield to the friendly commander's will. A defeated enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight and the enemy commander is unwilling or unable to pursue their adopted COA. The defeated force can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use.

A commander can generate different effects against an enemy to defeat that force:

- Physical. The enemy loses the physical means to continue fighting. The enemy force no longer has the personnel, weapon systems, equipment, and/or supplies to carry out their mission.
- Psychological. The enemy loses the will to fight. Enemy commanders and their forces become mentally exhausted, and their morale is so low that they can no longer accomplish their missions.

Defeat manifests itself in some sort of physical action, such as mass surrenders, abandonment of significant quantities of equipment and supplies, or retrograde operations.

Degrade

Degrade is an enemy-oriented tactical task to diminish the effectiveness or efficiency of an enemy's command and control systems, communications systems, and/or information collection efforts or means; lower the morale of an enemy unit; reduce a target's worth or value; and/or impair an enemy's decision-making capability.

Deny

Deny is an enemy-oriented tactical task to hinder or prevent the enemy from using terrain, space, personnel, supplies, facilities, and/or specific capabilities.

Destroy

Destroy is an enemy-oriented tactical task to physically render an enemy force combat ineffective unless they can be reconstituted. Figure C-10 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for destroy. Defeat and destroy are not the same. Destruction of the enemy force normally leads to their defeat, but defeat does not necessarily require destruction. While it is true that generating the destruction effect is relative—the amount of damage needed to render a unit combat-ineffective depends on its type, discipline, and morale—it is resource intensive. For example, even with precision weapons the destruction of armored or dug-in targets requires considerable ammunition and time. Consequently, commanders balance the need to maintain operational tempo, apply resources efficiently, and determine exactly what effects they need to generate on the enemy in choosing whether to assign a destroy task.

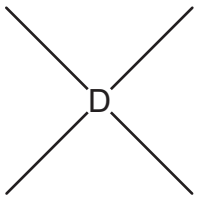

Figure C-10. Destroy.

Disrupt

Disrupt is an enemy-oriented tactical task or effect that employs or integrates fires and obstacles to break apart an enemy's formation and tempo, interrupt the timetable, or cause premature commitment or the piecemealing of enemy forces. Disruption deceives the enemy as to friendly locations, increases their vulnerability to friendly fires and counterattack, delays them, and generally degrades their organization, command and control, and ability to mass combat power. Disruption is never an end in itself, it is normally a means to set the conditions for some other action.

Figure C-11a depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for the tactical task disrupt. The center arrow points toward the targeted enemy unit. Figure C-11b depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for the obstacle effect disrupt. The short arrow(s) in the obstacle-effect graphic indicates where obstacles impact the enemy's ability to maneuver. The longer arrow(s) indicate where the commander allows the enemy to bypass the obstacle effect, so the defending force can attack the enemy with fires. The arrows indicate the direction of enemy attack. A defending commander normally uses the disrupt obstacle effect forward of EAs. Obstacles alone cannot disrupt an enemy unit. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on disrupting obstacles and their effects.

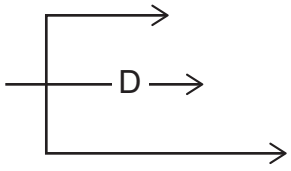

Figure C-11a. Disrupt as a Task.

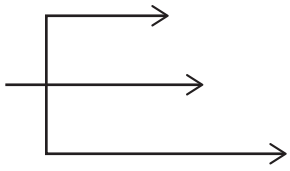

Figure C-11b. Disrupt as an Obstacle Effect.

Exploit

Exploit is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to the type of offensive operation, exploitation (see chap. 6). Exploit takes full advantage of success in battle and follow-up initial gains to disorganize the enemy in depth. Also, exploit is to employ to the greatest possible advantage enemy information that has come into friendly hands. Exploitation follows a successful attack that is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. It extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense.

Feint

Feint is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to the type of attack, feint (see chap. 5). Feints are used to cause the enemy to react in three predictable ways: to employ reserves improperly, to shift supporting fires, or to reveal defensive fires. A feint is graphically indicated by using a dotted "V" in association with the proper tactical graphic. Figure C-12 illustrates a feint along a direction of attack. A dotted "V" over a unit icon would indicate a dummy unit.

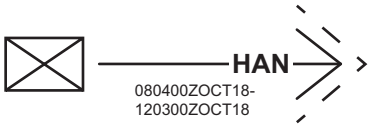

Figure C-12. Feint.

Fix

Fix is an enemy-oriented tactical task to prevent the movement of any part of enemy forces, either from a specific location or for a specific period of time, by holding or surrounding them to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere. Fix is also a tactical obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker within a specified area—normally an EA. This may occur by engaging the enemy force to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere, or y using deception, such as transmitting false orders. The commander uses fix in offensive and defensive actions; it is always a shaping action. Figure C-13a depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for the tactical task fix. The commander points the arrow toward the desired enemy unit to fix. The broken part of the arrow indicates the desired location for that event to occur.

Fixing an enemy force does not mean destroying them. However, the friendly force has to prevent the enemy from moving in any direction, which can be resource intensive. This task usually has a geographic or time constraint. The tactical task of fix (see fig. C-13a) differs from that of block in that a fixed enemy force cannot move from a given location, but a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the one obstructed.

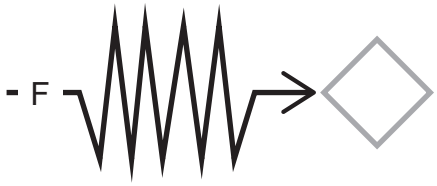

Figure C-13a. Fix as a Task.

As an obstacle effect, fix is generated to give the friendly unit time to acquire, target, and destroy the attacking enemy with direct and indirect fires throughout the depth of an EA or avenue of approach. Figure C-13b depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for the obstacle effect fix. The irregular part of the arrow in the obstacleintent graphic indicates the location where the enemy's rate of advance will be slowed by complex obstacles. The arrow indicates the direction of enemy advance. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on fixing obstacles and their effects.

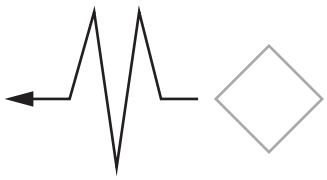

Figure C-13b. Fix as an Obstacle Effect.

Influence

Influence is to cause the enemy to behave in a manner favorable to friendly forces.

Interdict

Interdict is an enemy-oriented tactical task to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces. Interdiction is an action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military surface capability before it can be used effectively against friendly forces, or to otherwise achieve objectives. Interdiction in support of law enforcement, are activities conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, intercept, board, detain, or destroy, under lawful authority, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, people, cargo, and money. (JP 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*) Interdiction is a shaping action conducted to complement and reinforce other ongoing offensive or defensive operations. Figure C-14 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for interdict. The two arrows should cross on the unit or location targeted for interdiction. An interdict task must specify the length of time or an event that must occur before the interdiction is lifted or the exact effect desired from the interdiction.

The depth at which interdiction takes place determines the speed with which its effects are observed. Deeper interdiction attacks may not generate immediate effects on close combat, but serve to overall degrade the enemy's ability to mass combat power. Conversely, interdiction attacks in the immediate area may have direct impact in the close fight, but will not prevent the enemy from massing combat power across the battlespace. Commanders seek to blend both—the GCE may use artillery and CAS to interdict enemy reserves as part of isolating the battlespace, while the ACE interdicts targets deep in the enemy rear to prevent the enemy from massing against the MAGTF's operation.

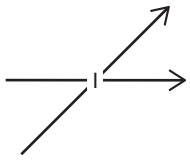

Figure C-14. Interdict.

Isolate

Isolate is an enemy-oriented tactical task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from sources of support, deny the enemy freedom of movement, and prevent the isolated enemy force from having contact with other enemy forces. The tactical task isolate is most easily associated with an envelopment, but equally applies to the establishment of a cordon to conduct a search. A commander does not allow an isolated enemy force sanctuary within their present position but continues to conduct offensive actions against them. Figure C-15 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for isolate. The position or direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic surrounds the targeted enemy unit.

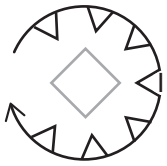

Figure C-15. Isolate.

