CHAPTER 9

Offensive Operations

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS are characterized by aggressive initiative on the part of subordinate commanders, by rapid shifts in the main effort to take advantage of opportunities, by momentum, and by the deepest, most rapid destruction of enemy defenses possible. The ideal attack should resemble Liddell Hart's concept of the expanding torrent. It should move fast, follow reconnaissance units or successful probes through gaps in enemy defenses, and shift its strength quickly to widen penetrations and to reinforce its successes, thereby carrying the battle deep into the enemy rear. It should destroy or bring under control the forces or areas critical to the enemy's overall defensive organization before the enemy can react.

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TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The five types of major offensive operations are—

- **Movement to contact.**
- **Hasty attack.**
- **Deliberate attack.**
- **Exploitation.**
- **Pursuit.**

Although these operations are roughly sequential, any offensive operation has the potential of developing into either a more fluid type of operation or a defense. The whole series can proceed by steps from movement to contact to an eventual pursuit; however, an attack can shift quickly forward or backward along the scale as resistance varies. Commanders must organize for combat so that they can change the operation from one type to another without a delay for reorganization. They must also anticipate their dispositions at the conclusion of the operation.

Movement to contact gains or reestablishes contact with the enemy. It may be used when

neither opponent clearly has the initiative or when the enemy has broken contact. The Soviets, looking ahead to operations in a nuclear or a chemical environment, regard it as the type of operation likely to dominate high-intensity warfare. Whether or not this is the case, the movement to contact will certainly be a part of any nonlinear battle.

Movement to contact involves rapid movement, decentralized control, and the hasty deployment of combined arms formations from the march to attack or to defend. It should result in a meeting engagement as the advancing force encounters the enemy. Sensors observing the corps or the division areas of interest may discover the enemy before the covering force reaches him. No matter how contact is made, however, seizure of the initiative is the overriding imperative.

A *hasty attack* takes minimum planning. It usually develops from a movement to contact, but it can also be the means of quickly seizing the initiative after a successful defense. The principles of attack—concentration of effort, surprise, speed, flexibility, and audacity—apply in a hasty attack as in any other.

Rapid and decisive action requires simpler schemes and greater reliance on SOPs and independent execution. Battle drill at company level and below often serves to launch hasty attacks. Battalions employ preconceived plans to launch hasty attacks. Divisions and brigades improvise hasty attacks or effect them through contingency plans. A corps attacks from the march on the basis of the hasty attacks of its divisions or covering forces.

Commanders must thoroughly plan and coordinate each *deliberate attack.* Planning such an attack takes considerable time, but it is sometimes necessary. Against well-organized enemy defenses without apparent gaps and weaknesses, a hasty attack would fail. Synchronized execution is most important. With sufficient information available to plan properly, attack actions will be synchronized in time and space for all elements of the force.

A bold *exploitation* should always follow a successful attack, either to destroy the enemy's ability to reconstitute a defense or to conduct an orderly withdrawal. Regardless of the weather or time of day, successful exploitations continue until the enemy force is completely destroyed or can stop the exploitation with a reorganized defense. Psychologically, exploitations create confusion and apprehension throughout the enemy force and reduce enemy ability to react. Thus, exploitation may well be decisive. As enemy forces become demoralized and the structure of the defense begins to disintegrate, exploitation may develop into pursuit.

Pursuit follows a successful attack and exploitation. It cuts off and annihilates a retreating enemy by maintaining direct pressure on him and by intercepting and destroying his main force.

In addition to the five major types of offensive operations mentioned above, commanders must also be prepared to conduct the special purpose operations:

- **Reconnaissance in force.**
- **Raid.**
- **Feint.**
- **Demonstration.**
- **Relief to continue the attack.**

A *reconnaissance in force* is a limited-objective operation by a considerable force that obtains information and locates and tests enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. Even when the commander is executing a reconnaissance in force primarily to gather information, he must be alert to seize any opportunity to exploit tactical success. If the enemy situation must be developed along a broad front, the reconnaissance in force may consist of strong probing actions to determine the enemy situation at selected points. The enemy's reactions may reveal major weaknesses in his defensive system. Because reconnaissance in force is primarily an information-gathering operation, commanders must carefully assess all risks involved. They

must make advance provisions either to extricate the force or to exploit success.

A *raid* is an attack into enemy-held territory for a specific purpose other than gaining or holding terrain. The raiding force always withdraws after it accomplishes its mission.

A *feint* is a diversionary supporting attack conducted to draw the enemy's attention from the main effort. It is normally executed by brigades and smaller units. Feints are usually shallow, limited-objective attacks that go in before or during the main attack.

A *demonstration* is a show of force in an area where a decision is not sought. It is similar to a feint, but it does not make contact with the enemy.

A *relief to continue the attack* is conducted to bring fresh troops forward to continue offensive operations, to introduce a new unit into combat, to avoid excessive radiation exposure, or to decontaminate forces that have been exposed to chemical munitions. While any pause in the attack is detrimental to success, special circumstances may dictate such a relief. Commanders conduct such an operation after objectives have been seized, units have dispersed, and enemy counterattacks are unlikely. An offensive relief can be a forward passage of lines, an area relief, or a relief in place. Forward passage of lines and area relief are more common in the offense than relief in place.

MANY SITUATIONS CAN GENERATE A CALL FOR RELIEF OF FORCES

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

Movement to contact develops the combat situation and maintains the commander's freedom of action after contact. This flexibility, essential to maintaining the initiative, is based on the following principles:

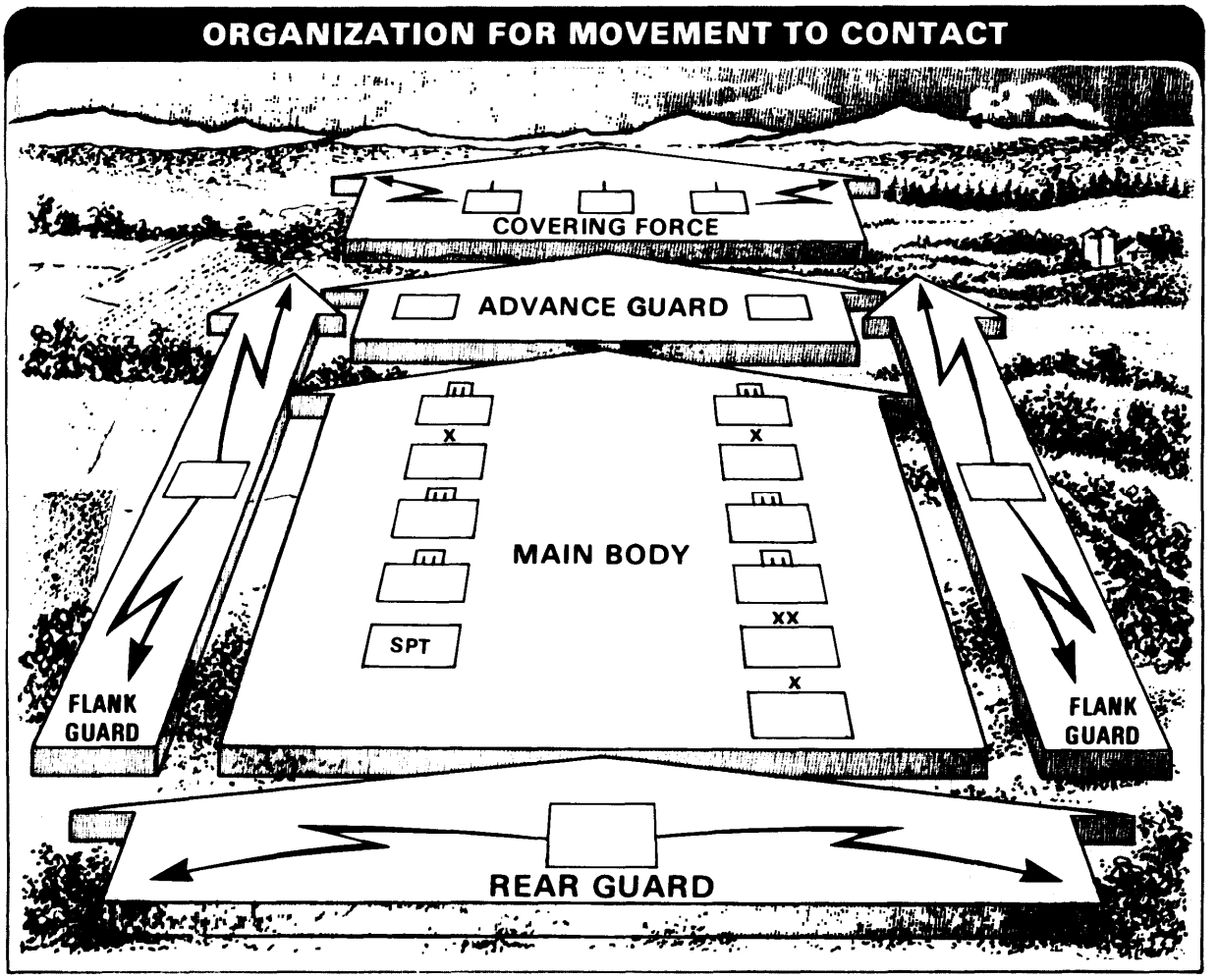
- **To locate and to fix the enemy, the commander must lead with a small mobile force, but he must also hold the bulk of his force back far enough so that he can maneuver without becoming inadvertently engaged in a decisive action. He fights through light resistance with lead**

units whenever possible to maintain the momentum of the operation.

- The commander must organize the force into combined arms teams that are ready to deploy and to attack rapidly in any direction with the support of accompanying air and artillery.
- The formation must provide for all-around security—that is, to the flanks and rear and against air attack, as well as to the front.
- The force must move aggressively with maximum speed. A slow or a cautious advance on a high-intensity battlefield will be dangerous, because slow-moving forces are easy to outflank or to target for a nuclear strike.
- The commander must decentralize execution of the movement to leaders on the front and flanks. However, he must also maintain sufficient control to assure that long-range supporting fires are effective and that succeeding echelons are prompt to follow up after contact.

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

A corps and its divisions usually organize a covering force, an advance guard, and a main body for movement to contact. The main body normally provides flank and rear security forces.



The composition, size, and operation of the covering force may influence the entire course of the battle. It must include the necessary fire support, logistic support, and other resources necessary to enable it to fight independently. In this regard it is essential that the covering force include engineer assets—bridging for hasty gap-crossing and dozers and plows to reduce obstacles, including minefields.

The covering force should be highly mobile and well-balanced. It should be employed well forward of the main body to reconnoiter, to develop the enemy situation, and to provide security so that the main body can deploy and fight on the best possible terms. Covering force operations may include attacking to destroy enemy resistance, securing or controlling key terrain, and containing large enemy units.

The advance guard is a security force provided by the main body. It operates to the front of the main body to insure its uninterrupted advance and to protect it from surprise attack by defeating, destroying, or delaying the enemy. The advance guard may protect the deployment of the main body and facilitate its advance by removing obstacles, repairing roads and bridges, or locating bypasses.

The advance guard moves as fast as possible but should remain within supporting distance of the protected force. It performs continuous reconnaissance to the front and flanks and pushes back or destroys small enemy groups before they can hinder the advance of the protected force. When the advance guard encounters large enemy forces or heavily defended areas, it takes prompt and aggressive action to develop the situation and, within its capability, employs offensive action to defeat the enemy. It employs every means available to determine the location, strength, disposition, and composition of the enemy. It may then have to join in the attack. The advance guard must be far enough in front of the main body to insure that the commander of the protected force has freedom of action. However, it must not be so far in front that enemy attack can destroy it before assistance arrives. The protected force commander usually specifies how far in front of his force the advance guard is to operate. At night, in close terrain, and under conditions of low visibility, those distances are reduced.

The advance guard normally advances in column until it makes contact. It may move continuously or by bounds. It moves by bounds when contact with the enemy is imminent and the terrain is favorable. Mechanized infantry, cavalry, and armored units are most suitable for use in the advance guard. Engineers should move with the advance guard, but other support can normally be provided by the main body.

The main body consists of combined arms elements prepared for immediate action on contact. Small units prepare by cross-attaching combined arms and using battle drill. Battalions and brigades prepare by cross-attachment and the direct support of artillery, engineers, air defense, and other units necessary to maintain momentum. Attack helicopter units will normally remain at division and corps level until contact. Air reconnaissance, close air support, battlefield air interdiction, and counterair operations are essential to the success of any large-scale movement-to-contact operation. Local air superiority or parity is also vital to their success.

Combat service support to sustain the elements of the main body must be decentralized and readily available. Aerial resupply may also be necessary to support a large-scale movement to contact or to maintain its momentum.

Brigades, divisions, and corps move over multiple parallel routes with numerous lateral branches in order to remain flexible and to reduce the time needed to initiate maneuver. The speed, momentum, and dispersion of the formation and its limited electromagnetic emissions make targeting by the enemy difficult. Once the force makes

contact and concentrates to overcome the enemy, however, it becomes vulnerable to nuclear and chemical strikes. The force must concentrate, attack rapidly, and disperse as soon as it overcomes resistance. Whether employed in the covering force, the flank, or the rear guard, air cavalry can assist by providing rapid and timely information to the commander.

