MCWP 3-01

Offensive and Defensive Tactics



U.S. Marine Corps

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

1 April 2025

FOREWORD

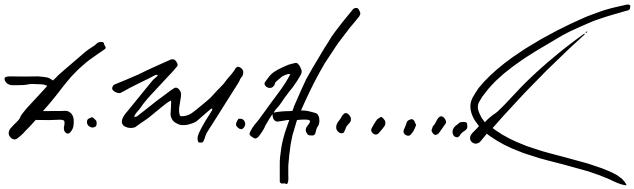
The requirement to balance traditional offensive and defensive tasks and tactics against enduring lessons from recent operations made writing Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-01, *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*, imperative. This publication comprehensively addresses the philosophy of tactics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

MCWP 3-01 is the Marine Corps' basic warfighting offensive and defensive tactics publication. It serves as a common starting point for leaders and units to address the specific tactical problems that face them in a globally contested environment, within multiple domains, across the competition continuum. This revision reflects that Marines employ a tactical system of single battle that integrates and synchronizes warfighting functions across all domains, focused on a thinking enemy, to offset disadvantage and create relative advantage through the use of multidomain combined arms.

MCWP 3-01 is a compendium of best practices and common terms, not a dictate that must be rigidly adhered to. Rather, it provides the basics of offensive and defensive tactics from the squad level to the Marine division and points the reader to additional references for further study. This publication is intended for the Marines, leaders, commanders, and staffs from the squad level to the Marine division as a foundational document to assist in preparing and executing offensive and defensive tactics in any given operational environment.

This publication supersedes MCWP 3-01, dated 20 September 2019.

Reviewed and approved this date.



ROBERT M. HANCOCK
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Director, Ground Combat Element Division
Capabilities Development Directorate

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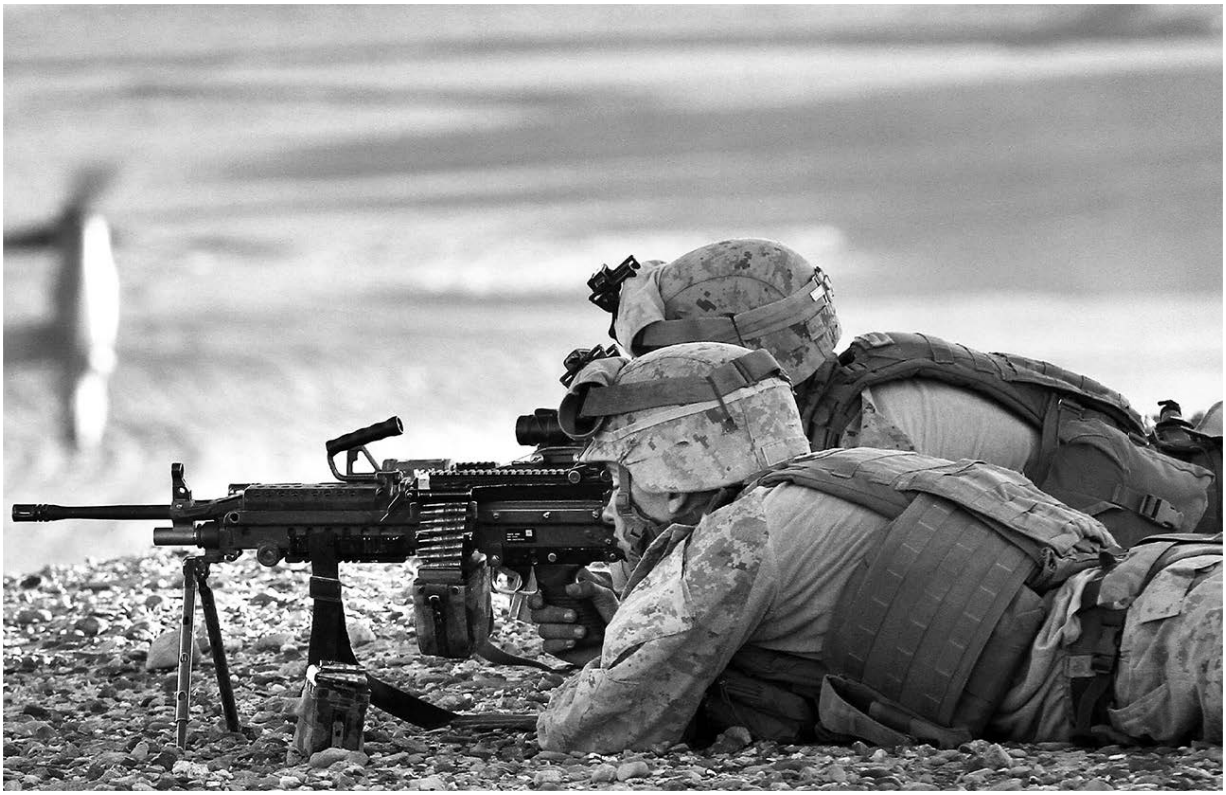
B. Warfighting Functions

C. Tactical Tasks

Glossary

References and Related Publications

Part I.
Tactical Fundamentals



Part I introduces the role of Marine Corps tactics and discusses how the tactics taxonomy nests within multidomain combined arms. This part discusses the art and science of tactics, the role of tactics, and common tactical concepts and control measures that apply to offensive and defensive operations as well as enabling activities.

CHAPTER 1.
TACTICS

According to Marine Corps Doctrine Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting*, tactics refers to the concepts and methods to accomplish a particular mission in either combat or other military operations. In combat, tactics can be thought of as the art and science of winning engagements and battles. It includes the use of firepower and maneuver; the integration of different arms; and the immediate exploitation of success to defeat the enemy. To accomplish missions, commanders use combat power (i.e., tactics), which is generated by combining elements of the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF). The tactical-level commander uses combat power in battles, engagements, and small-unit actions. (See MCDP 1 and MCDP 1-3, *Tactics*, for more information.)

TACTICAL LEVEL OF WARFARE

The tactics and supporting techniques and procedures described in this publication are only starting points for the Marine who must understand the difference between tactics, techniques, and procedures. Tactics requires prudent judgment as well as adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Techniques and procedures are rote, established patterns, that once learned can apply repeatedly to various situations. Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) provide the tactician with tools to use when developing the solution to a tactical problem. Marines use combine existing TTP to solve problems, or they create new ones, as the situation requires. The tactician determines a solution by mastering doctrine and TTP, tempered and honed by experience gained through training and operations. The tactician uses creativity to develop solutions for which the enemy is neither prepared nor able to cope.

The levels of warfare (i.e., strategic, operational, and tactical) link strategic objectives and tactical actions. The tactical level of warfare is "the level of warfare at which forces plan and execute battles and engagements to achieve military objectives" (*The DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, hereafter referred to as the *DoD Dictionary*). Activities at the tactical level focus on arranging and maneuvering combat elements in the most effective relation to each other and to the enemy. The strategic and operational levels of warfare provide context for tactical operations; without tactical operations are reduced to a series of disconsnected and unfocused actions.

Engagement

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

Battle

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

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

Advances in technology in the information age have made information and the communication of information levers that have compressed the interrelationships between the levels of warfare. Commanders must envision a logical flow of operations across the levels and allocate resources and assign tasks to the appropriate commands. However, commanders at every level must be aware that in a world of high connectivity, which allows for constant and immediate communications, any single event can affect any or all levels of warfare. See Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, for more information about the principles of joint operations.

ART AND SCIENCE OF TACTICS

The art (skillful wielding) and the science (proven practices and technologies) of tactics are two distinctly different yet inseparable constructs. A tactician is an individual devoted to mastering both. Commanders and leaders at all echelons must be tacticians to lead their Marines and Sailors in simultaneously conducting offensive, defensive, and stabilization activities.

An operation is "a sequence of tactical actions with a common purpose or unifying theme" (*DoD Dictionary*). Tacticians use the art and science of tactics to maneuver and position formations. Maneuver is "employment of forces in the operational area, through movement in combination with fires and information, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy" (*Marine Corps Supplement to the DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, hereafter referred to as the *USMC Dictionary*). Marines use maneuver tactics to gain and exploit positions of relative advantage to accomplish the mission.

To successfully execute Marine Corps tactics, commanders must apply various tactical concepts. Key concepts include achieving a decision, gaining advantage, being faster than the enemy, adapting, cooperating with friendly forces, and exploiting success. Commanders use these concepts when planning and executing tactics. These are not stand-alone ideas; rather, Marines combine them to achieve a greater effect than they can accomplish using them individually. Commanders must know where and when to apply these concepts and which combinations to use in order to achieve the desired effect. See Chapter 2 and MCDP 1-3 for a detailed discussion of key Marine Corps tactical concepts.

Art of Tactics

An art, as opposed to a science, requires Marines to exercise intuitive faculties that cannot be learned solely by study. Tacticians must temper their study and evolve their skill through various relevant, practical experiences. The more experience the tactician gains, the greater is that individual's mastery of the art of tactics.

Tacticians use the art of tactics to solve tactical problems within the commander's intent by considering—

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

These considerations represent a starting point for the tactician to create a unique solution to a specific tactical problem. Although there are checklists for techniques and procedures, there are no checklists for solving tactical problems. Therefore, tacticians must use their experience and creativity, their staffs, and their subordinates to outthink their enemies.

When employing the art of tactics, Marines consider three interrelated aspects:

- The creative and flexible tools.
- Decision making in uncertain conditions and when faced with an intelligent enemy.
- An understanding of the human element (i.e., the effects of combat on Marines and Sailors).

Creativity and Flexibility. Marines must provide the commander with creative and flexible tools, such as TTP, training, organizations, and materiel. The infinite variations of any situation, the changing mission factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available–time available (METT-T), and the independent will of the enemy demand creativity and flexibility from the tactician.

Decision Making in Uncertain Conditions. Marines must recognize and operate within the knowledge that tactical decision making takes place under conditions of uncertainty, in time-constrained environments, and against opposing wills. Leaders must apply their judgment, making the best use of the time and information available at the moment of decision and avoiding the illusion of certainty. To establish control, leaders use mission-type orders and direction to execute command and feedback into their decision-making process.

Understanding the Human Element. Success in combat depends on the human aspect of warfare as much as it does on any numerical or technological factor. Marines must understand both the enemy and friendly forces; this human element differentiates combat from problems they encounter during training or in a classroom. Combat leaders seek to recognize and exploit fear and weakness in their enemies while safeguarding friendly forces from similar effects. Tacticians accomplish this by gaining and maintaining the initiative and dictating the tempo of continuous combat operations.

Continuous combat operations against an intelligent enemy takes a toll on friendly forces, severely straining their physical and mental stamina, which can result in decreased vigilance, slowed perception, difficulty communicating, and an inability to concentrate or accomplish manual tasks. The tactician seeks to maximize these effects on the enemy while minimizing them on the friendly force by choosing tactics that dictate tempo and by exercising tactical patience—the art of developing the situation and timing decisions when conditions are favorable. The tactician must weigh the risk between pushing personnel beyond their limits to exploit success versus resting them to prevent the collapse of unit cohesion. See MCDP 1-3 for a more detailed discussion on developing the situation and timing and how it affects the human element.

Science of Tactics

The science of tactics requires Marines to understand the capabilities, techniques, and procedures of combat that can be measured and codified. The science of tactics includes measuring the physical capabilities of friendly and enemy organizations and systems, such as determining how long it takes a given organization (e.g., regimental landing team [RLT]) to move a certain distance. It also includes techniques and procedures used to accomplish specific tasks, such as the tactical term support by fire and the associated control graphic that compose the language of tactics. This publication focuses on the science of tactics—the techniques and procedures for employing various elements of the multi-domain combined arms (MDCA) team. See MCDP 1-3 for a more detailed discussion on the science of tactics.

HASTY VERSUS DELIBERATE OPERATIONS

Most operations are conducted in either a hasty or deliberate manner. A hasty operation is conducted when the tactical situation requires the commander to use available forces and fragmentary orders (FRAGORDs) to perform actions with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation time for speed of execution. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment's initial assault into Hue City in 1968 was a hasty operation conducted with available forces. A deliberate operation is conducted when the tactical situation allows the commander to develop and coordinate detailed plans and mission-specific rehearsals; task organize the force; and thoroughly prepare and synchronize shaping and sustaining actions.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment's initial assault into Hue City in 1968 illustrates hasty operations conducted with available forces. At the other end of the spectrum is a deliberate operation, such as the 1st Marine Division's breach operation during the opening hours of Operation DESERT STORM in 1991. Although improved command and control (C2) systems provide leaders with greater situational awareness, facilitate decision making, and diminish the distinction between hasty and deliberate operations, commanders and their staff must determine which type of operation is most appropriate.

OPERATIONAL CHOICES AND TRADEOFFS

A commander's decision to conduct a hasty or deliberate operation is based on the current knowledge of the enemy situation, an assessment of whether there are adequate available assets (to include time), and the ability to coordinate and synchronize those assets. Greater certainty is

necessary is for detailed planning and preparation, which is associated with deliberate or complicated operations. Greater uncertainty, which typically accompanies crises or changes to a situation, is often associated with hasty operations. Hasty operations require immediate action with the available forces and information. A key skill for a commander—and part of the art of tactics—is knowing when there is enough intelligence to make a decision within the higher commander's intent and constraints.

When commanders plan and prepare for an operation, they should use the least amount of time necessary to ensure a reasonable chance of success. This allows friendly forces to act faster than the enemy, permitting the rapid concentration of friendly strength against enemy vulnerabilities and mitigating uncertainty in tactical operations. Although commanders must understand the possible negative effects of reduced coordination, they must balance that risk against allowing the enemy more time to change the situation, conduct preparations, and move additional units within supporting range or distance. If the enemy can improve its disposition faster than the friendly force can, delays in execution decrease the commander's chances of success. Additionally, commanders should provide subordinates the maximum time possible to conduct their own planning and preparations.

The fundamentals of maneuver warfare indicate it is typically better for commanders to act with speed, audacity, and momentum when conducting military operations than to act with caution. Bold decisions give the best promise of success; however, commanders must differentiate between prudent risk and gambling. Prudent risk is a deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment as being worth the cost. Commanders determine whether to exploit an opportunity by applying military judgment, mitigating risk to an acceptable level, and determining whether the remaining risk is worth accepting. The World War I decision to advance the Marines into Belleau Wood to stem the German advance is an example of a justifiable, prudent risk. A gamble is conducting an operation that can lead either to victory or to the complete destruction of one's force. Rare situations can arise when a gamble might be justified, such as when defeat is merely a matter of time and the only chance for victory lies in an operation of great risk. Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Chamberlain's decision to direct a bayonet charge with what was left of the 20th Maine on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg is an example of a successful military gamble, as Union forces were able to surprise and force the Confederates into a retreat despite being nearly out of ammunition.

When facing a less capable and less prepared enemy force, commanders can forego detailed planning, extensive rehearsals, and significant changes in task organization. For example, an attacking battalion landing team encountering enemy security outposts just moving into position can conduct actions on contact to immediately destroy the outposts without losing momentum. Against a larger and more prepared enemy however, the commander needs more preparation time and a larger force to succeed. If the commander determines that the enemy forces cannot be defeated with the available forces, the commander must determine what additional measures to take to be successful.

RISK REDUCTION

Commanders encounter internal and external factors and influences that cast uncertainties regarding whether and when they will achieve their objectives. The effect of this uncertainty deviates from the expected. It can be positive, negative, or both, and can address, create, or result

in opportunities and threats. The decision to engage or not to engage an identified risk depends on the commander's risk threshold, which also guides the staff engaged in risk reduction. The commander's risk guidance is based on an assessment of negative and positive outcomes and measured against their likelihood and potential impact.

Choices and the potential cost of those choices characterize operations. Commanders decide whether they can accomplish their mission based on current intelligence of the enemy situation and an assessment of the asset available (including time) and means to coordinate and synchronize those assets. If those assets are unavailable, commanders take additional time to plan, resource, and prepare for an operation, or they articulate where and how they will assume risk. When executing a hasty operation, commanders should still operate within the framework of prudent risk.

Commanders reduce risk by acquiring information and intelligence within the context of the time available to make decisions (see Table 1-1 for risk reduction factors). They use combat information, which is unevaluated data that cannot be processed into tactical intelligence in time to satisfy the tactical intelligence requirements. The key difference between combat information and intelligence is the amount of planners have to analyze data. Acting on combat information exposes friendly forces to risk, such as enemy deception, but also allows commander to exploit fleeting opportunities. When the friendly forces act based on intelligence, they increase the effectiveness of tactical operations and the efficient use of resources but risk surrendering battlespace tempo to the enemy. As commanders receive combat information and intelligence, they can determine whether hasty or deliberate operations will accomplish the mission..

Table 1-1. Risk Reduction Factors.

Less Information and Intelligence	More Information and Intelligence
More uncertainty and more risk to force.	Less uncertainty and less risk to force.
Commander employs— • More reconnaissance and surveillance. • Larger reserve. • More security. • Reduced speed of operations.	Commander employs— • Smaller reconnaissance and surveillance. • Smaller reserve. • Fewer security formations. • Increased speed of operations.
Operates in a less distributed manner.	Operates in more distributed manners.

Commanders reduce risk through the methods they choose to employ their forces. Amid greater uncertainty, friendly forces typically choose formations that prioritize force protection over speed and create a large reserve capable of reacting to unforeseen events. Conversely, units with greater certainty typically reduce risk by dispersing and distributing forces and by increasing operational tempo. Although C2 systems and precision fires often provide Marine Corps forces an asymmetric advantage over certain enemies, such advantages are often fleeting, with enemy forces quickly reacting by camouflaging themselves (e.g., hiding among the population

Changes to task organization, mission, and priorities are part of an operation's process. Commanders, advised by their staffs, determine the optimal formation and organization for a specific mission, and they continuously assess risk. When necessary, commanders make changes and allocate resources to minimize risk. Every change has opportunities and risks, and commanders balance the two to achieve their purpose.

FIGHTING AT A DISADVANTAGE

Offensive and defensive operations at the tactical level involve a constant struggle for advantage. Against a peer competitor, commanders can expect limited air superiority and should not allow this to dominate the decisions made and actions taken.

Although aviation is a central element of the MDCA tactical system, successful units recognize that they cannot know when an enemy will contest the air domain nor allow friendly airflows to dictate tactical success. They acknowledge that there will be times of distinct disadvantages, but never willingly cede a space, and they contest perceived enemy advantages. They combine the effects of capabilities across the other domains to not only mitigate disadvantage but also retain freedom of maneuver, maintain tempo, and create periods of peak advantage.

Examples of fighting through disadvantage include—

- Integrating air defenses, to include counter-unmanned aerial systems that challenge enemy air advantage.
- Monitoring signals, systems, and platforms to provide warning of enemy air systems and identify gaps in enemy air coverage.
- Conducting aggressive and unabated actions in space and the information environment to maintain pressure on the enemy, influence the timing and tempo of their operations, and take shaping actions to maximize periods when friendly units have the advantage.
- Maintaining multi-layered sensing to feed the targeting process so action can be conducted as soon as assets become available.
- Employing decoys as a standard action to complicate enemy targeting and slow their decision-making process.
- Targeting enemy communications to disrupt command and control and degrade their targeting cycle.

SOLVING TACTICAL PROBLEMS

Marines solve tactical problems by gaining and maintaining the initiative—forcing the enemy to react to friendly operations—at a time and place of their choosing. A commander should never surrender the initiative once it is gained. The commander quickly builds momentum to by apply available combat power while operating inside the enemy's decision-making cycle, and mastering the transitions from the defense to the offense and vice versa. These general principles allow the commander to maximize friendly combat power and minimize enemy combat power by preventing the enemy from fighting as a MDCA force. Commanders seize, retain, and exploit the initiative by—

- Maneuvering more rapidly than the enemy to gain positional advantage (the place where the effects of fires are most destructive).
- Employing firepower to facilitate and exploit positional advantage.

- Sustaining subordinate forces before, during, and after engagement with the enemy.
- Achieving and maintaining information superiority.
- Planning beyond the initial operation and anticipating possible events.
- Pressing the battle.
- Accepting risk while leading Marines and Sailors and pushing systems to their limits.

Tactical success—the end goal for all operations—is when the opposing enemy force can no longer achieve its tactical objectives or prevent friendly forces from accomplishing their mission. Decisive tactical success is when the enemy no longer has the means to oppose the friendly force, or when the enemy admits defeat and agrees to negotiated an end to hostilities. Historically, rapid, tactical success results in fewer friendly casualties and lowered resource expenditures. However, it could also weaken MDCA synchronization.

Resolving tactical problems is a collective effort. Commanders must have full confidence in their subordinates' mastery of the art and science of tactics. See MCDP 1 and MCDP 1-3 for more information on solving tactical problems.

MULTI-DOMAIN COMBINED ARMS IN THE SERVICE TACTICAL SYSTEM

The Marine Corps employs a tactical, single-battle system that integrates and synchronizes warfighting functions (see Appendix B) across all domains to offset disadvantage and create relative advantage by using multi-domain combined arms. Multi-domain combined arms integrate lethal and nonlethal fires in conjunction with maneuver to create effects that exploit windows of relative advantage by synchronizing capabilities across domains. Commanders use this integration to mitigate enemy advantages and create conditions that will enable them to defeat enemy forces, achieve objectives, and consolidate gains Marine Corps units use MDCA operations to impose multiple dilemmas on the enemy.

All Marine Corps operations are MDCA operations because they integrate capabilities from all domains. At the tactical level of warfare, Marine Corps units provide the following capabilities:

- Ground maneuver forces able to seize and hold terrain.
- Surface-based indirect fires.
- Air and missile defense.
- Artillery and antiship missile attack.
- Logistics.

During offensive and defensive operations and stabilization tasks and activities, Marine Corps units also provide fixed- and rotary-wing aviation, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), and satellite communications.

CHAPTER 2.
COMMON TACTICAL CONCEPTS AND CONTROL MEASURES

MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS

Offensive operations are conducted to take the initiative from the enemy, gain freedom of action, and generate effects to achieve objectives. Defensive operations are conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, or develop conditions favorable to offensive and stability operations. Stabilization activities are conducted to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. Enabling activities connect offensive and defensive operations with stabilization activities. On their own, they are not decisive, but they help set conditions for the execution of all operations. They require either a deliberate planning effort or a well-developed and understood standing operating procedures (SOP) to execute. Every operation and activity have a mission that consists of a task and purpose.

Commanders conduct reconnaissance and security activities to help execute the various tasks and actions associated with combat and stabilization activities. Enabling activities set the friendly conditions required for mission accomplishment. Enabling activities do not directly accomplish the commander's end state and are not decisive on their own, but to the commander uses them to conduct successful offensive and defensive operations and stabilization activities. For example, a forward passage of lines might enable an attack to continue, allowing a new unit to pass through, thereby maintaining momentum and keeping pressure on the threat. Enabling activities can also be described or listed as key tasks during the execution of a mission.

Offensive and defensive operations arrange friendly forces by purpose. Purpose describes friendly force goals with respect to the enemy force's ability to achieve its objectives. An objective is "the clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which an operation is directed" (*DoD Dictionary*). Based on the purpose assigned, the commander selects a type of offensive or defensive operation and any enabling activities required. All operations have subsets called activities, methods, forms, and techniques. The variations organize forces as the parent operation, with differing conditions and outcomes.

BATTLESPACE FRAMEWORKS

The battlespace is, "the environment, factors, and conditions that must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, and/or complete the mission. It includes the physical environment (air, land, maritime, and space domains); the information environment (which includes cyberspace); the electromagnetic spectrum; and other factors. Included within these are friendly, enemy, adversary, and neutral entities contained within or having an effect on the operational areas, areas of interest, and areas of influence" (*USMC Dictionary*). Commanders use battlespace frameworks to enhance their understanding so they can best organize their forces in relation to one another and in time, space, event, and purpose. Battlespace frameworks provide commanders and their staffs with a means to ensure they consider all essential elements of military operations during the planning and execution phases. They are situation- and mission- dependent and vary in structure between units within the same operation. Commanders generally use either spatial- or purpose-based battlespace frameworks.

Spatial-based battlespace frameworks consist of deep, close, and rear operations (see Figure 2-1) and are either contiguous or noncontiguous. Commanders typically use lines of operation with spatial-based battlespace frameworks. Purpose-based battlespace frameworks consist of decisive, supporting, and sustaining actions. Commanders typically use lines of effort with purpose-based battlespace frameworks. It is possible to blend the two types, and changes in situation and mission might mandate a transition between them. See MCDP 3 for further discussions of battlespace frameworks, areas of interest, influence, and operations, as well as contiguous and noncontiguous areas of operation (AOs). See Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning*, for further information on lines of operation and lines of effort.



Figure 2-1. Spatial-Based Battlespace Framework Example.

Spatial-Based Battlespace Framework

Commanders use spatial-based battlespace frameworks to arrange operations and forces in terms of time, space, and geography. Typically associated with aspects of traditional warfare, spatial-based battlespace frameworks are useful when the tactical problem, mission, and situation is primarily based on ground objectives, physical capabilities of the enemy, and the corresponding deployment of friendly forces.

Deep Operations. Deep operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are "military actions conducted against enemy capabilities that pose a potential threat to friendly forces. These military actions are designed to isolate, shape, and dominate the battlespace and influence future operations" (*USMC Dictionary*). Supporting efforts are typically associated with deep operations. A supporting effort has "designated subordinate unit(s) whose mission is designed to directly contribute to the success of the main effort" (*USMC Dictionary*). Deep operations can weaken enemy capabilities, force an early culmination, or otherwise attack the enemy system so that friendly forces can handle the remaining enemy forces when deep operations transition to part of the close battle. Commanders conduct deep operations to seize the initiative, create windows of opportunity for decisive action, restrict the enemy's freedom of action, and disrupt the cohesion and tempo of enemy operations. Deep operations might require commanders to coordinate and integrate with national-level assets and joint forces.