Neutralize

Neutralize is an enemy-oriented tactical task that renders enemy's forces or resources ineffective or unusable. Neutralize is also an effect of fires delivered to render a target ineffective or unusable. The unit has degraded capability of accomplishing the mission. When assigning a task to neutralize, the commander specifies the enemy force or materiel to neutralize and the duration, which is time- or event-driven. The neutralized target may become effective again when casualties are replaced, damage is repaired, or effort resulting in the neutralization is lifted. The commander normally uses a combination of fires and information operations to neutralize enemy personnel or materiel. The assets required to neutralize a target vary according to the type and size of the target and the weapon and munitions combination used. Figure C-16 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for neutralize. The two lines cross over the symbol of the unit or facility targeted for neutralization.

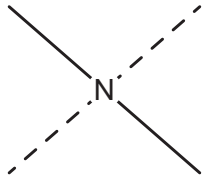

Figure C-16. Neutralize.

Penetrate

Penetrate is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to the form of offensive maneuver, penetrate and pertains to breaking through the enemy's defense to disrupt their defensive system (see chap. 3). Figure C-17 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for penetrate. The arrow points towards the enemy and the proposed point of penetration. The vertical line indicates the enemy position.

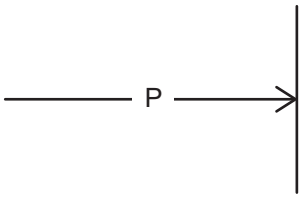

Figure C-17. Penetrate.

Reconnoiter

Reconnoiter is the enemy-oriented tactical task associated with conducting reconnaissance (see chap. 12). It refers to obtaining, by visual observation or other methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, the nature of terrain, and/or civil considerations.

Support by Fire

Support by fire is an enemy-oriented tactical task in which a maneuver force moves to a position where they can engage the enemy by direct fire in support of another maneuvering force using overwatch or by establishing a base of fire. The primary objective of the assigned force is to fix and suppress the enemy so that the enemy cannot effectively move against or fire upon friendly maneuvering units. The secondary objective is to destroy the enemy if the enemy tries to reposition. The commander specifies the desired effect on the enemy when assigning this task. Units assigned support-by-fire tasks do not maneuver against enemy forces or terrain, but support the maneuver of other elements. When assigning a support-by-fire mission, the commander designates the enemy, when to attack, the general location from which to operate, the friendly force to support, and the purpose of the task, such as fix or suppress. Figure C-18 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for support by fire. The ends of the arrows point in the general direction of the targeted unit or location. The base of the area indicates the general area from which to deliver fires.

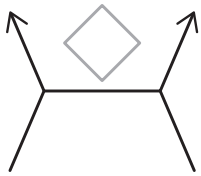

Figure C-18. Support by Fire.

Once the commander gives an element the task of support by fire, they should occupy support-by-fire positions that have cover and concealment, good observation, and clear fields of fire. Elements occupying support-by-fire positions should—

- Check the security of the position.
- Search for targets.
- Orient weapons on likely or suspected enemy positions.
- Assume fighting positions that provide some degree of protection.
- Assign observation sectors to each individual or weapon system in the support-by-fire element.

Support by fire closely resembles the task of attack by fire. The difference is that support by fire supports another force so that they can maneuver against the enemy, while an attack by fire does not support the maneuver of another friendly force.

Suppress

Suppress is an enemy-oriented tactical task that results in the temporary or transient degradation of an opposing force or the performance of a weapons system below the level needed to fulfill mission objectives. It derives from the joint definition of suppression (see JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*). It occurs when a commander employs direct or indirect fires (such as artillery) and information operations (such as electronic warfare), against enemy personnel, weapons, equipment, and networks to prevent or degrade enemy fires, sensors, command and control, and visual observation of friendly forces. Unlike the neutralization task, the original target regains effectiveness without needing to reconstitute once the effects of the systems involved in the suppression effort lift or shift to another target. Figure C-19 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for suppress.

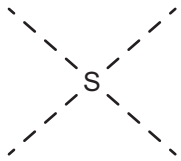

Figure C-19. Suppress.

TERRAIN-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on achieving some sort of condition as it relates to terrain. Most of these effects have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

Breach

Breach as a terrain-oriented tactical task is to break through or secure a passage through an obstacle. See Figure C-4 for the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for breach.

Clear

Clear is a terrain-oriented tactical task to remove enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned zone, area, or location by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces that could interfere with the unit's ability to accomplish the mission. This task can require significant time and resources to truly clear an area of an enemy. In assigning this task, commanders may modify the objective by applying it to enemy forces larger than a stated size, or by stating a condition, such as enemy forces unable to delay friendly movement. In these cases, the clearing force will still need to keep enemy forces not meeting the criteria under observation. Figure C-20 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for clear. The bar connecting the arrows designates the desired LOA for the clearing force. The bar also establishes the width of the area to clear.

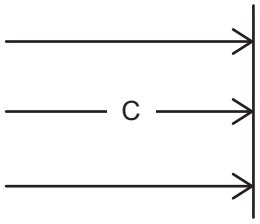

Figure C-20. Clear.

Clear is also a mobility operation that requires the complete elimination or neutralization of an obstacle or residual obstacles affecting the operational area. It is usually performed by follow-on engineers and is not done under fire. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on clearing operations.

Control

Control as a terrain-oriented tactical task is to maintain physical influence by occupation or range of weapon systems over the activities or access in a defined area. Influence can result from friendly forces occupying the specified area or by dominating that area with their weapon systems. Control prevents the movement of enemy ground forces through an area, but does not require the complete clearance of enemy forces or the prevention of enemy fires into the specified area. In this way, control differs from the tactical task secure, which stipulates that no enemy fires may impact the designated area.

> ***Note:*** See DOD Dictionary for the core definition and MCDP 6, "Command and Control," for discussion of the term in the context of command and control.

Cordon

Cordon is a terrain-oriented tactical task given to a unit to prevent withdrawal from or reinforcement to a position. It implies occupying or controlling terrain especially mounted and dismounted avenues of approach. While related to encirclements and often associated with the tactical task isolate as part of a cordon and search operation, any activity can occur within the cordon. The cordon is a temporary task limited by time or event. It requires physical presence and the employment of security outward, to prevent external reinforcement or support, and security inward, to prevent the withdrawal of enemy forces within the cordon. Cordons may be terrain- or force-oriented (see chap. 18).

Occupy

Occupy is a terrain-oriented tactical task to move onto an objective, key terrain, or other manmade or natural terrain area without opposition and control the entire area. The task occupy requires physical presence to achieve control and is done without opposition. Units occupy AAs, BPs, and objectives in advance of enemy action. Figure C-21 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for occupy. The X on the tactical mission graphic has no significance, but the graphic should encompass the entire area that the commander desires occupied. Chapters 2, 3, and 8 discuss this process in detail.

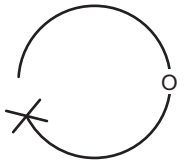

Figure C-21. Occupy.

Reconnoiter

Reconnoiter is the tactical task associated with the conduct of reconnaissance. In addition to being enemy-oriented (see previous discussion), reconnoiter is also a terrain-oriented tactical task to

secure data about the meteorological, hydrographic, and/or geographic characteristics of a particular area. Refer to chapter 13 for more information on reconnaissance.

Retain

Retain is a terrain-oriented tactical task to occupy and hold a terrain feature to ensure it is free of enemy occupation or use. The commander assigning this task specifies the area to retain and the duration of the retention, which is time- or event-driven. When a unit receives this task, they expect the enemy to attack and prepare to become decisively engaged. Commanders may modify this task to allow units to achieve retention via control—retaining a specific piece of terrain without occupying it. This is an exception to the task and requires approval. Figure C-22 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for retain. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to retain.

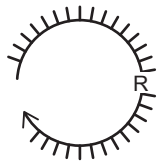

Figure C-22. Retain.

Secure

Secure is a terrain-oriented tactical task to gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action. The attacking force may or may not have to physically occupy the area. This task normally refers to securing a unit, facility, or geographical location, such as a route, intersection, or base. As a task, it requires preventing enemy capture and occupation of the secured location, but also preventing the impact of enemy direct fires and observed indirect fires. Consequently, forces executing this task may or may not occupy the secured location—the focus of their efforts being in the surrounding battlespace. The commander states the mission duration in terms of time or event. Figure C-23 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for secure. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to secure.