In a movement to contact, a good command and control system is imperative. The force commander must be able to move quickly to the area of contact. Then he must size up the situation promptly, act quickly and aggressively, and report the situation accurately.

To provide the commander with the earliest possible warning of enemy movement in his area of interest, long-range surveillance should support a force that is moving to contact. The information-gathering system, especially at corps and division levels, should provide current information as continuously as possible. Taking these steps will reduce battlefield uncertainties and provide the commander with a much better chance to seize and to hold the initiative.

Elements of the force must maintain continuous coordination. The advance guard maintains contact with the covering force. The lead elements of the main body maintain contact with the advance guard. The rear guard and flank guards maintain contact with, and orient on, the main body. The main body keeps enough distance between itself and forward elements to maintain flexibility for maneuver. This distance varies with the level of command, the terrain, and the availability of information about the enemy.

Open terrain provides maneuver options on either side of the line of march and supports high-speed movement. It also allows greater dispersion and usually permits more separation between forward elements and the main body than close terrain does. Commanders should never commit the main body to canalizing terrain before its forward elements have advanced far enough to insure that it will not become trapped. As information about the enemy becomes certain, the commander may choose to follow closely to decrease reaction time, or he may begin to deploy in preparation for contact.

Speed of movement should be the greatest allowed by the terrain, the mobility of the force, and the enemy situation. The commander must determine the degree of risk he is willing to accept on the basis of his mission. In a high risk environment, it is usually better to increase the distance between forward elements and the main body than to slow the speed of advance. On a battlefield where only the attacker is moving, he must avoid blundering into enemy killing zones. Therefore, as the advancing unit approaches suspected enemy positions, the unit leader must select covered and concealed routes and keep part of his force in overwatching positions.

Crossing obstacles in stride is generally desirable. When possible, bridges are seized intact in advance of leading elements. Airmobile forces are ideal for this mission. Lead elements bypass or clear obstacles as quickly as possible to maintain the momentum of the movement. If lead elements cannot overcome obstacles, follow-on elements may bypass and take the lead. Follow-on forces breach obstacles which will hinder the combat service support of the force.

ACTIONS ON CONTACT

At any level of command, successful movements to contact depend on—

- **Seizing the initiative early.**
- **Developing the situation and planning maneuver rapidly.**
- **Attacking violently and resolutely.**
- **Maintaining the momentum by synchronizing combat elements, combat support elements, and combat service support elements.**

A movement to contact often results in a *meeting engagement.* A meeting engagement can be a chance encounter between two opposing forces. Such encounters often occur in small-unit operations and when reconnais-

sance has been ineffective. But a meeting engagement may also occur when each opponent is aware of the other and both decide to attack without delay to obtain a tactical advantage, to gain a decisive terrain feature, or to demonstrate superiority. A meeting engagement may also occur when one opponent deploys hastily for defense while the other attacks before that defense can organize.

A commander should determine quickly whether he can bypass the enemy or whether he must attack and destroy him. Bypassed enemy forces must be reported to the next superior headquarters, which then assumes responsibility for their destruction or containment. Generally, if a division's leading task force(s) cannot quickly bypass, defeat, or fight through the enemy, the commander must decide whether to conduct a hasty attack. His alternative is to take the time to develop the situation more carefully and then to conduct a deliberate attack. Usually, the available intelligence will indicate clearly which course the commander should follow. However, a hasty attack may be necessary to insure that inferior forces are not holding up the attack or luring it into an unnecessary delay.

ATTACKS

The opportunity to attack may arise during the course of battle, or it may be created by skillful tactical leadership. Whatever the source, the attack must be fast, violent, resolute, shrewd, and coordinated.

TYPES OF ATTACKS

Attacks are of two basic types: hasty and deliberate. *Hasty attacks* proceed from meeting engagements or successful defenses. In either case, the commander deploys and attacks quickly to gain the upper hand or to keep the enemy from organizing resistance. The commander must be organized to make immediate use of every available asset on the shortest possible notice. Speed of attack will offset a lack of thorough preparation, but from the early moments of the meeting engagement, commanders must commit every available element of combat support to the attack.

The actions taken must always be appropriate to the situation. In some instances attacking with one unit and supporting with two will be more advantageous than automatically adopting the standard opposite configuration. Air maneuver, long-range sensors, extended range artillery, scatterable mines, and nuclear weapons will increase the speed, impact, and effectiveness of hasty attacks.

Deliberate attacks are usually necessary when the defender is well-organized and cannot be turned or bypassed. Thoroughly prepared deliberate attacks are characterized by—

- **High volumes of fire.**
- **Good intelligence.**
- **Extensive preparation of attacking troops.**
- **Well-developed deception plans.**
- **Complete exploitation of electronic warfare.**
- **Unconventional warfare.**
- **Psychological operations.**

The attacker must be organized in depth to provide operational flexibility. Reserves must be in position and prepared to replace lead units or to exploit success wherever it is achieved. Corps and divisions plan to attack the enemy throughout their areas of influence by blocking the movement of his reserves, destroying his command posts, neutralizing his artillery and preventing the escape of targeted units.

Counterattacks and *spoiling attacks* stand somewhere between hasty attacks and

deliberate attacks. They are based on reasonable assumptions about the enemy and on the battlefield conditions. Once the conditions are met or nearly met, the commander launches the attack if it supports his overall mission. He coordinates the attack and prepares the force better than for a hasty attack.

A counterattack or a spoiling attack is usually part of a defense or a delay. Each attempts to destroy the attacking enemy or to regain key terrain. When the balance of power on the battlefield quickly changes, the commander can boldly exploit the situation by counterattacking to seize the initiative. All necessary maneuver and support should be preplanned to permit rapid execution and maximum impact.

The same principles apply to both hasty and deliberate attacks. The effect sought on the objective is the same. The differences lie in the amount of planning, coordination, and preparation prior to execution—in other words, how thoroughly the principles can be applied, not whether they apply. Therefore, because the hasty attack may be the rule rather than the exception, commanders, staffs, and units should be trained to react quickly. Commanders must seek to achieve as much as a well-planned and well-executed deliberate attack can achieve despite the constraints of time and information. In practice, a clear distinction seldom exists between a hasty attack and a deliberate attack. Once commanders decide to attack, any time taken to prepare, plan, issue instruction, and realign allows the defender additional time to react and makes his defeat more difficult.

PLANNING, PREPARING, AND CONDUCTING ATTACKS

The success of the deliberate attack depends on the skill of commanders, staffs, and leaders at all echelons in accomplishing the many necessary preparations during the time allowed.

Planning for Attacks. When the force receives a mission, the commander and his staff initiate the planning for an attack. They develop tasks required to accomplish the mission. To facilitate planning, coordination, unity of effort, and control, they usually translate the mission into specific objectives for seizing control of the area or destroying the enemy. Commanders use mission-type orders to describe the intent and the overall mission of the force clearly. They minimize restrictions on subordinates' freedom of action.

Each commander must always have a plan for exploitation so that the force does not pause or lose momentum after seizing the objective. Each must plan to fight through the enemy's resistance and to exploit successes relentlessly. The plan should facilitate rapid dispersion of concentrated units or introduction of fresh forces to exploit success.

In designating objectives, the commander must consider the mission, the enemy situation (including his dispositions in depth), troops available and their combat effectiveness, the terrain, the weather, and the time and space factors. After selecting objectives, the commander can determine the scheme of maneuver, allocation of available forces, fire support plan, combat support, and combat service support.

The *scheme of maneuver* seeks to gain an advantage of position over the enemy, to close with him rapidly, to overrun him if possible, and to destroy his ability to resist. The attack may strike against the enemy's front, flank, or rear and may come from the ground or the air or a combination of both. The commander determines the specific form of maneuver or the combination of forms after considering METT-T and weather. He selects a scheme of maneuver that promises to seize the objective most rapidly and also to facilitate subsequent operations. Surprise and indirect approaches are important in the scheme of maneuver. When a geographically indirect approach is not available, the com-

mander can achieve a similar advantage by doing the unexpected—striking earlier, in greater force, with unexpected weapons, or at an unlikely place.

The scheme of maneuver identifies where the main effort occurs. All of the force's available resources must operate in concert to assure the success of the main effort. The plan of attack must also contain provisions for exploiting success whenever it occurs. Commanders must avoid becoming so committed to the initial main effort that they neglect opportunities. Commanders must be prepared to abandon failed attacks and to exploit any unanticipated successes or enemy errors.

In some cases the situation may be so obscure that commanders will not designate a main attack initially. General George S. Patton recommended assessing the situation four hours after a division attacked to determine whether to continue or to shift the main effort elsewhere.

Commanders determine allocation of available forces concurrently with the scheme of maneuver. They concentrate attacking forces against enemy weaknesses. They can weight the main attack by positioning reserves, by assigning a narrower zone to the main attack force, or by assigning priority of fires to the main attack. The main attack normally gets priority from close air support, attack helicopters, combat engineers, electronic warfare, combat service support, and NBC defense units. The nuclear fire plan and the plan for deep attack will also be designed to weight the attack.

Supported with nuclear or chemical weapons, small forces attacking at high speed may achieve the same success as larger forces supported with conventional fires. Nuclear or chemical preparatory fires may so reduce the enemy's strength that deep, multiple, and equally weighted attacks are possible.

The commander influences the action by shifting firepower assets such as air and artillery. The reserve is the commander's principal means of influencing the action decisively once the operation is under way. The reserve reinforces success in the attack or maintains attack momentum. The reserve prepares for a number of specific contingencies which may arise during the attack. Commanders position the reserve near the area to which it will most likely be committed and reposition it as necessary to assure it can react promptly.

The reserve's strength and composition vary with the contemplated mission, the forces available, the type of offensive operation, the form of maneuver, the terrain, the possible hostile reaction, and the situation. When the situation is relatively clear and enemy capabilities are limited, the reserve may be small. If the situation is vague, the attacker should lead with probing forces and retain his freedom of maneuver until a gap, a flank, or a weakness appears. When the situation is so obscure that it must develop before the commander commits himself to a main effort, the reserve may consist of half of the available maneuver force.

Commanders should make a distinction between true reserves and initially uncommitted forces with subsequent missions. An initially uncommitted force may have the mission of moving through a penetration another unit has made and seizing a deeper objective. This mission differs from both the reserve mission and the follow and support mission normal to an exploitation. A reserve force has no objective prior to its commitment; a follow and support force does. It supports the attack of the element it is following by maintaining the lines of communications and defeating or containing bypassed enemy pockets of resistance.

Rear area protection is a concern at all echelons. It is a particular concern of attacking corps and divisions, which must allocate forces and other combat resources appropriate to the threat. Lines of communications, reserves, and displaced support

elements are the logical targets of the enemy's defensive battle in depth. Air attack, saboteurs, irregular and regular stay-behind forces, or bypassed enemy units will all present problems during the attack. Rear area combat operations are treated at length in chapter 14.

Commanders develop the *fire support plan* for the entire force in general and the assault elements in particular. This plan also covers the reserve when it is committed. Commanders must decide whether or not to fire a preparation. That decision is based on the likelihood of surprising the enemy; knowledge of the enemy's strength and dispositions; nuclear, biological, and chemical protection; available ammunition; and the results desired.

The fire support plan allocates nuclear weapons and fires to subordinate units, nuclear weapons for preparation, and numbers and types of weapons to be held in reserve or in general support. Uncommitted nuclear weapons in reserve give the commander an additional, powerful means of influencing the course of the operation once their release has been granted. Likely locations for enemy reserve forces and weapons remain under surveillance. Certain areas may be so critical to the operation's success that they warrant specifically allocated weapons and rapid, prearranged procedures to call for fires. Commanders must evaluate predicted obstacles caused by conventional, nuclear, and chemical fires as they affect the movement of friendly troops.

The *deep battle plan* supports the scheme of maneuver. Enemy reserves, fire support elements, command and control facilities, and other high-value targets beyond the line of contact are possible targets for attack. The primary means of attack are—

- **BAI.**
- **Long-range artillery.**
- **Attack helicopter units.**
- **Electronic countermeasure systems.**
- **Special forces.**
- **Ranger units.**
- **Airmobile units.**
- **Airborne units.**

Separately or in combination, these means can block enemy reinforcement, protect the attacking force against counterattack, and disorganize enemy fire support, air defenses, and logistic support. They can slow the reactions of the defender by jamming communications and destroying command posts. Airmobile and airborne forces can divert forces, confuse the enemy, or seize key terrain deep in the enemy's rear area.

Preparing for Attacks. Time is essential and must be intensely managed. Senior commanders at any echelon should use no more than one third of the available preparation time for planning and issuing orders. Subordinates must have time to conduct necessary reconnaissance and coordination and to follow troop-leading procedures throughout the force.