Close Operations. Close operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are "military actions conducted to project power decisively against enemy forces that pose an immediate or near-term threat to the success of current battles or engagements. These military actions are conducted by committed forces and their readily available tactical reserves, using maneuver and combined arms" (*USMC Dictionary*). The main effort is typically associated with close operations. A main effort is "the designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. It is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power and is directed against a center of gravity through a critical vulnerability" (*USMC Dictionary*). Commanders designate a main effort to prioritize resource allocation. The reserve can serve as the decisive element of the battle. Marines conducting close operations require speed and mobility to rapidly concentrate overwhelming combat power at the critical time and place. Close operations are primarily conducted by MDCA forces from the ground combat element (GCE) and supported by the MAGTF.

Rear Operations. Rear operations, as part of a battlespace framework, are "military actions conducted to support and permit force sustainment and to provide security for such actions" (*USMC Dictionary*). All MAGTF elements conduct rear operations, although they are typically associated with supporting efforts. The MAGTF commander might need to provide commanders in the rear area with additional capabilities, such as a tactical combat force, fire support assets, civil affairs, and associated command and control. To minimize the logistical footprint, rear operation commanders can use seabasing, host-nation support, and existing infrastructure. As the operation progresses, the rear area's geographic location, C2 structure, and the organization changes.

Purpose-Based Battlespace Framework

Commanders use purpose-based battlespace frameworks to arrange actions, forces, and resources in terms of time, conditions, and effects. Associated with aspects of irregular warfare, purpose-based battlespace frameworks are useful whenever the primacy of the tactical problem,

mission, and situation is based on functions, activities, actions, and effects. Once AOs are assigned to subordinate units, the commander and staff assign broad tasks and purposes to subordinate units by designating decisive, shaping, and sustaining actions.

Decisive Actions. Decisive actions include "any action the commander deems fundamental to achieving mission success" (*USMC Dictionary*). The designated main effort typically conducts the decisive action. Because multiple units can be engaged in the same decisive action, commanders must carefully delineate priorities between units. Because any particular action or series of actions conducted by friendly forces might prove decisive, commanders must remain prepared to exploit unexpected or unplanned opportunities. For example, strikes and raids associated with shaping operations might lead to a loss of will and an unexpected enemy withdrawal from the battlespace.

Shaping Actions. Shaping actions are "the lethal and nonlethal activities conducted throughout the battlespace to attack an enemy capability or force to influence the enemy commander's decision making" (*USMC Dictionary*). Shaping actions set conditions for the decisive action by affecting the enemy, indigenous populations, and institutions, and terrain. Shaping actions can be conducted throughout a unit's AO and involve any combination of forces and capabilities. Shaping actions can be conducted before, during, or after the decisive action begins. Supporting efforts typically conduct shaping actions. Shaping actions can become decisive actions if friendly forces have unexpected success or opportunities.

Sustaining Actions. Sustaining actions are "activities conducted to prepare and support friendly forces (e.g., planning, logistics, force protection) that promote unity of effort and extend operational reach" (*USMC Dictionary*). Sustaining actions differ from decisive and shaping actions because they are focused internally (on friendly forces) rather than externally (on the enemy, environment, or population). For example, logistical support, movement control, infrastructure development, terrain management, and anti-terrorism support measures supporting force protection are a part of mission accomplishment. Sustaining actions typically address important logistics and force protection actions essential to the success of decisive and shaping actions. Although the success of decisive and shaping actions might rely on sustaining actions, these actions cannot be decisive themselves.

METT-T MISSION FACTORS

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

BASIC TACTICAL CONCEPTS

There are basic tactical concepts, which are common to both offensive and defensive operations, that commanders use along with the following to envision operations:

- Their experience.
- Principles of joint operations.
- METT-T mission factors.
- Operational design elements.
- Warfighting functions.
- Subordinate commander and staff estimates of supportability.
- Input from other commanders.

The following alphabetical list discusses the basic tactical concepts.

Control Measures

Commanders issue control measures to subordinate commands to assign responsibilities, coordinate fires and maneuver, and control operations. In general, all control measures should be easily identifiable on the ground (i.e., terrain features). Examples include boundaries, objectives, coordinating points, contact points, and direction of attack.

Decisive Engagement

A decisive engagement is an engagement in which a unit is considered fully committed and cannot maneuver or extricate itself. Decisive engagement can be planned (e.g., a unit is expecting to decisively engage the enemy) or it can be forced (e.g., a reconnaissance unit is compromised and is forced to decisively engage the enemy). The unit's mission usually drives the acceptance of decisive engagement rather than the unit's physical ability to extricate itself. For example, a unit might become decisively engaged to hold key terrain, defeat a specific enemy force, or seize a specific objective. Decisive engagement takes place from the perspective of the involved unit. The senior headquarter's guidance dictates which forces are committed or uncommitted. A committed force is a force in contact with an enemy or deployed on a specific mission or course of action (COA) that precludes their employment elsewhere. An uncommitted force is "a force that is not in contact with an enemy and is not already deployed on a specific mission or course of action" (*USMC Dictionary*).

Defeat in Detail

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

Flanks

Flanks are the right and left limits of a unit (see Figure 2-2). Stationary units are designated relative to the enemy's actual or expected location. Moving units are defined by the direction of movement. The flanks' level of vulnerability varies with its formation and position. An assailable flank is a flank that is exposed to attack or envelopment. In Figure 2-2 the flanks are assailable because the force can only bring limited combat power to bear to their right and left. Conversely, an attack on the flanks of the force in Figure 2-2 is risky for enemy forces because the friendly force need only turn right or left to bring its combat power to bear. Decisions about the vulnerability of friendly and enemy flanks are fundamentally decisions of mission, terrain, position, and orientation.

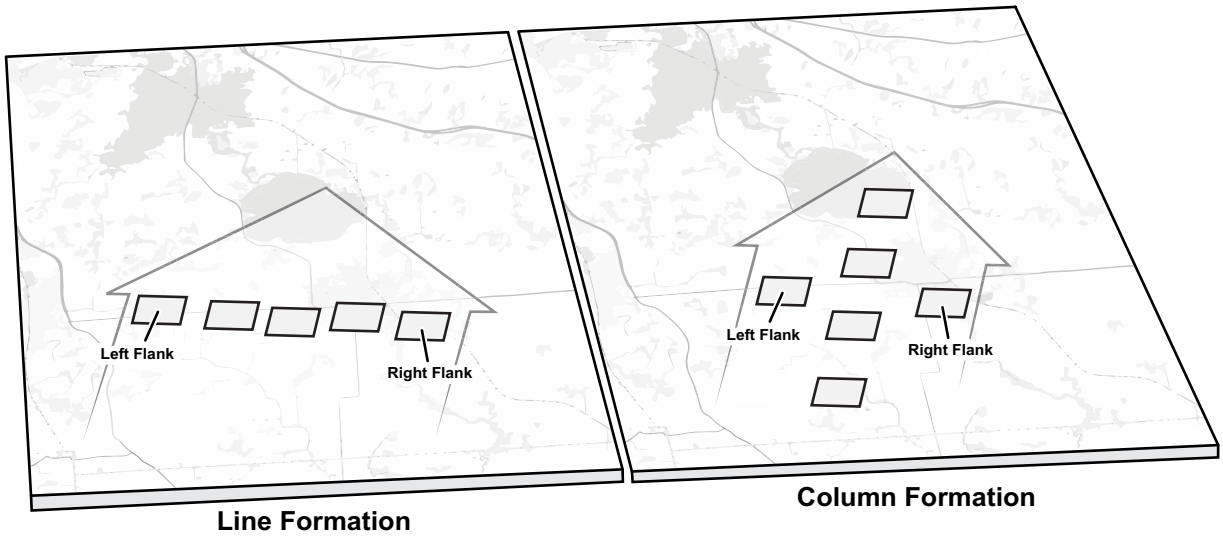


Figure 2-2. Flanks of a Stationary Unit.

Flanks can become vulnerable because of their mission, terrain, a weakness in their forces, their physical position or formation, the opponent's technical capability (e.g., the ability to conduct vertical envelopment), or because of unprotected gaps between adjacent units. An attacking force might accept risk to its flanks to bring combat power to bear at the point of decision. A flank anchored on restrictive terrain may not be vulnerable to armored or mechanized forces but may be vulnerable to foot mobile infantry forces. Sufficient room must exist for the attacking force to maneuver for the flank to be assailable. A unit could mitigate the vulnerability of an assailable flank by linking both flanks to other forces or by using various techniques, such as supplementary positions.

A defensive position on the flank is a geographical location on a force's flank where commanders can place fires capabilities. An attacking commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions against a defending force to place destructive fires directly against enemy vulnerabilities. A defending commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions of a hostile route of advance for the same reason. A flanking position that an advancing enemy can readily avoid has little value to the defender unless the enemy is unaware that it is occupied.

Maneuver

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

Piecemeal Commitment

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

Reconstitution

Reconstitution comprises "those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization" (*USMC Dictionary*). Reorganization is "action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness" or, "in administration, the realignment of force structure" (*USMC Dictionary*). Regeneration is the "significant replacement of personnel, equipment, and supplies in an attempt to restore a unit to full operational capability as rapidly as possible" (*USMC Dictionary*). The commander conducts reconstitution when one or more subordinate units become combat ineffective, or when the commander can raise the combat effectiveness of a subordinate unit closer to the desired level by shifting available resources. Besides typical logistic actions, reconstitution can include—

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

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

Reserve

The reserve primarily exists to reinforce success. The reserve is not an initially committed force and thus does not typically have a full suite of force multipliers until it is committed. The commander constitutes a reserve regardless of where within the range of military operations a mission is conducted. The commander bases the reserve's size on the level of uncertainty and risk

in the current tactical situation. The reserve's location depends on their most likely mission, time-distance requirements, and survivability considerations. A quick reaction force is an example of a reserve. A reserve's primary tasks are to—

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

A commander should always retain a reserve, reconstituting one whenever possible once the original reserve is committed.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement (ROE) are "directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered" (*DoD Dictionary*). The level of the ROE's permissiveness or restrictiveness affects the commander's decision on how to conduct operations. For example, ROEs might limit a company conducting a flanking attack in terms of weapons systems they can use to isolate the objective, suppress enemy positions, and exploit success. Additionally, ROE might affect the commander's decision to isolate and pursue the enemy or conduct pursuit by fire. Rules of engagement always recognize the right of self-defense and the commander's right and obligation to protect assigned personnel. It is imperative that leaders not only know the ROE but have the ability to conceptualize them so that they can train their Marines to these standards as it relates to the desired end state to accomplish the mission.

Tactical Mobility

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

Basic Control Measures

Commanders use control measures to help delineate responsibilities and coordinate fire and maneuver among various subordinate units. Although control measures are both permissive (allows something to happen) and restrictive (limits how something is done), commanders use them in a manner that provides the greatest possible freedom of action to subordinates,

establishing only those necessary to provide essential coordination and deconfliction between units. Commanders remove restrictive control measures as soon as possible. Control measures can be graphical, such as boundaries, or procedural, such as target engagement priorities.

Commanders use control measures to conduct and plan for current and future operations. The commander adjusts control measures as necessary to maintain synchronization and ensure mission accomplishment as the tactical situation evolves. Control measures help a commander balance the friction inherent in military operations by reducing the chance of a collapse in tempo and offensive action, which could negatively impact accomplishing the assigned mission.

Control measures apply to all forces at all echelons. A phase line or checkpoint established by higher headquarters applies to the commander's unit, and to subordinate units. Commanders reference only the control measures established by the higher headquarters when making reports to that headquarters. Commanders, choose to establish a standard naming convention for control measures in the unit SOP. Examples of such naming conventions would be car model names for phase lines and city names for objectives. See Table 2-1 for basic control measure symbols.

> **NOTE:** See Military Standard (MIL-STD)-2525E, *Department of Defense Interface Standard: Joint Military Symbology*, for more information on control measures and draw rules.

Table 2-1. Control Measure Symbols .

Airspace Coordinating Measures ACA MIN ALT: MAX ALT: GRIDS EFF:	**Assault Position** ASLT	**Assembly Area** AA	**Attack by Fire**
Attack Position ATK	**Battle Handover Line** BHL BHL	**Battle Positions** **Battle Position**	**Battle Position (Prepared but not Occupied)** (P)
Battlefield Coordination Line BCL BCL	**Block** B	**Breach** B	**Bypass** B

Table 2-1. Control Measure Symbols (Continued).

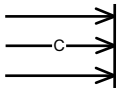
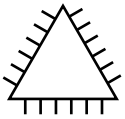
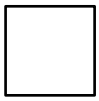
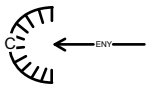
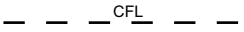
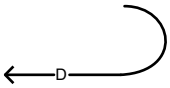
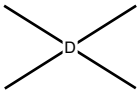
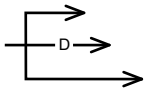
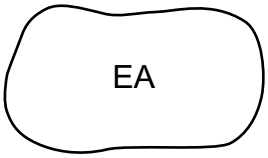
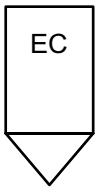
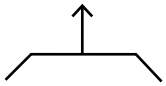
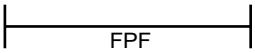
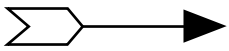
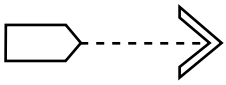
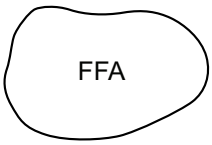
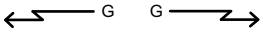
Call for Fire Zone 	**Censor Zone** 	**Checkpoint** 	**Clear** 
Combat Outpost 	**Contact Point** 	**Contain** 	**Coordinated Fire Line** 
Cover 	**Critical Friendly Zone** 	**Delay** 	**Destroy** 
Disrupt 	**Engagement Area** 	**Entry Control Point** 	**Envelopment** 
Feint 	**Final Coordination Line** 	**Final Protective Fire** 	**Fire Support Coordination Line** 
Fix 	**Follow and Support** 	**Follow and Assume** 	**Forward Edge of the Battle Area**
Forward Line of Own Troops 	**Free-Fire Area** 	**Guard** 	**Handover Line** 

Table 2-1. Control Measure Symbols (Continued).

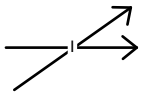
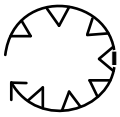
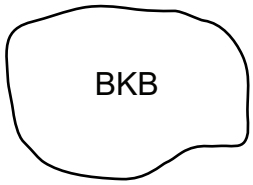
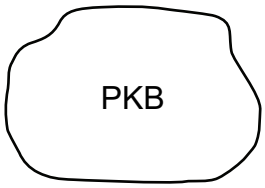
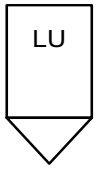
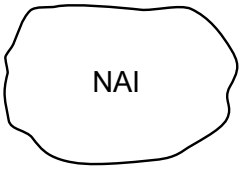
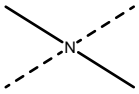
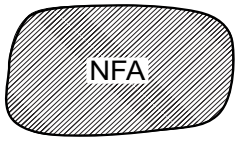
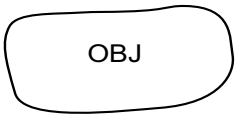
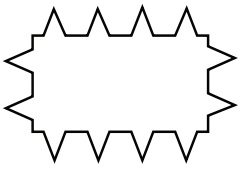
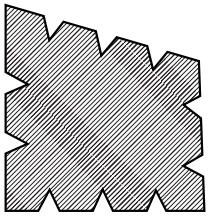
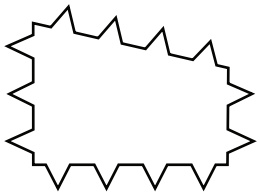
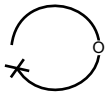
Infiltration Lane 	**Interdict** 	**Isolate** 	**Kill Boxes** **Kill Box (Blue)**  **Kill Box (Purple)** 
Lane 	**Limit of Advance** 	**Line of Contact**  **Line of Departure**  **Line of Contact/ Line of Departure** 	**Linkup Point** 
Named Area of Interest 	**Neutralize** 	**No-Fire Area** 	**Objective Area** 
Obstacles **Obstacle Belt**  **Obstacle-Restricted Zone**  **Obstacle Zone** 			**Occupy** 

Table 2-1. Control Measure Symbols (Continued).

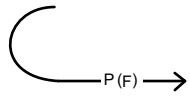
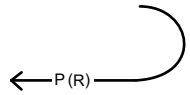
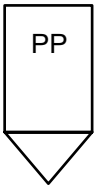
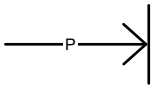
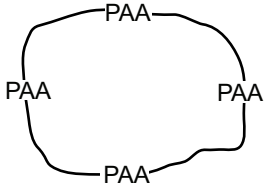
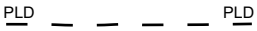
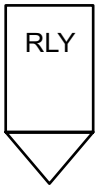
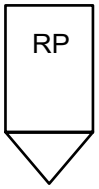
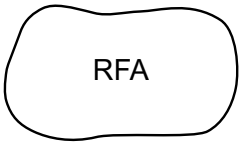
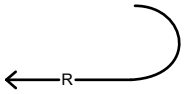
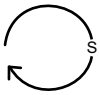
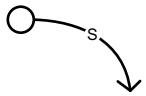
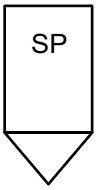
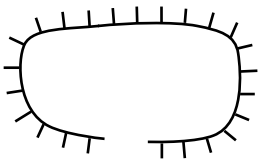
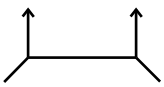
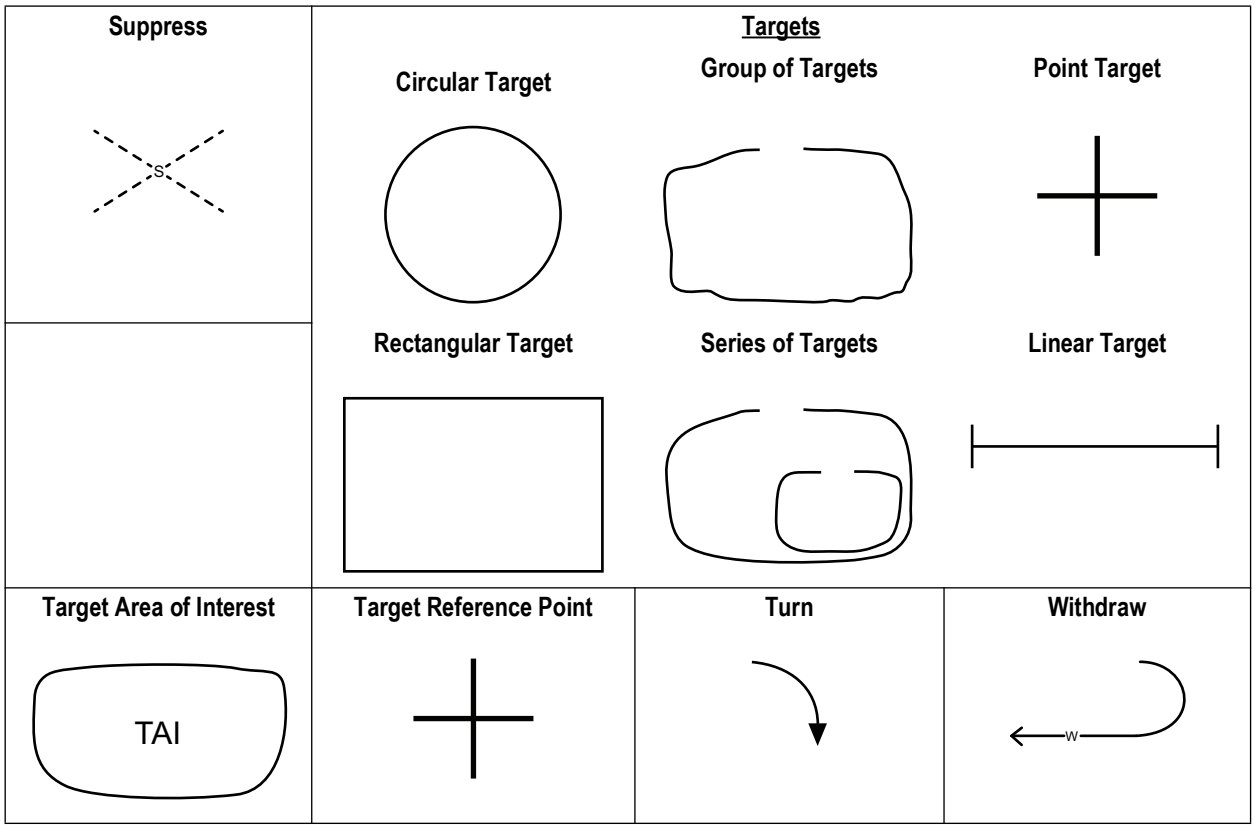
Passage of Lines **Forward Passage of Lines**  **Reward Passage of Lines** 	**Passage Point** 	**Penetrate** 	**Phase Line**
Position Area for Artillery 	**Probable Line of Deployment** 	**Rally Point** 	**Release Point** 
Relief in Place 	**Restricted Fire Area** 	**Restrictive Fire Line** 	**Retain** 
Retire/Retirement 	**Screen** 	**Sectors of Fire** **Primary Sector of Fire**  **Secondary Sector of Fire** 	**Secure** 
Seize 	**Start Point** 	**Strong Point** 	**Support by Fire** 

Table 2-1. Control Measure Symbols (Continued).



Airspace Coordinating Measures

An airspace control plan is "the document approved by the joint force commander that provides specific planning guidance and procedures for the airspace control system for the joint force operational area" (*DoD Dictionary*). It contains airspace coordinating measures (ACMs), which are "measures employed to facilitate the efficient use of airspace to accomplish missions and simultaneously provide safeguards for friendly forces (*DoD Dictionary*). Commanders use airspace coordinating measures for all methods of air support when conducting offensive and defensive tactics. Airspace elements establish ACMs to accomplish one or more of the following functions:

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

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

- Coordinating altitude.
- Low-level transit routes.
- Minimum-risk routes.

- Restricted operations areas.
- Special use airspace.
- High density airspace control zones.
- Standard use Marine Corps aviation flight routes.

Areas of Operations and Boundaries

Areas of operation are a common control measure used whenever commanders have ground-based tactical tasks. A higher headquarters assigns subordinates an AO using boundaries. These commanders can, in turn, assign subordinates their own AOs, decentralizing execution while maximizing freedom of action. Depending on the METT-T, AOs might extend down to the company level. Not using an AO centralizes execution and limits the options of subordinates. Commanders typically centralize execution when mandated by METT-T. For example, an RLT commander might assign subordinate battalions battle positions in support of an RLT engagement area. Areas of operation typically change over the course of an operation. Factors that influence such change include—

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

When assigning an AO, commanders must consider the capabilities of subordinate units to control and manage the area. The staff may recommend battlespace refinements based on the analysis of the terrain and tasks as well as friendly and adversary center of gravity, capabilities, and limitations. Areas of operation that are greater than a unit's area of influence should not be assigned. However, an area of influence is "an area inclusive of and extending beyond an operational area wherein a commander is capable of direct influence by maneuver, fire support, and information normally under the commander's command or control" (*DoD Dictionary*). The area of interest may change based on the commander's understanding of the situation. The extent of the area of influence may change based on changes in the amount of forces present, equipment capabilities and available, or rules of engagement. The commander's AO may need to change based on the scope of the mission, the results of operations, operational reach, or to ensure sufficient battlespace to maneuver and protect his force. While ground combat units typically receive AOs, aviation and logistic units might also receive AOs if properly resourced. For example, a MAGTF might assign an air base and corresponding AO to the aviation combat element (ACE). The ACE would likely require augmentation of C2 assets and security forces. Units have the following responsibilities when assigned to an AO:

- Terrain Management. The AO owner controls the battlespace to include assigning additional boundaries and AOs to subordinates. Even when higher headquarters assigns units to the AO, the owning unit still dictates final placement. This ensures the unit commander controlling the AO knows what units are in that area and where they are located.
- Intelligence Collection. Commanders conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities within their AOs to maintain current and accurate operational pictures of their

areas that they can share both within and external to their units to establish a common operational picture of those areas. See Chapter 13 for more information on reconnaissance and MCWP 2-10, *Intelligence Operations*, for more information on intelligence processes.

- Civil-Military Operations. Ensuring that public order and safety exist within the unit's AO are implied tasks for commanders during any operation.
- Air and Ground Movement Control. Units cannot move across boundaries into another unit's AO without receiving clearance from the unit owning the AO. The owning unit controls movement throughout the AO. The designation, maintenance, route security, and control of movement along routes within an AO are the responsibility of the owning unit unless the higher echelons' coordinating instructions direct otherwise. Similarly, the ground maneuver commander manages the airspace below the coordinating altitude, using procedural control measures and positive control measures, to include air defense. The coordinating altitude is "an airspace coordinating measure that uses altitude to separate users and as the transition between different airspace control elements" (*DoD Dictionary*). Details regarding airspace control can be found in MCWP 3-20, *Aviation Operations*.
- Clearance of Fires. Within their AO, the owning unit can employ any direct or indirect fire system without receiving further clearance from higher headquarters. Standard exceptions regarding cross-boundary effects and ROE apply.
- Security. The security of all units operating within the AO is the responsibility of the owning commander. If the commander cannot or chooses not to provide security throughout the AO, all affected individuals and organizations are informed of when, where, and under what conditions the commander will not exercise this function. Each unit commander remains responsible for local unit security measures. See Chapter 14 for further information on security operations.
- Personnel Recovery. Personnel recovery is "the sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel" (*DoD Dictionary*). The Marine Corps executes both ground-based personnel recovery and aircraft-based tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (also referred to as TRAP). Tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel is "a Marine Corps mission performed by an assigned and briefed aircrew for the specific purpose of the recovery of personnel, equipment, and/or aircraft when the tactical situation precludes search and rescue assets from responding and when survivors and their location have been confirmed" (DoD Dictionary). The AO commander is responsible for recovering and returning isolated persons within that AO to friendly control.
- Influence the Population. To influence the population is "to persuade the civil population within the area of operations to support or cooperate with operations by friendly forces, or, at a minimum, to accept the friendly force presence in the area of operations" (*USMC Dictionary*). For more information, see MCWP 8-10, *Information*.