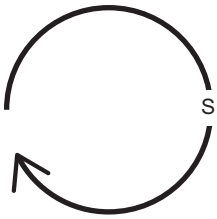

Figure C-23. Secure.

Seize

Seize is a terrain-oriented tactical task to clear, occupy, and gain control of a designated area. When a force seizes a physical area, they clear the terrain within that objective by killing, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of all enemy forces. Seize differs from the tactical task secure by requiring offensive action to obtain control and requires physical occupation. A more subtle difference is that in seizing an objective the friendly force is required only to prevent direct fires

from impacting it, not indirect fires as well. The tactical task seize differs from occupy in that seizure occurs in the face of enemy opposition. It is certainly true that a force sent to seize an objective may find the enemy gone and can merely occupy it. Conversely, a unit sent to occupy a position might find the enemy present, and will need to decide whether the commander's purpose and intent requires seizure. As with all planning, the tactical task the commander chooses is based on the SOM and METT-T. Figure C-24 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for seize. The arrow points to the location or objective to seize.

FRIENDLY-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

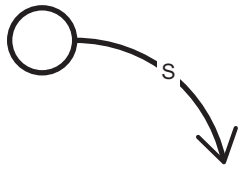

Figure C-24. Seize.

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on supporting the actions of other friendly forces. Most of these effects have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

Cover

Cover is a friendly-oriented tactical task to conduct offensive and defensive actions independent of the main body to protect the covered force and develop the situation. (See the glossary for Marine Corps definitions.) It is the tactical task associated with the security operation cover (see chap. 13). Figure C-25 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for cover.

Disengage

Disengage is a friendly-oriented tactical task to break contact with the enemy and move to a point where the enemy cannot observe or engage the unit by direct fire. Disengagement requires the

Figure C-25. Cover.

unit to move—by any form or method—to a position offering cover and concealment and in such a way as to break contact. In other words, mere displacement to another position, such as a

supplementary or alternate position, or to a position of survivability, is not disengagement if it does not involve breaking contact with enemy forces. The tactical task disengagement is often associated with retrograde operations. A disengagement plan includes—

- Synchronized direct and indirect fires and information operations to set the conditions for elements to break contact and disengage—conditions include suppression, obscuration, and the enemy unable to exploit the disengagement.
- A movement plan, to include appropriate tactical and traffic control measures, for tactical units after the disengagement is complete.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement as part of a deception operation or to cover passage points.
- Signal to start, based on either time or event.

The senior headquarters conducts operations to support the disengaging forces and relieve pressure on units in contact with the enemy. For example, if a MEB is conducting a delay, the commander uses the ACE to help the GCE disengage from the close fight. Simultaneously, the MEB employs naval gunfire, long-range artillery, rocket, and IRCs to destroy or disrupt enemy followon echelons to prevent the enemy from interfering with the disengagement. The intent is to create conditions that allow the unit to disengage while avoiding decisive combat. For more information on disengagement, see chapter 11.

Displace

Displace is a friendly-oriented tactical task to leave one position to take another while remaining in contact with the enemy. While units disengage to break contact with the enemy, units displace to continue the mission or execute alternate missions. Units displace between the various types of positions, for example supplementary and alternate (see chap. 8). Units may displace in the offense or defense, and may displace forward, rearward, or laterally. Contact with the enemy is defined as close combat, direct fires, or observed indirect and aerial delivered fires. An artillery unit may displace to continue the mission while increasing survivability in the same way a maintenance contact team may displace after having been targeted.

Exfiltrate

Exfiltrate is a friendly-oriented tactical task to remove personnel or units from areas under enemy control by stealth. Friendly forces exfiltrate when they have been encircled by enemy forces and cannot conduct a breakout or be relieved by other friendly forces (see chap. 18). Forces returning from a raid, an infiltration, or a patrol behind enemy lines can also conduct an exfiltration. The exfiltration uses the same methods of movement and control measures as an infiltration (see chap. 3). Exfiltration is dependent on METT-T and can consist of vehicles or personnel, and any size unit—though, just like infiltration, small elements are generally used for exfiltration.

Follow and Assume

Follow and assume is a tactical task in which a second committed force follows a force conducting an offensive operation and is prepared to continue the mission if the lead force is fixed, attrited, or unable to continue. The follow-and-assume force is not a reserve but is prepared to execute all missions of the followed unit. See chapter 5 for more discussion of follow and assume. Figure C-26 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for follow and assume.

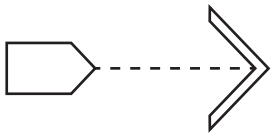

Figure C-26. Follow and Assume.

Figure C-27 depicts a mechanized infantry unit conducting a follow-and-assume mission. The commander places the box part of the graphic around the symbol of the unit being assigned this task.

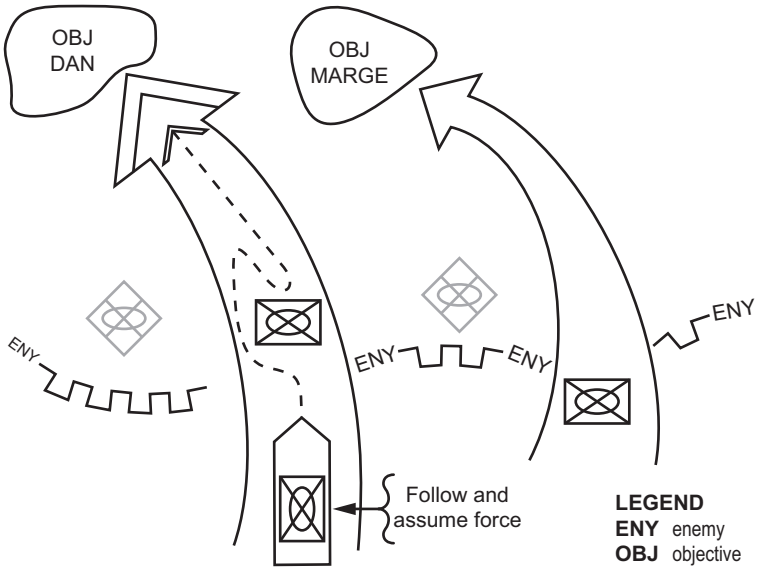

Figure C-27. Follow-and-Assume Mission.

Follow and Support

Follow and support is a friendly-oriented tactical task in which a committed force follows and supports a lead force conducting an offensive operation. The follow-and-support force is not a reserve but is a force committed to supporting the followed unit. The difference between follow and support and follow and assume is as follows. The follow-and-assume force is prepared to take over the lead element's mission, to avoid a culminating point for example. The follow-and-support force acts to create the conditions to allow the lead element to continue their success, such as destroying bypassed elements, blocking enemy movement of reinforcements, clearing obstacles, controlling dislocated civilians, etc. See chapter 5 for more information on follow and support.

Figure C-28 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for follow and support. The commander places the box part of the graphic around the symbol of the unit being assigned this task. Figure C-29 depicts a mechanized infantry unit conducting a follow-and-support mission.

Figure C-28. Follow and Support.

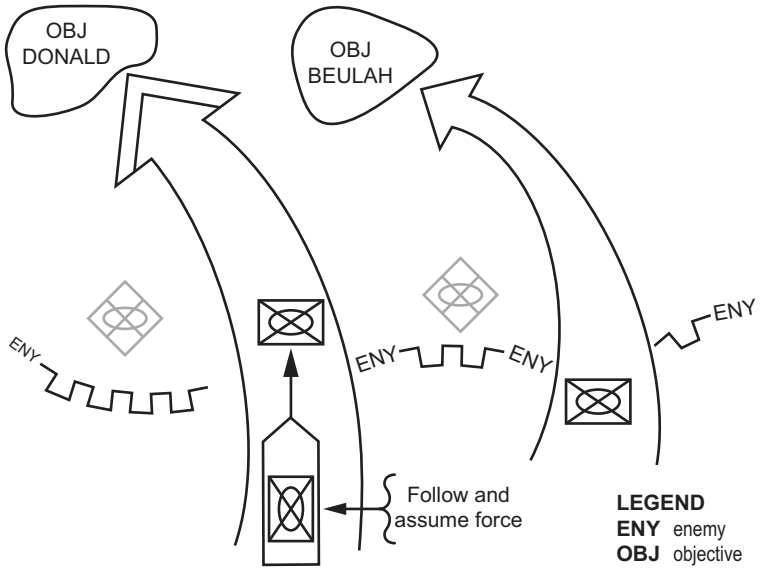

Figure C-29. Follow-and-Support Mission.