Attack orders include the measures for coordinating and controlling operations. Control measures describe and illustrate the plan, maintain separation of forces, concentrate the effort, assist the commander in the command and control of his forces, and add flexibility to the maneuver plan. At a minimum, they prescribe a line of departure, a time of attack, and the objective. In addition, they may assign zones of action and name axes of advance, directions of attack, routes, phase lines, checkpoints, and fire control measures. Such control measures should give subordinate commanders maximum freedom yet insure a coordinated effort.

Whenever possible, commanders should issue orders face to face to avoid misunderstanding. Subordinate commanders must know what the command as a whole is expected to do, what is expected of them, and what adjacent and supporting commanders are expected to do. Subordinate commanders and staffs must have pertinent information and as much time as possible to prepare their

plans. Warning orders that contain as much information as practical are vital in preparing for attack.

Coordination begins immediately on receipt of a mission and is continuous throughout the operation. When time allows, the commander and/or his staff should review plans of subordinates, giving additional guidance as needed to insure an overall coordinated effort.

In the final analysis, *the success of the operation depends on proper understanding and aggressive execution at battalion level and below.* Soldiers will attack with the required confidence, aggressiveness, and resolve when they understand their own tasks within the scheme of the overall plan and when they know what their comrades on the ground and in the air will do.

SOLDIERS MUST BE KEPT AWARE OF THE OVERALL PLAN

In preparing for offensive operations, commanders must integrate support and tactical plans. They must also insure that their CSS operators are kept fully informed during the battle. The success actually achieved will depend in part on the initiative and innovation of CSS planners and operators.

In the offense, commanders should generally position CSS facilities as close as possible to the tactical units they support. This reduces distances over which units must travel to receive support. Only CSS elements providing essential support (trucks with ammunition and POL) should move forward during the period just prior to the attack. If possible, such movements should occur at night.

When the plan calls for the attacking unit to pass through a defending unit, CSS planners should seek assistance from the defending unit. It may be able to assist by providing POL, medical aid, or other support.

Offensive operations use large amounts of POL, but the selected course of action influences the amount of POL required. Units that travel over rough, broken ground will consume more POL than similar units that travel over a smooth terrain. By requesting

outside assistance in topping off combat vehicles prior to an attack, the CSS operator can keep his own bulk POL transporters full so they will be available to refuel combat units after the attack starts.

Ammunition consumption will normally be high, but several factors can influence the amount and types that will be needed. If the commander adopts a course of action which strikes the enemy in a weakly defended sector, consumption may be relatively light. Units moving over open terrain may be well exposed to enemy aircraft and use large quantities of antiaircraft ammunition.

By estimating how much ammunition and POL each unit of the command will consume, CSS planners can prepare push package shipments. These will be automatically dispatched to supported units if communications break down.

The repair parts required to support an attack will vary, depending on the selected course of action. More repair parts will be required to support an attack over rough terrain.

A CSS unit on the move cannot normally provide support. In planning displacements of CSS units, CSS planners must insure continuous support. This is particularly necessary with regard to medical support.

Water can be as critical a commodity as ammunition. Combat takes a tremendous amount of energy and substantially increases the human body's requirement for water. Vehicles operating under constant mechanical strain also use large amounts of water. Planners must consider water sources along the route of advance. Operations in desert areas can be limited by the sources of water and means to transport it.

Communications between headquarters of tactical units and CSS units are critical. The tactical unit's headquarters must keep the CSS operators informed. This means that CSS units must have sufficient radios, particularly because CSS units operate from a number of dispersed locations (supply points and/or maintenance contact teams).

Planners must select and use supply routes carefully. When possible, trucks moving supplies forward should use secondary routes to avoid detection. They should also avoid setting a pattern which could disclose the locations of units being supported.

Combat units should carry as much materiel as possible into battle because disruptions in the supply system can occur. The CSS planners and commanders should review the authorized stockage list and the prescribed load list of each unit to insure that transportation carries only combat essential items.

Just prior to the attack, units move rapidly into attack positions. This movement must be thoroughly coordinated and planned in detail to preserve surprise. Concentration of the force should take place quickly and should make maximum use of cover and concealment, signal security, and deception. Actions that will alert the enemy to the coming attack must be avoided since deception is vital to success.

The attacking force organizes to cope with the environment—to attack across obstacles and rivers, during snow or rain, at night, or on nuclear or chemical battlefields. Engineers, NBC reconnaissance units, and air defense artillery and aviation assets must support maneuver throughout the attack.

Conducting Attacks. The attack must be violent and rapid to shock the enemy and to prevent his recovery until the defense has been destroyed. The attacker must minimize his exposure to enemy fires by using maneuver and counterfire, avoiding obstacles, maintaining security, insuring command and control, and remaining organized for the fight on the objective.

Commanders must be well forward for psychological reasons as well as for good control of their units. By commanding near the source of combat information, they are

able to make assessments and issue instructions. While on the move, forces communicate primarily by radio. Commanders must zealously guard this means of communications and demand discipline, passing only essential information. They can facilitate coordination by monitoring the reports of adjacent units.

A force attacks under a variety of circumstances. It attacks most often as a result of a meeting engagement that follows a movement to contact, from defensive positions after defeating an enemy attack, or through an attacking or defending force. The first two of these cases will most often result in a hasty attack.

When a hasty attack fails and the commander decides to resort to a deliberate attack, he insures that the force does not become disorganized or vulnerable to counterattack or nuclear and chemical attack. Positive command and control at this juncture are imperative. Portions of the force must take up hasty defensive positions; other parts of the force are directed to assembly areas. Rapid dispersion is essential, but it must be orderly enough to allow the attack to continue after a brief period of reorganization, consolidation, planning, and coordination.

Attack often begins with a forward passage of lines, an operation in which one friendly unit moves forward through positions held by another. It must be well planned and coordinated to insure minimum congestion and confusion. When possible, passage should be through elements that are not in contact.

The respective subordinate unit commanders coordinate specific details of the passage. Normally, the overall commander assigns boundaries to designate areas through which subordinate elements will pass. Such boundaries usually correspond to those of the stationary force. The unit in place mans contact and passage points, supplies guides, and provides information concerning the enemy, minefields, and obstacles.

To insure continuous support without increasing battlefield clutter, the stationary unit may provide the initial logistic support. Once started, the attacking unit moves through as quickly as possible to minimize the vulnerability of the two forces. The moving force must assume control of the battle as soon as its lead elements have passed through the stationary force. Artillery supporting the stationary force and its direct fires should be integrated into the fire support plan of the attacking unit.

Although indirect approaches are best, the attack may require a powerful and violent direct assault of enemy-occupied key or decisive terrain. The purpose of the assault is to destroy the enemy force or to seize the ground it has occupied. Synchronized fires, maneuver, and combat support are imperative to achieve superior combat power at the point of the assault. Artillery preparation, suppressive fire, isolation of the enemy force, concentration of combat power, and overrunning the enemy all combine to destroy the defending force.

Commanders concentrate all available firepower on the enemy-occupied positions at the beginning of the assault. These fires shift to targets beyond the assault objective as troops move on to the objective. This requires detailed planning, precise execution, and considerable discipline in the fire support force as well as in the assault force. Dismounted assault forces should move as close behind their own fires as possible; armored forces should assault under overhead artillery fire.

As the attacker reaches his assault objective, he must overcome enemy resistance with violent, concentrated firepower and a rapid advance. Speed during this phase of the attack is absolutely essential to reduce casualties and to avoid becoming stalled in the enemy's fields of fire. The assault must move completely across the enemy-occupied position. Fortified positions on the assault objective are then attacked from the flank or rear after the assaulting force has passed around them.

A coordinated effort to suppress enemy field artillery, air defense, and command and control supports assaulting forces. The enemy forces in depth posing the greatest threat to the attacking force are nuclear or chemical delivery systems, command and control facilities of the force being attacked, reserve forces, or fire support units. They are jammed by combat electronic warfare intelligence units, attacked by artillery or air, or blocked by other maneuver forces during the assault.

Once an enemy-occupied position is taken, the force must disperse rapidly and initiate the exploitation. Exploitation occurs either by continuing the attack with the same force or by passing another through it. Infantry attacks on fortified defenses are normally exploited by armor and mechanized forces. Besides giving the enemy time to reorganize, any pause in operations increases the force's vulnerability to counterattack or to nuclear or chemical counterfires.

OTHER TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Use of Terrain. Attacking forces should select avenues of approach that permit rapid advance, allow for maneuver by the attacking force, provide cover and concealment, permit lateral shifting of reserves, allow good communications, resist constriction efforts by enemy engineers, and orient on key terrain.

Battalion task forces and company teams advance from one covered and concealed position to the next. Divisions and corps move along lines of communications that provide for rapid advance of all combined arms and supporting forces. To sustain momentum, tank and mechanized task forces must move forward; so must field and air defense artillery, engineers, and combat service support units.

Terrain chosen for the main effort should allow rapid movement into the enemy's rear area. Commanders should normally identify and avoid terrain that will hinder a rapid advance; however, an initial maneuver over difficult terrain may be desirable if the enemy can be surprised. Commanders should personally reconnoiter the terrain, particularly terrain where the main effort is to be conducted.

As they move forward, combat elements should provide as much mutual support as possible. However, rapidly moving forces should not generally be held back to preserve a uniform rate of advance. Elements may seize intermediate objectives to provide mutual support and protection for an adjacent unit moving on a more exposed route.

Key terrain along the route of advance must be either seized or controlled by fire. When present, decisive terrain becomes the focal point of the attack.

Flank Security. The attacking force commander should not ignore the threat to his flanks, which increases as the attack progresses. He must assign responsibility for flank security to attacking units or designated security forces. To maintain forward momentum, it may sometimes be necessary to dispense temporarily with flank protection. The speed of attack itself offers a degree of security because it makes defensive reactions less effective.

Obstacles overwatched by air or ground cavalry or other security forces can improve flank security. When flank obstacles are emplaced, the commander should be mindful of how they affect his maneuver options.

Smoke Operations. During offensive operations, smoke degrades enemy observation. Smoke placed on or near enemy positions blinds gunners and observers. Delivered between friendly and enemy forces, it screens friendly maneuver.

Smoke may also deceive the enemy as to the attacker's intentions. For example, smoke may attract the enemy's attention to one part

of the battlefield while friendly units attack on another.

Protection from Air Attack. Cloud cover or limited visibility conditions in conjunction with a well-planned, ground-based air defense effort are a great advantage to an attack. Local air superiority during corps-, division-, or brigade-size attacks is highly desirable.

In the attack, SHORAD units protect critical assets such as supporting artillery, combat trains, and/or other potential targets designated by the division commander. As the maneuver elements move forward, HIMAD units should relocate forward to extend medium-altitude coverage for attacking forces.

Breaching Obstacles. When facing an organized defense, the attacker should expect to encounter obstacles. Assisted by engineer units with leading attack elements, forces should bypass, breach, or cross natural obstacles identified by map or ground reconnaissance.

An attacker should bypass obstacles whenever possible. Unable to bypass quickly, he should begin breaching operations at once. Even while breaching operations are under way, the search for a bypass must go on. Since obstacles are usually covered by fire, it is important to act quickly to bypass or to breach.

An *assault breach* usually occurs under fire, with little opportunity for reconnaissance. Any pause to reorganize or to conduct detailed reconnaissance would weaken the attack's momentum. When possible, combat engineers moving with leading companies perform the breach while tanks and infantry overwatch. Because engineers cannot be everywhere, however, all units must be trained, organized, and equipped to conduct hasty minefield breaches. In an assault breach, rapid breaching devices clear lanes to a width that will allow combat forces to continue the advance.

Combat engineers may conduct a deliberate breach if time permits detailed reconnaissance and planning. Normally, in a deliberate breach, they will clear obstacles completely.

River-Crossing Operations. Commanders must plan to quickly cross whatever rivers or streams are in the path of advance. A river crossing requires special planning and support. The size of the obstacle and the enemy situation will dictate how to make the crossing. Regardless of how they cross the river, attackers should do so without losing momentum. Only as a last resort should the attacking force pause to build up forces and equipment. *FM 90-13 deals with the subject in detail.*

Attacks During Limited Visibility. Darkness and other periods of limited visibility offer great advantages to the attacker. At such times attacks can—

- **Achieve surprise.**
- **Exploit success.**
- **Maintain momentum.**
- **Rupture strong enemy defenses.**

Modern night vision devices make night combat more feasible and effective than ever before. Because it lights the battlefield for both sides, artificial illumination is appropriate only when night vision devices are not available in sufficient quantities or when ambient light levels are very low. Sources of illumination such as searchlights provide targets for the enemy.

The side equipped with passive devices has a significant advantage. The degree of advantage gained by using illumination depends on the availability of night vision devices to both attacker and defender. When ambient light levels are high, passive night vision devices will reduce many of the effects of darkness. However, visibility will still be impaired enough to reduce detection and engagement ranges, length of bounds, and movement on covered and concealed routes.

Snow, rain, fog, or smoke present special problems in navigation, target acquisition, and identification. Special training, use of appropriate sensors, and careful planning can overcome these difficulties.

When a defender is disposed in positions that afford good long-range fields of fire, the last 3,000 meters of the attack approach may produce unacceptable losses. Under these circumstances, attackers may delay for a short period to take advantage of darkness, bad weather, or fog.