Contiguous and Noncontiguous Areas of Operation. A contiguous AO is one in which all subordinate command AOs share one or more boundary (see Figure 2-3). A noncontiguous AO involves one or more subordinate AOs that do not share a boundary (see Figure 2-3). Higher headquarters is responsible for the intervening area between noncontiguous AOs. The commander can choose to organize the AO so that subordinate units have contiguous AOs, noncontiguous AOs, or both. The AOs can be assigned within both spatial- and purpose-based battlespace frameworks.

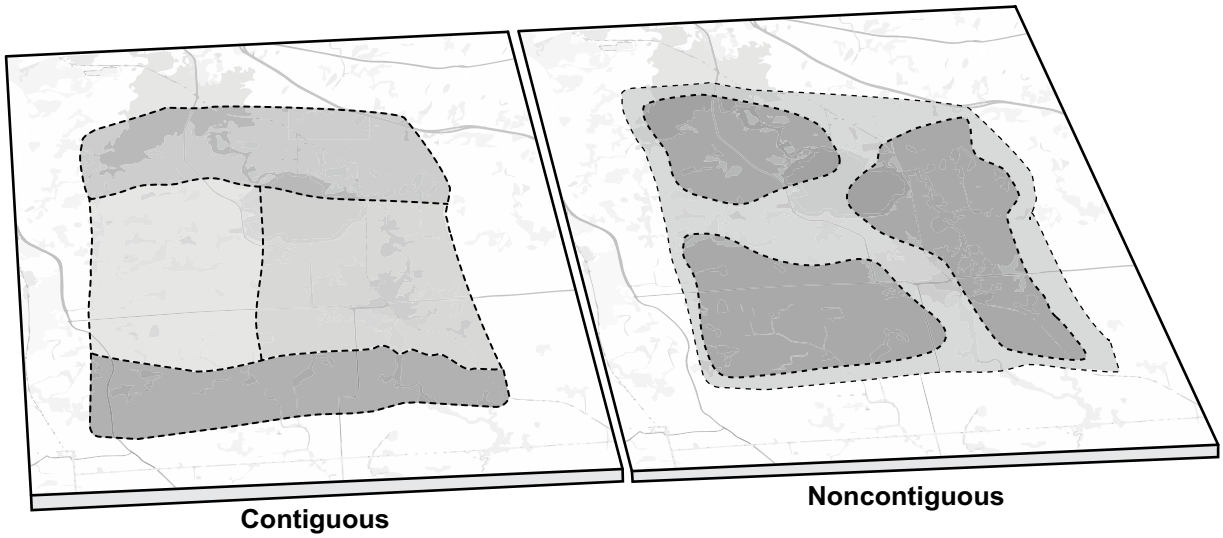


Figure 2-3. Areas of Operation.

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

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

A noncontiguous AO does not have distinctive forward, rear, and lateral boundaries. Commanders establish noncontiguous boundaries that enclose the entire area. Subordinate boundaries are continuous and closely approximate the subordinate unit's area of influence. For example, the commander typically established a noncontiguous regimental boundary at the limit of observed fires for the RLT's security forces. Because noncontiguous boundaries must provide all-around security, the commander typically cannot concentrate combat power on a single axis. Additionally, commanders must account for the risk that comes with noncontiguous AOs because the units are typically out of supporting range from each other.

The commander bases the decision to establish noncontiguous AOs on METT-T analysis. Commanders establish noncontiguous AOs because—

- Limited friendly forces must occupy, or control widely separated key terrain.
- Subordinate units do not need to provide mutual support.
- Dispersed enemy or population centers throughout the AO require a corresponding dispersal of friendly units.

Operations in areas not included in assigned noncontiguous AOs are the responsibility of the common higher commander. Using these AOs requires innovative means to conduct logistic operations, including aerial resupply. A commander has the following choices for establishing ground lines of communications (LOCs) with subordinates who have noncontiguous AOs:

- Assign subordinates the route security mission for each main supply route (MSR).
- Assume risk by having CSS elements run convoys with only their organic self-defense capabilities, while assigning the mission of responding to enemy contacts beyond a convoy's self-defense capability to subordinate units.
- Assign a subordinate unit the mission of providing convoy security for each convoy. For example, the MAGTF could assign its military police the mission of providing convoy security for critical ground convoys.

Boundaries. A boundary is "a line that delineates surface areas for the purpose of facilitating coordinating and deconflicting operations between adjacent units, formations, or areas" (*DoD Dictionary)*. Commanders use boundaries to define the limits of an AO and establish ground forces' responsibilities. The ACM control the vertical dimension. The commander bases the boundaries of subordinate units on clearly defined terrain features. Commanders should not assign boundaries that split responsibilities for roads, rivers, railways, or other transportation routes. Additionally, responsibility for an avenue of approach and key terrain should also belong to only one unit. The commander adjusts boundaries as necessary in response to the evolving tactical situation. The commander is responsible for any areas not delegated to subordinates.

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

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

The area behind the rear boundary line of an AO, sector, or zone of action assigned to a particular unit belongs to the next higher commander, and positioning of elements behind it must be coordinated with that commander. The rear area, is where most of the unit's logistic, administrative, and CSS functions are conducted. Regardless of whether assigned or using a

contiguous or noncontiguous AO, the rear area is generally the area opposite the direction of a unit's focus on an enemy force. Because a unit's combat power is generally focused forward or outward, units seek to defend their rear areas and exploit the enemy's.

Assembly Area

An assembly area is "an area in which a command is assembled preparatory to further action" (*USMC Dictionary*). An ideal assembly area offers—

- Concealment from air and ground observation.
- Adequate entrances, exits, and internal routes.
- Space for dispersion. Each assembly area is separated by enough distance from other assembly areas to preclude mutual interference.
- Cover from direct fire.
- Good drainage and soil conditions that can sustain unit vehicles and individual movement.
- Terrain masking of electromagnetic signatures.
- Terrain allowing observation of ground and air avenues into the assembly area.
- Standoff distance outside the range of enemy medium indirect fires.

The commander assigns each unit its own assembly area or, if necessary, subdivides an assembly area. All units and echelons can be assigned assembly areas. Since the assembly area of one unit is typically in the AO of another, assembly areas are treated as noncontiguous AOs. The unit occupying the assembly area has the same responsibilities there as in their AO.

Assembly area site selection should be made relative to the concept of operations per the site's ability to contribute to security, flexibility, and future operations. An assembly area site should enable units to quickly and smoothly move to subsequent positions by concealed routes. Smaller, lighter, and less tactically mobile units use assembly areas closer to the enemy than do larger, heavier, and more tactically mobile units.

An assembly area must be large enough to accommodate the force occupying it. Because of dismounted infantry's small signature, their assembly areas are typically smaller than those assigned to mechanized and motorized units and can be closer to enemy forces without risking detection. A mechanized and motorized unit's tactical mobility allows them to occupy assembly areas at a greater distance from the line of departure than infantry units.

There are three methods to organize an assembly area: a single area, part of a large assembly area, or dispersed. The biggest difference between the three methods is the amount of security required since every assembly area inherently conducts a perimeter defense.

Single Assembly Area. The single area method configures a unit in a perimeter defense with maneuver units deployed along the entire perimeter. Command and control, sustainment, and any other supporting units are located within the interior of the assembly area.

Large Assembly. A unit can also occupy a portion of a larger assembly area. This typically takes place when a subordinate formation occupies a portion of their higher headquarters' assembly area. With this method, a unit has boundaries with adjacent units and may only have a portion of its assembly area focused on a perimeter.

Dispersed Assembly Area. A unit may use a dispersed method to assign assembly areas. In this method, commanders assign subordinate units individual assembly areas. These subordinate units maintain their own security. Similar to the single assembly area method, maneuver units occupy perimeter assembly areas with command and control, sustainment, and other units located within the interior.

Axis of Advance

An axis of advance is "a line of advance assigned for purposes of control (often a road, group of roads, or a designated series of locations) extending in the direction of the enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*). An axis of advance designates the general area through which the bulk of a unit's combat power must move. When developing the axis of advance, the commander also establishes bypass criteria

Battle Handover Line

The battle handover line (BHL) is a designated phase line where responsibility transitions from the stationary force to the moving force and vice versa (Army Doctrine Publication 3-90, *Offense and Defense*). The common higher echelon commander of the two forces establishes the BHL after consulting both commanders; however, the stationary commander determines the location of the line. The BHL is forward of the FEBA in the defense or the FLOT in the offense. Commanders establish a BHL where the direct fires of forward combat elements of the stationary unit can effectively support the passing unit's passage of lines. The area between the BHL and the stationary force belongs to the stationary force commander. The stationary force commander can employ security forces, obstacles, and fires in the area.

Battle Positions

A battle position is, "in ground operations, a defensive location oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend" (*USMC Dictionary*). See Chapter 8 for more information on battle positions in the defense.

Checkpoint

A checkpoint is "a predetermined point on the ground used to control movement, tactical maneuver, and orientation" (*USMC Dictionary*). Units can also use a checkpoint as a fire control measure in lieu of a target reference point (TRP), which is the preferred control measure. Checkpoints are useful for orientation. Units may use checkpoints to supplement or as substitutes for phase lines.

Contact Point

A contact point is, "in land warfare, a point on the terrain, easily identifiable, where two or more units are required to make contact" (*DoD Dictionary*). Commanders use contact points to ensure coordination between units or to coordinate linkups. See Chapter 23 for more information on linkups. Contact points are established where phase lines intersect with lateral boundaries or on identifiable terrain. The commander provides a date-time-group to indicate when to make physical contact.

Control Point

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

Direct Fire Control Measures

Commanders create the greatest effect on the enemy by controlling the manner, method, and time to initiate, shift, and mass fires, and when to disengage by using control measures for their direct fires. They use direct fire control measures to control, coordinate, and deconflict their battlespace geometry. Commanders must understand the characteristics of weapon systems and available munitions (e.g., the danger to unprotected personnel when tanks fire discarding sabot ammunition over their heads or near them). Direct fire control measures defined in this publication include engagement areas, engagement criteria, engagement priorities, sectors of fire, TRPs, and trigger lines. Publications for the rifle squad and infantry platoon address other direct fire control measures, such as frontal, cross, or depth fire patterns and simultaneous, alternating, or observed techniques of fire.

Engagement Area

An engagement area is "an area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the effects of massed weapons and supporting systems" (*USMC Dictionary*). This includes organic firepower and supporting systems, such as close air support (CAS). The commander determines the engagement area's size and shape by the relatively unobstructed line of sight from the weapon systems in their firing positions and the maximum range of those weapons. The commander designates engagement areas to cover each enemy avenue of approach into unit positions. The commander also can use them to designate known or suspected enemy locations. The commander arrays available forces and weapon systems into these areas in positions to concentrate overwhelming effects. The commander subdivides an engagement area into smaller engagement areas for subordinates using one or more TRPs or prominent terrain features. The commander assigns sectors of fires to subordinates in a way that prevents friendly fire incidents; however, responsibility for an avenue of approach or key terrain is never split. These sectors typically do not affect friendly maneuver. Commanders, of units up to battalion, generally use this control measure. For further discussion of engagement area development see Marine Corps Tactical Publication (MCTP) 3-34B, *Combined Arms Countermobility Operations*.

Engagement Criteria

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

Engagement Priority

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

Fire Support Coordination Measures

In the same way control measures are used for direct fires to aid units in generating the greatest effects on the enemy, fire support coordination measures (FSCMs) facilitate the rapid engagement of targets while deconflicting battlespace geometry. Fire support coordination measures are either permissive or restrictive. A unit's boundaries are the most basic FSCM. The fire support coordinator recommends FSCMs to the commander based on the commander's guidance, location of friendly forces, SOM, and anticipated enemy actions. Fire support coordination measures discussed in this publication include battlefield coordination lines (BCLs), coordinated fire lines (CFLs), fire support coordination lines (FSCLs), free-fire areas (also referred to as FFAs), kill boxes, no-fire areas (NFAs), restrictive fire areas (RFAs), restrictive fire lines (RFLs), final protective fires (FPFs) and fire support targets. See Chapter 8 for more information on FPF. See MCWP 3-31, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Fires and Effects*, for further information on FSCMs.

Permissive Fire Support Coordination Measures. The primary purpose of permissive measures is to facilitate attacking targets. Once they are established, no further coordination is required to engage targets affected by the measures. Permissive FSCMs include BCL, CFL, FSCL, free-fire area, and kill box.

Battlefield Coordination Line. The BCL facilitates expeditious attacks, with surface indirect fires and MAGTF aviation fires, between the BCL and the FSCL. Per JP 3-09, *Joint Fire Support*; MCWP 3-31; and MCTP 3-10F, the BCL allows MAGTF aviation to strike targets without GCE commander approval. An airspace coordination area will always overlie the area between the BCL and the FSCL. Ground units can strike any targets beyond the BCL and short of the FSCL with

artillery and rockets without coordination as long as those fires deconflict with established airspace coordination area overhead. The BCL location is graphically portrayed on fire support maps, charts, and overlays by a solid black lie with the letters "BCL" followed by the establishing headquarters in parentheses above the line and the effective date-time group below the line. The BCL facilitates expeditiously attacking surface targets of opportunity between the BCL and the FSCL. When a commander establishes a BCL, its primary purpose is to allow MAGTF aviation to attack surface targets without further approval from the commander in whose area the targets are located.

Coordinated Fire Line. A CFL is "a line beyond which conventional surface-to-surface direct fire and indirect surface fire support means may fire at any time within the boundaries of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination but does not eliminate the responsibility to coordinate the airspace required to conduct the mission" (*DoD Dictionary*). The purpose of the CFL is to expedite the surface-to-surface attacks beyond the CFL without coordination with the ground commander in whose area the targets are located. Within the MAGTF, the GCE typically establishes the CFL, which can be simultaneously established at the division, regiment, and battalion levels. It is located as close as possible to the establishing unit, without interfering with maneuver forces, to open up the area beyond the CFL to fire support. A higher echelon can consolidate subordinate unit CFLs; however, any changes to the subordinate CFLs are coordinated with the subordinate headquarters.

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

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

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

The commander designating an FSCL remains responsible for establishing the priority, effects, and timing of fires impacting beyond the FSCL. The FSCL should follow well-defined terrain features, easily identifiable from the air. When positioning the FSCL, commanders must consider the tactical situation. This includes the SOM or plan of defense, weather, terrain, type and source of aircraft,

and overall flexibility of maneuver and fire support. When establishing an FSCL, a key factor is the range of the commander's organic weapon systems. By establishing an FSCL close in, yet at sufficient depth to not limit high tempo maneuver, land and amphibious force commanders ease the coordination requirements for engagement operations within their AOs by forces not under their control, such as naval surface fire support or air interdiction.

Free-Fire Area. A free-fire area is "a specific region into which any weapon system may fire without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters" (*DoD Dictionary*). Usually, a GCE or MAGTF command element establishes a free-fire area on easily recognizable terrain.

Kill Box. A kill box is "a three-dimensional permissive fire support coordination measure with an associated airspace coordinating measure used to facilitate the integration of fires" (*DoD Dictionary*). Commanders use kill boxes to facilitate air-to-ground and surface-to-surface interdiction fires, allowing lethal attacks against surface targets without further coordination with the establishing commander and without the requirement for terminal attack control.

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

See MCRP 3-31.4, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Kill Box Planning and Employment*, for more information on kill boxes. See MIL-STD-2525 for additional examples of kill box symbology.

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

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

Restrictive Fire Area. An RFA is "a location in which specific restrictions are imposed and into which fires that exceed those restrictions will not be delivered without coordination with the establishing headquarters" (*DoD Dictionary*). Any ground-unit commander, typically at the battalion level and above, can establish an RFA within the ground-unit commander's own zone. A company operating semi-independently can establish an RFA, as required. To facilitate rapidly changing maneuver areas, on-call RFAs can be used. The RFA is activated and deactivated when requested by the maneuvering unit or scheduled by time or event. Commanders can establish an RFA on recognizable terrain or they can express it by grid coordinates or by radius from appoint.

Restrictive Fire Line. An RFL is "a specific boundary established between converging, friendly surface forces that prohibits fires or their effects from crossing" (*DoD Dictionary*). The common commander of the converging forces establishes the RFL, which is usually located on easily recognizable terrain and closer to the stationary force.

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

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

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

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

Forward Line of Own Troops and Forward Edge of the Battle Area

The forward line of own troops (FLOT) is "a line that indicates the most forward positions of friendly forces in any kind of military operation at a specific time" (*USMC Dictionary*). The FLOT does not refer to small, long-range reconnaissance assets, observation posts, or stay-behind forces. Rather, the FLOT normally identifies the forward location of covering and screening forces. In the defense, it may be beyond, at, or short of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), depending on the tactical situation. The FEBA is "the foremost limits of a series of areas in which ground combat units are deployed to coordinate fire support, the positioning of forces, or the maneuver of units, excluding areas in which covering or screening forces are operating" (*DoD*

Dictionary). (Chapter 8 discusses the FEBA with other defensive control measures.) Friendly forces forward of the FLOT may have a restrictive fire coordination measure, such as an RFA, placed around them to preclude friendly fire incidents.

Handover Line

The handover line is "a control measure, preferably following easily defined terrain features, at which responsibility for conducting combat operations is passed from one force to another" (*USMC Dictionary*). In ground combat operations, a handover line is a predetermined location, typically a phase line designated as a handover line where control of the battle is transferred to the main battle force. The common higher commander of the two forces establishes the handover line after consulting with both commanders. The stationary commander determines the location of the line. The handover line is forward of the FEBA in the defense and the FLOT in the offense. The commander establishes it where elements of the passing unit can be effectively supported by the direct fires of the stationary unit until passage of lines is complete. (See Chapter 17 for information about passage of lines). The area between the handover line and the stationary force belongs to the stationary force commander. The stationary force commander might employ security forces, obstacles, and fires in the area.

Line of Contact

The line of contact is, "a general trace delineating the location where two opposing forces are engaged" (*USMC Dictionary*). Units develop their line of contact based on the maximum effective range of the direct fire weapons systems, or the visual line of sight from known or estimated enemy locations. The enemy side of the line of contact is designated using the abbreviation "ENY." The line of contact is a general trace delineating the location where friendly and enemy forces are engaged. In a manner similar to the FLOT, it does not refer to ambushes, patrol contacts, and other small unit tactical actions but rather delineates the general line of engagement between significant ground forces. In the defense, a line of contact is often synonymous with the FLOT. In the offense, a line of contact is often combined with the line of departure.

Probable Line of Contact. Planners can designate a phase line as a probable line of contact for other forms of contact. For example, based on IPB and information collection, friendly forces can depict the known of anticipated locations of enemy artillery assets and determine a probable line of contact for enemy indirect fires.

Line of Departure

The line of departure is, "in land warfare, a line designated to coordinate the departure of attack elements" (*DoD Dictionary*). See Chapter 3 for more information on the line of departure.

Linkup Point

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

Main Battle Area

The MBA is "that portion of the battlespace in which the commander conducts close operations to defeat the enemy. Normally, the main battle area extends rearward from the forward edge of the battle area to the rear boundary of the command's subordinate units" (*USMC Dictionary*). Within a spatial-based battlespace framework, the MBA is where the commander conducts close operations that accomplish the mission. See Chapter 8 for more information on the MBA.

Named Area of Interest

A named area of interest (NAI) is "a point or area along a particular avenue of approach through which enemy activity is expected to occur. Activity or lack of activity within a named area of interest will help to confirm or deny a particular enemy course of action" (*USMC Dictionary*). Named areas of interest are usually selected to capture indications of enemy COAs but can also be related to battlespace and environmental conditions. The NAI could be a person, group, or portion of cyberspace. The commander tailors the shape of the NAI symbol to the actual area the commander wants observed, rather than using a prescribed shape. It is possible to redesignate an NAI as a targeted or target area of interest (TAI) on confirmation of enemy activity within the area, allowing a commander to mass the effects of combat power on that area.

Obstacle Control Measures

An obstacle is "any barrier designed or employed to disrupt, fix, turn, or block the movement, and to impose additional losses in personnel, time, and equipment" (*DoD Dictionary*). Forces emplace tactical and protective obstacles that reinforce existing terrain and obstructions and integrate them with fires to shape engagements and affect the enemy's ability to move or maneuver. Commanders can emplace protective obstacles within 500 meters of their positions; however, higher headquarters can provide restrictions on the types of obstacles subordinate commanders use. Additionally, higher header quarters provides guidance and employment authority for obstacles farther than 500 meters from subordinate positions. Commanders use the obstacle control to ensure emplaced obstacles support the concept of operations and do not interfere with future operations. Obstacle control measures are zones, belts, groups, and restrictions. Table 2-2 summarizes obstacle control measures. See Chapter 21 for a more detailed discussion on obstacles and how they support countermobility. Also, see MCTP 3-34B for information on developing engagement areas and achieving obstacle integration.

Table 2-2. Obstacle Control Measures.

Obstacle Control Measure	Echelon	Desired Effect	Size of Enemy Avenue of Approach or Mobility Corridor	
			Armored	Light
Zone	Division	Optional; not typically used	Division and Regiment	Regiment and Battalion
Belt	Regiment	Optional; typically used	Regiment and Battalion	Battalion and Company
Group	Battalion Regiment Division	Mandatory	Battalion and Company	Company and Platoon
Restrictions	Division Regiment Battalion	N/A	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Phase Line

A phase line is "an easily identified feature in the operational area utilized for control and coordination of military operations" (*DoD Dictionary*). A commander establishes phase lines to control the maneuver of subordinate units. Phase lines are not boundaries unless designated as such and do not establish any specific responsibilities between units, unless specified in the operation order. When possible, the commander places them along easily recognizable terrain features (e.g., roads, railroad tracks, rivers, ridgelines) to ensure easy identification. Some phase lines have additional designations for specific purposes, such as a line of departure or a probable line of deployment (PLD) (see Chapter 3). A disengagement line, which is a phase line, is typically used in the defense (see Chapter 8).

Position Area

A position area is an area that is occupied, or will be occupied, by an artillery unit with their elements disposed to provide artillery support. Commanders assign position areas for artillery (PAAs) to manage terrain, deconflict maneuver, simplify battlefield geometry, and manage risk (e.g., probable areas of enemy counterfires). Position areas are not AOs, and occupying artillery units do not have the authority and responsibilities associated with AOs. For example, other units can move through a PAA without clearing that movement with the artillery unit. Similarly, PAAs do not constitute a rigid restrictive area for the artillery unit; they should be used as guides as applicable for the mission, terrain, and tactical situation. See MCTP 3-10E, *Artillery Operations,* for further information on PAAs.

Point of Departure

The point of departure is "a specific place where a unit will cross the line of departure" (*USMC Dictionary*). Reconnaissance and security patrols commonly use a point of departure as a control measure, particularly during limited-visibility conditions. Like a line of departure, it marks the point where the unit transitions from movement to maneuver.

Radar Zone

Search zones prioritize the search pattern and provide the reaction posture of the radar system to meet the maneuver commander's intent. Each radar system can be programmed to store up to nine different zones. There are four different types of zones used with the radar: the critical friendly zone (CFZ), the call for fire zone, the artillery target intelligence zone, and the censor zone. These zones are used with artillery target acquisition radar. For additional information on employing these zones, see MCTP 3-10F, *Fire Support Coordination in the Ground Combat Element*, and Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 3-10E.7, *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Field Artillery Target Acquisition*.

Rally Point

A rally point is "an easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble and reorganize if they become dispersed" or, "a planned or hasty location where a separated flight joins up" (*USMC Dictionary*). Forces conducting a patrol, convoy, or an infiltration commonly use this control measure. An objective rally point (ORP) is a rally point located nearest the objective where a unit makes final preparations prior to approaching the objective or where the unit reassembles after completing actions on the objective. To serve both as a preparation point and a rally point, the commander typically establishes the ORP far enough from the objective to prevent the enemy from detecting the actions.

Route

A route is a prescribed course from a point of origin (start point) to a specific destination (release point); it could be a road or an axis of advance. Commanders use routes to manage maneuver and deconflict traffic. Routes can have different functions such as passing routes or MSRs. Commanders can further designate routes as open, supervised, dispatch, reserved, or prohibited. The commander can assign names, numbers, or alphanumeric designations to routes within an AO. For a detailed discussion on planning and executing routes, see MCRP 3-40F.7, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Tactical Convoy Operations.*

Sector of Fire

A sector of fire is "a defined area that is required to be covered by the fire of individual or crew-served weapons or the weapons of a unit" (*USMC Dictionary*). Battalions and smaller echelons primarily use this direct fire control measure. Each sector of fire can extend from a firing position to the maximum engagement range of the weapon, or it can be an enclosed area at a distance from the firing position. The commander should assign each subordinate unit or available weapon system a primary sector of fire and a secondary sector of fire to increase the capability of concentrating fire in certain areas. The primary sector of fire is that area in which the assigned unit, individual, or crew-served weapon team is initially responsible for engaging and destroying enemy targets in accordance with established priorities of engagement. Fire shifts to the secondary sector, on order, when there are no targets in the primary sector, or when the commander needs to cover the movement of another friendly element. This secondary sector of fire should correspond to another element's primary sector of fire to obtain mutual support. Subordinate commanders may impose additional fire control measures as required.

Support-by-Fire Position

A support-by-fire position is the general position from which a unit conducts the tactical task of support by fire (see Appendix C). Commanders establish these positions to support the maneuver of another force by using direct fires to suppress or neutralize enemy positions capable of affecting the maneuver force. Support-by-fire positions are located within the enemy's maximum friendly direct fire range, in a manner that prevents being masked by friendly maneuver, and properly deconflicted from other elements of battlespace geometry. Support-by-fire positions are often located on the flank of the assault force, elevated above the objective if possible. Typically, only company-sized units and below use support-by-fire positions. A support-by-fire position symbol designates the general location and direction from which the unit provides fires; it does not indicate a specific site.