Guard

Guard is a friendly-oriented tactical task to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. It is the tactical task associated with the security operation guard. See chapter 13 and the glossary for Marine Corps definitions for more information. Figure C-30 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for guard.

Figure C-30. Guard.

Protect

Protect is a friendly-oriented tactical task to prevent observation by engagement with or interference from an adversarial or enemy force, system, capability, or location.

Screen

Screen is a friendly-oriented tactical task to observe, identify, and report information, and only fight in self-protection. It is the tactical task associated with the security operation screen. See chapter 13 and the glossary for Marine Corps definitions and more information. Figure C-31 depicts the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for screen.

Figure C-31. Screen.

POPULATION-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following population-oriented tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on achieving some sort of condition as it relates to the population within the AO and are also considered supporting stability tasks. More information on stability-related tasks can be found in MCWP 3-03 and JP 3-07, *Stability*.

Advise

Advise is a population-oriented tactical task to improve the individual and unit capabilities and capacities of host-nation security forces through the development of personal and professional relationships between US and HN forces.

Assess the Population

Assess the population is a population-oriented tactical task to evaluate the nature, situation, and attitudes of a designated population or elements of a population inhabiting the AO.

Assist

Assist is a population-oriented tactical task to provide designated support or sustainment capabilities to host-nation security forces to enable them to accomplish their objectives.

Build/Restore Infrastructure

Build/restore infrastructure is a population-oriented tactical task to construct, rebuild, or repair local infrastructure to support the host nation and gain or maintain the cooperation of the local population.

Contain
Contain is a population-oriented tactical task to prevent or halt elements of a population or designated party from departing or projecting physical influence beyond a defined area. See figure C-9 for the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for contain.

Control
Control is a population-oriented tactical task to use physical control measures and IRCs to influence elements of a population or designated actors to respond as desired.

Coordinate with Civil Authorities
Coordinate with civil authorities is a population-oriented tactical task to interact with, maintain communication, and harmonize friendly military activities with those of other interorganizational agencies and coalition partners to achieve unity of effort.

Cordon
Cordon is a population-oriented tactical task to temporarily prevent movement to or from a prescribed area such as a neighborhood, city block, series of buildings, or other feature.

Enable Civil Authorities
Enable civil authorities is a population-oriented tactical task to support or assist the host nation government and designated interorganizational agencies in providing effective governance.

Exclude
Exclude is a population-oriented tactical task to prevent or halt elements of a population or designated party from entering or projecting physical influence into a defined area.

Influence
Influence is a population-oriented tactical task to persuade the local population, including potential and known adversaries, within the operational area to support, cooperate with, or at least accept the friendly force presence, and to dissuade the local population from interfering with operations.

Occupy
Occupy is a population-oriented tactical task to move onto an objective, key terrain, or other manmade or natural area without opposition and control the entire area. See figure C-21 for the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for occupy.

Reconnoiter
Reconnoiter is a population-oriented tactical task to obtain, by visual observation or other methods, information about civil considerations.

Secure
Secure is a population-oriented tactical task to gain possession of a position, terrain feature, piece of infrastructure, or civil asset, with or without force, and prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action. See figure C-23 for the MIL-STD-2525D symbol for secure.

Train

Train is a population-oriented tactical task to teach designated skills or behaviors to improve the individual and unit capabilities and capacities of host nation security forces.

Transition to Civil Control

Transition to civil control is a population-oriented tactical task to handover civil government and security responsibilities from friendly force military authorities to legitimate civil authorities.

GLOSSARY

Section I: Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA ..... assembly area
ACE ..... aviation combat element
ACM ..... airspace coordinating measure
AO ..... area of operations

BCL ..... battlefield coordination line
BP ..... battle position

C2 ..... command and control
CAS ..... close air support
CBRN ..... chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
CFL ..... coordinated fire line
CFZ ..... critical friendly zone
COA ..... course of action
CP ..... command post
CSS ..... combat service support

DLIC ..... detachment left in contact
DZ ..... drop zone

EA ..... engagement area
EPW ..... enemy prisoner of war

FCL ..... final coordination line
FEBA ..... forward edge of the battle area
FLOT ..... forward line of own troops
FPF ..... final protective fire
FRAGO ..... fragmentary order
FSCL ..... fire support coordination line
FSCM ..... fire support coordination measure

GCE ..... ground combat element

HN ..... host-nation

IO ..... information operations
IPB ..... intelligence preparation of the battlespace
IRC ..... information-related capability
ISR ..... intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance

JP ..... joint publication

LAR ..... light armored reconnaissance
LC ..... line of contact
LCE ..... logistics combat element
LD ..... line of departure (*land warfare*)
LOA ..... limit of advance
LOC ..... line of communications
LZ ..... landing zone

MAATF ..... Marine air assault task force
MAGTF ..... Marine air-ground task force
MBA ..... main battle area
MCDP ..... Marine Corps doctrinal publication
MCPP ..... Marine Corps planning process
MCRP ..... Marine Corps reference publication
MCTP ..... Marine Corps tactical publication
MCWP ..... Marine Corps warfighting publication
MEB ..... Marine expeditionary brigade
MEF ..... Marine expeditionary force
METT-T ..... mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available—time available
MIL-STD ..... military standard
MSR ..... main supply route

NAI ..... named area of interest
NFA ..... no-fire area

OP ..... observation post
OPSEC ..... operations security
ORP ..... objective rally point

PAA ..... position area for artillery
PD ..... point of departure
PL ..... phase line
PLD ..... probable line of deployment
POL ..... petroleum, oils, and lubricants

RFA ..... restrictive fire area
RFL ..... restrictive fire line
RIP ..... relief in place
RLT ..... regimental landing team
ROE ..... rules of engagement
ROMO ..... range of military operations

SOM ..... scheme of maneuver
SOP ..... standing operating procedure

TAI ..... target area of interest
TCP ..... traffic control post
TRP ..... target reference point
TTP ..... tactics, techniques, and procedures

UAS ..... unmanned aircraft system
US ..... United States

Section II: Terms and Definitions

advance guard—Detachment sent ahead of the main force to ensure its uninterrupted advance; to protect the main body against surprise; to facilitate the advance by removing obstacles and repairing roads and bridges; and to cover the deployment of the main body if it is committed to action. (DOD Dictionary)

advance party—1. A task organization of designated personnel who form the nucleus of the arrival and assembly organizations whose primary tasks are to arrange for the reception of the main body and provide force protection. 2. During tactical missions, a team that reconnoiters, secures, and organizes an area prior to the main body's arrival and occupation. (Upon promulgation of this publication, the modified definition are is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

adversary—A party acknowledged as potentially hostile to a friendly party and against which the use of force may be envisaged. (DOD Dictionary)

air assault—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Operations in which air assault forces (combat, combat support, and combat service support), using the firepower, mobility, and total integration of assault support assets in their ground or air roles, maneuver on the battlefield under the control of the mission commander to provide mobility and firepower of the assigned mission. (MCRP 1-10.2)

airborne operation—An operation involving the air movement into an objective area of combat forces and their logistic support for execution of a tactical, operational, or strategic mission. (DOD Dictionary)

air movement—Air transport of units, personnel, supplies, and equipment including airdrops and air landings. (DOD Dictionary)

alternate position—A position to be occupied when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuitable for carrying out the assigned task. The alternate position is so located that the original task can be accomplished. See also **position; primary position; supplementary position**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, the modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

ambush—A surprise attack by fire from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

approach march—Advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is imminent. Troops are fully or partially deployed. The approach march ends when ground contact with the enemy is made or when the attack position is occupied. (MCRP 1-10.2)