Combat techniques in limited visibility are similar to those in a deliberate attack during daylight. Attackers need detailed knowledge of enemy dispositions. The maneuver force can often get closer to an enemy position by capitalizing on the enemy's inability to acquire and to engage long-range targets as well as on reduced mutual support between enemy positions. Night attacks against strongly defended positions should cover relatively short distances (1 to 2 kilometers from the line of departure to the objective). Leaders at all levels should have the opportunity to reconnoiter the area of the attack as far forward as possible during good visibility. Wire will often be the primary means of communications until the assault begins or surprise is lost. Visual aids for recognition may assist in control of forces. Colored lights or luminous strips may help. Objectives will usually be smaller than normal, but they must be sufficiently prominent to insure easy location.

Nuclear weapons fired at night will dazzle friendly troops. When friendly forces use nuclear fires at night, they should give adequate warning and coordinate with the operations of other friendly units. Attackers can use nonpersistent chemical agents when nuclear fire is unacceptable.

EXPLOITATION AND PURSUIT

Exploitation and pursuit proceed directly from the attack and are initiated from attack dispositions. Exploitation is the bold continuation of an attack to maximize success. Pursuit is the relentless destruction of retreating enemy forces who have lost the capability to resist.

EXPLOITATION

Exploitation forces drive swiftly for deep objectives, seizing command posts, severing escape routes, and striking at reserves, artillery, and combat support units to prevent the enemy from reorganizing an effective defense. Exploitation forces should be large and reasonably self-sufficient. Well-supported by tactical air, air cavalry, and attack helicopters, they should be able to change direction on short notice. The commander must provide his exploiting forces with mobile support, including air resupply to move emergency lifts of POL and ammunition.

Planning for exploitation begins during the preparation for the attack. To avoid losing critical time, the commander tentatively identifies forces, objectives, and zones for the exploitation before his attack begins. Subordinates watch the enemy's defenses for indications of disintegration. When the opportunity to exploit occurs, commanders must issue warning orders, group forces, establish control measures, and arrange combat service support quickly.

Commanders of committed forces must act fast to capitalize on local advantages. Corps and divisions should aim for an early and rapid transition from attack to exploitation. Most exploitations will be initiated from the front rather than directed from the rear. When possible, the leading forces of the attack should retain the lead for the exploitation.

Commanders normally designate exploiting forces by issuing fragmentary orders during the course of an attack.

Assigned missions include seizing objectives deep in the enemy rear, cutting lines of communication, isolating and destroying enemy units, and disrupting enemy command and control. The exploiting force commander must have the greatest possible freedom of action to accomplish his mission. He will take the initiative and move aggressively and boldly. His objective—a critical communications center, a mountain pass, or key terrain that would significantly contribute to destruction of organized enemy resistance—may often be some distance away. At other times, the objective may simply be a point of orientation.

Exploitation should be decentralized. The major commander maintains sufficient control to alter the direction of the command or to prevent its overextension. He relies on his subordinates to find the fastest way to their objectives, to deploy as necessary to fight, and to seize all opportunities to damage the enemy or to accelerate the pace of the operation. The major commander uses minimum control measures, but issues clear instructions concerning seizure of key terrain and the size of enemy forces which may be bypassed.

The exploiting force commander must be careful not to dissipate combat power in achieving minor tactical successes or in reducing small enemy forces. His aim is to reach the objective with the maximum strength as rapidly as possible. Control is vital to prevent overextension of either the exploiting force or the logistics required to sustain it, especially if the enemy is capable of regrouping unexpectedly to attack the command. Available fires target enemy forces that cannot be bypassed or contained. Rapid advances provide security from nuclear attack by keeping enemy forces off balance and degrading their intelligence and surveillance capabilities. Exploitation continues day and night as long as the opportunity remains.

To sustain the exploitation and to insure that supplies and support reach the force safely and on time, commanders must give specific attention to the control of logistic units and convoys. Commanders must call them forward and guide them around bypassed enemy positions and obstacles.

Maneuver. Exploitation forces normally advance rapidly on a wide front toward their objectives. Leading elements maintain only those reserves necessary to insure flexibility of operation, continued momentum in the advance, and essential security. Armored and mechanized task forces are best suited for exploitation on the ground. Airmobile forces are extremely useful in seizing defiles, crossing obstacles, and otherwise capitalizing on their mobility to attack and cut off disorganized enemy elements. They can also seize key terrain such as important river-crossing sites or vital enemy communications nodes along the exploiting force's route or in the enemy rear. Attack helicopter units can interdict and harass enemy armored forces retreating slowly.

Exploitation actions are speedy, bold, and aggressive in reconnaissance, prompt to use firepower, and quick to employ uncommitted units. The force clears only enough of its zone to permit its advance. It contains, bypasses, or destroys those enemy pockets of resistance too small to jeopardize the mission. It reports bypassed enemy forces to adjacent units, following units, and higher headquarters. It attacks from the march and overruns enemy formations or positions strong enough to pose a threat to the mission. If the enemy is too strong for leading elements of the exploitation force to destroy and cannot be bypassed, succeeding elements of the force will mount a hasty attack.

Follow and Support Forces. In exploitation and pursuit operations, follow and support forces—

- **Widen or secure the shoulders of a penetration.**
- **Destroy bypassed enemy units.**
- **Relieve supported units that have halted to contain enemy forces.**

- **Block the movement of enemy reinforcements.**
- **Open and secure lines of communications.**
- **Guard prisoners, key areas, and installations.**
- **Control refugees.**

The follow and support force is not a reserve. It is a committed force and is provided the appropriate artillery, engineer, and air defense artillery support. In division operations, brigades may have missions to follow and support; in corps exploitations, divisions may follow and support other divisions.

Fire Support. Field artillery units should always be available to fire into and beyond retreating enemy columns. In some cases field artillery battalions will be attached to exploiting brigades. Nuclear or chemical weapons may be useful for destroying enemy artillery and reserves, closing routes of escape, and engaging suitable targets of opportunity, including enemy nuclear delivery means. With sufficient nuclear or chemical fire support, the exploitation can be launched shortly after the attack itself.

Security. The exploiting force depends primarily on its speed and enemy disorganization for security. Overextension is a risk inherent in aggressive exploitation. While senior commanders must be concerned about overextension, they must guard against being overcautious as well. They must rely on aggressive reconnaissance by air cavalry units and Air Force systems. In addition, IEW units organic to exploiting divisions can seek out enemy counterattack forces and jam enemy command and control and intelligence nets.

Air Defense. Adequate mobile air defense units should accompany exploiting forces. Air defense arrangements for the initial attack should remain effective for the exploitation. SHORAD systems continue to move with the advancing maneuver forces. They also move with and protect convoys, trains, and vital command posts. The area air defense commander may choose to position HIMAD systems forward to provide coverage for division and corps as the exploitation gains ground. As formations are extended and assets must cover more area, the air defense coverage becomes less effective. Thus, it is particularly important during an exploitation that Air Force counterair operations establish local air superiority.

Engineer Tasks. Engineers integrated into exploiting maneuver forces help breach obstacles and keep forces moving forward. Engineers also keep supply routes open and unimpeded.

Logistics. Exploitation and pursuit may be limited more by vehicle failures and the need for fuel than by combat losses and ammunition. Transportation and supplies to sustain the force become increasingly important as the exploitation progresses. As supply lines lengthen, security of routes will also become a problem. The largest possible stocks of fuel, spare parts, and ammunition should accompany the force so that momentum does not lag for lack of support. When possible, the support troops of larger units should follow the exploiting force echeloned along the main supply route. Maintenance teams with the attacking force repair disabled vehicles or send them to collecting points along the MSR for repair by maintenance units following the main force.

Combat support and combat service support arrangements must be extremely flexible. In deep or diverging exploitations, some combat support and some combat service support units will commonly be attached to maneuver forces.

The Human Dimension. Because troops are frequently tired when the opportunity for exploitation occurs, the commander must exercise aggressive and demanding leadership to keep units advancing. Meeting and overcoming repeated light resistance can actually add to the momentum of well-trained

units even if they are fatigued. When fatigue, disorganization, or attrition has weakened the force, or when it must hold ground or resupply, the commander should exploit with a fresh force. He should insure that it does not congest routes and create a lucrative nuclear target as it moves forward.

PURSUIT

Normally, a pursuing commander maintains pressure on the enemy to prevent the reconstruction of an orderly withdrawal while he simultaneously dispatches forces to encircle or to cut off the enemy. Pursuit requires great energy and resolution on the part of the attacking commander. Fatigue, dwindling supplies, diversion of friendly units to other tasks, and approaching darkness may all be reasons to discontinue the attack, but the commander must insist on continuous pursuit as long as the enemy is disorganized and friendly forces can continue.

Transition. As the enemy becomes demoralized and his defense begins to disintegrate, exploitation may develop into pursuit. Commanders of all units in exploitation must anticipate the transition to pursuit and consider the new courses of action as enemy resistance breaks down.

Successful pursuit requires unrelenting pressure against the enemy to prevent reorganization and preparation of defenses. Pursuit completes the destruction of the enemy force that has lost the ability to defend and is attempting to disengage. A terrain objective may be designated, but the enemy force is the primary objective. The attacker may be able to launch the pursuit after his initial assault if he exploits nuclear fires promptly.

Command and Control. Commanders are located well forward and take decisive action to insure that the momentum of the attack continues. Because of the enemy's disorganization, pursuit allows greater risks than other types of offensive operations. Pursuit operations are aggressive and decentralized. Troops and equipment in the pursuit push to the utmost limits of their endurance during both daylight and darkness.

Commanders must focus their attention forward. They must delegate greater authority than usual to deputy corps commanders and assistant division commanders, as well as to brigade and task force executive officers, entrusting them to push support forward aggressively.

Maneuver. In the pursuit, direct pressure against retreating forces is maintained relentlessly while an encircling force cuts enemy lines of retreat. The pursuing force attempts double envelopments of the retreating main force when conditions permit. It makes maximum use of airmobile and air maneuver units. During the pursuit, artillery, engineer, and combat service support units will often be attached to the maneuver units they support. Pursuit operations require—

- **A direct-pressure force that keeps enemy units in flight, denying them any chance to rest, to regroup, or to resupply.**
- **An encircling force to envelop the fleeing force, cut its escape route, and, in conjunction with the direct-pressure force, to attack and to destroy the enemy force.**

The *direct-pressure force* conducts hasty attacks to maintain contact and forward momentum until the enemy force is completely destroyed. The direct-pressure force prevents enemy disengagement and subsequent reconstitution of the defense and inflicts maximum casualties. It should preferably consist of armor-heavy forces. Its leading elements move rapidly along all available roads and contain or bypass small enemy pockets of resistance, which follow and support units reduce. At every opportunity, the direct-pressure force envelops, cuts off, and destroys enemy elements, provided such actions do not interfere with its primary mission.

The *encircling force* moves as swiftly as possible by the most advantageous routes to cut off enemy retreat. If necessary, it organizes a hasty defense behind the enemy to block his retreat.

The encircling force must be at least as mobile as the enemy. It must be organized for semi-independent operations. Airmobile and airborne forces are ideally suited for this role. An enveloping force gets to the enemy's rear area and blocks his escape so that he can be destroyed between the direct-pressure and enveloping forces. The enveloping force advances along or flies over routes that parallel the enemy's line of retreat to reach defiles, communications centers, bridges, and other key terrain ahead of the enemy's main force. If the enveloping force cannot outdistance the enemy, it attacks his main body on one or both of its flanks. If an attempt to cut the enemy's escape routes fails, a new enveloping force is immediately dispatched.

An encirclement can completely destroy the enemy. During the exploitation of successful penetrations into the enemy's rear, the commander may see possibilities for cutting off and encircling enemy elements; however, he must not initiate an encirclement prematurely or divert from more important missions. To encircle an enemy force, the pursuing force must overtake the retreating enemy and block his escape. Strong forces should position themselves to block his attempt to break through to the rear. Airmobile forces supported by attack helicopters can perform this mission. Forces must prevent enemy attempts to break out at any point, including forests, broken terrain, swamps, and water. All should be secured or covered against enemy exfiltration. If sufficient combat troops are not available, fire or barriers, including nuclear and chemical fires and scatterable mines, may block gaps. Maneuver and fires of all forces involved in the encirclement must be coordinated. Constant pressure, including psychological operations, will weaken the enemy. He must not have time to reorganize for an all-around defense. If he forms a perimeter, pursuit must repeatedly split it into smaller elements until the encircled force is destroyed or capitulates.

If time is not critical, the commander can keep the encirclement closed, ward off breakout attempts, and weaken the enemy by fire alone. The collapse of a large and encircled enemy force can be accelerated considerably by nuclear or chemical weapons.

PART THREE

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

CHAPTER 10

Fundamentals of the Defense

THE DEFENSE denies success to an attacking enemy. For this reason some theorists have labeled defense the less decisive form of war. To win, one must attack. However, the distinctions between defensive and offensive operations of large formations are made primarily on their intended purposes rather than on the types of combat actions they under take. Offensive combat is as much a part of defensive operations as strongpoint defenses or delaying actions.