Target Area of Interest

A TAI is "the geographical area where high-value targets can be acquired and engaged by friendly forces" (*DoD Dictionary*). Not all TAIs form part of the friendly COA; only TAIs associated with high priority targets are of interest to the staff. The staff identifies these TAIs during planning and wargaming. Target areas of interest interdict enemy forces by fire, maneuver, or jamming to reduce or deprive them of some capability. Whereas an engagement area is where a commander plans to use all available weapons to destroy an enemy force. Engagement areas plan for the use of all available weapons; TAIs might be engaged by a single weapon. The commander designates a TAI where friendly weapon systems can best attack high value and high-payoff targets. The unit

staff develops these TAIs during the planning process. The shape of a TAI reflects the type of target and the weapon system intended to engage that target. A commander can designate a TAI for any organic or supporting systems, including CAS.

Target Reference Point

A TRP is "an easily recognizable point on the ground (either natural or man-made) used to initiate, distribute, and control fires" (*USMC Dictionary*). Once established, they also become indirect fire targets designated by the fire support officer. Target reference points are used at the regiment level and below. Marines use TRPs to identify sectors of fire and to distribute or concentrate direct and indirect fires. Target reference points must be easily identifiable at all visibility levels; they are typically terrain features, buildings, or markers emplaced by the owning unit. Although associated with engagement areas, TRPs are useful in all types of offensive and defensive actions—in the same manner as establishing targets in a fire support plan for an attack. As in indirect fire targeting, TRPs are also established using a "top-down planning, bottom-up" refinement methodology. As with indirect fire targeting, commanders and subordinates should resist establishing too many TRPs, shifting direct and indirect fires off existing TRPs if necessary. Target reference points are either designated per standard indirect target naming conventions or, if not associated with an indirect fire target, by a numeric-only system.

Trigger Line

A trigger line is a phase line used to initiate a preplanned event. Trigger lines are often used to initiate and mass fires into an engagement area or an objective at a predetermined range for all or like weapon systems. They may signal the requirement to withdraw to another position. In the offense, the crossing of a phase line might act like a trigger to execute preplanned fires. A trigger line could indicate the requirement to engage certain types of enemy systems, such as enemy breaching assets. Similar to phase lines, trigger lines are typically located on identifiable terrain that crosses an engagement area, a direction of attack, or an axis of advance. The commander can designate one trigger line for all weapon systems or separate trigger lines for each weapon or type of weapon system. The commander can combine other control measures, such as engagement criteria and priorities, with trigger lines, and can use a time-based or a geography-based fires delivery methodology. Engagement criteria might be either time or event-driven, such as establishing that a certain number or certain type of vehicle must cross the trigger line before Marines initiate engagement. The commander might also initiate engagement by firing a personal weapon or giving the oral command to fire.

The trigger line's location varies based on METT-T requirements, with a special focus on time-distance factors. For example, the distance an enemy force is likely to traverse in the time it takes from when fires are requested to when they impact. By beginning with identifying where the commander wants the effects of direct and indirect fires to be conducted, planners can use the time to deliver those fires with the likely speed of the enemy to determine where to the trigger line. Distance generally reflects the more rapid response.

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

PART II.
THE OFFENSE



Marines use offensive operations to defeat and destroy enemy forces as well as to seize terrain, resources, and population centers. Part II describes the fundamentals of the offense and the four offensive operations—movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

CHAPTER 3.
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The offense is the decisive form of warfare. Although other operations may cause great damage or harm to the interests of an enemy, offensive operations provide the means to decisive victory. Commanders conduct offensive operations to impose their will on the enemy by shattering the enemy's moral, mental, and physical cohesion.

When seizing, retaining, or exploiting the initiative, the commander is conducting offensive operations. Even when conducting defensive operations or stabilization tasks and activities, commanders apply offensive concepts. Offensive operations—

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

The focus of offensive operations is the enemy, not seizing terrain. Although units can be tasked to seize key objectives or terrain features, the operation's goal is defeat of the enemy. Successful offensive operations—

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENSE

Offensive characteristics include—

- Audacity.
- Concentration.
- Surprise.
- Tempo.

Offensive operations capitalize on intelligence, allowing units to shape the battlespace, maneuver to gain a position of advantage, and generate a greater operational tempo than the enemy can match. Commanders initiate selective contact with enemy forces to shape their decisive operation. The decisive operation determines the outcome of the major operation, battle, or engagement. Commanders accept operational risk to maintain the initiative, dictate the terms of battle, and undertake COAs that—although difficult or unexpected—generate the maximum effects on the enemy. (See Chapter 2 for more on decisive operations.)

Audacity

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

Concentration

Concentration is massing combat power to generate overwhelming effects to achieve a single purpose. Commanders balance the necessity for concentrating forces to create effects with the need to disperse them to avoid creating targets for the enemy or giving away the element of surprise. Advances in ground and air mobility, target acquisition, and long-range precision fires enable attackers to rapidly concentrate effects. Command and control information systems can provide reliable, relevant information that assists commanders in determining when and where to concentrate forces to mass effects.

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

The concentration of combat power to generate overwhelming effects includes—

- Assembling ground forces.
- Capitalizing on air superiority to deny the enemy the ability to detect or strike friendly forces from the air.
- Using direct land, air, and maritime resources to delay, disrupt, or destroy enemy reconnaissance elements or capabilities.
- Using rear security, information protection, and counterfire to protect friendly forces as they concentrate.

Surprise

In the offense, units achieve surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place the enemy does not expect or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. To achieve surprise, one must estimate the enemy commander's intent and deny that commander the ability to gain thorough and timely situational understanding. Commanders use unpredictability and boldness to gain surprise. The nature, direction, timing, and force of the attack also help achieve surprise. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses the enemy commander's C2 systems, induces psychological shock among enemy soldiers and leaders, and reduces the coherence of the defense. Surprise diminishes enemy combat power, which enables friendly forces to exploit enemy paralysis and hesitancy.

Tactical surprise is fleeting and difficult to achieve. Modern surveillance and warning systems, readily available commercial imagery products, and the global news cycle make achieving surprise more difficult. Nonetheless, units can achieve surprise by recognizing and reacting to opportunity, and by operating in a way the enemy does not expect. To achieve surprise, units often must by accept operational risk, demonstrate a willingness to endure hardship; using and warfighting doctrine and mission-type orders help generate flexibility and adaptability. Marines use bad weather, seemingly impassable terrain, feints, demonstrations, and false communications to lead the enemy into inaccurate perceptions. They use sudden, violent, and unanticipated attacks to paralyze the enemy and shape the environment for the main effort's decisive action.

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

Tempo

In military terms, tempo is "the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*). In the offense, commanders seek to dictate the tempo of operations to maintain dominance, momentum, and initiative, thereby increasing combat power. Commanders increase tempo to prevent the enemy's recovery from the initial assault. Faster tempos—

- Degrade the enemy's situational awareness and ability to make timely, relevant decisions.
- Deny the enemy a chance to rest.
- Disrupt the enemy's plans.
- Destroy the enemy's ability to effectively react.

Commanders make the rapid and timely decisions necessary in a high-tempo environment by empowering subordinates through mission-type orders, staff processes that focus on effective command and control, and by accepting uncertainty.

Dictating tempo acknowledges that offensive operations require rapidity, violence of action, and coordination and synchronization of combat power and logistics to effect concentration at decision points, maintain the offense, and avoid culminating points. Commanders dictate when to attack and when to alter tempo to reconstitute, reorganize or conduct reliefs in place (RIPs). Effective staff processes, efficient logistic procedures, and prior planning are critical to maintaining the ability to conduct operations without ceding the initiative to the enemy.

FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

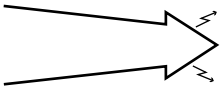
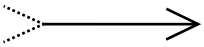
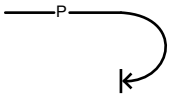
The Marine Corps warfighting philosophy is offensive in nature. It focuses on the enemy and uses tempo to seize the initiative and degrade the enemy's ability to resist. To be decisive in offensive operations, the attacking force weights the main effort. The fundamentals of offensive action, which have evolved from the time-proven application of the joint warfighting principles, include the following:

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

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The four types of offense are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Table 3-1 contains the planning symbols associated with movement to contact, exploitation, and pursuit. There are numerous methods to conduct and execute these types of offensive operations—such as the different ways to conduct an attack; there is no limit on how commanders and Marines approach tactical problems, or how they execute these offensive operations.

Table 3-1. Offensive Operations and their Planning Symbols.

Operations	Planning Symbol
Movement to Contact	
Exploitation	
Pursuit	
NOTE Attack does not have a planning symbol. Unless a commander deems it is necessary to constrain subordinates, the default type is an attack; graphic control measures such as an axis of advance or direction of attack can be used to convey the commander's intent. Additionally, exploitations and pursuits are generally a branch or sequel to a successful attack.	

Movement to Contact

Movement to contact is employed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact with the enemy. It is one of the most used types of offense because of its almost universal utility. Commanders conduct a movement to contact when the enemy situation is vague, whether trying to locate the enemy, regain contact with the enemy, or preserve tactical flexibility. A movement to contact also forces the enemy troops to reveal themselves for further friendly force targeting or operations. Even when the enemy situation is known, commanders often use movement to contact methods as a means of force protection in their approach or when conducting exploitations and pursuits. Forces executing a movement to contact seek to make contact with the smallest friendly force feasible to avoid decisive engagement and enable decisive action by a main effort. Once contact is made with an enemy force, the commander has five options: attack, defend, bypass, delay, or withdraw. There are two methods of movement to contact—the approach march and the search and attack (see Chapter 4).

Attack

An attack is characterized by coordinated movement, supported by fire, conducted to defeat, destroy, or capture the enemy, or seize and/or secure terrain. Attacks can be either decisive or shaping actions and hasty or deliberate. The methods of attack are:

- Spoiling.
- Counterattack.
- Reconnaissance in Force.
- Raid.
- Ambush.

Units use multiple attack methods to increase effects.

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

Exploitation

Exploitation, which follows a successful attack, is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth and extend to the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. Whether conducting hasty or deliberate operations, commanders plan to exploit the success of every attack without losing momentum or the initiative. The attacking element or a reserve element can conduct exploitation activities. Exploitation places necessary, but immense, demands on Marines' endurance and equipment. Chapter 6 discusses exploitation.

Pursuit

A pursuit is designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. A pursuit typically follows a successful exploitation. However, any type of offense can transition into a pursuit if enemy resistance is diminished, and they flee the battlefield. Because the conditions necessary to conduct a pursuit are not predictable, pursuits are difficult to plan. Commanders and staffs must recognize and exploit "catastrophic success." A pursuit entails rapid movement and decentralized control. Like exploitation, it places great demands on the endurance of Marines and equipment to take advantage of the opportunity to defeat the enemy. Chapter 7 discusses the pursuit.

PHASES OF THE OFFENSE

Phasing of offensive operations depends on how the commander decides to solve the tactical problem. A commander can use any or all of the following five phases in an offensive operation:

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

Typically, the first three phases are shaping actions, while the maneuver phase is the decisive action. Follow through is usually a sequel or a branch based on the current situation. It can consist of transition to other types of offense operations such as exploitation, or it can transition to defensive operations or stabilization tasks and activities.

COMMON OFFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

There are several common control measures that commanders use in offensive operations to synchronize maneuver and the effects of combat power. However, commanders use the minimum number necessary to complete the mission while providing subordinate units with the flexibility to respond to changes. See Figure 3-1 for a graphic depiction of common offensive control measures. The following paragraphs discuss those control measures common only to offensive operations (see Table 3-2). For more information on basic control measures, see Chapter 2.

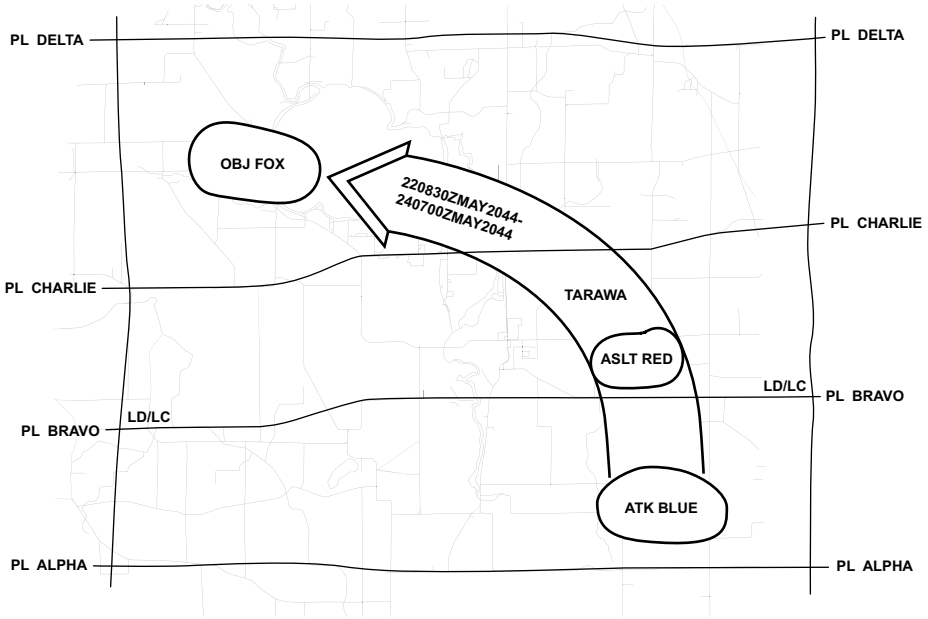


Figure 3-1. Offensive Control Measure Example.

Table 3-2. Common Offensive Control Measures.

Assault positions	Checkpoints	Point of departure
Assault time	Direction of attack	Probable line of contact
Assembly areas	Final coordination line	Probable line of deployment
Attack-by-fire positions	Limit of advance	Rally point
Attack position	Line of departure	Support by fire position
Axis of advance	Objectives	Time of attack
Battle handover line	Phase lines	Zone and Sector

Assault Position

An assault position is "that position between the line of departure and the objective in an attack from which forces assault the objective. Ideally, it is the last covered and concealed position before reaching the objective (primarily used by dismounted infantry)" (*USMC Dictionary*). Momentum in an assault is critical; therefore, any time a unit spends in an assault position should

be minimal. Final preparations before the assault include ensuring the readiness of personnel, weapons, and special equipment, and the reorganizing the plan after combat losses. Assault positions are often located near to either a final coordination line (FCL) or a PLD.

Assault Time

The assault time is the assigned time to attack the initial objectives throughout the geographical scope of the operation. Local commanders usually establish the assault time to coordinate and synchronize the actions of the assault with the effects generated by other units on the enemy, such as final mortar fires or increased rate of fire from support-by-fire positions.

Assembly Area

A tactical assembly area is "an area that is generally out of the reach of light artillery and the location where units make final preparations (pre-combat checks and inspections) and rest, prior to moving to the line of departure" (*DoD Dictionary*). Tactical assembly areas are positioned where enemy contact is likely and where planners anticipate commitment of a unit into combat. Units that typically occupy a tactical assembly area include—

- Units designated as tactical reserves.
- Units completing a rearward passage of lines.
- Units conducting tactical movement (temporary).
- Units undergoing reconstitution.

Units in tactical assembly areas are typically preparing to execute a forward passage of lines followed by offensive operations or have been assigned a reserve mission by their higher commander. See Chapter 2 for more information on assembly areas.

Attack-by-Fire Position

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

Attack Position

An attack position is "the last position occupied by the assault echelon before crossing the line of departure" (*DoD Dictionary*). However, an attack position is not an assembly area. An attack position facilitates the deployment and last-minute coordination of the attacking force before it crosses the line of departure. It is located on the friendly side of the line of departure and offers cover and concealment for the attacking force. The battalion level and below primarily use the attack position. Whenever possible, units move through the attack position without stopping. An attacking unit might occupy an attack position for a various reasons; for example, when the unit is waiting for specific results from preparation fires, or when it is necessary to conduct additional coordination, such as a forward passage of lines. If the attacking unit occupies the attack position,

it stays there for the shortest amount of time possible to avoid losing momentum or providing the enemy a target. If required to loiter in the attack position, the attacking unit immediately assumes a defensive posture.

Axis of Advance

During offensive operations, higher headquarters can establish bypass criteria, which are control measures that specify the conditions and size under which friendly units should avoid contact with the enemy. There are three primary reasons a commander uses an axis of advance:

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

Direction of Attack

The direction of attack is a specific direction or assigned route a force uses and does not deviate from when attacking. It is a restrictive control measure. A direction of attack maximizes control over subordinate unit movement, and commanders often use it during night attacks, infiltrations, and when attacking in limited visibility. The commander establishes a direction of attack through various means, such as TRPs, checkpoints, and way points. When using a direction of attack, the commander designates a point of departure and a release point.

Final Coordination Line

The FCL is "a line used to coordinate the ceasing and shifting of supporting fires and the final deployment of the assault echelon in preparation for launching an assault against an enemy position" (*USMC Dictionary*). Prior to crossing the FCL, planners make final adjustments to supporting fires to reflect the tactical situation rather than the planned situation. An FCL should be easily recognizable on the ground and is often associated with an assault position. The FCL is not an FSCM.

Limit of Advance

The limit of advance (LOA) is "an easily recognized terrain feature beyond which attacking elements will not advance" (*USMC Dictionary*). Limits of advance are restrictive control measures. Because LOAs prevent units from exploiting success, commanders only use them if they do not want units to conduct an exploitation or pursuit. A commander might employ an LOA to prevent overextending the attacking force or to mitigate battlespace geometry (e.g., preventing the maneuver element from advancing into isolation fires). A commander usually selects a recognizable, linear terrain feature on the far side of the objective, perpendicular to the direction of attack, as the LOA. Commanders position LOAs far enough beyond the objective so it can be defended by friendly forces. A forward boundary is always a limit of advance because the unit cannot act or move beyond the forward boundary. However, an LOA is not always a forward boundary because there are other reasons to hold a unit physically short of a forward boundary.

Line of Departure

The line of departure is a restrictive control measure used to synchronize and coordinate the actions of the attacking and supporting forces to create the greatest concentration of effects on the enemy at the point of decision. It is not intended to serve as a preparatory position—commanders designate an attack position for that purpose, if required. Rather, units employ combat formations and cross the line of departure at the time of attack, allowing other attacking and supporting elements to synchronize and execute their assignments in support of maneuver. Generally, the line of departure is perpendicular to the direction the attacking force will take on their way to the objective. The commander analyzes friendly actions such as rates of movement, the enemy situation, and terrain before designating a line of departure. Friendly forces control the line of departure to prevent enemy interference with maneuver units. The line of departure should provide cover for maneuver units deploying into and crossing the line. When a unit already in contact is the attacking unit, the line of departure is also the line of contact.

Objective

In offensive operations, objectives are either terrain- or force-oriented. Terrain objectives should place the enemy at a disadvantage and facilitate further actions against them. Force-oriented objectives should disrupt, degrade, or destroy specific enemy elements to achieve the commander's purpose. Commanders might use both types of objectives in the same operation—for example, seizing a key crossroad to prevent the enemy's withdrawal (i.e., terrain-oriented) and enable their destruction (i.e., force-oriented). The commander typically assigns subordinate commanders only their final objectives but can assign intermediate objectives as necessary.

Probable Line of Deployment

A PLD is "an easily recognized line selected on the ground where attacking units deploy in assault formation prior to beginning an attack" (*USMC Dictionary*). It is usually a linear terrain feature perpendicular to the direction of attack and recognizable under limited-visibility conditions. Commanders use a PLD when a unit does not cross the line of departure in assault formation. The commander should establish the PLD outside the range where the enemy can place the attacking force under effective direct fire.

Time of Attack

The time of attack, often referred to as H-hour, is "the hour at which the attack is to be launched. If a line of departure is prescribed, it is the hour at which the line is to be crossed by the leading elements of the attack" (*USMC Dictionary*). However, it can also designate the time to implement preliminary phases of the operation, such as strikes or an air assault phase. Commanders and their staffs use the time of attack to coordinate shaping actions within the attack.

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

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

- Conduct necessary reconnaissance, prepare plans, and issue orders.
- Synchronize plans between all subordinate units.

- Complete attack preparations, such as pre combat inspections.
- Move to the line of departure or point of departure.

An assault time's scope differs from a time of attack. A time of attack begins with crossing the line of departure and synchronizes all the actions necessary for units to conduct the assault; the time of attack is usually preplanned and typically does not change.

Zone and Sector

A zone is an operational area assigned to a unit in the offense that only has rear and lateral boundaries (Field Manual [FM] 3-0, *Operations*). The non-bounded side of a zone is open toward enemy forces. A higher-echelon headquarters uses fire support coordination and maneuver control measures such as a limit of advance and a coordinated fire line to synchronize its deep operations with those of a subordinate unit. Zones allow higher headquarters to adjust deep operations without having to change unit boundaries. This gives greater flexibility to the higher headquarters for controlling deep operations, allowing subordinate units to focus on close and rear operations. A zone is best for front-line units executing high-tempo offensive operations characterized by direct fire contact with the enemy and a fluid forward line of troops. Units treat everything behind the forward line of troops as an AO with the associated nine responsibilities. Zones can be further subdivided as needed.

A sector is an operational area assigned to a unit in the defense that has rear and lateral boundaries with interlocking fires (FM 3-0). The non-bounded side is open toward the enemy. A higher-echelon headquarters uses fire support coordination and maneuver control measures such as battle positions and trigger lines to synchronize subordinate units. Higher headquarters are responsible for synchronizing operations forward of the main battle and security areas or coordinated fire line. Units use sectors to synchronize and coordinate engagement areas and allow for mutually supporting fields of fire, which do not require coordination between adjacent units. Units treat everything behind the forward line of troops as an AO with the associated nine responsibilities. Sectors can be further subdivided as needed.

FORMS OF CONTACT

Contact is an interaction between two forces. There are three possible types of interactions:

- Both forces are in contact with each other.
- A friendly force is in contact with an enemy force, while the enemy force is not in contact with the friendly force.
- A friendly force is out of contact with an enemy force; however, the enemy force is in contact with the friendly force.

Leaders account for how to defend or mitigate against the enemy using these forms of contact. They also make plans on how to use these forms of contact against the enemy. Units use all the available capabilities to conduct various forms of contact. The 10 forms of contact are—

- Direct. Interactions from ground-based, line of sight weapons systems (including small arms, tank main guns, and antitank missiles).
- Indirect. Interactions from non-line of sight weapons systems (including cannon artillery, mortars, and rockets).
- Non-Hostile. Neutral interactions that may degrade military operations (including civilians on the battlefield, nongovernmental organizations, or neutral forces).
- Obstacle. Interactions from natural and man-made obstacles (including rivers and minefields).
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN). Interactions from friendly, enemy, and civilian CBRN effects (including chemical attacks, nuclear attacks, industrial accidents, and toxic or hazardous).
- Aerial. Interactions from air-based combat platforms (including attack helicopters, armed UAS, and fixed-wing aircraft).
- Visual. Interaction from acquisition via the human eye, optical, or electro-optical systems (including ground reconnaissance, telescopic, thermal, and infrared sights on weapons and sensor platforms such as UAS and satellites).
- Electromagnetic. Interactions via systems used to acquire, degrade, or destroy using select portions of the electromagnetic spectrum (including radar systems, jamming, cyberspace, and electromagnetic pulse).
- Influence. Interactions through the information dimension intended to shape the perceptions, behaviors, and decision making of people relative to a policy or military objective (including through social media, telecommunications, human interaction, and other forms of communication and contact).
- Audio. Interaction from acquisition via the human ear, auditory, artillery sound ranging (aural and stopwatch), sonar, microphone sensors, and optoacoustic means (e.g., laser-based transducers).

The forms of contact describe the method of interaction that identifies the location or activity of a force. The forms of contact also—

- Quickly describe to others what is happening.
- Describe the method of engagement.
- Provide an understanding of a force's capabilities and ranges.
- Can trigger additional actions, typically in the form of battle drills.

An exception to these forms of contact are interactions with friendly or neutral civilians, military forces, or nongovernmental organizations. This interaction is categorized as a non-hostile form of contact.

Whenever a force gain contact with another force, the gaining force can impede the freedom of action of that other force while enhancing their own freedom of action. For example, after gaining visual contact on an enemy force, friendly forces can maneuver—out of enemy contact—to a position to best destroy the enemy force. Ideally, when friendly forces engage enemy forces, they use as many different forms of contact as possible to create a dilemma for the enemy and allow the friendly force to accomplish its mission.

Visual contact allows one force to gain understanding of another other force with or without the other force's knowledge. When units conduct direct, indirect, and aerial forms of contact, they use visual contact. When using CBRN, obstacle, non-hostile, electromagnetic, influencing, or audio forms of contact, units should still visually confirm what is happening. For example, an animal could trigger an electronic ground sensor and a unit must confirm with visual contact whether the ground sensor was activated by enemy forces or by an animal.

When commanders direct friendly forces to gain and maintain contact, units decide which form or forms of contact is best to use for the situation. The unit must understand where the enemy force is what it is trying to do, while minimizing the forms of contact the enemy conducts on friendly forces.

Friendly forces should assume that the enemy always has them under some form of visual, electromagnetic, or influence contact. The proliferation of communication capabilities results in an increasing ability of friendly, neutral, and adversarial actors to influence one another. Relevant actors increasingly use social media in the battlespace to influence other actors' perceptions. Therefore, leaders should encourage disciplined actions that will help mitigate enemy contact, such as masking, deception, electromagnetic spectrum discipline, and camouflage.

ACTIONS ON CONTACT

Actions on contact is a process used to help leaders understand what is happening and to take action. Actions on contact is not intended to generate a rigid, lockstep response to the enemy. Rather, the goal is to provide an orderly framework that enables leaders to apply sound decision making and timely actions to complete the operation.

Actions on contact are applicable to all operations. They are applicable to a squad coming into direct fire contact with an enemy during a movement to contact, a rifle company observing enemy in the defense, a communications element ambushed by the enemy, or a division in the attack. This framework enables leaders to quickly assess a situation as it develops and what actions, if any, they need to take. Actions on contact are—

- React.
- Develop the situation.
- Choose an action.
- Execute and report.