area defense—A type of defense in which the bulk of the defending force is deployed on selected terrain. Principal reliance is placed on the ability of the defending forces to maintain their positions and to control the terrain between them. The reserve is used to add depth, to block,

or restore the battle position by counterattack. (Upon promulgation of this publication, the modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

area of influence—A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control. (DOD Dictionary)

area reconnaissance—A directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area such as a town, ridge line, woods, or other features critical to operations. (MCRP 1-10.2)

assault position—That position between the line of departure and the objective in an attack from which forces assault the objective. Ideally, it is the last covered and concealed position before reaching the objective (primarily used by dismounted infantry). (MCRP 1-10.2)

assault support—The use of aircraft to provide tactical mobility and logistic support for the Marine air-ground task force, the movement of high priority cargo and personnel within the immediate area of operations, in-flight refueling, and the evacuation of personnel and cargo. Assault support is one of the six functions of Marine aviation. (MCRP 1-10.2)

assembly area—1. An area in which a command is assembled preparatory to further action. Also called **AA**. (MCRP 1-10.2, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

attack—An offensive action characterized by coordinated movement, supported by fire, conducted to defeat, destroy, or capture the enemy and/or secure key terrain. (MCRP 1-10.2)

attack by fire—Fires (direct and indirect) in the physical domains and/or through the information environment to engage the enemy from a distance to destroy, fix, neutralize, or suppress. (MCRP 1-10.2)

attack position—The last position occupied by the assault echelon before crossing the line of departure. (DOD Dictionary)

avenue of approach—An air or ground route of an attacking force of a given size leading to its objective or to key terrain in its path. Also called **AA**. (DOD Dictionary)

axis of advance—A line of advance assigned for purposes of control; often a road or a group of roads, or a designated series of locations, extending in the direction of the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2.)

battalion landing team—1. In an amphibious operation, an infantry battalion normally reinforced by necessary combat and service elements. 2. The basic unit for planning an assault landing. Also called **BLT**. (DOD Dictionary)

battlefield coordination line—A fire support coordination measure, similar to a fire support coordination line, that facilitates the expeditious attack of targets with surface indirect fires and aviation fires between this measure and the fire support coordination line. To facilitate air delivered fires and deconflict air and surface fires, an airspace coordination area will always

overlie the area between the battlefield coordination line and the fire support coordination line. The battlefield coordination line location is graphically portrayed on fire support maps, charts, and overlays by a solid black lie with the letters "BCL" followed by the establishing headquarters in parentheses above the line and effective date-time group below the line. Also called **BCL**. (MCRP 1-10.2).

battle position—1. In ground operations, a defensive location oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend. 2. In air operations, an airspace coordination area containing firing points for attack helicopters. Also called **BP**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

battlespace—The environment, factors, and conditions that must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, or complete the mission. This includes the air, land, sea, space, and the included enemy and friendly forces; facilities; weather; terrain; the electromagnetic spectrum; and the information environment within the operational areas, areas of interest, and areas of influence. (MCRP 1-10.2)

battlespace geometry—A dynamic, multifaceted and multidimensional environment in which military operations occur. It is determined by such factors as intelligence preparation of the battlespace, time, sustainment, command relationships, boundaries, fire support coordination measures, rules of engagement, and political considerations that could affect operations. Also called **BSG**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

block—1. To deny the enemy access to an area or prevent enemy advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. It may be for a specified time. 2. An obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent an attacker from passing through an engagement area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

boundary—A line that delineates surface areas for the purpose of facilitating coordination and deconfliction of operations between adjacent units, formations, or areas. (DOD Dictionary)

bounding overwatch—A movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is expected. The unit moves by bounds. One element is always halted in position to overwatch another element while it moves. The overwatching element is positioned to support the moving unit by fire or fire and movement. (MCRP 1-10.2)

breach—To break through or secure a passage through an obstacle. (MCRP 1-10.2)

breakout—An operation conducted by an encircled force to regain freedom of movement or contact with friendly units. It differs from other attacks only in that a simultaneous defense in other areas of the perimeter must be maintained. (MCRP 1-10.2)

bridgehead—An area of ground held or to be gained on the enemy's side of an obstacle. (MCRP 1-10.2)

bypass—1. To maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain the momentum of advance. Previously unreported obstacles and bypassed enemy forces are reported to higher headquarters. 2. To maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain

the momentum of the operation while deliberately avoiding combat with an enemy force. (MCRP 1-10.2)

canalize—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To restrict enemy movement to a narrow zone by the use of existing or reinforcing obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver. (MCRP 1-10.2)

checkpoint—A predetermined point on the ground used to control movement, tactical maneuver, and orientation. (MCRP 1-10.2)

clear—1. To remove enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned zone, area, or location by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces that could interfere with the unit's ability to accomplish its mission. 2. To eliminate transmissions on a tactical radio net in order to allow a higher-precedence transmission to occur. 3. In mobility operations, the total elimination or neutralization of an obstacle that is usually performed by follow-on engineers and is not done under fire. (MCRP 1-10.2)

close air support—Air action by manned or unmanned fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called **CAS**.(DOD Dictionary)

close operations—Military actions conducted to project power decisively against enemy forces that pose an immediate or near term threat to the success of current battles or engagements. These military actions are conducted by committed forces and their readily available tactical reserves, using maneuver and combined arms. See also **deep operations; rear operations**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

combat information—Unevaluated data, gathered by or provided directly to the tactical commander which, due to its highly perishable nature or the criticality of the situation, cannot be processed into tactical intelligence in time to satisfy the users tactical intelligence requirements. (DOD Dictionary)

combat outpost—1. A security force established at the regimental level during defensive or stationary operations. 2. A reinforced observation post that can conduct limited combat, stability, or other operations. Also called **COP**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

combat service support—The essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of all operating forces in theater at all levels of war. Also called **CSS**. See also **combat support**. (DOD Dictionary)

combat support—Fire support and operational assistance provided to combat elements. Also called **CS**. See also **combat service support**. (DOD Dictionary)

combined arms—1. The full integration of combat arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. 2. The tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by a force to integrate firepower and mobility to produce a desired effect upon the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

combined arms team—The full integration and application of two or more arms or elements of one Service into an operation. (DOD Dictionary)

command and control—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The means by which a commander recognizes what needs to be done and sees to it that appropriate actions are taken. Command and control is one of the six warfighting functions. Also called **C2**. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

concept of operations—A verbal or graphic statement that clearly and concisely expresses what the commander intends to accomplish and how it will be done using available resources. Also called **CONOPS**. (DOD Dictionary)

contact point—In land warfare, a point on the terrain, easily identifiable, where two or more units are required to make contact. See also **control point**. (DOD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

contain—1. To stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause the enemy to center activity on a given front and to prevent the withdrawal of any part of the enemy's forces for use elsewhere. 2. To prevent or halt elements of a population or designated party from departing or projecting physical influence beyond a defined area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

contiguous area of operations—An area of operations in which all of a commander's subordinate forces' areas of operations share one or more common boundary. (MCRP 1-10.2)

control—To maintain physical influence by occupation or range of weapon systems over the activities or access in a defined area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

control point—A position along a route of march at which men are stationed to give information and instructions for the regulation of supply or traffic. (DOD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

coordinated fire line—A line beyond which conventional surface-to-surface direct fire and indirect fire support means may fire at any time within the boundaries of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination. Also called **CFL**. (DOD Dictionary)

cordon—To prevent withdrawal from or reinforcement to a position. (MCRP 1-10.2)

counterattack—Attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost or cutting off or destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of the enemy's purpose in attacking. In sustained defensive operations, it is undertaken to restore the battle position and is directed at limited objectives. (MCRP 1-10.2)

countermobility operations—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and manmade obstacles to deny enemy freedom of movement and maneuver. (MCRP 1-10.2)

counterreconnaissance—All measures taken to prevent hostile observation of a force, area, or place. (MCDP 1-10.2)

cover—1. A type of security operation that protects the force from surprise, develops the situation, and gives commanders time and space in which to respond to the enemy's actions. 2. A form of security operation whose primary task is to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body. 3. Offensive or defensive actions to protect the force. 4. Protection from the effects of direct and indirect fire. It can be provided by ditches, caves, river banks, folds in the ground, shell craters, buildings, walls, and embankments. (MCRP 1-10.2)