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A successful defense consists of reactive and offensive elements working together to rob the enemy of the initiative. It is never purely reactive. The defender resists and contains the enemy where he must but seeks every opportunity to turn the tables. Early in the battle, such opportunities will be local and limited. As the battle develops, they will become more numerous. This is especially true when the defender uses reactive elements to uncover enemy vulnerabilities and to confuse or to disorganize his force. When the attacker exposes himself, the defender's reserves or uncommitted forces counterattack. The defense that successfully attacks the enemy's plan can ultimately destroy his uncoordinated force.

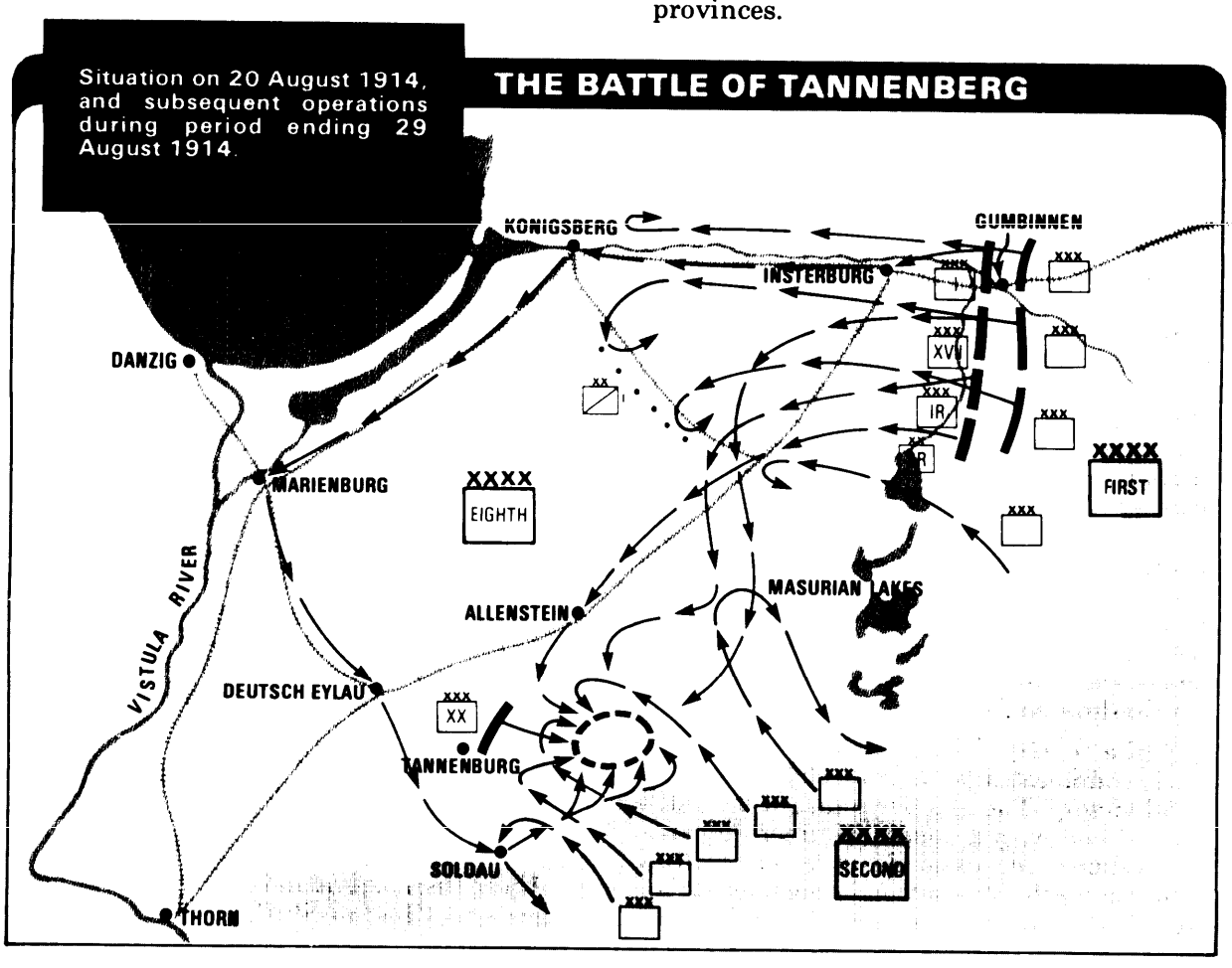
While reactive measures halt the enemy, early counterattacks improve the chances for total victory. The reactive phase of the battle should end with a general counteroffensive. Gettysburg, for example, was an entirely reactive battle. The outcome depended on the attacker's errors, not on the defender's exploitation of them. At the Battle of Kursk in 1943, the defense was better balanced. Early counterattacks strengthened the reactive phase, and the entire defending army ultimately went on the offensive to exploit its gains.

A closer parallel to the fluid conditions, rapid maneuver, and calculated risks of future operations occurred in the Battle of Tannenberg fought in East Prussia in August 1914. While the majority of the German army attacked France, General Max von Prittwitz, commander of the German Eighth Army, defended the province against two Russian armies—Rennenkampf's First Army and Samsonov's Second. After failing to halt the two forces with a series of counterstrokes, Prittwitz notified the high command that he would evacuate the province to set up a defense on the Vistula River. As a result, he was promptly relieved and replaced by General Paul von Hindenburg.

Upon their arrival in East Prussia, Hindenburg and Chief of Staff, General Erich von Ludendorff, adopted a plan conceived by

Chief of Operations, Lieutenant Colonel Max Hoffman, to entrap and destroy Samsonov's Second Army. Leaving only a screen of cavalry to confront Rennenkampf's army, Hindenburg began to concentrate his forces in the south. Five days later he halted, then encircled and destroyed the Second Army near Tannenberg. Samsonov's army broke up in panic, losing 125,000 men and 500 guns from 26 to 31 August.

Turning back to the north, the Germans then concentrated against the Russian First Army, defeating and driving it out of East Prussia. In this defensive campaign, the Germans lost about 10,000 men while imposing losses of 250,000 and effectively ended the Russian threat to their eastern provinces.



OBSOLETE

PURPOSES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Defensive operations achieve one or more of the following:

- **Cause an enemy attack to fail.**
- **Gain time.**
- **Concentrate forces elsewhere.**
- **Control essential terrain.**
- **Wear down enemy forces as a prelude to offensive operations.**
- **Retain tactical, strategic, or political objectives.**

The immediate purpose of any defense is to cause an enemy attack to fail. The other listed reasons contribute to purposes beyond the immediate defense.

It may be necessary to gain time for reinforcements to arrive or to economize forces in one sector while concentrating forces for attack in another. In either case, a defense or a delay may achieve these purposes.

In some cases a force may be defending because it cannot attack. The defender then uses his advantages of position and superior knowledge of the terrain to cause the enemy to extend himself. Once the enemy has been weakened and adopts a defensive posture, the defender maneuvers to destroy him with fires or counterattacks.

In other cases, portions of a force may be required to retain key terrain or essential tactical, strategic, or political objectives. In some instances, airmobile or airborne forces must first seize and hold such objectives until a larger force can link with the defender. An underlying purpose of all defensive operations is to create the opportunity to change to the offensive. All activities of the defense must contribute to that aim.

OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR THE DEFENSE

Some military theorists think defense is the stronger form of war because denying success is easier than achieving it. Indeed, the defender does have significant advantages over the attacker. In most cases he not only knows the ground better, but having occupied it first, he has strengthened his position and massed his forces. He is under the cover of his own field artillery and air defense. Once the battle begins, the defender fights from cover against an exposed enemy. He uses the terrain to mask his movements as he gathers forces to block and to attack the enemy. The defender can hold his major forces in reserve until the attack has developed and then strike the extended enemy over carefully selected and prepared terrain within the defensive area. The effects of obstacles, airpower, and conventional weapons on exposed troops and certain aspects of nuclear, chemical, and electronic warfare also favor the defender.

Balanced against these advantages, however, is the attacker's single greatest asset—the initiative. The attacker chooses the time and place of battle. He can concentrate first and surprise the defender by his choice of ground, direction of approach, and time of attack. He can also mislead the defender to slow his recognition of the main attack or distract him to delay his countermeasures.

The attacker tries to shatter the defense quickly and to maintain a fast pace to prevent its reconstitution. The defender must slow the tempo, giving himself time to react before he ultimately isolates and destroys the attacking forces.

The defender prevents the attacker from focusing his full strength at one time and place on the battlefield. Using deception, operations security, and maneuver to appear ambiguous and to confuse the enemy, the defender must divert the attacker's efforts into unproductive ventures and into strikes at nonexistent targets. These dissipate his strength, use his resources, and throw him off balance. Using terrain skillfully and interdicting follow-on forces through deep attack, the defender breaks the attacker's ability to

sustain the momentum. The defender makes it difficult for him to employ fire support assets, to reinforce, to resupply, and to direct attacking echelons. In essence, he destroys the synchronization among the elements of the attacking force.

Initially outnumbered, the defender must take advantage of fighting from stationary, protected positions. Deep attack, the actions of security forces, and detailed fire and barrier plans help contain and control the attack. However, once the defender has controlled the attacker and concentrated forces in the area of the main attack, he gains equally important advantages. He can operate against exposed, precisely located segments of the attacking force. He can attack the overextended enemy with fires from all sides and launch surprise counterattacks on his flanks and rear to destroy the attacking force.

The defender's ultimate task is to overcome the attacker's advantages and to gain the initiative quickly. Napoleon's *Memoirs* contain his principles for conducting defensive campaigns. They can be succinctly summarized: The entire art of war consists of a well-planned and exceptionally circumspect defense followed by rapid, audacious attack.

The key terms of AirLand Battle doctrine—initiative, depth, agility, and synchronization—also apply to any successful defense.

Defensive operations—

- **Seize the tactical initiative locally and then generally as the entire force shifts from defense to attack.**
- **Fight the enemy throughout the depth of his formations to delay and to disorganize him and to create opportunities for offensive action. The defender must organize forces and resources in depth to gain time and space for flexibility and responsive maneuver.**
- **Maintain agility and flexibility in using fire, maneuver, and electronic warfare to set the terms of battle. Just as the attacker commits himself, the defender should change the situation and thereby force a countermove. This overloads the enemy's command and control system and renders his reaction uncoordinated and indecisive. Effective agility can lead to the enemy's piecemeal destruction.**
- **Synchronize all available combat capability in well-coordinated combat actions. Violent execution of flexible plans and aggressive exploitation of enemy weaknesses can halt the attacking force.**

TYPES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Types of defensive operations include the defense, the delay, the defense of an encircled force, and rear area protection operations. Other combat activities normally associated with defensive operations include counterattacks, passage of lines, withdrawals, and reliefs to continue the defense. In defensive operations, portions of large corps-or division-size forces may be conducting any of these operations or activities:

- DEFENSE. **The defense is a coordinated effort by a force to defeat an attacker and to prevent him from achieving his objectives. The manner in which this is done is developed in chapter 11.**
- DELAY. **A delaying operation is usually conducted when the commander needs time to concentrate or to withdraw forces, to establish defenses in greater depth, to economize in an area, or to complete offensive actions elsewhere. In the delay, the destruction of the enemy force is secondary to slowing his advance. Counterattacks and defenses by elements of a delaying force may be necessary in such operations. Delay operations are discussed in chapter 12.**
- DEFENSE OF ENCIRCLED FORCES. **Those defending units intentionally and unintentionally bypassed on a nonlinear battlefield must continue to contribute to the overall defense. This is the subject of chapter 13.**
- REAR AREA PROTECTION OPERATIONS. **The rear areas must be defended during any operation. The threats may vary**

from individual acts of sabotage to major regimental attacks and even to division-size airborne or airmobile attacks. Chapter 14 addresses the particulars of rear area protection operations.

- COUNTERATTACKS AND SPOILING ATTACKS. Counterattacks and spoiling attacks may enhance both the defense and the delay. They may occur forward of or within the main battle area. Counterattacks by fire involve maneuvering to engage an enemy's flank or rear. A well-executed counterattack to the flanks or rear of an enemy just as he meets a resolute defense to his front can entirely upset his plan. Companies and larger forces may launch counterattacks to retake critical terrain or to destroy an enemy. They may also assist a friendly unit to disengage. Launched as the enemy gathers his offensive force, a spoiling attack can prevent him from attacking or give the defender additional time to prepare.

- WITHDRAWALS. In a withdrawal, all or part of a force disengages from the enemy for another mission in another area. A partial withdrawal may be necessary in either the defense or a delay. Withdrawals are discussed in chapter 12.

- RELIEFS TO CONTINUE THE DEFENSE. There are two kinds of relief. The relief-in-place is common when units have similar organizations or when occupied terrain must be retained. The area relief is practical when units are dissimilar or when improved defensive terrain is located away from the line of contact.