Once a friendly force makes contact with the enemy, they conduct actions on contact regardless of whether the enemy has detected their presence. Actions on contact are not to be confused with the battle drill of "react to contact," which is a trained response, requires minimal orders to accomplish,

and is initiated by an enemy action. Actions on contact can also start with a unit reacting to contact, which simultaneously starts the actions on contact process for different echelons.

Typically, a unit's SOP dictates specific actions, to include battle drills and reports, depending on the type of contact. Additionally, the mission variables, commander's intent and guidance, and scheme of maneuver guide the actions individual units take when they make contact with enemy forces.

Leaders understand that at different echelons, actions on contact require different amounts of time to conduct with the primary variable being the time it takes to develop the situation. At the company-level and below, units can quickly develop the situation and choose an action to execute. Battalions and higher might need to execute the rapid response planning process (known as R2P2) or a deliberate Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) session to synchronize their echelon to a new action. Leaders balance the need to conduct their actions on contact with the need to maintain momentum. See MCWP 5-10, *Marine Corps Planning Process*, for more information.

React

One of the tenets of maneuver warfare is to make contact with the smallest element possible. This element is the one that reacts to contact while the rest of the force begins conducting actions on contact at different tempos. If the enemy initiates contact, the friendly element in contact conducts the react-to-contact the unit practiced in their battle drill. Any unengaged portion monitors the situation and prepares to either support the portion of the unit in contact or continue the mission. Simultaneously, the unit in contact reports the contact to their higher headquarters. If friendly forces make contact first without the enemy being aware, they pause to determine whether they have been detected. If they have not been detected, they move to a location where they will not be observed and continue the actions on contact process

Develop the Situation

The unit in contact develops the situation to define the threat. This helps to develop the situation and provides more maneuver space to execute further actions. As the situation develops and the enemy force's dispositions, strength, and intentions become clearer, the unit in contact submits additional reports. Significant reporting data includes—

- Size, activity, location, composition, and orientation of the enemy force.
- Effects of obstacles and terrain.
- Enemy capabilities.
- Probable enemy intentions.
- Methods of gaining positional advantage over the enemy.
- Friendly situations (location, strength, and capabilities).
- Possible friendly actions to achieve the specified end state.

Lower echelons, such as companies and below, require less time to develop the situation. Regiments and divisions will take longer to develop the situation and determine whether the enemy is acting according to the plan before the commander can make an informed decision.

Choose an Action

After the unit makes contact, its leaders gather information to make an assessment based on their understanding of the enemy and friendly forces' composition and disposition and chooses an action consistent with the higher echelon commander's intent and within the unit's capabilities.

These actions typically are—

- Attack.
- Bypass.
- Defend.
- Delay.
- Withdraw.

If the unit in contact encounters reinforcing obstacles, its Marines will either bypass them or conduct a hasty breach using organic resources. For obstacles not covered by fire, the unit can either seek to bypass or create lanes to support its maneuver or the maneuver of a supported unit.

Circumstances might dictate that the action requires a higher commander's approval, such as when action—

- Requires additional resources.
- Is not within the commander's intent.
- Sets conditions for the higher echelon to continue.
- Changes their higher echelon's scheme of maneuver.

Execute and Report

After the unit selects an action—and receives higher echelon approval, if necessary—they begin conducting the actions. The unit initiates direct and indirect fires to gain the initiative when engaging enemy forces. If the action is to attack, the unit in contact immediately attacks if it has sufficient, immediately available combat power to overwhelm the enemy force. If the action is to defend or withdraw, the unit in contact does so while maintaining contact and continuing to gain as much information as possible about the enemy forces disposition and positions. If the action is to bypass the enemy, the unit in contact maintains contact and continues their mission. Unless specifically directed by their higher headquarters to break contact, the unit in contact maintains contact regardless of the chosen action. Reporting to the next higher echelon is required to ensure the unit's actions are consistent with the commander's intent.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

Maneuver is the "employment of forces in the operational area, through movement in combination with fires and information, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*). The Marine Corps employs six forms of maneuver:

- Frontal Attack.
- Flanking Attack.

- Envelopment.
- Turning Movement.
- Infiltration.
- Penetration.

Planners use the six forms of maneuver to develop offensive COAs and synchronize the warfighting functions. Different levels of command combine the forms of maneuver differently (e.g., a company might conduct a flanking attack when executing their portion of the parent battalion's envelopment). Although higher commanders rarely specify forms of maneuver, their guidance and intent, along with the mission and any implied tasks, might impose constraints such as time, security, and direction of attack that narrow a subordinate commander's options. Key factors such as the terrain, adjacent unit's actions, and enemy dispositions and likely reactions also affect the choice of maneuver. A single operation can contain several forms of maneuver, such as a frontal attack to clear a security area, penetration to create a gap in enemy defenses, and envelopments to defeat the rest of the enemy force.

Frontal Attack

A frontal attack is "an offensive maneuver in which the main action is directed against the front of the enemy forces" (*USMC Dictionary*). Figure 3-2 depicts a frontal attack. A commander might use a frontal attack as a shaping action in conjunction with other forms of maneuver such as applying pressure along a wider front to enable a penetration as the decisive action or to fix an enemy force in support of an envelopment. Since a frontal attack often pits strength against strength, frontal attacks without significant combat power advantages over the enemy are rarely decisive and often unwarranted. A commander might use a frontal attack to—

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

Force Organization. Because frontal attacks generally result when friendly forces seek to quickly overwhelm a weak enemy or as part of a more deliberate shaping effort, there is no unique force organization associated with this form of maneuver. However, the force can expect to use security, main body, and reserve elements. Security elements conduct tasks such as locating the enemy and providing support by fire. Main body elements conduct attacks by fire or assaults. A reserve conducts the decisive action or exploits success.

Control Measures. When conducting a frontal attack, units might use minimal control measures (i.e., an AO defined by unit boundaries and objective). Other control measures include—

- Attack positions.
- Lines of departure.
- Phase lines.

- Assault positions.
- LOAs.
- Direction of attack or axis of advance for maneuver units.

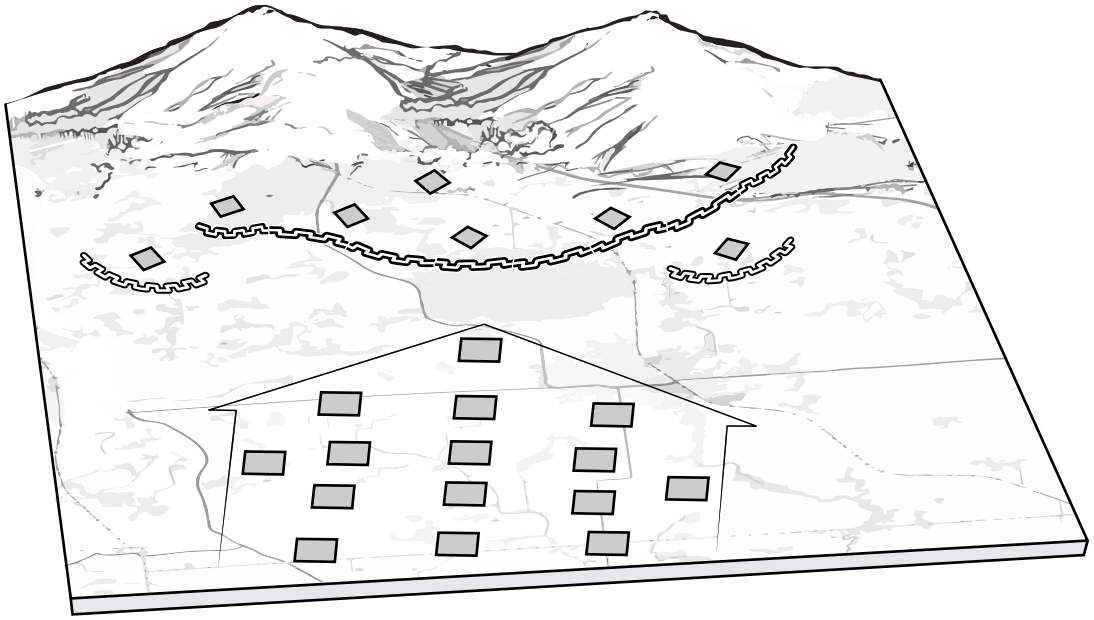


Figure 3-2. Frontal Attack Example.

Planning a Frontal Attack. When planning a frontal attack against a weaker enemy, planners focus on maintaining tempo. Planners seek to rapidly deploy assault formation, execute the assault, and conduct force consolidation and reorganization. At the battalion level and below, units often use battle drills to accomplish these actions. When a unit conducts a frontal attack as part of a shaping action, the primary planning objective is how to fix or disrupt the enemy force while mitigating the risk of losing personnel and equipment. A unit might conduct a frontal attack by executing a feint or demonstration or using attack by fire (direct or indirect).

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

If the attacking unit discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, the commander seeks to exploit that weakness and disrupt the integrity of the enemy's defense. After assessing the situation and ensuring it is not a trap, the commander can employ the reserve to exploit the opportunity. The commander synchronizes the exploitation with the actions of other maneuver and support elements to prevent possible enemy counterattacks from isolating and destroying the reserve and other exploitation elements. If a unit conducting a frontal attack can no longer advance, it adopts a

defensive posture. The commander might require the unit to assist the forward passage of lines of other units. The unit continues to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks.

Flanking Attack

A flanking attack is "an offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*) (see Figure 3-3). Commanders use this form of maneuver to place friendly combat power against an enemy's flank, defeating the enemy while minimizing the effect of the enemy's frontally oriented combat power. Forces attack the flank using fires or by a successful penetration. Usually, a supporting effort engages and fixes the enemy by combining fires and maneuver while the main effort maneuvers to attack the enemy's flank. Units often use this form of maneuver in hastily conducted attacks or as a battle drill in meeting engagements.

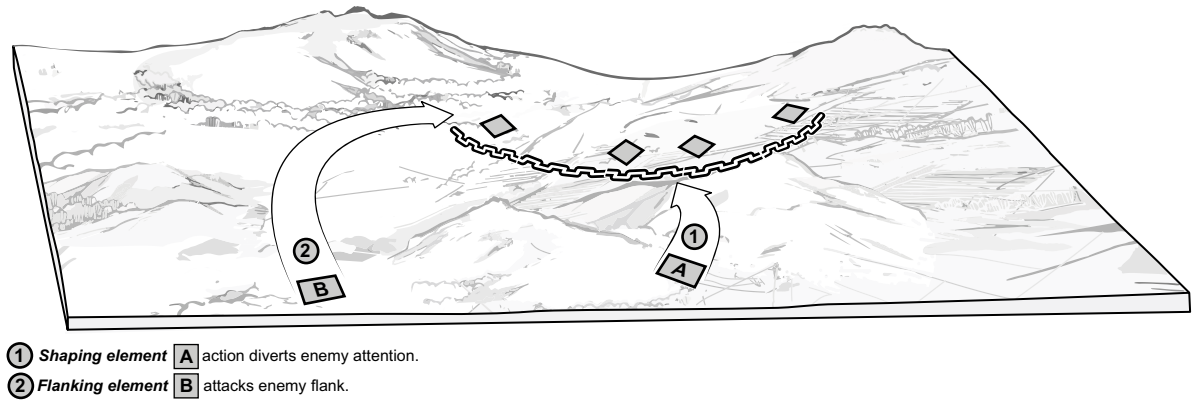


Figure 3-3. Flanking Attack Example.

Envelopment

Envelopment, also called a single envelopment, is "an offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear" (*USMC Dictionary*). Commanders use envelopments to seize terrain, destroy specific enemy forces, interdict enemy withdrawal routes, and deliver a psychological shock to the enemy. The main effort focuses on attacking beyond an assailable flank. By doing so, friendly forces avoid the enemy's strength (i.e., the enemy's front) where the effects of enemy fires and obstacles are the greatest, while gaining a position of advantage. If no assailable flank is available, the attacking force might attempt to create one by conducting a penetration.

The primary difference between an envelopment and a flanking attack is the friendly force's depth relative to the enemy's positions. An envelopment is a flanking attack delivered beyond the enemy's flank and into the enemy's rear area, but short of the depth associated with a turning movement. There are also varying levels of effort in terms of force to space ratios; logistics; and command and control between flanking attacks, envelopments, and turning movements. The flanking attack is the simplest in these terms and is most likely executed by battalions and below. Envelopments are typically conducted at the RLT and division level, whereas turning movements are conducted at the division level and above. The four methods of envelopment are—

- Single envelopment.
- Double envelopment.

- Vertical envelopment.
- Encirclement.

A single envelopment is a variation of envelopment where a force attacks along one flank of an enemy force. A single envelopment is generally easier to control and does not require a significant number of forces. See Figure 3-4 for an example of a single envelopment.

A double envelopment is "an offensive maneuver designed to force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging axis of the attack" (*USMC Dictionary*). A double envelopment is a variation of envelopment where forces simultaneously attack along both flanks of an enemy force. A force seeking to execute a double envelopment must also have a substantial mobility advantage over defending forces. A unit performs a double envelopment by conducting a frontal attack to fix enemy forces in place while enveloping both of the enemy force's flanks. A double envelopment generally requires more forces than a single envelopment and is more difficult to control. See Figure 3-4 for an example of a double envelopment.

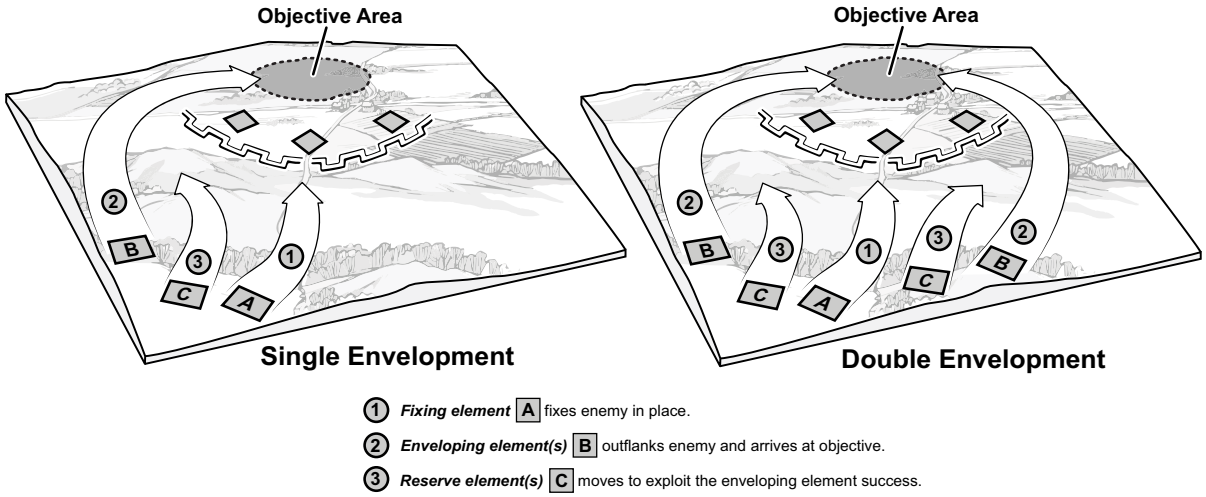


Figure 3-4. Envelopments.

A vertical envelopment is "a tactical maneuver in which troops that are air-dropped, air-landed, or inserted via air assault, attack the rear and flanks of a force, in effect cutting off or encircling the force" (*USMC Dictionary*). A force seeking to execute a vertical envelopment requires the necessary vertical lift capability and indirect fire assets to suppress enemy air defense capability. Because of the forces required, typically only divisions can conduct double and vertical envelopments, as these organizations have the resources and capability to control these envelopments. For more information on vertical envelopments, see Chapter 18.

Encirclement is where one force loses its freedom of maneuver because an opposing force is able to isolate it by controlling all ground lines of communications and reinforcement. An encirclement restricts the enemy's freedom of maneuver by controlling all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. A unit can conduct offensive encirclements designed to isolate an enemy force; conversely, the enemy could encircle the friendly force, thereby isolating the friendly force.

Encirclements occur because combat operations are chaotic, intense, and highly destructive, extending across large areas containing relatively few units as each side maneuvers against the other to obtain positional advantage.

A unit performs an encirclement or double envelopment by fixing the enemy in place while going around or over both hostile flanks. Because of the forces required, typically only divisions and larger organizations have the resources to execute double envelopments and encirclements. For a detailed discussion on encirclement operations, see Chapter 19.

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

Control Measures. The commander, at a minimum, establishes boundaries to designate AOs for each element participating in the envelopment. The commander also designates phase lines; support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions; contact points; and direct fire and fire support coordination measures, such as an RFL or boundary between converging forces, and any other control measures necessary to control the envelopment.

Planning an Envelopment. The commander seeks to maneuver the enveloping element around or over the enemy's main defenses to secure objectives on the enemy's flank or rear. From those objectives, the enveloping element can use its positional advantage to employ superior combat power against a defending enemy oriented in the wrong direction. To do so, the commander must be aware of the enemy's positions and their ability to react. For example, if the enemy has strong, mobile counterattack forces, the commander must mitigate their ability to affect the fight. Using branches and sequels, the commander plans how to exploit the envelopment's success—for example, deciding whether to seek encirclement or transition to pursuit.

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

Executing an Envelopment. Marines execute envelopments by combining surprise, overwhelming combat power, superior tactical mobility, air and information superiority, and fixing the bulk of the enemy in their positions. The commander uses ISR assets to find enemy flanks and determine enemy dispositions, guide the enveloping force, and provide continuous intelligence collection to identify changes in enemy COAs throughout the execution of the envelopment.

After the fixing element identifies an assailable flank, or creates a flank by a penetration, they pin the enemy in place. The enveloping element then exploits the situation, rapidly moving before the enemy can react. Speed and violence of execution are important as the enemy typically seeks to mitigate envelopments through planning, alternative defensive positions, counterattack elements, or reserves. Friendly forces also use ground and air shaping efforts to isolate the battlespace and prevent the enemy from countering the enveloping element.

The enemy might attempt to counter an envelopment by extending their flank, interdicting the enveloping force's LOC to cut them off from the support of the fixing force, or conducting a frontal counterattack. When facing a flank extension, the enveloping force typically attacks through the weakened extension rather than attempting to maneuver around the extended flank, as doing so slows momentum and risks losing support from the fixing force. When facing the temporary interdiction of their LOC, the enveloping element maintains the initiative and dictates tempo by selecting objectives vital to the enemy and their short-term self-sustainment. If confronted with a frontal counterattack, the fixing element defends itself or conducts a delay while the enveloping force continues the envelopment.

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

Turning Movement

A turning movement is a "form of offensive maneuver in which the attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear" (*USMC Dictionary*) (see Figure 3-5). It is typically geography based. Commanders frequently transition to this form of offensive maneuver as part of an exploitation or pursuit. A turning movement differs from envelopment in two ways. First, a force executing a turning movement does not engage the enemy in the enemy's current locations but seeks their displacement. Second, the force executing the turning movement typically relies on external support—such as aerial resupply or the amphibious task force (for amphibious turning movement). Division levels and above generally execute turning movements.

Force Organization. The commander directing a turning movement organizes available resources to conduct three main tasks: conduct the turning movement (typically the decisive action), conduct shaping actions, and conduct reserve operations. Although METT-T determines the exact composition of these turning, shaping, and reserve elements, each must be able to execute semi-independent operations across the warfighting functions. In particular, the commander must organize and resource the turning force to execute operations independent of the main body for extended periods of time.

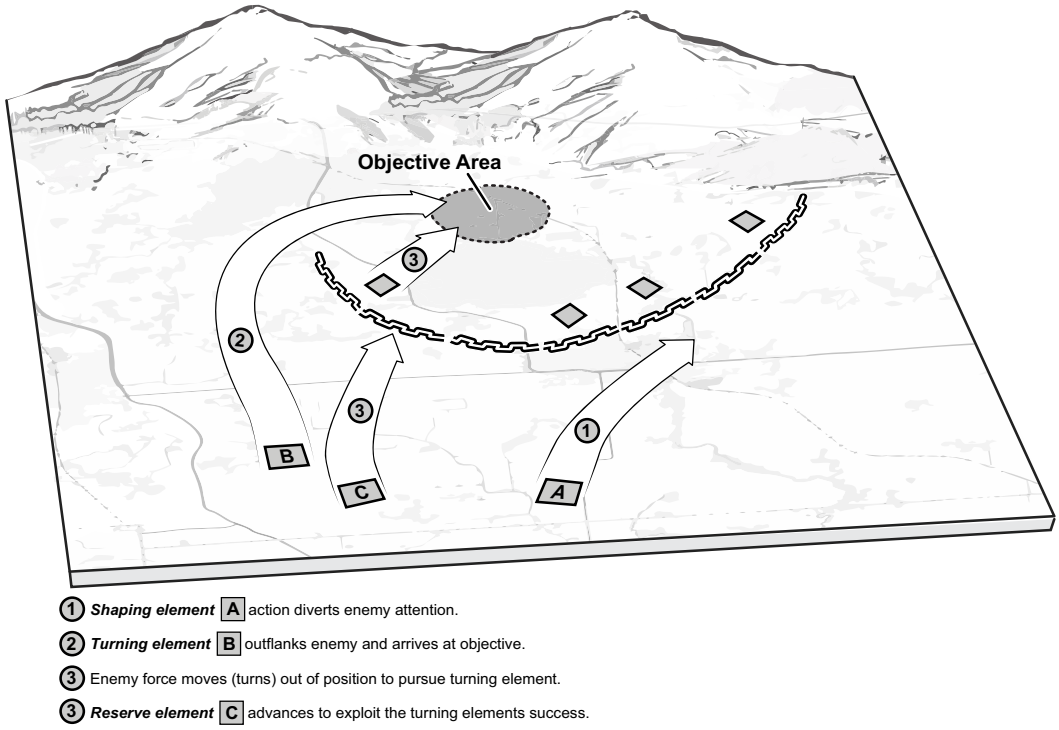


Figure 3-5. Turning Movement.

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

Control Measures. The commander uses boundaries to establish AOs for units executing the turning movement. They can also use additional control measures, such as phase lines, contact points, objectives, LOAs, and direct fire and fire support coordination measures to synchronize operations.

Planning a Turning Movement. Planners must determine three key factors when planning a turning movement:

- Critical terrain that threatens the enemy's survival, displaces them, and exposes them to defeat.
- Which way the turning force should maneuver to the objective and the planning associated with that movement (e.g., movement, staging, loading assault support assets).
- How long the turning force will operate before a linkup or relief takes place and how to sustain the force during that time.

In addition, the commander conducting a turning movement also considers—

- Exploitation and pursuit branches and sequels for shaping, turning, and reserve element.
- Defensive operations by the turning force.

- Linkups between the turning force and the main body.
- Retrograde operations for the turning force.

All forces executing a turning movement must consider logistics planning, which is critical to the maneuver itself and the exploitation of success. From maneuvering and sustaining the turning force to avoiding culmination during pursuit, this form of maneuver not only requires significant sustainment planning, but also the willingness of commanders to accept risk to personnel and equipment to prevent the enemy's escape. Logistic planners recognize that standard supporting distances and responsibilities might not be applicable to this movement, and they adjust their plans to use available resources. Because excessive supplies and equipment can slow operational tempo, units carry only what is required to meet their immediate needs. Staffs establish and maintain required supply levels in the objective area by phasing supplies on an accompanying, follow-up (automatic and on-call), and routine basis. Ammunition and petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL) typically constitute the major tonnage items.

Executing a Turning Movement. The shaping and reserve elements focus on moving the turning element to the objective area, with sufficient combat power and CSS to accomplish the mission. Whenever possible, the turning force maneuvers without encountering the enemy. Techniques to accomplish this include outflanking the enemy or using assault support and amphibious means to avoid the enemy's positions. Shaping elements support this effort by executing attacks to fix the enemy, using feints and demonstrations to divert their attention, and applying the information warfighting function to create and exploit information advantages in pursuit of mission objectives, thereby corrupting the enemy's decision-making processes. Reserve elements prepare to exploit the turning elements successes, exploit unexpected opportunities created by the shaping element, or reinforce shaping actions that enable the successful maneuver of the turning force.

When threatened with a turning movement, an enemy commander that has not prepared a COA for a turning movement is in a dilemma as the original plan for defense is dissembled. First, enemy forces must move from their original positions to meet the threat presented by the turning force. Often enemy forces must commit available reserves against this new threat, which exposes their reserves to friendly fires. After the turning movement, enemy forces must engage the friendly force on ground that they have not chosen or prepared. The other option for enemy forces is to continue to hold the terrain they occupy at the risk of becoming enveloped and potentially encircled by friendly forces. Whenever possible, units conducting a turning movement try to reach the terrain-oriented objective that compels enemy forces to reposition prior to encountering them. Friendly forces finding their way into the enemy force's rear area to rapidly exploit the situation seek to achieve their objectives before the enemy can react. Rapid movement is essential to prevent enemy forces from occupying previously prepared positions in the enemy force's rear.

The maneuver of the turning element is what causes enemy forces to leave their positions. A turning element typically conducts most of its operations outside the supporting range of the diversion element and possibly outside its supporting distance. The turning element must contain sufficient maneuver, functional, and multifunctional capabilities to operate independently for a specified period. Units organize the reserve to exploit success by using either the turning element or the diversion element.

Infiltration

An infiltration is "the movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it implies that contact is avoided" (*USMC Dictionary*).

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

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

Special operations forces and infantry units up to regimental size typically conduct an infiltration. However, smaller units can do so, particularly against an enemy force that is dispersed over a wide area. The reverse of infiltration is exfiltration (for more information regarding exfiltration, see Appendix C).

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

Each infiltration element organizes itself as if conducting an approach march type of movement to contact using security elements and a main body (see Chapter 4 for more information about movement to contact). In general, each infiltration element is responsible for local security and reconnaissance. Larger infiltration elements have increased security requirements, such as using an advanced guard, flank security, and rear guards. In some instances, and if resources allow, the commander might employ security forces along infiltration routes to conduct screen and guard missions for the infiltration elements (see Chapter 14).