covering force—1. A force operating apart from or independent of the main force for the purpose of intercepting, engaging, delaying, disorganizing, and deceiving the enemy before the enemy can attack the force covered. 2. Any body or detachment of troops that provides security for a larger force by observation, reconnaissance, attack, or defense, or by any combination of these methods 3. A self-contained maneuver force that operates beyond the range of friendly artillery positioned with the main force. To operate independently, a covering force may task-organize to include aviation, artillery, tank, reconnaissance, and combat service support. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

cueing—External actions or inputs that cause a surveillance or target acquisition device to turn on and search a suspect area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

decisive action—Any action the commander deems fundamental to achieving mission success. See also **shaping actions; sustaining actions**. (*Note: Decisive actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.*) (MCRP 1-10.2)

deep operations—Military actions conducted against enemy capabilities that pose a potential threat to friendly forces. These military actions are designed to isolate, shape, and dominate the battlespace and influence future operations. See also **close operations; rear operations**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

defeat—To disrupt or nullify the enemy commander's plan and overcome the will to fight, thus making the enemy commander unwilling or unable to pursue the adopted course of action and yield to the friendly commander's will. (MCRP 1-10.2)

defeat in detail—Concentrating overwhelming combat power against separate parts of a force rather than defeating the entire force at once. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

defensive operations—Operations conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable to offensive and stability operations. The three types of defensive operations are area, mobile, and retrograde. (MCRP 1-10.2)

delay—A form of retrograde in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. (MCRP 1-10.2)

delay line—A specified line forward of which a force must slow the enemy, to include becoming decisively engaged, for a specified time or until a specified event. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

delaying operation—An operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. (DOD Dictionary)

deliberate attack—A fully coordinated operation that is conducted when preparation time is available for lengthy reconnaissance, precise planning, and rehearsals. Deliberate attacks normally include large volumes of supporting fires, main and supporting attacks, and deception measures. (MCRP 1-10.2)

deliberate breach—1. The creation of a lane through a minefield or a clear route through a barrier or fortification that is systematically planned and carried out. 2. Used against a strong defense or complex obstacle system. In tank employment operations it is also called an assault breach. (MCRP 1-10.2)

demonstration—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Operation designed to divert enemy attention, allowing the forces of a Marine air-ground task force to execute decisive action elsewhere. It is a show of force that threatens an attack at another location but does not make contact with the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

deny—(See DOD Dictionary, denial measure, for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To hinder or prevent the enemy from using terrain, space, personnel, supplies, facilities, and/or specific capabilities. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

destroy—1. To physically render an enemy force combat ineffective unless it can be reconstituted. 2. In the context of defeat mechanisms, to apply lethal combat power on an enemy capability so that it can no longer perform any function and cannot be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt. (MCRP 1-10.2)

disengage—To break contact with the enemy and move to a point where the enemy cannot observe nor engage the unit by direct fire.(MCRP 1-10.2)

displace—To leave one position to take another while remaining in contact with the enemy. Forces may be displaced laterally to concentrate combat power in threatened area. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

disrupt—1. To integrate fires and obstacles to break apart an enemy's formation and tempo, interrupt the enemy's timetable, or cause premature commitment or the piecemealing of enemy forces. 2. To preclude efficient interaction of enemy combat or combat support systems. (MCRP 1-10.2)

double envelopment—An offensive maneuver designed to force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging axis of the attack. (MCRP 1-10.2)

economy of force—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The allocation of minimum essential combat capability to supporting efforts, with attendant degree of risk, so that combat power may be concentrated on the main effort. Economy of force is used to describe a principle of war and a condition of tactical operations; it is not used to describe a mission. (MCRP 1-10.2)

encirclement—The loss of freedom of maneuver resulting from enemy control of all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. (MCRP 1-10.2)

engagement—A tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces. (DOD Dictionary, part 2 of a 2-part definition.)

engagement area—An area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the effects of massed weapons and supporting systems. (MCRP 1-10.2)

envelopment—An offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear. (Part 1 of a 2-part definition.) (MCRP 1-10.2)

exfiltrate—(See DOD Dictionary, **exfiltration**, for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To remove personnel or units from areas under enemy control by stealth. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

exploitation—(See DOD Dictionary, part 3 for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) An offensive operation following a successful attack that is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. It extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. (MCRP 1-10.2)

feint—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) An offensive action involving contact with the enemy to deceive the enemy about the location or time of the actual main offensive action. Feints are used to cause the enemy to react in three predictable ways: to employ reserves improperly, to shift supporting fires, or to reveal defensive fires. (MCRP 1-10.2)

field of fire—The area that a weapon or group of weapons may cover effectively from a given position. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

final coordination line—A line used to coordinate the ceasing and shifting of supporting fires and the final deployment of the assault echelon in preparation for launching an assault against an enemy position. Also called **FCL**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

final protective fire—An immediately available prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas. Also called **FPF**. (DOD Dictionary)

fire and maneuver—The process of one or more elements establishing a base of fire to engage the enemy, while the other element(s) maneuver to an advantageous position from which to close with and destroy or capture the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

fire and movement—A technique primarily used in the assault wherein a unit or element advances by bounds or rushes, with supplements alternately moving and providing covering fire for other moving subelements. Fire and movement may be done by individuals (personnel or vehicles) or units (such as fire teams or squads). Usually, fire and movement is used only when under effective fire from the enemy because it is relatively slow and difficult to control. (MCRP 1-10.2)

fires—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Those means used to delay, disrupt, degrade, or destroy enemy capabilities, forces, or facilities as well as affect the enemy's will to fight. Fires is one of the six warfighting functions. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

fire support—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Assistance to elements of the Marine air-ground task force engaged with the enemy that is rendered by other firing units, including (but not limited to) artillery, mortars, naval surface fire support, and offensive air support. (MCRP 1-10.2.)

fix—1. To prevent the enemy from moving any part of the enemy's forces, either from a specific location or for a specific period of time, by holding or surrounding them to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere. 2. To integrate fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker within a specified area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

flank guard—A security element operating to the flank of a moving or stationary force to protect that force from enemy ground observation, direct fire, and surprise attack. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

flanking attack—An offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

follow and assume—A tactical task in which a second committed force follows a force conducting an offensive operation and is prepared to continue the mission if the lead force is fixed, attrited, or unable to continue. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

follow and support—A tactical task in which a committed force follows and supports a lead force conducting an offensive operation. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

follow-on forces—All enemy ground forces not committed during their offensive operations to the contact battle, their command and control installations, and their logistic and other support provided for sustained operations. (MCRP 1-10.2)

force protection—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Actions or efforts used to safeguard own centers of gravity while protecting, concealing, reducing, or eliminating friendly critical vulnerabilities. Force protection is one of the six warfighting functions. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

force sustainment—Capabilities, equipment, and operations that ensure continuity, freedom of action, logistic support, and command and control. (MCRP 1-10.2)

fortified area—A defensive system that contains numerous strong points disposed in depth and width in such a manner as to be mutually supporting. (MCRP 1-10.2)

forward edge of the battle area—The foremost limit of a series of areas in which ground combat units are deployed, excluding the areas in which the covering or screening forces are operating, designated to coordinate fire support, the positioning of forces, or the maneuver of units. Also called **FEBA**. (DOD Dictionary)

forward line of own troops—A line that indicates the most forward positions of friendly forces in any kind of military operation at a specific time. Also called **FLOT**. (DOD Dictionary)

free-fire area—A specific area into which any weapon system may fire without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters. Also called **FFA**. (DOD Dictionary)

frontal attack—An offensive maneuver in which the main action is directed against the front of the enemy forces. (MCRP 1-10.2)

gap—1. Any break or breach in the continuity of tactical dispositions or formations beyond effective small arms coverage. Gaps (soft spots, weaknesses) may in fact be physical gaps in the enemy's disposition, but they also may be any weakness in time, space, or capability; a moment in time when the enemy is overexposed and vulnerable, a seam in an air defense umbrella, an infantry unit caught unprepared in open terrain, or a boundary between two units. 2. A ravine, mountain pass, or river that presents an obstacle that must be bridged. 3. An area within a minefield or obstacle belt, free of live mines or obstacles, whose width and direction will allow a friendly force to pass through in tactical formation. (MCRP 1-10.2)