All coordination, reconnaissance, planning, and control for relief should be simple and efficient. Control, speed, and secrecy can insure simplicity and efficiency. Control, the most important principle, should receive the most command involvement. All relief decisions must consider the time available and allow for advance reconnaissance. The larger the units involved in the relief, the more time will be required for planning and coordination. Both hasty and deliberate reliefs must be concealed from the enemy. Reliefs should be conducted during periods of reduced visibility and when the enemy is least likely to attack. Any change in the defensive plan should normally wait until the relief is complete.

CHAPTER 11

The Defense

KARL VON CLAUSEWITZ characterized the ideal defense as a "shield of blows." At the onset of the attack the defender yields the initiative. However, he uses his prepared positions and knowledge of the ground to slow its momentum and to strike the enemy with repeated, unexpected blows. He defeats the attacker's combined arms, degrades his strength and ability to concentrate, and destroys his force with effective maneuver supported by flexible firepower. He does not have to kill each enemy tank, squad, or combat system; he has only to destroy the ability of the attacking force to continue fighting.

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SCOPE

US Army defensive doctrine is applicable anywhere in the world. The commander chooses a defense to fit his mission, the nature of the enemy, the terrain, and the capabilities of available units. He may elect to defend well forward by striking the enemy as he approaches. He may fight the decisive battle within the main battle area (MBA). If he does not have to hold a specified area or position, he may draw the enemy deep into the area of operations and then strike his flanks and rear. He may even choose to preempt the enemy with spoiling attacks if conditions favor such tactics. In the past, all four methods have proved decisive.

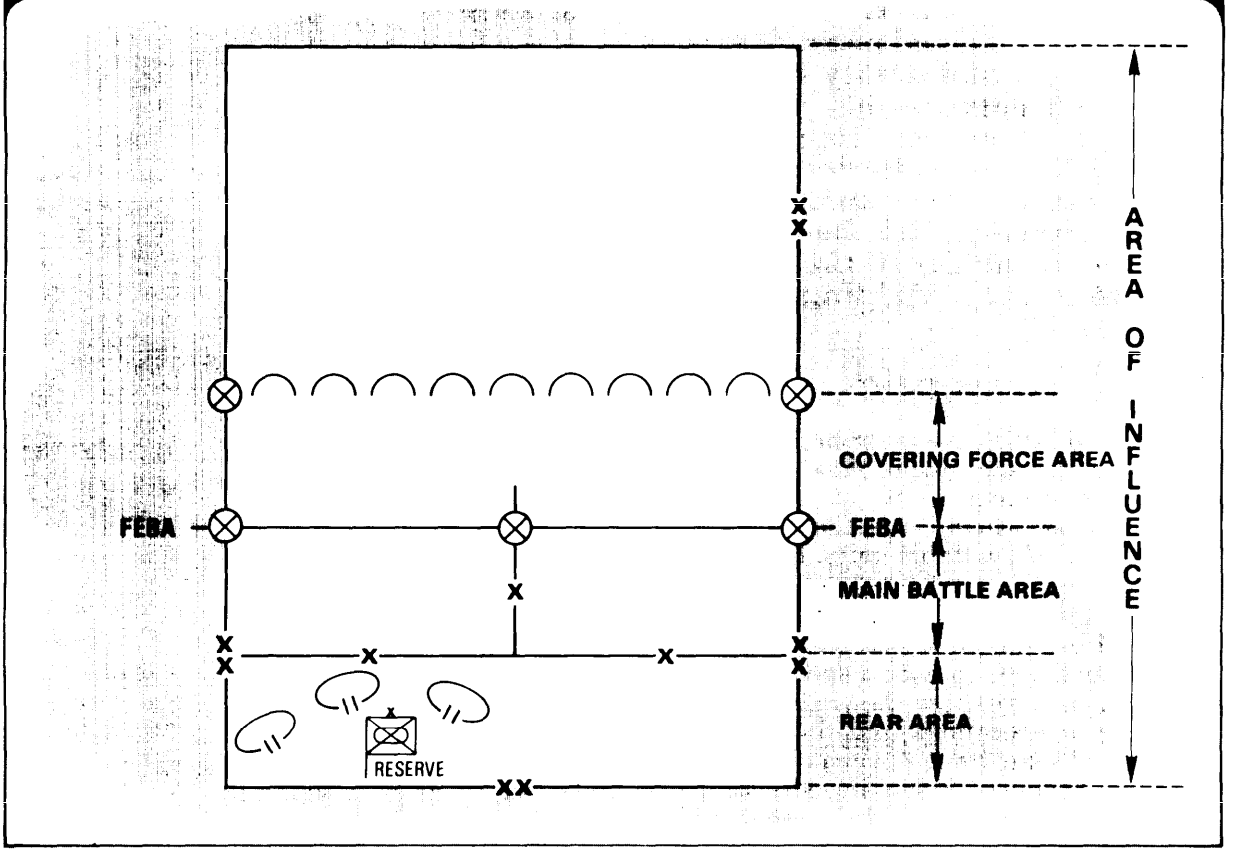
DEFENSIVE FRAMEWORK

Corps and divisions fight a unified air-land defense organized into five complementary elements:

- **A continuous deep battle operation in the area of influence forward of the FLOT.**
- **A covering force operation to support the main effort.**
- **A main effort in the main battle area.**
- **Rear area protection (RAP) operations.**
- **Reserve operations in support of the main effort.**

These elements perform different but complementary functions in the defense. The deep battle robs the attacker of the initiative early and continues to limit his options throughout the battle. Normally established by corps, the covering force serves as the forward security echelon and begins the fight against the attacker's leading echelons in the covering force area (CFA). Covering force actions are designed to facilitate the defeat of the attack in the MBA where the main defensive effort occurs, either at the FEBA or further to the rear. Rear area protection maintains the viability of command and control and support for the overall effort. The primary purpose of the reserve in the defense is to maintain the commander's flexibility. It is best used to strike a decisive blow against the attacker. The commander organizes his defense around these functional elements based on the factors of METT-T. He allocates forces and other resources to these tasks and shifts them as appropriate during the battle.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DEFENSE



CONSIDERATIONS

To plan effective defenses, commanders must consider the five factors discussed below.

Mission. The first consideration in planning the defense is the mission. It defines the area to be defended, and it must be analyzed in terms of the higher commander's overall scheme. Defending broad frontages forces the commander to accept gaps. Defending shallow sectors in which there is little ground to yield reduces flexibility and requires the commander to fight well forward. Narrow frontages and deep sectors increase the elasticity of the defense and simplify concentration of effort, which create a stronger defense. In planning his defensive posture, the commander also considers subsequent missions.

Enemy. The second consideration in planning the defense is the enemy—his procedures, equipment, capabilities, and probable courses of action. Defending commanders must look at themselves and their sectors for weaknesses that the enemy will seek to exploit and then act to counter them. They may also be able to identify probable enemy objectives and approaches to them. In a defense against an echeloned enemy, they must know how soon follow-on forces can attack. If the defenders can delay such forces, they can defeat a strong, echeloned enemy piecemeal—one echelon at a time. If the defenders can force the enemy to commit follow-on echelons sooner than planned, they upset his attack timetable, creating exploitable gaps between the committed and subsequent echelons.

Terrain. The third consideration in organizing the defense is terrain. The defending force must exploit any feature of the terrain that impairs enemy momentum or makes it difficult for him to mass or to maneuver. Defenders must engage the attacker at those points along his avenue of approach where the terrain puts him at greatest disadvantage. Controlling key terrain is vital to a successful defense. Some terrain may be so significant to the defense that its loss would prove decisive. Decisive terrain is usually more prevalent at brigade and lower levels. Terrain itself is seldom decisive in division or corps defense. However, when it is, commanders must make it a focal point of the defensive plan.

Troops. The fourth consideration is the mobility and protection of the defending force relative to the opposing forces. Armor and mechanized forces can move on the battlefield with minimum losses even under artillery fire, while infantry cannot. Once engaged, infantry elements must remain where they are initially positioned and dug in. They disengage when the attack is defeated or when counterattacking forces relieve the pressure on them. However, infantry defenses against enemy infantry attacks in close terrain can be fluid battles of ambush and maneuver.

Time. The fifth consideration in organizing the defense is time. The defense needs time for reconnaissance; for preparing initial, supplementary, and subsequent positions; for fire planning; and for coordinating maneuver, fires, terrain reinforcement, and logistic support. To give MBA forces additional preparation time, the commander may order a high-risk delay by a covering force. Lack of time may also cause a commander to maintain a larger-than-normal reserve force.

OPTIONS

Based on his analysis, the commander assigns missions, allocates forces, and apportions combat support and CSS resources within the framework of the overall defense. He decides where to concentrate his effort and where to take risks. This analysis also establishes the advantages of defending forward or defending in depth.

When he defends in the forward part of the sector, the commander commits most of his combat power and the main defensive effort early. He may do so by deploying forces

forward or by planning counterattacks well forward in the MBA or even forward of it. He may select a defense in depth when the mission is less restrictive, when defensive sectors are deep, and when advantageous terrain extends deep into the sector. Normally, divisions and corps defend a wide sector in depth. Elements in the CFA and forward elements in the MBA identify, define, and control the depth of the enemy's main effort while holding off secondary thrusts. Then counterattacks on the flanks of the main effort seal off, isolate, and destroy penetrating enemy forces.

While METT-T may require forward defense, it is the most difficult to execute because it is inherently less flexible and more dependent on synchronization than defense in depth. The commander's options are not limited to a defense in depth or to a forward defense. The conditions may favor an intermediate form of defense.

DEEP BATTLE OPERATIONS

Deep battle operations in the defense turn the table on the attacker by limiting his options, destroying his plan, and robbing him of the initiative. They can delay the arrival of follow-on forces or cause them to be committed where and when it is most advantageous to the defense. They can also disrupt enemy operations by attacking command posts at critical stages in the battle or by striking and eliminating key elements of an enemy's capability.

Areas of interest and influence extend far enough forward of the FLOT to give the commander time to react to approaching enemy forces, to assess his options, and to execute operations accordingly. The deep battle begins before the enemy closes with the maneuver forces. It goes on during combat in the CFA and the MBA, and it usually continues after the direct contact between forces has ended.

In fighting the deep battle, the commander will maintain a current intelligence picture of enemy forces throughout his area of interest. Yet, he must focus his collection effort on areas and units of particular concern. To conduct a deep attack successfully, the fire support coordinator (FSCOORD), G3, and G2 must cooperate to insure that deep battle actions support the overall concept of the defense.

As enemy formations approach the FLOT, the commander will monitor them, seek high-value targets, and disrupt and delay them. Air-delivered weapons, field artillery fires, tactical nuclear weapons, air maneuver units, and unconventional warfare forces are the chief means of the deep battle. Because they are usually limited in number and effect, commanders must use them wisely and efficiently. Generally, more sensors and weapons become available as the enemy nears the FLOT. Effective employment of maneuver units in deep attack requires careful planning, IPB, and responsive surveillance once operations are underway. For a detailed discussion of the deep battle, see chapter 7.

COVERING FORCE OPERATIONS

In any form of defense, the covering force serves as the forward security echelon. It occupies a sector far enough forward of the FEBA to protect MBA units from surprise, allowing MBA commanders to reposition forces to meet the enemy attack and preventing enemy medium-range artillery fire on the FEBA. The covering force gains and maintains contact, develops the situation, and delays or defeats the enemy's leading fighting forces.

Corps and division commanders may establish a strong covering force as the first echelon of a two-echelon defense. It may battle leading enemy formations, causing the enemy to commit follow-on battalions or regiments and disclose his main effort. During the action, the corps or next higher level of command conducts the deep battle

against follow-on forces and prepares for battle in the MBA.

The size and composition of the covering force depends on METT-T and also on the time that the MBA force needs to organize or to occupy its positions. Normally the covering force is organized around tank-heavy task forces and divisional and regimental cavalry. Ideally, a corps will employ one or more armored cavalry regiments because they are specially organized, trained, and equipped for security missions. A corps may use divisions or separate brigade units instead of cavalry or with cavalry. A light corps may have to use air cavalry, light armor, or airmobile infantry in the CFA. Light covering forces will be able only to harass the enemy and to report his movement as he approaches the MBA. In any case, the covering force will require appropriate additional artillery, engineer, CEWI, ADA, and Army aviation units to perform its mission successfully.

THE COVERING FORCE DEFEATS OR DELAYS THE ENEMY, FORCING HIM TO REVEAL HIS MAIN THRUST AND DENYING HIM ACCESS TO THE MAIN BATTLE AREA

The corps or MBA divisions may control the covering force as a separate force in their own sectors. Brigades should control the covering force only where terrain makes other solutions impractical. Corps or division control depends on the overall plan for defense, the size of the CFA, the number of battalion-size units to be employed, and the time that MBA units have for preparing.