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

An infiltration lane is a control measure that commanders use to coordinate forward and lateral movement of infiltrating units and fix fire planning responsibilities. The commander selects infiltration lanes that avoid the enemy, provide cover and concealment, and facilitate navigation. Each unit assigned an infiltration lane picks their own routes within the lane and switches routes as necessary. The left and right limits of the infiltration lane act as lateral boundaries for the unit conducting the infiltration. Attacks by rotary or fixed wing aircraft, indirect fires, or munitions effects that impact the lane must be coordinated with the infiltrating unit. Commanders typically assign a single infiltration lane to company size units (although they can use more) and two or more to larger organizations (i.e., battalion and above).

Planning an Infiltration. Planning for infiltration requires units to conduct three tasks: conducting the infiltration, conducting follow-on actions after the infiltration is complete, and conducting linkup and relief procedures after they accomplish the mission. Planners consider three key factors when planning an infiltration:

- Intelligence on the positions of the enemy. Without this intelligence, the infiltration form of maneuver becomes little more than a high-risk, time consuming, probing of the enemy.
- Integrating supporting fires and information. Operations security (OPSEC), ruses, tactical deception, and similar information functions assist the infiltrating force in avoiding an enemy force, minimizing direct contact, and maximizing surprise. Units can use ground- and air-delivered fires to assist in tactical deception, support feints and demonstrations, and fix the enemy in their positions.
- Command and control to include deconflicting communications among multiple units on multiple lanes; handling contingencies; synchronizing and coordinating follow-on activities; and conducting linkups and reliefs.

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

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

Multiple infiltration lanes—

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

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

When planning for the infiltration's movement portion, units create contingency plans for the following situations:

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

Additionally, units should identify abort criteria.

After planning for the infiltration, planners address mission accomplishment, post-mission activities (e.g., linkups, relief), and sustainment. The method the infiltration force uses to linkup with other friendly forces is a function of the larger plan. Planners should consider the following:

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

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

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

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

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

- Significant portions of the infiltrating force's combat power are lost through navigation errors, enemy action, accidents, or maintenance failures.
- Movement or significant reinforcement of a force oriented objective.
- Detection of the infiltration by the enemy.
- Changes in the tactical situation that render the mission unfeasible, such as the initiation of an enemy attack.

Penetration

A penetration is "a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system" (*USMC Dictionary*). The exploiting force uses this form of maneuver to destroy the enemy's defense, subsequently isolating the enemy and enabling defeat in detail. A successful penetration maneuver begins in the enemy's security area and passes through their main defensive positions into their rear operational area. A commander uses this maneuver when there is no assailable flank, envelopment is impractical or will take too much time, or enemy defenses are overextended and have exploitable weak spots. Penetrations often require the commander to conduct breaching operations.

Organization of Forces. To penetrate a well-organized position, units requires overwhelming combat power at the point of penetration and the resources to maintain local combat superiority to maintain momentum and tempo. The initial penetration is weighted to ensure its success; commanders are willing to accept risk in follow-on penetrations to do so. At a minimum, penetrations use breach, support, and assault elements. Commanders should designate these elements for each defensive position the force is required to penetrate. Commanders can designate security and reserve elements to conduct reconnaissance, isolate the area of penetration, manage expected or unexpected contingencies, and prevent the enemy from interfering with the main effort—typically the assault element.

Control Measures. To control and synchronize the attack, a commander assigns, as a minimum—

- An AO to every maneuver unit.
- A line of departure or line of contact.
- Time of attack or time of assault.
- Phase lines.

- Objectives.
- An LOA or handover line.

Planners establish narrow lateral boundaries for the main effort to focus overwhelming combat power at the point of penetration. The commander positions the LOA beyond the enemy's main defensive position to provide maneuver room to complete the breach. The commander uses a handover line instead of an LOA if follow-and-assume forces are already designated to conduct a forward passage of lines (see Chapter 17). If the operation results in opportunities to exploit success and pursue weakened enemy, the commander adjusts existing boundaries to accommodate the new situation. At the small-unit level, commanders add additional control measures such as breaching points, lanes, checkpoints, support-by-fire positions, PLDs, attack and assault positions. Commanders can also designate either an axis of advance or direction of attack to further control maneuver and mass combat power at the point of decision.

Planning a Penetration. Marines execute penetration maneuvers to systematically paralyze and overwhelm the enemy at the point of penetration, but only when that penetration can be exploited. In addition to analyzing likely penetration points, planners must also analyze the terrain beyond them to ensure maneuver elements can proceed from the breach to a decisive objective.

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

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

- Isolate the area of penetration.
- Breach the enemy's main defensive positions.
- Widen the breach to secure the flanks.
- Seize the objective and exploi the success of the penetration.

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

Planners create detailed, synchronized plans to suppress and destroy enemy elements that can affect the breach, to include if and where to commit engineering forces. Planners must also address how to phase initial assault elements through the breach to secure the far side and expand the penetration, and how to rapidly push combat power through the breach, creating a gap for

further exploitation. Units often create multiple breach points to ensure this movement is effectively conducted (to include back breaching) and to provide redundancy to the movement plan. (See MCTP 3-34B for more information on breaches and breaching.) Command and control of this portion of the penetration is critical and commanders should rely on secondary and tertiary means of signals and communications, so combat power moves rapidly into and through the point of penetration.

The final phase of the plan (seize the objective and exploit the success of the penetration) requires detailed coordination and synchronization. Units must lift or shift isolation fires as needed to prevent the enemy from interdicting the penetration point. Units typically conduct battle handovers and forward passage of lines, and CSS must phase forward. Finally, equipment and personnel casualties retrograde through the same movement channels inuse by elements moving forward. In this phase, planners ensure friendly forces are far enough forward to enable displace or destroy the enemy's rear forces. The gap must be held open, diverging combat power to roll up enemy flanks risks allowing the enemy to successfully withdraw and reconstitute the defense.

Executing a Penetration. The following paragraphs discuss the four phases of executing a penetration maneuver (see Figure 3-6).

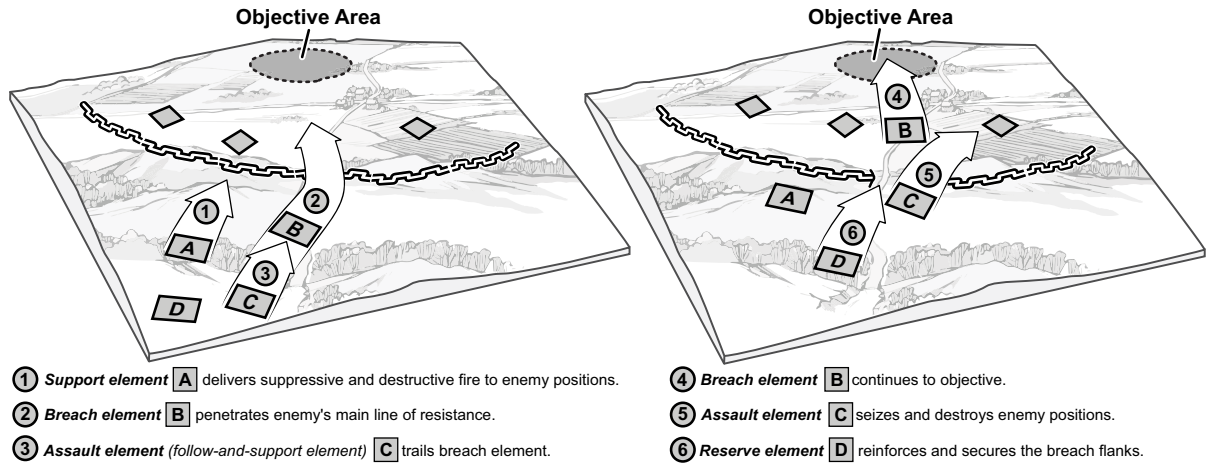


Figure 3-6. Penetration.

<u>*Isolate the Area of Penetration*</u>. Support elements conduct shaping actions to set the conditions for a successful breach, which marks the beginning of the penetration. Such support includes creating information advantages, which starts before the operation and continues throughout the maneuver. Supporting arms deliver fires in the vicinity of the breach site fix enemy reserves, and interdict movement routes into the penetration area. Feints, demonstrations, and frontal attacks reinforce information effects and fix the enemy in their positions. Finally, depending on METT-T, other forms of maneuver, such as infiltration and vertical envelopment, deliver supporting efforts directly into the enemy's rear operational area to further isolate the area.

<u>*Breach the Enemy's Main Defensive Positions*</u>. Once the support elements sets the conditions, the commander commits the breach element on a relatively narrow front focusing combat power on the penetration point and close-in objectives that support it. Support elements deliver suppressive and destructive fires to enable the maneuver of the breach and assault elements. The assault element

moves rapidly through breaches to secure the breach site and the immediate area before continuing forward. Other support elements, or the reserve element, with follow-and-support missions, trail the assault element. See Appendix C for more information on follow-and-support and follow-and-assume tactical tasks.

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

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

Seize the Objective and Exploit Success. The assault element conducts the decisive action by seizing the objectives that destroy the continuity of the enemy's defense. Objectives can be geographic, force-oriented, or both. The commander commits other follow-and-support elements to enable the assault element to continue their maneuver. If the distance from the point of penetration to the objective is too great for the initial assault element to continue, or unexpected enemy actions demand it, the commander uses follow-and-assume elements to pass forward, become the new main effort, and continue the assault. Coordination and synchronization remain critical to phase exploitation units forward, shift supporting arms, and counter enemy actions.

COMMON OFFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Accurate and lethal weapons, increased tactical mobility, ever-present sensors, and a complex operational environment all characterize contemporary MDCA warfare. Units have a higher probability of tactical success when they can visualize the battlespace, understand the implications of existing friendly and enemy dispositions, and take effective action. The planning considerations for the offense also apply to the defense with situationally appropriate modifications.

Only a determined offense with a high tempo and conducted to great depth, can destroy the enemy force. The attacker's principal advantage is that it possesses the initiative. Maintaining the initiative enables units to engage the enemy at the time and in a manner of their choosing. Attacking units have the time and opportunity to develop a plan and to concentrate the effects of subordinate forces

and combat enablers to create conditions for success. Units strike the enemy in unexpected ways at unexpected times and places. They rapidly and violently execute these attacks, which are unpredictable and seek to disorient enemy forces.

Attacking units maintain tempo by rapidly following up on attacks to keep enemy forces off-balance and to deny them the ability to recover. Friendly forces develop flexible plans that allow them to take advantage of opportunities to maintain the initiative and dictate operational tempo. Because offensive operations are intense and have a high tempo, units take proactive measures to prevent culmination prior to accomplishing their assigned mission. Friendly operations must be fast enough to prevent effective counteraction; therefore, attacking units change their means and methods before enemy forces can adapt and respond.

Command and Control

Synchronizing the seven warfighting functions through planning and preparation prior to execution increases a unit's effectiveness. However, the fluid nature of combat requires leaders to orchestrate the actions of subordinates during the execution phase. Leaders determine where they can best affect the flow of operations and influence critical events by redirecting the effects of committed forces, changing priorities of support, or employing echelon reserves. To effectively redirect, units should be well forward in the echelon's formation, usually with the force designated to conduct the main effort or at a location where a key decision or task must be accomplished to enable the success of the main effort. Examples of key tasks or decisions can include executing a forward passage of lines or a wet-gap crossing. Once the unit conducting the main effort makes contact with the enemy, friendly forces quickly move to where they best can assess the situation and continue the offensive operation.

At battalion and above, units anticipate requirements to shift the main effort during an offense to press the battle and keep enemy forces off balance. They develop decision points to support these changes using both human and technical means to validate decision points.

In addition to assigning objectives and identifying decision points, leaders at all echelons consider how to exploit advantages that arise during operations and how to seize intermediate and final objectives. Leaders exploit success by aggressively executing the plan, taking advantage of subordinate unit's initiative, and employing other units. The echelon reserve also provides a flexible capability to exploit unforeseen advantages.

Units maintain communications and comprehensive throughput of information among all units. They plan how to position and reposition command and control systems to help control operations. Units plan how to expand the communications coverage to accommodate increased distances and enemy efforts to deny and degrade friendly communications systems. Units provide for redundant communication means.

A unit maintains its common operating picture throughout an operation. For a common operating picture to aid a unit in maintaining situational awareness, the unit requires timely and frequent updates of relevant information. All echelons report information on the disposition and activities of friendly and enemy forces.

Maneuver

Although inherent to all military operations, the concept of the offense is inextricably linked to maneuver. To attack one must maneuver against the enemy—regardless of their relative mobility—to strike blows that cause damage and create defeat. Maneuver is combined with fires to avoid enemy strengths and create or exploit enemy gaps. Commanders use maneuver to achieve surprise and create greater effects than the force would otherwise accomplish. Security forces and information activities mask maneuver, other supporting efforts shape the battlespace for the success of maneuver, and the main effort delivers the decisive action through maneuver. Finally, maneuver combined with fires enables friendly forces to successfully close with, shock, and destroy or defeat the enemy through close combat. Close combat, which encompasses all actions that place friendly forces in a direct fire fight with the enemy, is supported by direct and indirect fires and other assets. Close combat can also include hand-to-hand combat with the enemy.

Two planning factors of offensive maneuver are objective type and relative mobility. Objective type is critical because it addresses the purpose of maneuver. (Is the objective a key piece of terrain or an enemy force?) If a unit is maneuvering against terrain that can provide an advantage over the enemy, its forces are only relevant to friendly forces if they are moving, reaching, and seizing the objective. Friendly forces may even choose to bypass them or force them to withdraw.

Relative mobility is the friendly force's mobility compared to the enemy (i.e., are friendly units more or less mobile than the enemy?). For example, mounted forces in armored vehicles are more mobile than dismounted enemy forces.

Combat Formations. Units conducting ground movement use combat formations in the presence of the enemy or when contact with an enemy is likely or intended. As it relates to ground operations, a combat formation is an ordered arrangement of forces for a specific purpose and describes the general configuration of the formation. A commander can use seven different combat formations depending on METT-T:

- Column.
- Line.
- Echelon (left or right).
- Box.
- Diamond.
- Wedge.
- Vee.

Combat formations allow a unit to move on the battlefield in a posture suited to the mission and commander’s intent. Planners weigh terrain characteristics, movement methods, and visibility to determine the arrangement and location of the unit’s personnel and vehicles within a given formation. A unit might employ a series of combat formations during an operation; each has its advantages and disadvantages. Subordinate units within a combat formation can also employ their own combat formations, consistent with their situation. When choosing formations and moving between them, commanders consider the advantages and disadvantages of each as they apply to command and control, maintenance, firepower orientation, ability to mass fires, and flexibility.

All combat formations use one or more of the three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Chapter 15 describes these three movement techniques. By designating the combat formation, the commander—

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

Column. In a column formation, elements are placed one behind another. The unit moves in column formation when the commander does not anticipate enemy contact, the objective is distant, and speed and control are critical. Figure 3-7 depicts a column formation. When present, the fire support units' location within the column reflects the column's length and the range fans of those fire support systems. Usually, the lead element uses a traveling overwatch technique while the following units are in traveling formation. The trailing element moves at variable speeds and may pause for short periods to overwatch the lead element. Employing a column formation—

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



Figure 3-7. Column Formation.

A disadvantage is that most of the column's firepower can only be immediately applied from the column's flanks. The length of the column can negatively impact control. Additionally, there is a potential for inadvertently bypassing enemy units or positions and exposing the unit's flanks and rear or running head-on into an enemy deployed perpendicular to the column.

Line. In a line formation, the unit's subordinate ground maneuver elements move abreast of each other (see Figure 3-8). A commander employs this formation when assaulting an objective because it concentrates firepower to the front in the direction of movement. A line formation also—

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



Figure 3-8. Line Formation.

The disadvantages of using a line formation include the following:

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

Echelon. In an echelon formation (see Figure 3-9), commanders arrange subordinate elements on an angle to the left (echelon left) or to the right (echelon right) of the direction of attack. This formation provides for firepower forward and to the flank of the direction of the echelon and facilitates control in open areas. Echelons enables forces not in contact with the enemy to maneuver against known enemy forces. It provides minimal security to the opposite flank of the direction of the echeloning. Units operating on the flank of a larger formation commonly use this formation. The primary disadvantages of the echelon formation are that it is more difficult for commanders to maintain control in restricted terrain or in limited visibility, and there is a lack of firepower available on the opposite side the echelon.

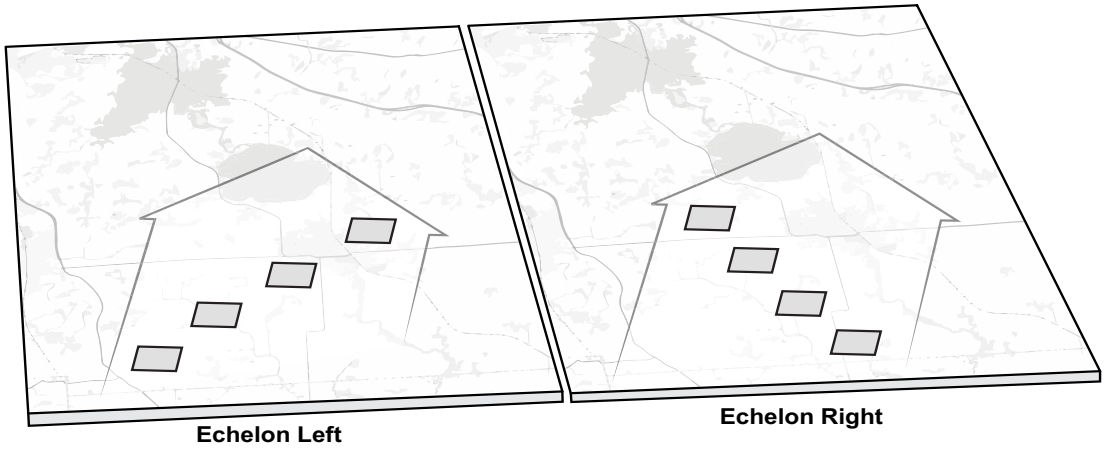


Figure 3-9. Echelon Left and Echelon Right.

Box. In a box formation, commanders arrange subordinate elements in a square. It is a flexible formation that provides equal firepower in all directions. Commanders typically use this formation when they know the enemy's location. With this formation, half the force could be decisively engaged at the same time, limiting the combat power available to maneuver. The box formation arranges the unit with two forward and two trail maneuver elements (see Figure 3-10). A unit with only three maneuver elements, cannot adopt the box formation unless it is reinforced. The subordinate elements usually move in a column formation with flank security. Commanders with general knowledge about the enemy often use it when executing an approach march, exploitation, or pursuit. Employing a box formation—

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

The primary disadvantages are that it requires sufficient maneuver space for dispersion and multiple routes. At the battalion and company level, enemy units could converge on one element at a time as the other elements' direct fires are masked by other friendly forces.



Figure 3-10. Box Formation Example.

Diamond. A diamond formation is a variation of the box formation with one maneuver unit leading, maneuver units positioned on each flank, and the remaining maneuver unit to the rear (see Figure 3-11). In this formation, subordinate elements usually move in a column formation with flank security. It is most effective during approach marches, exploitations, or pursuits when the commander has only general knowledge about the enemy. Employing a diamond formation—

- Enables the commander to maneuver either left or right immediately, without first repositioning, regardless of which subordinate element makes contact with the enemy. This is the chief advantage of and the difference between a diamond and a box formation.
- Facilitates making enemy contact with the smallest possible force yet still provides all-around security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Changes easily and quickly to another formation.
- Facilitates speed of movement while remaining easy to control.
- Provides an uncommitted force for use as a reserve.

The primary disadvantages of this formation are that it requires—

- Sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Four subordinate maneuver elements.
- Multiple available routes.



Figure 3-11. Diamond Formation.

Wedge. Commanders use the wedge formation to arrange forces to attack an enemy appearing to the front and flanks (see Figure 3-12). A unit with only three subordinate maneuver elements can adopt the wedge formation. The commander uses the wedge when contact with the enemy is possible or expected, but the enemy's location and dispositions are vague. It is the preferred formation for an approach march because initial contact is usually with only one unit, leaving the others free to

maneuver and develop the situation. Within the wedge, subordinate units employ the formation best suited to the terrain, visibility, and likelihood of contact. Employing a wedge formation—

- Provides maximum fire power forward and allows a large portion of the unit's firepower to be used on the flanks.
- Enables units to rapidly cross open terrain.
- Facilitates control.
- Enables rapid changes in the force's orientation.
- Facilitates rapid change to other formations.



Figure 3-12. Wedge Formation.

The primary disadvantages to the wedge formation are that it—

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

Vee. The vee formation disposes the unit with two maneuver elements abreast and one or more units trailing (see Figure 3-13). This arrangement is well suited for an advance against a known threat to the front. The commander might use this formation when expecting enemy contact and the enemy's location and disposition are known. Employing a vee formation—

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

The primary disadvantages to this formation are that it—

- Makes changing the direction of movement (e.g., 90 degree turn) more difficult than a wedge.
- Makes control in restricted terrain and limited-visibility conditions difficult.
- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.



Figure 3-13. Vee Formation.

Limited-Visibility Operations. Typically, limited visibility presents significant control problems when conducting offensive operations. However, the force with the capability and training to operate effectively in limited visibility can achieve significant advantages over the force that cannot operate in these conditions. For limited-visibility conditions to be an opportunity rather than a disadvantage, commanders must ensure they train to fight and operate in these conditions—to include phasing from daylight to night operations.

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

Assured Mobility. Assured mobility is "a framework—of processes, actions, and capabilities—that assures the ability of a force to deploy, move, and maneuver where and when desired, without interruption or delay, to achieve the mission" (*USMC Dictionary*). When planning offensive operations, commanders and staffs apply the following assured mobility fundamentals:

- *Predict* potential obstacles to mobility by analyzing enemy TTP, capabilities, and likely countermeasures; the effects of terrain; and civil considerations in terms of vehicular traffic, dislocated civilians, etc.
- *Detect* the location of avenues of approach, natural and man-made obstacles, and enemy obstacle resource capabilities.
- *Prevent* negative effects on friendly mobility through shaping actions such as eliminating enemy countermobility capabilities, preparing to mitigate natural obstacles, and destroying

terrorist networks implanting improvised explosive devices and mines. Prevent also includes denying the enemy the ability to disrupt or destroy friendly mobility capabilities—such as protecting breaching assets until they must be committed.

- *Avoid* likely impediments to mobility, whether in terms of enemy action, natural features, friendly shortfalls, or combinations of all three—even if this results in the selection of less favorable, but unexpected routes.
- *Neutralize* obstacles and impediments as soon as possible to allow unrestricted movement of forces. The TTP available to do this are a factor of METT-T, ROE, and the type of military operation being conducted. For example, how one mitigates an urban minefield in a major combat operation will be different from mitigating that same urban minefield in a peacekeeping operation.
- *Protect* by implementing survivability and other force protection measures that will prevent observation of friendly forces and degrade or eliminate the effects of enemy actions. This can include actions from creating new routes that allow forces to move unobserved and unmolested, to the employment of mine rollers, to the use of electronic warfare systems to disrupt improvised explosive devices.

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

Mobility. In the offense, units rely on mobility to concentrate combat power, conduct shaping operations, exploit success, and pursue a retreating enemy. Mobility enables friendly forces to achieve surprise by passing through or over terrain thought impassable, or by creating new routes to allow units to mass undetected by the enemy. Mobility allows friendly forces to retain momentum and dictate tempo by passing quickly and efficiently through natural and man-made obstacles. Mobility operations are "those combined arms activities that mitigate the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver" (*USMC Dictionary*). Mobility operations include six primary tasks:

- Conduct breaching.
- Conduct clearing (areas and routes).
- Conduct gap crossing.
- Construct and maintain combat roads and trails.
- Construct and maintain forward airfields and landing zones (LZs).
- Conduct traffic management and control.

Maintaining momentum in the offense often requires breaching operations. Ideally, obstacles are bypassed. If necessary, the preferred method of conducting breaching operations is employing a hasty breach, which avoids the loss of time and momentum associated with deliberate breaches. A hasty breach is the rapid creation of lanes through minefields, barriers, fortifications, or enemy obstacles by any expedient method when the time factor does not permit detailed reconnaissance, deliberate breaching, or bypassing the obstacle. Commanders ensure that maneuver forces have the means to conduct hasty breaches.

A deliberate breach is "the systematically planned and executed creation of a lane or clear route through a barrier, obstacle, or fortification" (*USMC Dictionary*). The fundamentals of assured mobility allow commanders to determine likely breach sites, and if unavoidable, how to best shape and conduct efficient deliberate breaches. Breaching operations use a reverse planning sequence from the objective back to the assembly area. For more information on breaching, see MCTP 3-34A.

Units conduct clearing operations to eliminate enemy obstacles or residual obstacles within an assigned area or along a specified route. A clearing operation is "an operation designed to clear or neutralize all mines and obstacles from a route or area" (*DoD Dictionary*). Typically, an MDCA force built around an engineer-based clearing force conducts clearing operations. Units can conduct clearing operations as a single mission to open or reopen a route or area or on a recurring basis to support efforts to defeat a sustained threat to a critical route. For more information on clearing operations, see MCTP 3-34A.

Rivers and other gaps remain major obstacles despite advances in technology and aviation support. Wet gap crossings are among the most critical, complex, and vulnerable of military operations. Similar to breaches, hasty crossings are preferred to maintain momentum and limit the amount of defensive preparation time available to the enemy. The size of the gap, as well as the enemy and friendly situations, dictate the specific TTP units use to conduct the crossing. Deliberate gap crossings typically require augmentation of amphibious and engineering assets. For more information on gap crossings, see MCTP 3-34A. See Chapter 22 for more information on mobility.