guard—1. To protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. 2. A form of security operation whose primary task is to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information, and to prevent enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body by reconnoitering, attacking, defending, and delaying. A guard force normally operates within the range of the main body's indirect fire weapons. (MCRP 1-10.2)

guarding force—A security element whose primary task is to protect the main force from attack, direct fire, and ground observation by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

handover line—1. A control measure, preferably following easily defined terrain features, at which responsibility for the conduct of combat operations is passed from one force to another. 2. A predetermined location, normally a phase line designated as a handover line, where control of the battle is transferred to the main battle force. (MCRP 1-10.2)

hasty attack—Offensive action conducted when preparation time must be traded for speed. Forces readily available are committed immediately to the attack. (MCRP 1-10.2)

hasty breach—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The rapid creation of a route through a minefield, barrier, or fortification by any expedient method. (MCRP 1-10.2)

infiltration—The movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it implies that contact is to be avoided. (MCRP 1-10.2, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

information operations—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The integration, coordination, and synchronization of actions taken to affect a relevant decision maker in order to create an operational advantage for the commander. Also called **IO**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

intelligence—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Knowledge about the enemy or the surrounding environment needed to support decision-making. Intelligence is one of the six warfighting functions. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

interdict—(See DOD Dictionary, **interdiction**, for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces. (MCRP 1-10.2)

interdiction—1. An action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military surface capability before it can be used effectively against friendly forces, or to achieve enemy objectives. 2. In support of law enforcement, activities conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, intercept, board, detain, or destroy, under lawful authority, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, people, cargo, and money. (DOD Dictionary)

key terrain—Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. (DOD Dictionary)

kill box—A three-dimensional permissive fire support coordination measure with an associated airspace coordinating measure used to facilitate the integration of fires (DOD Dictionary)

kill zone—That part of an ambush site where fire is concentrated to isolate, fix, and destroy the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

lane—In mobility operations, a route through, over, or around an enemy or friendly obstacle that provides safe passage of a passing force. The route may be reduced and proofed as part of a breaching operation, constructed as part of the obstacle, or marked as a bypass. (MCRP 1-10.2, part 2 of a 2-part definition.)

limit of advance—An easily recognized terrain feature beyond which attacking elements will not advance. Also called **LOA**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

line of communications—A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called **LOC**. (DOD Dictionary)

line of contact—A general trace delineating the location where two opposing forces are engaged. Also called **LC**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

line of departure—In land warfare, a line designated to coordinate the departure of attack elements. Also called **LD**. (DOD Dictionary)

linkup—An operation wherein two friendly ground forces join together in a hostile area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

local security—Those security elements established in the proximity of a unit to prevent surprise by the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

logistics—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) 1. The science of planning and executing the movement and support of forces. 2. All activities required to move and sustain military forces. Logistics is one of the six warfighting functions. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

main battle area—1. That portion of the battlespace in which the commander conducts close operations to defeat the enemy. Normally, the main battle area extends rearward from the forward edge of the battle area to the rear boundary of the command's subordinate units. 2. That portion of the battlefield in which the decisive battle is fought to defeat the enemy. Also called **MBA**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

main body—The principal part of a tactical command or formation. It does not include detached elements of the command such as advance guards, flank guards, and covering forces. (MCRP 1-10.2)

main effort—The designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. It is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power and is directed against a center of gravity through a critical vulnerability. (MCRP 1-10.2)

maneuver—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows). The movement of forces for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy. Maneuver is one of the six warfighting functions. See also **warfighting functions**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

Marine division—A ground force of combat and combat support units organized and equipped primarily for amphibious operations. It consists of three infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, and separate combat support battalions. Subordinate units can be organized into effective forces of combined arms based upon the infantry regiment, infantry battalion, or tank battalion. One or more divisions form the ground combat element of the Marine expeditionary force. To perform its combat role, it requires air defense and aviation support from a Marine aircraft wing and service support from a Marine logistics group. Also called **MARDIV**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

meeting engagement—A combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. (MCRP 1-10.2)

mission type order—1. An order issued to a lower unit that includes the accomplishment of the total mission assigned to the higher headquarters. 2. An order to a unit to perform a mission without specifying how it is to be accomplished. (DOD Dictionary)

mobile defense—Defense of an area or position in which maneuver is used with organization of fire and utilization of terrain to seize the initiative from the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

mobility—A quality or capability of military forces which permits them to move from place to place while retaining the ability to fulfill their primary mission. (DOD Dictionary)

mobility operations—Those combined arms activities that mitigate the effects of natural and manmade obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver. (MCRP 1-10.2)

movement control—The planning, routing, scheduling, and control of personnel and cargo movements over lines of communications; includes maintaining in-transit visibility of forces and material through the deployment and/or redeployment process. See also **line of communications**. (DOD Dictionary)

movement to contact—A type of offensive that is employed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact with the enemy. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

named area of interest—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) A point or area along a particular avenue of approach through which enemy activity is expected to occur. Activity or lack of activity within a named area of interest will help to confirm or deny a particular enemy course of action. Also called **NAI**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

neutralize—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To render the enemy or enemy resources ineffective or unusable. (MCRP 1-10.2)

noncontiguous area of operations—An area of operations in which one or more of the commander's subordinate forces' area of operations do not share a common boundary. (MCRP 1-10.2)

objective—The clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which an operation is directed. (DOD Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

obstacle—Any natural or man-made obstruction designed or employed to disrupt, fix, turn, or block the movement of an opposing force, and to impose additional losses in personnel, time, and equipment on the opposing force. (DOD Dictionary)

obstacle belt—A brigade-level command and control measure, normally depicted graphically, to show where within an obstacle zone the ground tactical commander plans to limit friendly obstacle employment and focus the defense. See also **obstacle**. (DOD Dictionary)

obstacle zone—A divisionlevel command and control measure to designate specific land areas where lower echelons are allowed to employ tactical obstacles. See also **obstacle**. (DOD Dictionary)

occupy—To move onto an objective, key terrain, or other manmade or natural terrain area without opposition and control the entire area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

offensive operations—Operations conducted to take the initiative from the enemy, gain freedom of action, and generate effects to achieve objectives. The four types of offensive operations are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. (MCRP 1-10.2)

passage of lines—An operation in which a force moves forward or rearward through another force's combat positions with the intention of moving into or out of contact with the enemy. (DOD Dictionary)

passive air defense—All measures, other than active air defense, taken to minimize the effectiveness of hostile air and missile threats against friendly forces and assets. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

penetrate—To break through the enemy's defense and disrupt enemy's defensive system. (MCRP 1-10.2)

penetration—A form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system. (MCRP 1-10.2)

personnel recovery—The sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel. Also called **PR**. (DOD Dictionary)

phase line—A line utilized for control and coordination of military operations, usually an easily identified feature in the operational area. Also called **PL**. (DOD Dictionary)

point of departure—1. A specific place where a unit will cross the line of departure. 2. The designated location (typically an airport) outside of the disaster-affected area from which response personnel and resources will deploy to the disaster area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

position—1. A location or area occupied by a military unit. 2. The location of a weapon, unit, or individual from which fire is delivered upon a target. See also **alternate position**; **primary position**; **supplementary position**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

primary position—A position that provides the best means to accomplish the assigned mission. See also **position**; **alternate position**; **supplementary position**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

probable line of deployment—An easily recognized line selected on the ground where attacking units deploy in assault formation prior to beginning an attack. Also called **PLD**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

procedures—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The particular courses or modes of action for performing certain functions. (MCRP 1-10.2)

protect—To prevent observation, engagement, or interference with a force or location. (MCRP 1-10.2)

pursuit—An offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. (MCRP 1-10.2)

raid—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) 1. An attack, usually small scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain. It ends with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. 2. In amphibious operations, conducted as an independent operation or in support of other operations, such as another landing, land operations, or air or naval operation. When required, they are conducted by stealth or appropriately supported so that they resemble the early stages of an amphibious assault, except they include a provision for withdrawal. (MCRP 1-10.2, parts 1 and 2 of a 3-part definition.)