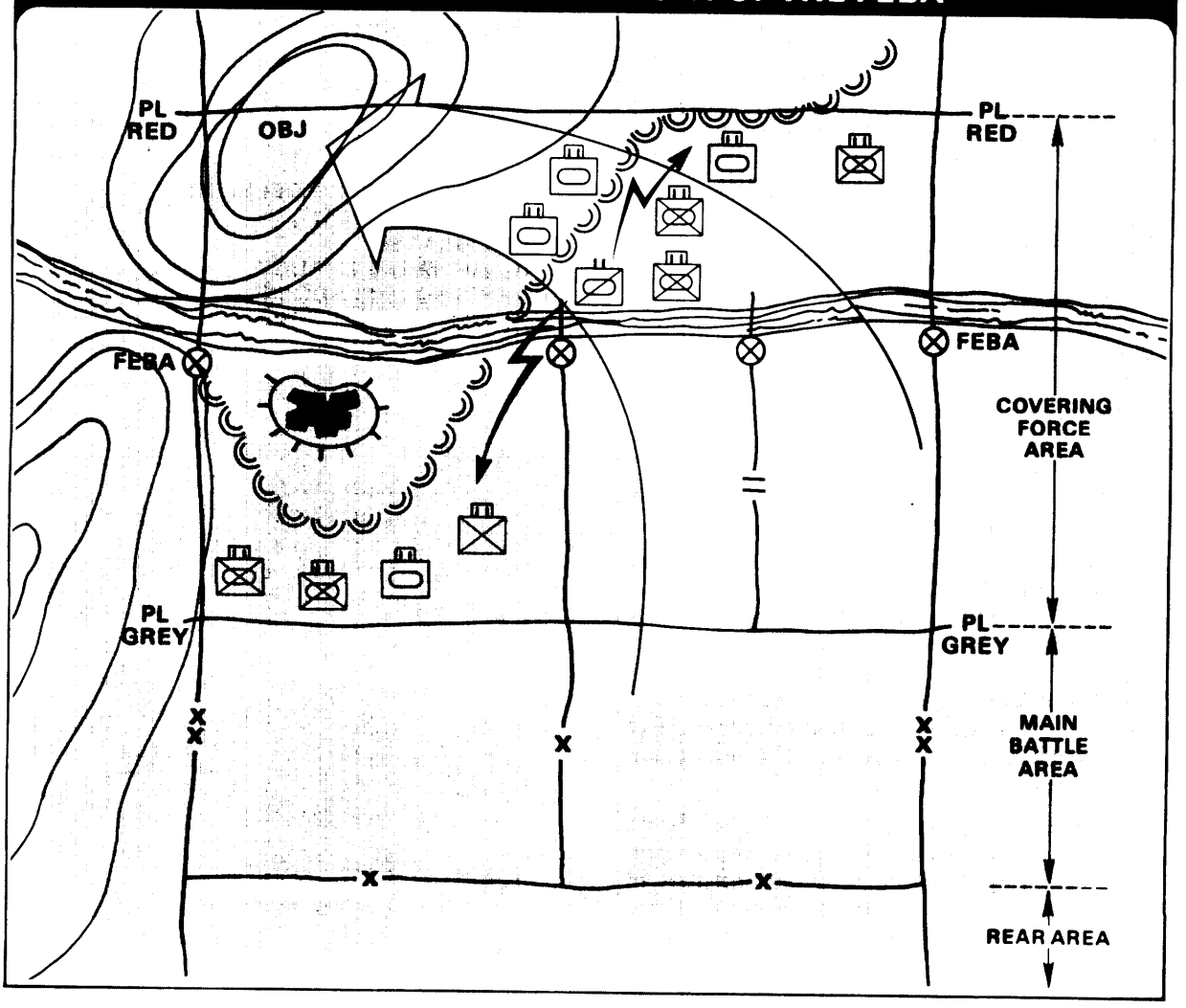
Corps and division operations officers must monitor the covering force battle and maintain coordination between it and the deep battle. Above all, the covering force battle must complement the overall defensive plan. It must damage and mislead the enemy, channel his attacks into desired areas, and cover either the positioning or the relocation of MBA forces.

Covering force battalions and squadrons fight from a series of mutually supporting battle positions that make maximum use of the terrain and the force's long-range fires. Carefully planned indirect fires and obstacles protect these positions. They also help the covering force avoid an inappro-

priate decisive engagement. Normally, the covering force will defend, delay, and attack with its maneuver units. Delay by itself will rarely provide enough protection.

The entire covering force should not withdraw automatically when the first enemy units reach the FEBA. It should adjust to the enemy advance and continue to fight or to screen far forward. Doing so can increase the chances for success even though the attack has penetrated in some parts. Those parts that remain forward can maintain surveillance. They resist the enemy's supporting attacks and reconnaissance effort, upsetting his coordination and allowing the MBA commander to fight one battle at a time. Finally, the covering force can stage a staggered withdrawal. In observing and providing access to enemy flanks, it facilitates counterattack forward of the FEBA. In some cases the covering force can attack first-echelon forces from the rear or drive between echelons to isolate leading enemy units.

COUNTERATTACK IN FRONT OF THE FEBA



HANDOFF

Handoff must occur quickly and efficiently to minimize vulnerability. It also requires close coordination between the covering force and MBA forces. The covering force commander must retain freedom to maneuver until he initiates the passage of lines. The overall commander must establish contact points, passage points, passage lanes, routes to positions, resupply, and fire support coordination prior to the withdrawal of the covering force. Normally battalion-size units of the covering force hand off the battle to the brigades through which they pass. After passage, the covering forces normally move to designated areas in the rear or MBA to prepare for subsequent operations. Those areas must be far enough away to keep the withdrawn units from interfering with operations.

Control of the deep battle passes to MBA divisions as the covering force hands off the battle. This usually occurs in one sector at a time until the covering force has been completely withdrawn. A corps will continue to fight its deep battle after the commander commits MBA divisions to the defense.

MAIN EFFORT

Whatever the concept of operation, forces fight the decisive defensive battle either at the FEBA or within the MBA. The commander positions forces in the MBA to control or to repel enemy penetrations.

The commander assigns MBA sectors on the basis of the defending unit's capability, the terrain within the sector, and the larger unit's mission. The assigned sector usually coincides with a major avenue of approach. The force responsible for the most dangerous sector in the MBA normally receives priority in the initial allocation of artillery, engineer, and close air support. It is the main effort. The commander strengthens the effort at the most dangerous avenue of approach by narrowing the sector of the unit astride it. He may use armored cavalry units or other maneuver forces to economize in rough sectors and to concentrate the major units on the most dangerous approaches, but he must do so without splitting secondary avenues of approach. The defensive plan must be flexible enough to allow changes in the main effort during the course of the battle.

A significant obstacle along the FEBA, such as a river, favors a defense trying to retain terrain. It adds to the relative combat power of the defender. Reserves at all levels destroy forces which have penetrated such obstacles or established bridgeheads. Such attacking forces must be destroyed while they are small. If they are not, they can assist following elements to cross, build rapidly in strength, and rupture the coherence of the defense.

Corps and division commanders—

- **Follow developments in the MBA.**
- **Support important fights with additional nuclear or conventional firepower.**
- **Adjust sectors.**
- **Control movement of committed forces as necessary.**
- **Reinforce MBA units with fresh maneuver forces.**
- **Intervene at decisive junctures in the battle with reserves.**

As the close battle progresses, corps and division commanders continue to fight the deep battle. They monitor events beyond the FLOT and fight follow-on enemy forces to prevent them from outflanking defensive positions or overwhelming committed forces.

The commander may also structure a deep defense with elements deployed within the MBA. He may enhance it by holding out a large mobile reserve and by committing fewer elements to the initial MBA defense. Committed elements in such a defense control the penetration until counterattack can eliminate it.

Large mobile forces may penetrate sections of the MBA. Penetration and separation of adjacent units is likely with nuclear and chemical operations. Nonetheless, MBA forces continue to fight while protecting their

own flanks, striking at the enemy's, and driving across penetrations when possible. Division or corps reserves can defeat some penetrations, but others will pass into the corps rear area.

REAR AREA PROTECTION OPERATIONS

In contemporary battle, protection of rear areas will be very important. Because RAP may divert forces from the main effort, commanders should carefully balance their assets against requirements and prepare to take risks somewhere. For example, they may have to decide between competing needs if the rear area and the main effort both need reserves simultaneously. To make such decisions, commanders require accurate information and nerve.

Rear area command and control and support facilities must be dispersed and redundant. Artillery and obstacles must protect such facilities. Air defense forces should be detailed to protect especially sensitive areas and facilities in the rear if the enemy succeeds in opening flight corridors over the MBA. Reserves must be ready for fluid counteroffensive operations in the rear area—in essence, movement to contact. Airmobile forces, attack helicopter and air cavalry units, Air Force close air support missions, and mechanized forces will be of special value, as will be chemical fires and low-yield nuclear weapons. For a detailed discussion of RAP, see chapter 14.

RESERVE OPERATIONS

The primary purpose of reserves in the defense is to counterattack to exploit enemy weaknesses, such as exposed flanks or support units, unprotected forces in depth, and congestion. They also reinforce forward defensive operations, containing enemy penetrations or reacting to rear area threats.

Commanders should decide on the size, composition, and mission of the reserve as early as possible. Commanders down to brigade will normally try to retain about one third of their maneuver strength in reserve.

Timing is critical to counterattacks, but the commander and his subordinates have little latitude. They must anticipate the lead times for committing reserves. Committed too soon, the reserves may not be available for a more dangerous contingency. Committed too late, they may be ineffectual. Once he has committed the reserves, the commander should form other reserves from uncommitted forces or from forces in less threatened sectors.

In planning a counterattack, the commander must carefully estimate the time and distance for follow-on enemy echelons. Then he must determine which of his units can attack, where they will take positions after the counterattack, and what interdiction or deep attack will isolate the enemy. Counterattacking units seek to avoid enemy strength. The most effective counterattacks seize strong positions from which to fire on the enemy's exposed flanks and rear. If the force is to stay and to defend after counterattack, it must regain good defensive positions before overwatching enemy units can interfere.

Reserves may be air or ground maneuver units. Nuclear weapons may also be reserves if the theater policy permits the commander to use them freely. Reserves may exist at battalion and task force levels, but designated reserves are not usually available at these or lower levels. At these levels counterattacks are conducted by least committed elements, by elements positioned in depth, or by reinforcing elements that a higher headquarters has attached for the purpose. In any case, the commanders must designate artillery units to support the reserves on short notice.

Reserve airmobile forces can respond rapidly. In suitable terrain they may reinforce positions to the front or on a flank. In a threatened sector they may be positioned in depth. Airmobile forces are also suitable for swift attack against enemy airborne units landing in the rear area. Once committed, however, they have limited mobility.

Because of the unique capabilities of attack helicopter units, commanders hold them in depth initially and commit them when needed. They respond so quickly that commanders have a long decision window. The mobility and firepower of attack helicopters often make them the quickest and most effective means for stopping surprise tank attacks and for destroying enemy tanks which have broken through.

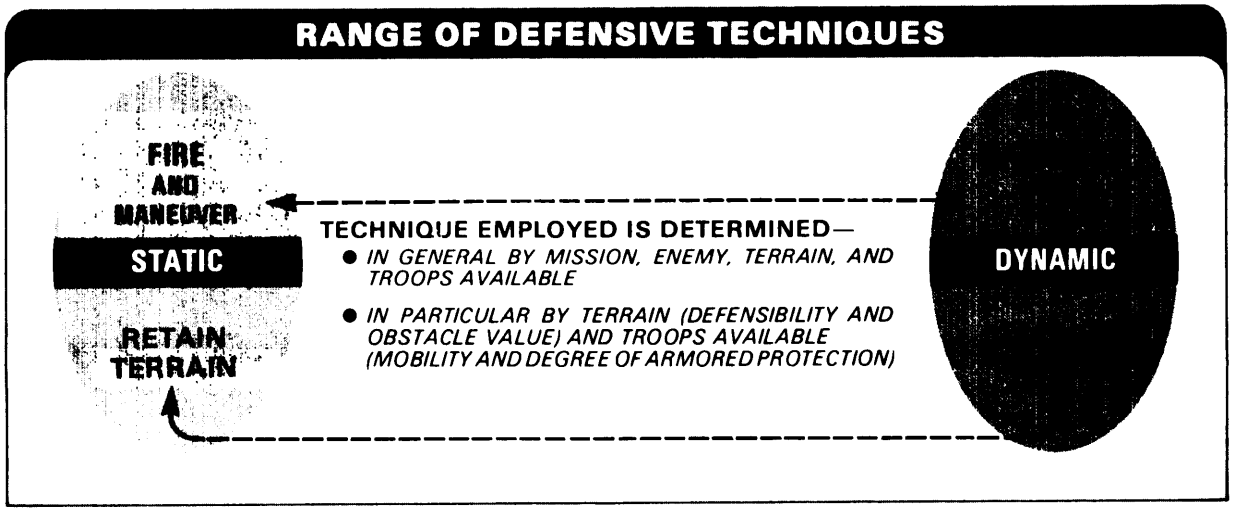
In addition to designating reserve forces, commanders may choose to shift uncommitted subordinate elements to reconstitute a reserve or to concentrate forces elsewhere. The most easily shifted forces are the reserves of subordinate units. Commanders should shift committed MBA forces laterally only as a last resort because of three great risks. First, the attacker can inhibit or prevent such lateral movement with air or artillery interdiction and with nuclear or chemical munitions. Second, when a force is engaged even by small probing or reconnaissance actions, it is neither physically nor psychologically prepared to make lateral movements. Third, vacating a sector, even temporarily, invites penetration and exploitation by alert follow-on forces.

DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

Defensive techniques apply to brigades, battalions, and companies. *Army doctrine does not prescribe a single technique for defense.*

The defensive options form a continuum. At one end is the absolutely static defense designed exclusively to retain terrain. It depends primarily on firepower from fixed positions. At the other end is the wholly dynamic defense that focuses only on the enemy. It depends primarily on maneuver to disrupt and to destroy the attacking force. Typically, large-unit operations combine elements of both forms: the static which controls, stops, or canalizes the attacker; and the dynamic which strikes and defeats the enemy's committed forces. Defenses are predominantly static or dynamic depending on the unit's mission, composition, relative strength, mobility and operational environment.

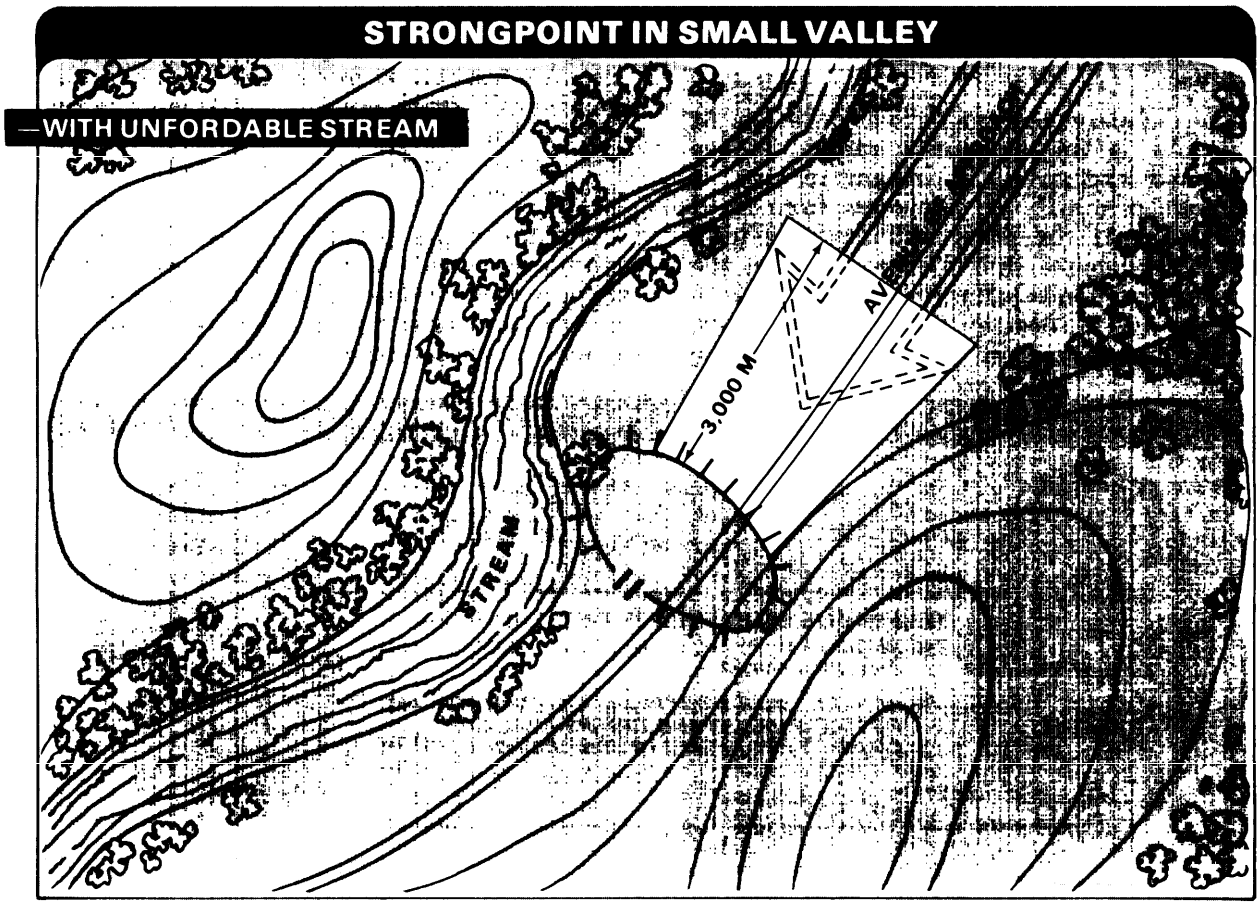
Whatever the plans, commanders must match available defending forces to the terrain. For example, infantry can form static pivots for maneuver and defensive strongpoints in rugged terrain, forests, and urban



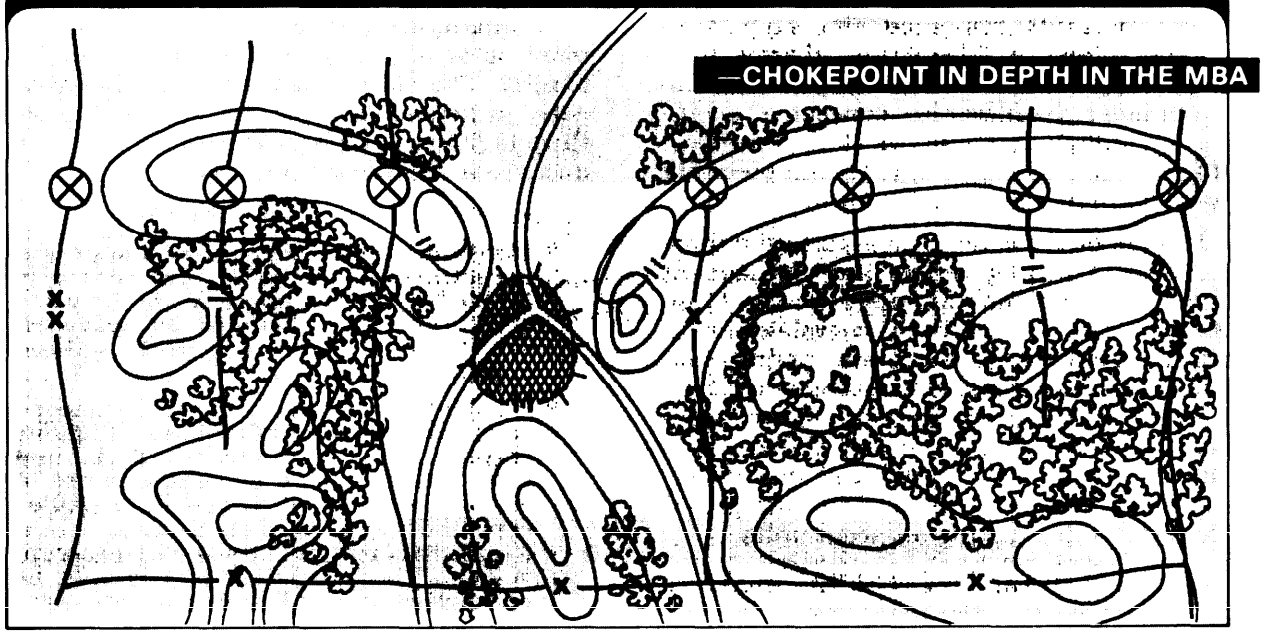
areas. Heavily armored units form the dynamic elements of a defense. They can best defend by moving between islands of resistance and by using them to cover their maneuver or to entrap the enemy.

In a dynamic defensive battle, commanders generally use tanks and overwatching long-range antitank weapons. They use short-range antitank and other infantry weapons in urban, wooded, or rugged areas to defend static positions. Each commander decides on whether and how to cross-reinforce, depending on his battle plans. On some occasions, the brigade commander may decide to use tank and mechanized infantry battalions without cross-reinforcing to make special use of the capabilities of each. For example, he may position a mechanized battalion in a cluster of small villages all within supporting distance of each other across an avenue of approach. The tank battalion forms the dynamic element, counterattacking the flank or rear of the enemy force as it encounters the dug-in mechanized infantry.

Strongpoints are the most static elements of a defense. The strongpoint is essentially a heavily fortified battle position—an antitank nest which enemy forces cannot quickly overrun or easily by-pass. Strongpoints locate on terrain features critical to the defense or at a bottleneck formed by terrain obstacles. Strongpoints astride or along avenues of approach in small urban areas may make it possible to halt a vastly superior force for a considerable time. When nuclear or chemical



STRONGPOINT IN MOUNTAIN PASS



—CHOKEPOINT IN DEPTH IN THE MBA

weapons are in use, strongpoints must be well camouflaged and protected, or forces must occupy them just before the enemy's arrival.

To be effective, the strongpoint must surprise the enemy. It must congest and limit his maneuver. It can set up a counterattack. Commanders can extricate the force in the strongpoint after it has accomplished its mission and before enemy follow-on forces arrive.

In organizing their defenses, corps, divisions, brigades, and battalions will all combine the static and dynamic forms. However, they will probably vary the details of their operations even in executing the same plan.

Once the division commander decides where he intends to employ his brigades, brigade commanders organize tank, mechanized, and infantry battalions for combat on the basis of METT-T. Brigade commanders organize for defense by assigning sectors or battle positions to subordinate battalions or task forces. Sectors give battalion task forces freedom to maneuver and to decentralize force planning. Assigning sectors to battalion task forces on the FEBA in the MBA has four additional advantages. It helps commanders plan fires and terrain-reinforcing barriers. It allows commanders to match teams to terrain. It permits the forward task force to plan a battle in depth, and it improves integration of direct and indirect fires.

To retain control over maneuver and task force positioning, the brigade commander establishes initial battle positions. He does so to concentrate task forces rapidly and to manage them in open terrain with good fields of fire. He controls maneuver outside those battle positions and prescribes the position's primary directions of fire. He assumes responsibility for fire and maneuver planning among several battalions in mutually supporting positions.

Whatever the defensive techniques, the overall scheme should maximize maneuver and offensive tactics. When the enemy has committed his forces, the defender should seize the initiative and counterattack over familiar ground protected by his own positions. He can destroy a halted, disorganized enemy.

DEFENSIVE PREPARATIONS

PLANS AND ORDERS

To coordinate combined and supporting actions, soldiers and leaders of all arms must prepare in detail. As soon as possible, the commander describes his concept of operation in enough detail for his staff and subordinate commanders to understand precisely how he intends to fight the battle.

Time is of the essence in getting the force prepared. Warning orders and subsequent verbal instructions can alert forces. Commanders cannot wait for the complete plan to begin preparations. Maximum preparation time increases defensive effectiveness. If time allows, commanders should receive briefbacks from their subordinates. These insure that orders are understood and that implementing plans match the overall concept and are coordinated among adjacent units.

Deception plans and OPSEC guidance must be a part of the defensive plan. The OPSEC effort should conceal the location of the main defense and the disposition of forces from the enemy. If the attacker finds understrength sectors, he will attack them. Dummy battle positions can deceive the enemy. Preparing and camouflaging positions can, too. Commanders should avoid predictable defensive preparation.

As he plans, the commander must evaluate his vulnerability to nuclear or chemical attack. He must specify the degree of risk he is willing to accept and establish priorities for his NBC defense units. He positions forces and installations to avoid congestion, but he must not disperse to the extent that he risks defeat with conventional weapons. He plans to mass forces at the last moment to avoid a nuclear strike and an enemy exploitation of it. He positions forces and plans and prepares multiple routes so that nuclear or chemical strikes do not hamper maneuver.

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

To anticipate CSS needs, the logisticians must understand how the battle will be fought. Therefore, they must be involved early in defensive planning. This will allow them to plan the support of the defense and to anticipate changing priorities.

Combat service support should—

- **Consider stockpiling limited amounts of ammunition and POL in centrally located battle positions in the forward MBA that are likely to be occupied. Plans should be made to destroy those stocks if necessary.**
- **Send push packages of critically needed supplies on a scheduled basis. Regular shipments of ammunition, POL, and repair parts should be sent forward to eliminate the need to call for supplies repeatedly and to reduce the chance that a lapse in communications will interrupt supply. The receiving unit should be resupplied until it issues instructions to the contrary.**
- **Resupply during periods of limited visibility to reduce the chances of enemy interference; infiltrate resupply vehicles to reduce the chances of detection.**
- **Plan to reconstitute the CSS capability lost to enemy fires. Potential replacements from DISCOM CSS units should be identified as early as possible to reestablish lost capability.**
- **Echelon CSS units in depth throughout the defensive area. When a forward unit displaces to the rear, another should be designated to pick up the work load until the displacing unit is again operational.**
- **Use maintenance contact teams and dispatch them as far forward as possible to reduce the need to evacuate equipment.**
- **Consolidate different types of maintenance contact teams (vehicle, armament, missile) to maximize the use of available vehicles and make sure such teams have adequate communications.**