Countermobility. Commanders use countermobility operations to enable economy of force operations, isolate the battlespace, and provide security. Countermobility operations are "those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to deny enemy freedom of movement and maneuver" (*USCM Dictionary*). Units create obstacles to provide security to flanks and deny the enemy counterattack routes as friendly forces advance into the enemy's defense. Similarly, units use obstacles to provide force protection for consolidation and reorganization after a successful offensive operation. Countermobility enables economy of force—smaller forces able to defend larger areas—allowing units to mass combat power for offensive action elsewhere. Finally, they help isolate the battlespace, preventing reinforcement and withdrawal and dividing the enemy's defense into portions for defeat in detail. Although countermobility operations have significant utility in the offense, commanders ensure that conducting countermobility does not hinder offensive maneuver. Countermobility includes four primary tasks:

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

During the planning phase, planners identify avenues of approach that offer natural flank protection to an attacking force are identified, such as rivers or ridgelines. Obstacles are sited and constructed, bridges destroyed, and minefields emplaced to interdict roads, trails, and avenues of approach.

Units can use natural terrain features such as swamps, canals, lakes, forests, and escarpments to quickly reinforce flank security. To maintain momentum, Marines conducting countermobility operations in the offense focus on rapid emplacement and flexibility. Engineer support must keep pace with advancing maneuver forces and be prepared to emplace obstacles alongside them. Planners ensure that mobility operations are properly prioritized, and that engineers receive both the resources and planning guidance necessary to make decisions that support the commander's plan during execution. Siting, construction, and emplacement planning consider blocking enemy avenues of approach and withdrawal, containing bypassed enemy forces, and isolating the battlespace from reinforcement. Depending on METT-T and the ROE, commanders can use aircraft or artillery to emplace minefields containing scatterable munitions. These scatterable munitions can be tailored to remain active for a selected length of time before they self-deactivate or self-destruct. Minefields containing scatterable munitions might be unmarked munitions because some mines may lie outside the intended boundary of the minefield. Obstacles must be marked, reported, and recorded, and properly integrated with maneuver. Chapter 8 addresses integrating countermobility into the defense. See Chapter 21 and MCTP 3-34B for a more information on countermobility.

Fires

Fires is "the use of weapon systems or other actions to create specific lethal or nonlethal effects on a target" (*DoD Dictionary*). Fire support is "fires that directly support land, maritime, amphibious, space, cyberspace, and special operations forces to engage enemy forces, combat formations, and facilities in pursuit of tactical and operational objectives" (*DoD Dictionary*). Commanders and staffs use the targeting process to select and prioritize targets, and weaponeer to those targets to support the offensive SOM. The four fire support tasks are—

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

Commanders use organic, lethal and nonlethal fires to create numerous options for generating lethal and nonlethal effects to gain and maintain fire superiority, which enables maneuver. The commander uses long-range fire support systems (e.g., artillery and air support) and short-range fire support systems (e.g., mortars) to engage the enemy throughout the battlespace. Fire support planning, which results in a fire support plan, is a continuous, concurrent cycle of analyzing the enemy and friendly situation; conducting targeting; tasking and allocating fire support assets; scheduling fires; and coordinating execution to integrate fire support with the SOM and maximize combat power. It relies upon top-down planning and bottom-up refinement. Fire support planning answers the question, "How will fires support the SOM?" In the offense, the SOM typically includes of the following:

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

In support of the SOM, the staff determines—

- What types of targets to attack.
- How to acquire and track targets.
- When to attack targets.
- What fire support assets are available to attack targets.
- How to coordinate the attacks.
- How to integrate with information for the purpose of creating and exploiting information advantages in pursuit of mission objectives.
- What defines success.

When planning offensive fires, fire support planners consider—

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

As the attacking force moves forward, they use preparatory fires suppress, neutralize, or destroy enemy positions, thereby shaping the battlespace to create conditions favorable to maneuver. Planners weigh the probable effects of preparatory fires against the potential advantages of achieving surprise, particularly in limited-visibility conditions. Whether the commander chooses to make an assault without using preparatory fires, they still plan fires to use if necessary.

Quick-Fire Support Planning. Commanders use quick fire support planning to respond to immediate threats using the available fire support assets. During quick-fire support, when time does not permit detailed evaluation of targets and fire planning, the supported unit's FSC has authority to plan supporting arms fires. The effective assignment of joint forward observers and target acquisition assets to quick fire or exclusive nets also provides responsive fires. Quick-fire nets allow the lead observers to associate directly with specific field artillery or mortar fire units. These kinds of communication arrangements enhance responsiveness through streamlined net structures and focused priorities. Communications planning should also include the need for communication nets for the clearing of targets for rotary- and fixed-wing attacks. See MCTP 3-10F for more information on quick-fire plans and nets in fire support planning.

Air and Missile Defense Planning. The GCE's primary means of air defense is the employment of passive air defense measures and the ACE's execution of antiair operations in accordance with the joint force air component commander. Passive air defense measures are an essential and inherent part of air and missile defense planning at all levels. If an enemy attacks a unit's aerial systems in assembly areas, attack positions, or while moving, the unit disperses and conducts small-arms air defense. Enemy air threats consist of UAS and rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft. As part of the air defense plan, the GCE accounts for, and supports, the deployment of various radar systems and the presence and maneuver of light antiair defense units. The commander at each echelon establishes air defense priorities based on the concept of operations, SOM, air situation, and the air defense priorities established by higher headquarters. If the commander has air defense systems directly supporting the attack, their coverage is generally weighted toward the unit's decisive action and establishes a protective corridor over the terrain traversed by the subordinate unit or units conducting the decisive action. Command and control of all air defense assets requires complete and timely communications to ensure the correct weapon status for the protection of friendly air support assets. See MCTP 10-10B, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Air and Missile Defense (AMD)*, for more information.

Information Activities

Marines apply the information warfighting function to create and exploit information advantages in pursuit of mission objectives. To do this, Marines consider and integrate the information warfighting function with the other functions to achieve focus and unity of effort in operations. Marines apply the warfighting function to create and exploit three information advantages:

- Systems Overmatch. Systems overmatch refers to the technical advantage of one side over another, yielding fires, intelligence, maneuver, logistics, force protection, or C2 advantages.
- Prevailing Narrative. A prevailing narrative influences public opinion or perception, yielding trust, credibility, or believability advantages.
- Force Resiliency. From an information perspective, resiliency embeds a Marine or unit's ability to resist, counter, and prevail against enemy and adversary reconnaissance, technical disruptions, and foreign malign activity such as misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda.

Information serves a vital role in every activity Marines undertake. It is fundamental to intelligence, command and control, situational understanding, decision making, etc. The Marine Corps uses the term information environment to refer to the global competitive space that spans the warfighting domains, where all operations depend on information. It includes information

itself and all relevant social, cultural, psychological, technical, and physical factors that affect the employment of forces and bear on the decisions of commanders. Information is inseparable from the physical environment, allowing commanders to plan and conduct operations in all warfighting domains to create or exploit information advantages. The inseparable nature of information from the operational environment allows a commander to plan and conduct operations to leverage the power of information by using the following four functions of information:

- Information Generation. All deliberate and coordinated activities undertaken to gain and maintain access to the information environment; build awareness of information-based threats, vulnerabilities, and opportunities; hold opponent systems at risk; and create the necessary information to plan and conduct operations.
- Information Preservation. All deliberate and coordinated activities undertaken to protect and defend the information, systems, and networks used to facilitate planning and friendly operations against internal and external threats.
- Information Denial. All deliberate and coordinated activities undertaken to deny, disrupt, degrade, or destroy the information needed by the opponent to understand the situation, make decisions, or act in a coordinated fashion.
- Information Projection. All deliberate and coordinated activities undertaken to communicate, transmit, or deliver information of any type to inform, influence, or deceive an observer or targeted system.

The role of information in the offense is to enable the commander to successfully maneuver and mass combat power at the point of decision. Information is integrated with fires and maneuver to accomplish this purpose. Marines use various information activities to support of this goal, such as using tactical deception (TAC-D) to induce enemy action or inaction, electromagnetic warfare attacks to disrupt enemy C2 networks at critical moments in the battle, or to mitigate interference in military operations. Marines conduct information activities by integrating, coordinating, and synchronizing the following information capabilities:

- Tactical Deception. Tactical deception is a friendly activity that causes enemy commanders to take action or cause inaction that is detrimental to their objectives. It creates windows of opportunity by causing the target to react or falsely interpret friendly operations. See Chapter 20 for a detailed discussion of TAC-D.
- Electromagnetic Warfare. Electromagnetic warfare uses offensive and defensive TTP to shape, disrupt, and exploit an enemy or adversary such as disrupting or destroying enemy C2 networks, disrupting improvised explosive devices, assisting military deception activities, disrupting enemy air defense systems, protecting friendly C2 networks, etc.
- Operational Security. Operational security contributes to the offense by denying enemy or adversary access to information, which slows the enemy's or adversary's decision-making cycle, thereby providing opportunity for friendly forces to attain objectives.
- Military Information Support. Military information support aids the offense by undermining the enemy's will to resist, increasing the acceptance of friendly forces in occupied territory, increasing the element of surprise, encouraging the noninterference by civilians with military operations, and increasing the psychological effect of military deception activities on enemy leaders and forces.

- Cyberspace Actions. Cyberspace actions are planned in conjunction with electromagnetic warfare using both offensive and defense cyberspace operations to attack, deceive, degrade, disrupt, deny, exploit, and defend electromagnetic information and infrastructure.
- Physical Attack. Physical attack is applying combat power to physically neutralize or destroy enemy forces, equipment, installations, and networks associated with their C2 system. Since the enemy can recover, units typically conduct physical attack at a particular moment or to generate an effect for a certain time.
- Physical Security. Physical security consists of friendly actions taken to prevent or mitigate an enemy's attempt to conduct physical attacks against friendly C2 forces, equipment, installations, and networks.
- Information Assurance. Information assurance uses information security and computer security to protect friendly information—and the credibility and accuracy of that information—from enemy attack or influence.
- Controlling Electromagnetic Emissions and Frequency Hopping. Controlling electromagnetic emissions and frequency hopping ensures units protect their command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems.
- Counterintelligence. Counterintelligence is the intelligence function focused on force protection—identifying and counteracting enemy attempts at espionage, sabotage, subversion, or terrorism.
- Communication Strategy and Operations. Marine Corps communication strategy and operations (also referred to as COMMSTRAT) communicates and engages domestic and foreign publics to build understanding, credibility, and trust. Because of legal considerations regarding communication strategies and operations, the plan must have an awareness of all information activities, integrate with those that it is appropriate to integrate with, and avoid compromising others. Communication strategies and operations also provides commanders operational imagery and supports information activities, with visual information. For more information, see MCTP 3-30F, *Marine Corps Public Affairs*, and MCTP 3-32A, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Combat Camera*.
- Civil-Military Actions. Civil-military operations include any activity of the command concerned with the relationships between the force and the civil authorities and people in the unit's AO. They primarily focus on enabling military operations by mitigating issues with the civil populace. Civil-military operations is the responsibility of commanders at all levels, regardless of whether they receive civil affairs personnel or other enablers. For more information, see MCTP 3-03A, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Civil-Military Operations*.
- Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. Defense support to public diplomacy consists of activities and measures taken by Department of Defense (DoD) components to support and facilitate the United States (US) Government's public diplomacy efforts. Much of the operational-level information activity conducted in any theater is directly linked to public diplomacy objectives. Defense support to public diplomacy requires coordination among US Government departments and agencies, and all DoD components.

See MCWP 8-10, I*nformation in Marine Corps Operations*, for more information.

Intelligence

Commanders use the intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) process to understand, and design the framework to solve the tactical problem. A continuous process that begins even before mission receipt, the commander uses available ISR assets to study the terrain and confirm or deny the enemy's strengths, dispositions, and likely intentions, particularly where and in what strength the enemy will defend. Indications of an obstacle's location and composition and the positioning of engineer assets may be key in determining where and when the enemy will defend. Additionally, units use ISR assets to collect information about the civilian population in the AO to confirm or deny their numbers, locations, and likely intentions—particularly the likelihood of civilians staying or fleeing combat area.

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

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

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

Logistics

In offensive operations, tactical commanders use logistics to maintain the momentum through force sustainment. Pausing for resupply or other services risks ceding the initiative to the enemy. Further, commanders should take advantage of windows of opportunity and launch offensive operations with minimum advance warning time. Therefore, logistic commanders and planners must remain closely integrated throughout the operations process (i.e., plan, execute, assess) with their ground counterparts to be aware of these potential opportunities and likely actions to exploit them. A key to successful offensive operations is the ability to anticipate the requirement to push support forward, specifically regarding ammunition, fuel, replacements, and water. The commanders of logistic elements must act, rather than react, to support requirements.

Logistic elements conduct CSS and the logistic functions as far forward, and as close to maneuver units as possible, to maintain momentum and tempo. Units use preplanned and preconfigured packages of essential times—such as POL and ammunition—to help maintain the offensive movement and tempo, for short-duration offensive operations such as raids, or to support distributed operations. The commander works with logistic officers and elements to—

- Analyze the unit's basic load.
- Identify specific and critical items necessary to the operation.
- Evaluate contingency requirements.
- Determine sustainment requirements.

Attacking units cross-load supplies and critical resources to prevent their destruction in the event they lose a single vehicle or system. The commander considers the likelihood that logistic preparations for the offense will be detected by enemy forces and plans for that risk accordingly.

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

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

General engineering are those engineering capabilities and activities, other than combat engineering, that modify, maintain, or protect the physical environment. General engineering encompasses a wide spectrum of activities, including horizontal and vertical construction, explosive ordnance disposal, hygiene services (i.e., showers and laundry), engineering reconnaissance, bulk water production, and bulk fuel storage. To support sustained offensive operations, the GCE's combat engineer battalions posses organic capabilities to perform limited

general engineering tasks. This can include providing mobile electric power to meet the needs of the regimental and battalion headquarters. Most general engineering requirements will need to be planned for and provided by the LCE as offensive operations allow.

The offense consumes more resources than other operations, and it can generate significantly greater casualties in a short period of time. As with other logistic functional areas, the means of triaging and evacuating casualties is pushed as far forward as possible. Logistic planners anticipate greater health service support requirements with offensive operations and coordinate and synchronize additional medical support and augmentation. These include—

- Coordinating and synchronizing additional medical support or augmentation, such as medical evacuation support, forward resuscitative surgical intervention provided by forward resuscitative and surgical detachments, combat support and field hospitals, casualty collection points, ambulance exchange points, and established Class VIII resupply.
- Quickly locating and evacuating injured personnel from the battlefield.
- Providing effective tactical combat casualty care and emergency medical treatment for injured personnel.
- Transporting casualties to medical treatment facilities at the next higher role of care.
- Using casualty evacuation considerations (CASEVAC) assets when the number of casualties overwhelms the medical evacuation system's capacity.
- Accurately triaging and rapidly conducting medical evacuations of injured personnel to medical treatment facilities at the next higher role of care.
- Planning CASEVAC routes (ground and air) along with contingencies during times of hazardous trafficability.
- Designating casualty evacuation capability within their formations because CASEVAC capacity is rarely sufficient.

Health services planning, in terms of evacuation routes and ambulance exchange points, becomes more important depending on the type of offensive operation and enemy capabilities. A penetration conducted in an urban environment will most likely preclude aerial casualty evacuation at, or near, the point of injury. Similarly, the vulnerability of LOCs in an envelopment may preclude ground casualty evacuation. In any event, planners must coordinate and integrate CASEVAC and treatment plans across the warfighting functions.

The LCE provides other services to the GCE, however, manpower restrictions mandate that the committed LCE support be located in the LCE rear area. Services are subdivided into two components: command support and combat service support services. Commanders are responsible for the health, welfare, and morale of the personnel in their command. These services include the following: personnel administration; religious ministry; billeting; financial management; food service support; and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR). Whereas, combat service support services are primarily provided by the LCE, which provides services including operational contract support, postal, legal, mortuary affairs, security support, civil-military operations, and hygiene and waste management. Because of the geographic separation of these services from the

LCE and the GCE during offensive operations, commanders will need to plan for a phased support that delivers these capabilities when offensive action permits. See MCTP 3-40B, *Tactical-Level Logistics*, for more information.

Force Protection

Force protection includes those measures commanders take to preserve their force's potential so that it can be applied at the appropriate time and place. In the offense, commanders might face challenges with protecting their force because units must mass combat power while conducting maneuvers that can expose them to the enemy. To increase force protection, units try to maintain greater momentum and tempo than the enemy. This denies the enemy a chance to plan, prepare, and execute an effective response to friendly actions.

To safely mass the force at the point of decision, commanders consider—

- Using multiple routes.
- Dispersing forces.
- Destroying isolated forces in piecemeal.
- Scheduling rotation and relief of forces before they culminate.
- Using terrain wisely.
- Integrating force protection with information capabilities (e.g., OPSEC, communication strategies and operations, information assurance, counterintelligence).
- Using units to execute personnel recovery according to METT-T.
- Mitigating friendly fire through the use of confirmation briefs, rehearsals, and briefbacks, maintaining situational awareness across the force, and the elements of battlespace geometry.
- Ensuring rear area security is properly tasked, organized, led, and resourced.
- Using passive (camouflage, cover, concealment, counter-improvised explosive device awareness) and active (engineering assets) survivability activities. For more discussion about survivability see Chapter 8 and MCTP 3-34C, *Survivability Operations*.
- Employing proper CBRN postures and preparedness.

TRANSITIONS

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

Offensive operations cease with the realization of victory and an end to hostilities, when a commander receives a change in mission (e.g., being ordered to conduct security operations for another element), or when the force reaches a culminating point. A culminating point is "the point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense" (*DoD Dictionary*). In offensive operations this takes place when the strength shifts

from the attacking force to their opponent. The culminating point takes place because of operational reasons, logistic reasons, or some combination of the two. Operational reasons include encountering heavily defended areas that cannot be bypassed, the enemy receiving reinforcements, or the enemy experiencing success with a counterattack. Logistic reasons include physical exhaustion, casualties, equipment losses, and expenditures that outstrip CSS.

Units can regain offensive momentum, but often only after difficult fighting or following an operational pause, which is "a temporary halt in operations" (*DoD Dictionary*). An operational pause in offensive operations might be forced by a culminating point. Conversely, a commander might plan an operational pause to replenish combat power. Planning operational pauses requires careful phasing, expeditious sustaining actions, and operations to maintain pressure on the enemy and deceive them as to the nature and length of the pause.

Transition to Defensive-Oriented Operations

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

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

A commander can use two basic techniques when transitioning to a defensive operation, regardless of the defense (i.e., area, mobile, retrograde, and counterlanding) the commander plans to conduct. (See Chapter 8 for more information on the defense.) The first technique is for the leading elements to commit forces and push forward, claiming enough ground to establish a security area anchored on defensible terrain. The main force moves forward or rearward as necessary to occupy key terrain and institutes hasty defensive operations that progress towards deliberate operations as time and resources allow. The disadvantage of this technique is that if the force is facing a culminating point

or unexpected change in the situation, they probably lack the combat power necessary to push forward and create a proper security area—thus leaving the main body exposed to decisive enemy actions.

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

Civil considerations are inherent to all operations; transitioning from offense to defense often requires units to focus on stabilization tasks and activities, which includes increased civil considerations for the commander. Transitioning to defensive operations often creates a lull where civilian populations seek aid, flee from the area, or if hostile, interfere with friendly activities. The commander should consider how to minimize effects of the civilian population on military activities while still providing protection measures associated with international law.

Transition to Stabilization Activities

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

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

CHAPTER 4.
MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

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

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

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

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

Current intelligence collection capabilities often preclude the need for large units, such as regiments and divisions, to conduct movements to contact for purposes of finding the enemy. But finding the enemy in general terms and locating them in specific terms that allow them to be targeted are often very different propositions. Further, apparent certainty can be quickly degraded by an enemy's use of complex terrain (e.g., jungle, urban, extensive forests), OPSEC, and information activities. The more capable an enemy, the more likely they can disrupt intelligence collection. Regardless, locating the enemy is only one aspect of a movement to contact. Movement to contact remains the preferred way to gain and maintain contact with the enemy, develop the situation as enemy dispositions are discovered, and mitigate risk if the enemy is contacted during movement.

A primary threat to friendly force movement, which a movement to contact mitigates, is a meeting engagement. A meeting engagement "is a combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place" (*USMC Dictionary*). In a meeting engagement, the force that reacts first to the unexpected contact generally gains an advantage over their enemy—seizing the initiative is imperative. Platoon levels and below promptly conduct battle drills, and standard actions on contact for larger units can give initiative to the friendly force.

APPROACH MARCH

An approach march is the "advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is imminent. Troops are fully or partially deployed. The approach march ends when ground contact with the enemy is made or when the attack position is occupied" (*USMC Dictionary*). A commander uses this method of movement to contact when the enemy is operating in larger, organized elements whose locations might be generally—but not specifically—known, when seeking to gain or regain contact with the enemy and develop specific information on their disposition, or when contact is possible and security is more important than speed (e.g., conducting an exploitation or moving from the line of departure to the assault position). All units at the platoon level and above can conduct an approach march using any ground movement.

Commanders conduct shaping operations to support subordinate maneuver elements conducting approach marches. Such operations might include targeting known and suspected enemy positions, isolating the battlespace, attacking enemy reserves, and conducting information activities. Subordinate commanders receive support (e.g., fire support, enablers, logistic support) to seize the initiative upon contact with the enemy.

Force Organization

At a minimum, units conducting movement to contact using an approach march have a forward security force—either a covering force or an advance guard—and a main body. However, subordinate units within the main body might use advanced guards to operate behind the covering force as shown in Figure 4-1. Commanders can add flank and rear security elements, particularly when their rear forces or flanks are not protected by adjacent or following units but in advance of their individual columns, to provide specific support and protection to that column.

The main body can consist of one or more columns. Security elements may receive screen or guard missions. Resourcing of the forward security force, flank, and rear security elements is dependent upon METT-T. Chapter 14 discusses security operations such as screen and guard.

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

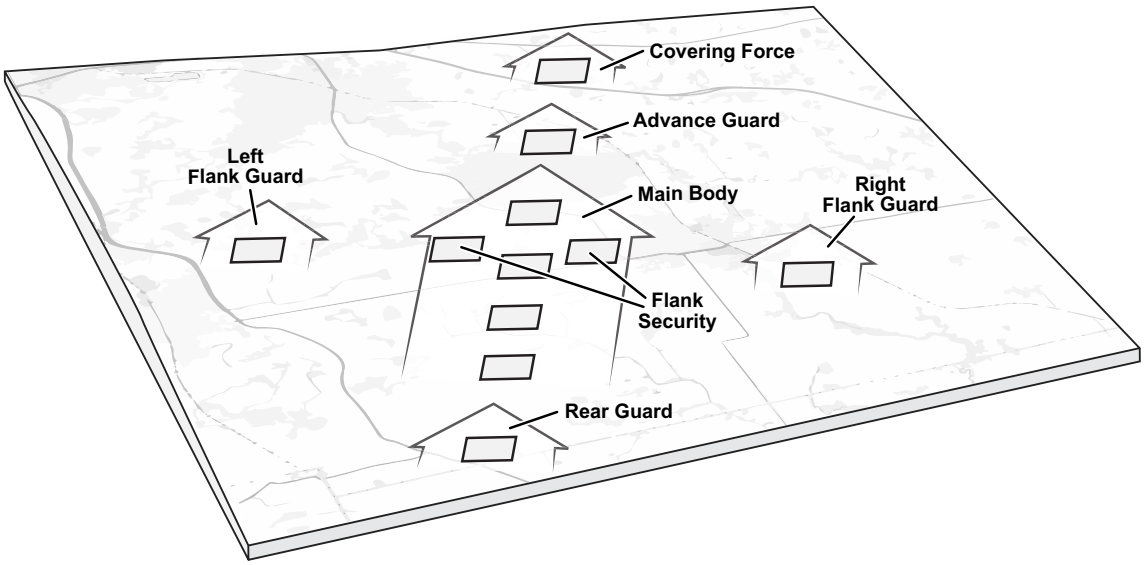


Figure 4-1. Force Organized for a Movement to Contact.

Although flank and rear security elements receive either screen or guard missions to achieve their purposes, commanders might assign forward security elements a cover mission and to serve as a covering force. The key factor in distinguishing a covering force is their ability to operate independently of the main body. Because of the resources required to create a covering force, units below the regimental level typically do not have covering forces in approach marches. Typically, the forward security element is organized as an advance guard.

The advance guard is a detachment sent ahead of the main force to ensure their uninterrupted advance; to protect the main body against surprise; to facilitate the advance by removing obstacles and repairing roads and bridges; and to cover the deployment of the main body if it is committed to action. Being far easier to resource, and less mission specific, units frequently use advanced guards to support the main body in all types of movement—even administrative.

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

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

If using flank security, main body elements positioned near those flanks typically provide the necessary combat power—for example, the regiment on the left of a division approach march would be tasked with left flank security. If rear security is used, they are sourced from a subordinate element and report directly to the unit conducting the approach march—for example, a company pulled from a subordinate battalion serving as rear security and working directly for the regiment conducting the operation. Flank and rear security elements typically perform either screen or guard tasks. Flank security elements conduct cover missions if there are clearly identified, significant threats to the flank—though this requires significant resources. Aviation units conduct screens if applicable to METT-T, though there is increased risk to the main body. See Chapter 14 for more information on security operations and screen, guard, and cover missions.

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

The commander designates a portion of the main body as the reserve. Commanders use METT-T and the amount of uncertainty concerning to the enemy to determine the reserve force's size. The more uncertain the enemy situation, the larger the reserve's size. The reserve typically constitutes approximately one-fourth to one-third of the force and increases the commander's flexibility and adaptability. By being able to use the reserve to react to unforeseen circumstances or tasks, commanders can retain the ability to commit the main body to the decisive action when they see fit, vice being forced to do so prematurely.

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

Control Measures

A commander uses the minimal number and type of control measures possible to maximize the freedom of maneuver in the face of an uncertain enemy situation. These measures include designating an AO with left, right, front, and rear boundaries, and a line of departure. Commanders can use an axis of advance in limited visibility, but this reduces maneuver space and risks bypassing the enemy. The commander can use an LOA to control the depth of movement, terrain objectives to limit depth and orient the force (though the focus remains on the enemy), and phase lines, contact points, and checkpoints as required.