rally point—1. An easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble and reorganize if they become dispersed. 2. A planned or hasty location where a separated flight joins up. Also called **RP**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

rear area—That area extending forward from a command's rear boundary to the rear of the area assigned to the command's subordinate units. This area is provided primarily for the performance of combat service support functions. (MCRP 1-10.2)

rear area security—The measures taken before, during, and/or after an enemy airborne attack, sabotage action, infiltration, guerrilla action, and/or initiation of psychological or propaganda warfare to minimize the effects thereof. Also called **RAS**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

rear guard—1. The rearmost elements of an advancing or a withdrawing force. It has the following functions: to protect the rear of a column from hostile forces; during the withdrawal, to delay the enemy; during the advance, to keep supply routes open. 2. A security detachment that a moving ground force details to the rear to keep it informed and covered. (MCRP 1-10.2)

rear operations—Military actions conducted to support and permit force sustainment and to provide security for such actions. See also **close operations**; **deep operations**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

reconnaissance—A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. (DOD Dictionary)

reconnaissance in force—1. A deliberate attack made to obtain information and to locate and test enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. It is used when knowledge of the enemy is vague and there is insufficient time or resources to develop the situation. 2. An offensive operation designed to discover and/or test the enemy's strength or to obtain other information. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

reconstitution—1. Those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization. 2. In maritime prepositioning force operations, the methodical approach to restore the maritime prepositioned equipment and supplies aboard the maritime prepositioning ships squadron to full mission capable status. (MCRP 1-10.2)

reduce—A mobility task to create and mark lanes through, over, or around an obstacle to allow the attacking force to accomplish its mission. (MCRP 1-10.2)

regimental landing team—A task organization for landing composed of an infantry regiment reinforced by those elements that are required for the initiation of its combat function ashore. Also called **RLT**. (DOD Dictionary)

relief in place—An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. (DOD Dictionary)

reorganization—Action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness. (MCRP 1-10.2, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

reserve—Portion of a body of troops that is kept to the rear or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement to be available for a decisive movement. (DOD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

restrictive fire line—A line established between converging friendly surface forces that prohibits fires or their effects across that line. Also called **RFL**. (DOD Dictionary)

retain—To occupy and hold a terrain feature to ensure it is free of enemy occupation or use. (MCRP 1-10.2)

retirement—An operation in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

retrograde—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Any movement or maneuver of a command to the rear, or away from the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

route reconnaissance—A directed effort to obtain detailed information of a specified route and all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along that route. (MCRP 1-10.2)

rules of engagement—Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. Also called **ROE**. (DOD Dictionary)

screen—1. A security element whose primary task is to observe, identify, and report information, and only fight in self-protection. 2. A form of security operation that primarily provides early warning to the protected force. (MCRP 1-10.2)

sector of fire—A defined area that is required to be covered by the fire of individual or crew-served weapons or the weapons of a unit. (MCRP 1-10.2)

secure—To gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action. The attacking force may or may not have to physically occupy the area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

security—Measures taken by a military unit, activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair its effectiveness. (DOD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

security area—The area that begins at the forward edge of the battle area and extends as far to the front and flanks as security forces are deployed, normally to the forward boundary of the area of operations. Forces in the security area conduct reconnaissance to furnish information on the enemy and to delay, deceive, and disrupt the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

seize—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) To clear, occupy, and control a designated area. (MCRP 1-10.2)

shaping—The use of lethal and nonlethal activities to influence events in a manner that changes the general condition of war to an advantage. (MCRP 1-10.2)

shaping actions—The lethal and nonlethal activities conducted throughout the battlespace to attack an enemy capability or force or to influence the enemy commander's decision-making. See also **decisive actions**; **sustaining actions**. (*Note: Shaping actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.*) (MCRP 1-10.2)

simultaneous activities—The continuous, concurrent combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability operations or defense support of civil authorities as appropriate to a given mission. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

spoiling attack—A tactical maneuver employed to seriously impair a hostile attack while the enemy is in the process of forming or assembling for an attack. A spoiling attack is usually an offensive action conducted in the defense. (MCRP 1-10.2)

stability activities—Various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. (DOD Dictionary)

strong point—A key point in a defensive position, usually strongly fortified and heavily armed with automatic weapons, around which other positions are grouped for its protection. (MCRP 1-10.2)

supplementary position—A position that provides the best means to accomplish a task that cannot be accomplished from the primary or alternate position. See also **position**; **alternate position**; **primary position**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

support by fire—To engage the enemy by direct fire to support a maneuvering force using overwatch or by establishing a base of fire. The supporting force does not capture enemy forces or terrain. (MCRP 1-10.2)

supporting effort—Designated subordinate unit(s) whose mission is designed to directly contribute to the success of the main effort. (MCRP 1-10.2)

suppression—Temporary or transient degradation by an opposing force of the performance of a weapons system below the level needed to fulfill its mission objectives. (DOD Dictionary)

survivability—All aspects of protecting personnel, weapons, and supplies while simultaneously deceiving the enemy. (DOD Dictionary)

sustaining actions—Activities conducted to prepare and support friendly forces (e.g., planning, logistics, force protection) that promote unity of effort and extend operational reach. See also decisive action; shaping actions. (*Note: Sustaining actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.*) (MCRP 1-10.2.)

tactical level of warfare—The level of warfare at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. (DOD Dictionary)

tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel—A Marine Corps mission performed by an assigned and briefed aircrew for the specific purpose of the recovery of personnel, equipment, and/or aircraft when the tactical situation precludes search and rescue assets from responding and when survivors and their location have been confirmed. Also called **TRAP**. (DOD Dictionary)

tactical road march—A movement used to relocate units within an area of operation in order to prepare for combat operations. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included in the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2.)

tactical tasks—The defined actions, based on unit capabilities, that a commander may take to accomplish the mission. Tactical tasks may be specified, implied, or essential. (MCRP 1-10.2) tactics—The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. See also procedures; techniques. (DOD Dictionary)

target—An entity or object that performs a function for the threat considered for possible engagement or other action. (DOD Dictionary)

target area of interest—The geographical area where high-value targets can be acquired and engaged by friendly forces. Also called **TAI**. (DOD Dictionary)

target reference point—(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) An easily recognizable point on the ground (either natural or manmade) used to initiate, distribute, and control fires. Also called **TRP**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

techniques—Non-prescriptive ways or methods used to perform missions, functions, or tasks. See also **procedures**; **tactics**. (DOD Dictionary)

tempo—The relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. (MCRP 1-10.2)

time of attack—The hour at which the attack is to be launched. If a line of departure is prescribed, it is the hour at which the line is to be crossed by the leading elements of the attack. (MCRP 1-10.2)

traveling overwatch—A movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is possible. The trailing element, separated by a short distance, keys its movement to the lead element and terrain and pauses for short periods to overwatch the lead element. The overwatch distance is such that, should the enemy engage the lead element, it will not prevent the trailing element from firing or moving to support the lead element. See also **overwatch**. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this modified definition is approved for use and will be included the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

turn—A obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to drive an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area. (Upon promulgation of this publication, this term and definition is approved for use and will be included the next edition of MCRP 1-10.2)

turning movement—A variation of the envelopment in which the attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear to force the enemy to abandon his position or divert major forces to meet the threat. (DOD Dictionary)

uncommitted force—A force that is not in contact with an enemy and is not already deployed on a specific mission or course of action. (MCRP 1-10.2)

vertical envelopment—A tactical maneuver in which troops that are air-dropped, air-landed, or inserted via air assault, attack the rear and flanks of a force, in effect cutting off or encircling the force. (MCRP 1-10.2)

warfighting function—The six mutually supporting military activities integrated in the conduct of all military operations. The six warfighting functions are command and control, fires, force protection, intelligence, logistics, and maneuver. See also **command and control**; **fires**; **force protection**; **intelligence**; **logistics**; **maneuver**. (MCRP 1-10.2)

zone reconnaissance—A directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, obstacles (to include chemical or radiological contamination), terrain, and enemy forces within a zone defined by boundaries. A zone reconnaissance normally is assigned when the enemy situation is vague or when information concerning cross-country trafficability is desired. (MCRP 1-10.2)

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