The use and shifting of boundaries is critical in delineating responsibilities and authorities in approach marches above the battalion level (e.g., coordinating fire support). Commanders can use phase lines to successively serve as "new" rear boundaries for forward security elements as they advance. Each rear boundary becomes the forward boundary of the main body and shifts as the security force moves forward. The main body's rear boundary designates the limit of responsibility for the rear security element. This line also shifts as the main body moves forward. See Chapter 14 for a discussion of security force boundaries.

Planning an Approach March

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

The decisive action in an approach march varies since the purposes for which an approach march is executed vary. In a movement to contact tasked with regaining contact with the enemy, the decisive action might be deploying the main body in an attack-by-fire position to allow other actions to take place. In a battalion-sized approach march conducted as part of an exploitation, the decisive action might be committing the main body against any organized enemy resistance of company strength or greater. As with all operations, commanders conduct an approach march for a specific purpose and a critical planning factor is tailoring the organization and movement of the approach march.

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

The commander plans to gain contact with the enemy using with the smallest friendly elements possible. These elements are ideally ground or aerial reconnaissance elements (including UAS), or other ground combat assets of the forward security element leading the reconnaissance effort. The unit's planned movement formation should contribute to supporting reconnaissance and making initial contact with the smallest force possible. It should also provide for efficiently moving the force and employing the reserve (other elements could conduct follow-and-assume or follow-and-support tasks).

The frontage assigned to a unit conducting an approach march must allow sufficient room to fire, maneuver, and mass combat power to gain contact with the enemy and retain the initiative. Too large a frontage dilutes combat power, leaves the commander unable to effectively influence the AO, and risks ceding the initiative to the enemy. Too narrow a frontage restricts the commander's ability to maneuver and dictate tempo while simplifying the enemy's tactical problem and potentially ceding them the initiative. Terrain also influences frontage in terms of its effects on the mobility of the force and the ability of elements to support each other. The ability to control the battlespace and constitute and maneuver a reserve is often helpful in determining frontage assignments. Questions to ask include the following:

- Is the forward security element able to control its battlespace, execute its mission, and still have a reserve to help develop the situation?
- Can forward security element have those things while still leaving the main body with the combat power necessary to execute the decisive action?

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

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

Commanders plan shaping operations as part of the approach march even though the enemy situation is vague or uncertain. Such shaping operations seek to suppress or neutralize enemy reserves, interdict and isolate likely enemy routes in and out of the battlespace, and disrupt or destroy enemy units that expose themselves during the operation. Forward security elements conduct shaping actions to set the conditions for their own operations, the commitment of the reserve, or the employment of the main body.

Preparing for an Approach March

Commanders prepare for an approach march and attack in the same manner. See Chapter 5 for additional information.

Executing an Approach March

Each element of the force synchronizes their actions with adjacent and supporting units, maintaining contact and mutual support and minimizing the chance of the enemy infiltrating or exploiting seams between friendly elements. The advance guard maintains contact with the covering force (if established). The main body's lead elements maintain contact with the advance guard. The rear guard and flank security elements maintain contact with and orient on the main body's movement. Reconnaissance elements operate to the front and flanks of each column's advance guard and maintain contact with the covering force. The commander can instruct each column's advance guard to eliminate small pockets of resistance bypassed by the forward security element.

The commander of the forward security element chooses combat formations designed to make contact with the smallest possible force while providing flexibility for easily deploying and maneuvering units. The commander ensures that the route or axis of advance traveled by the main body is free of enemy forces. Commanders can position some indirect-fire assets, such as a mortar platoon or artillery battery and fire support teams, with the advance guard.

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

The main body advances as rapidly as terrain and the enemy situation allows. The main body uses multiple parallel routes with numerous lateral branches to remain flexible and reduce the time needed to initiate maneuver. Elements of the main body use traveling, traveling overwatch, or bounding overwatch techniques to conduct movement (see Chapter 15). At the battalion level and below, units maximize using cover and concealed routes. Regardless of situation and environment, the main body's march dispositions must allow maximum flexibility for maneuvering during movement and when establishing contact with the enemy force. Command posts and combat trains travel along high mobility routes within the AO and occupy hasty positions as necessary.

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

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

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

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

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact. The approach march force gains contact with the enemy through one or more of the 10 categories described in Chapter 3:

- Direct.
- Indirect.
- Non-hostile.
- Obstacle.
- CBRN.
- Aerial.
- Visual.
- Electromagnetic.
- Influence.
- Audio.

Ideally, forward security elements determine the enemy location through other than physical means, allowing them to dictate if, when, and how contact takes place. This enables the commander to receive information on enemy strength and dispositions and commit the main body on more favorable terms. Regardless of how the covering force or advance guard makes contact, they execute actions on contact. Actions on contact are a series of combat actions, that units often conduct simultaneously, taken upon contact with the enemy to develop the situation. (See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion.) Once the unit gains contact, the forward security element seizes terrain that provides observation and maneuver advantages, and they strive to prevent the enemy force from breaking contact unless ordered to do so by the commander. The main body remains ready to exploit identified weaknesses and gaps.

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

Actions on contact specific to a movement to contact include the following:

- Deploy and Report. When a unit's security element encounters an enemy unit or obstacle, they deploy to a covered position that provides observation and fields of fire. If the security element is under enemy fire, they use direct and indirect fire to suppress the enemy and restore freedom of maneuver. Simultaneously, the commander of the security element reports the contact, provides all available information on the situation, and updates the C2 information system's common operational picture. This alerts the commanders and allows them to initiate necessary actions.
- Evaluate and Develop the Situation. The unit's security element rapidly develops the situation by employing techniques ranging from stealthy, foot-mobile reconnaissance to reconnaissance by fire, using both direct and indirect fire weapons. The element seeks to determine critical elements of information on the enemy, such as strength, disposition, and intentions to support the approach march commander's decision-making. The covering force or advanced guard submits additional reports as required.
- Choose a COA. Having taken immediate steps to deploy, report, and conduct basic force protection, the forward security element chooses a COA on how to proceed consistent with their mission and capabilities. Accounting for IPB and commander's intent, the commander of the forward security element decides whether to attack, bypass, defend, or observe. Commanders typically bypass or destroy smaller enemy forces to maintain the momentum of the advance. The presence of large enemy forces, or upon reaching the force-oriented objective of the approach march, will dictate a choice between observation, engagement, or defense (to include retrograde if the survival of the force is threatened). When there are obstacles, the unit can bypass, create a minimum number of lanes, or conduct a hasty breach and attack. Commanders can position some indirect-fire assets, such as a mortar platoon or artillery battery and fire support teams, with the advance guard. The higher commander can disapprove COA, but to avoid delay, unit SOPs might provide automatic approval of certain actions.
- Execute Selected COA. Commanders of the covering force or advance guard rapidly convey their decision to the security element and higher headquarters and execute the COA.
- Recommend Follow-on Actions to the Higher Commander. Since the forward security element is in contact with the enemy and is conducting shaping operations, they provide recommendations on further action to the commander. Such recommendations might address committing the main body, bypassing the enemy, etc. The higher commander should be able to rapidly join the security element commander and gain firsthand knowledge of the situation.

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

Fix the Enemy. Fixing the enemy marks a transition point from a movement to contact using an approach march to an attack. If the forward security element can fix and then defeat or bypass the enemy force encountered, the approach march continues. If the security force cannot do so without deploying the main body, or a portion of them, then fixing the enemy becomes a shaping operation to support the main body's employment. The organization, size, and combat power of

the security force, and the MAGTF resources that can be brought to support that force, are the major factors that determine the size of the enemy force the forward security element can either defeat or fix in place for the main body's decisive action.

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

Decisive Action or Maneuver. When the forward security element contacts the main enemy force, or encounters enemy security forces they cannot overcome, the main body commits to decisive action. This is typically the hasty execution of one of the six forms of offensive maneuver, such as a penetration or envelopment, but could be a hasty defense depending on the threat and mission. (See Chapter 3 for all six forms of offensive maneuver.) Maintaining the freedom to act is a key reason that commanders ensure their main body is not engaged until the time and place of their choosing. When and where possible, commanders initiate this maneuver at a tempo the enemy cannot match to maintain the momentum of the advance when facing strong enemy security forces or accomplish the mission of the movement to contact when encountering the enemy's main body.

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

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

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

SEARCH AND ATTACK

Units use search and attack, a form of movement to contact, to develop the situation or deny the enemy the ability to operate an area. A commander uses this movement to contact when the enemy is operating as small, dispersed elements whose locations cannot be determined to targetable accuracy by methods other than a physical search, or as a possible method of conducting a clearing task. All units can conduct search and attack; however, it's typically conducted by regiments, battalions, and companies. Regiments assist their maneuver battalions by ensuring indirect fires and other support is available.

Force Organization

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

> **NOTE:** All subordinate elements execute the reconnaissance function. When an enemy force is found, unengaged units are assigned to supporting fix, and decisive finishing functions.

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

Control Measures for a Search and Attack

The commander establishes control measures that allow for decentralized actions and small unit initiative to the greatest extent possible. The minimum control measures for a search and attack are an AO, TRPs, objectives, checkpoints, and contact points. Units use TRPs to facilitate responsive fire support once the reconnaissance forces make contact with the enemy. The commander uses objectives and checkpoints to guide the movement of subordinate elements. Coordination points indicate a specific location for coordinating fires and movement between adjacent units. The commander uses other control measures, such as phase lines, as necessary.

Planning a Search and Attack

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

Search and attack planners focus their considerations on how to accomplish two critical tasks: finding the enemy, and then finishing them. To find the enemy, the commander must craft the battlespace in a manner that increases the likelihood for success. This involves deploying intelligence collection assets to assist the reconnaissance element and narrowing the focus of the search through detailed terrain and enemy analysis. For example, operating base camps and rest areas requires water sources, routes, and a physical space. Crafting the conditions for successful reconnaissance also includes creating properly sized AOs and organized and equipped reconnaissance forces. Although terrain and enemy analysis can help mitigate a large AO and a small reconnaissance force, a platoon assigned dozens of square miles of jungle is going to be ineffective. Similarly, that same platoon assigned a comparable space of desert, but remaining foot mobile is likely to be ineffective.

The second critical task, finishing the enemy, requires units fixing the enemy in place and then delivering the decisive action. Again, the size of the AO and the means of accomplishing these functions are critical planning factors. A commander might choose to organize the reconnaissance element with enough combat power and combat support to accomplish both reconnaissance and fixing functions. However, the commander might choose to organize a fixing element to enable greater dispersion and flexibility for the reconnaissance force. The positioning of the fixing element, their combat support, and the means and speed by which they can move are important factors for planning. The finishing element requires similar planning, particularly when a unit is tasked with both fixing and finishing functions. In fixing and finishing, the single driving factor in determining task organization, location, and method of movement is the maximum length of time the commander feels is acceptable between finding and defeating an enemy and their ability to evade friendly forces.

Search and attack planning factors should enable units to adapt to various situations. These planning factors include—

- Preparing for contingencies such as personnel recovery, reserves, and threats to the survival of the force.
- Establishing adaptable combat support (e.g., positioning combat engineers).
- Developing fire plans and using fire control measures (e.g., TRPs, priority of fires) to ensure responsive fire support.

Mobility and countermobility planning assist the force in locating, responding to, and restricting the movement of the enemy. Finally, the organization of the search and attack force, the length of the operation, and the methods of movement significantly influence logistics. Foot-mobile infantry elements, sustaining themselves in the field, in a small AO, will have significantly different logistic planning demands than a vehicle- and helicopter-mobile force, basing itself within and operating across a large AO. Given that the success of a search and attack movement to contact rests foremost with locating the enemy, commanders choose austerity over comfort.

Executing a Search and Attack

When executing a search and attack (see Figure 4-2), each subordinate element operates in their own AO and is tasked to destroy the enemy within their capability. The company maintains the finishing element. Units can enter the AO as an entire unit and then split out, or as smaller units

via ground, air, or water. The commander establishes control measures and communications means between any finishing elements to prevent friendly fire incidents. The reconnaissance element conducts a zone reconnaissance to reconnoiter identified NAIs.

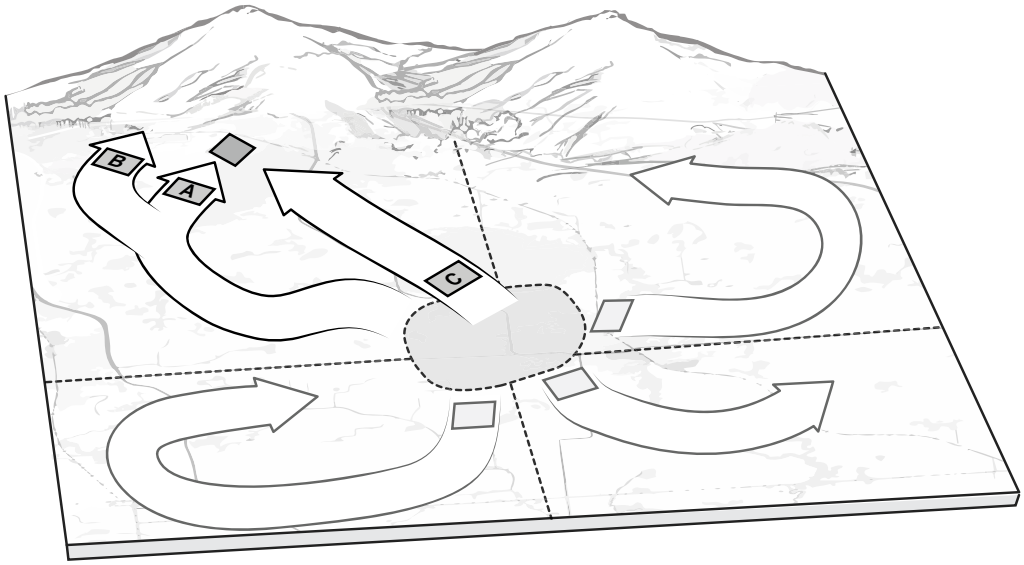


Figure 4-2. Search and Attack Example.

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

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

If conditions impede using the finishing element or main body to attack the detected enemy, the reconnaissance or the fixing element can continue to conduct ISR activities to further develop the situation. The element maintaining surveillance must avoid detection and possible enemy ambushes.

The finishing element either follows the reconnaissance and fixing elements or deploys to the point of contact, maintaining the responsiveness necessary to engage the enemy before the enemy can break contact. The finishing element deploys to defeat the enemy by either attacking, isolating the enemy to support another unit's attack, or by using indirect fire or CAS. The commander might have the finishing element establish an ambush and use the reconnaissance and fixing element to drive the enemy into it.

CHAPTER 5.
ATTACK

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

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

> **NOTE:** The general offensive warfighting function considerations discussed in Chapter 3 continue to apply. There are no unique logistic or force protection functional considerations that apply only to the attack.

FORCE ORGANIZATION

After commanders select an SOM, they task-organize the force to give each unit enough combat power to accomplish their mission. A commander typically organizes an attacking unit into a security force, main body, and reserve, all supported by organic CSS assets, the LCE, and the ACE. Whenever possible, changes to task organization are made in time to allow units to conduct rehearsals with their attached and supporting elements. The best place and time for an attacking force to task-organize is when located in an assembly area.

Security Forces

Typically, a commander creates security forces in an attack only if the action will uncover the flanks or rear of the attacking force as they advance. In this case, the commander designates a flank or rear security force and assigns them a guard or screen mission, depending on METT-T. Usually, an attacking unit does not need extensive forward security forces; most attacks are launched from positions in contact with the enemy, which reduces the need for a separate forward security force. Exceptions occur during limited visibility attacks or when transitioning from an operation in which a security force already exists, such as a movement to contact or the defense.

Main Body

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

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

Reserve

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

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

In an attack, the commander generally positions the reserve force rear of the attacking unit, balancing force protection from hostile observation and fire with the need to move quickly and decisively when needed. For mounted and armored reserve forces, key factors are cross country mobility and road networks. For dismounted forces, key factors include existing roads and trails and available rucks and assault support. The commander prioritizes positioning the reserve in a location that enables it to reinforce the success of the decisive action first, and then to counter the worst case enemy counterattack.

Combat Service Support

Because attacks place significant demands on logistics support and coordination, the staff positions combat trains and CSS assets forward to sustain the attacking force. From these forward locations, the CSS elements can rapidly evacuate personnel and equipment causalities and provide priority of support to the main effort. As the attacking force advances, combat trains and CSS elements displace forward to keep supply lines short and ensure uninterrupted support to

maneuver units. Depending on the enemy threat, the commander might need to provide a maneuver element to provide security to the rear area or forces conducting sustaining actions. Chapter 14 addresses area security operations in more detail.

CONTROL MEASURES

Within a unit's AO, the commander typically designates the following control measures whether the attack takes place in a contiguous or noncontiguous environment:

- AOs for subordinate units of battalion size or larger.
- A phase line as the line of departure, which may also be the line of contact.
- The time to initiate the attack.
- The objective.

If necessary, a commander can use either an axis of advance or a direction of attack to further control maneuver forces. A commander might add assembly areas to prepare and attack positions, or to wait for the conditions necessary to initiate the attack. Depending on the terrain, and particularly for limited-visibility attacks, the commander might add additional control measures for movement such as checkpoints, phase lines, directions of attack, assault positions, and PLDs. To mitigate battlespace geometry issues, commanders might add direct fire control measures and indirect FSCMs such as FCLs, LOAs, and support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions. See Chapters 2 and 3 for more information on control measures.

PLANNING AN ATTACK

In the attack, friendly forces seek to place the enemy in a dilemma that leaves the enemy no options other than surrender or destruction. The attacker accomplishes this by using MDCA and isolating the battlespace, leaving the enemy unable to withdraw or reinforce without risking destruction. This requires commanders to synchronize combat power while providing for the flexibility required to address unexpected changes and opportunities.

To successfully maneuver without prohibitive losses requires the attacker to achieve fire superiority at critical points during the attack, such as when maneuver forces are crossing a danger area. The commander gains fire superiority by integrating maneuver, direct fires, fire support, and information activities. Common TTP include counterfires, maneuvering to support-by-fire positions, neutralizing enemy positions, disrupting enemy command and control, tactical deception, and destroying key facilities and assets. The warfighting functions provide a model of how units organize and employ the force to ensure all capabilities of the force are synchronized in time and maneuver space during an attack.

Command and Control

Planning for an attack begins with the commander's understanding of the situation and environment and a vision for how to solve the problem. The commander weighs known and likely enemy positions and capabilities, how the environment might affect friendly operations, and friendly force capabilities. In doing so, commanders develop a general concept of the operation—an approach. This concept shapes further planning. For example, the commander might consider the available planning time, enemy situation, and friendly force's mobility and combat power, and then decide that the most likely solution to the tactical problem is a flanking attack or single envelopment. This becomes guidance for planners to further develop the attack plan.

Depending on the unit's size, commanders use the MCPP or the troop leading steps to develop the initial concept into one or more COAs, which they evaluate, weigh, select, and develop into an order. Planners develop a SOM, which includes methods of movement and formations, main and support efforts, and forces assigned to those efforts. Additionally, planners analyze where the enemy can see and effect the force, integrate fires and information activities with maneuver to mitigate those effects, and create control measures. Commanders determine where to best position themselves during various moments in the attack to overcome likely points of friction and maintain momentum. They develop the plan to provide subordinates the maximum latitude during execution and create a decision framework that allows the force to rapidly react to unexpected developments and exploit opportunities. For more information on planning, see MCWP 5-10.

Maneuver

Commanders use maneuver to achieve an advantage over the enemy and to place overwhelming combat power at the decisive point. Although planners use timing (e.g., time of attack) as an important coordination tool, planning events and establishing fulfillment conditions—such using CAS and artillery to suppress the enemy as the condition for committing the breach force—provides the attacker a way to concentrate forces while allowing for unexpected changes.

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

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

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

Limited-Visibility Attacks

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

The primary planning factors for limited-visibility attacks are the training and capabilities of the attacker and defender. Units equipped with current night vision devices can conduct limited-visibility attacks similar to the way they conduct daylight attacks, even against a similarly equipped and trained enemy. Units without extensive night vision devices or effective training can still use limited-visibility conditions to conceal movement and close with the enemy but will require more time and control measures to do so. They will not be able to operate effectively against enemies that have superior night vision equipment and training.

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

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

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

- Keeping the plan simple.
- Taking additional time for reconnaissance.
- Taking advantage of easily identifiable terrain features, such as roads and railroad tracks, when establishing control measures.
- Using intermediate objectives to control and maintain the correct movement direction during the attack.
- Concealing preparations.
- Using cover and concealment as if the attack was conducted during daylight.
- Scheduling rehearsals during daylight and twilight, with the final rehearsal at night.

To simplify control problems, the commander might weight supporting efforts over the main effort to reduce the number of personnel moving on the objective in the darkness. Units might reduce the distances between vehicles and individuals to maintain contact. To simplify navigation, units develop plans that do not require them to change their movement azimuth after they cross the line of departure or point of departure.

Intelligence

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

- Location and depth of enemy reserves.
- Location and extent of contaminated areas.
- Location and extent of obstacles, possible breach sites, and enemy engagement areas.
- Location where attacking units could become disoriented (e.g., rough or restrictive terrain).
- Most favorable routes of approach to the attack objective.
- Areas and routes that the attacker can use for counterattacks, flanking fire, and maneuver.
- Suitability of planned friendly assault, support, artillery, and CSS positions.
- Enemy's deception operations.

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

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

See Chapters 13 and 14 for additional discussion of reconnaissance and security operations. See MCWP 2-10 and MCRP 2-10B.1, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*, for additional information on the intelligence warfighting function and ISR assets and capabilities.

Fires

The planning process integrates the unit's maneuver with fires and operations in the information environment to mass effects, achieve surprise, and obtain decisive results. The commander must first identify the critical times and locations where the effects of fires and information activities must support maneuver, which become essential fire support tasks. Commanders must then consider limitations on the employment of fires such as ROE and the presence of other friendly forces. Fire and information support of maneuver consists of preventing the enemy from successfully reacting to the attack. Such actions include inhibiting the enemy's ability to place direct and indirect fires on maneuver elements, isolating the battlespace from enemy withdrawal or reinforcement, disrupting C2 networks, and preventing enemy counterattacks. For more information on fires, essential fire support tasks, and information planning, see MCWP 3-31 and MCTP 3-10F.

Based on the commander's guidance, desired effects, and COA development, fire support and information planners develop concepts of support. Commanders emphasize simple and rapidly integrated fire support plans using quick fire planning techniques and SOPs. Fire and information plans are refined using top-down planning, bottom-up refinement. Fire plans considerations include the following:

- Integrated with information collections.
- Targeting cycle integrated into, and supported by, the intelligence collection plan.
- Targets have designated primary and secondary observers and communication links.
- The placement of fire support assets and their movement plan provide attacking maneuver forces with uninterrupted fire support.
- Quick-fire planning techniques, nets, and unit SOPs are used to facilitate rapid planning.

- Preparation, deception, and isolation fires are integrated with information collections and used to shape the enemy's defense.
- The use of proper weaponeering to match various fire support assets against appropriate targets to include ammunition requirements.
- Suppression of enemy air-defenses is proactive and integrated with information collections.
- Battlespace geometry is deconflicted.
- Targets have redundant means of attack and leverage the use of FSCMs, shifting of fires, and ceasing of fires to allow maneuver forces to get as close as possible to the objective.
- Suppression and obscuration fire plan to support breaching operations.
- Pre-positioned ammunition backed by prepackaged munitions stocks capable of rapid delivery.
- Radio and visual signals for ceasing and shifting fires on the objective.

Information Activities

Information activities are integrated with the unit's maneuver with fires to mass effects, achieve surprise, and obtain decisive results. The commander must first identify the critical times and locations where the effects of information activities must support maneuver and fires, which become essential tasks. Commanders must also account for limitations on the employment of information in support of maneuver. Planners should consider the following when using information activities:

- Planning begins as early as possible given longer lead times for certain information capabilities.
- Planning and execution are linked into the targeting cycles.
- Actions are deconflicted to preclude information friendly fire incidents.
- Weaponeering matches information capabilities against appropriate targets.
- Wherever possible, masses effects to include establishing redundant means to attack a target.

Logistics

Units prioritize their logistics operations to support their attacking forces. They prioritize logistics support by designating who has priority for resupply combined with task-organizing capabilities (for example, shifting fuel tankers and operators from one unit to another). Logistics planners ensure forces have the required supplies and equipment to accomplish their tasks.

During attacks, movement along the lines of communication typically increases. Therefore, units consider forward positioning logistics assets to increase their operational reach and flexibility. Units also consider using aerial assets like resupply and medical evacuation to augment ground-based logistics operations. Using such assets is most viable when the friendly forces have air supremacy or at least local air superiority.

Units must balance positioning supporting logistics assets forward to support the attacking force with maintaining force protection. Forward positioning logistics assets can create a risk. If the enemy can target and destroy these assets, they might force an early culmination of friendly operations. Commanders account for this risk when considering the placement of logistics assets during an attack. However, from these forward locations, units can sustain attacking forces and, when applicable, shift priority of support to the units conducting the main effort. As attacking

forces advance, their supporting logistics units and capabilities displace forward as required to shorten supply lines, using displacement techniques designed to ensure uninterrupted support to maneuver units.

Force Protection

Units prioritize protection tasks, which is vital to supporting an attack; however, prioritization varies by echelon is based on available resources and capabilities. The mission variables guide the priorities, tasks, and resources. Protections tasks that support the attack include OPSEC, detention operations, CBRN operations, survivability activities, area security, and air and missile defense.

PREPARING AN ATTACK

In fluid situations, such as those resulting from a movement to contact, commanders should organize and coordinate attacks in assembly areas, which provide the attack force with an opportunity to organize and mass combat power. If a commander decides that rapid action is essential to retain a tactical advantage, they might mitigate risk by using battle drills and advanced planning rather than an assembly area. Unless already in an assembly area, the attacking unit moves into one to prepare for the attack. The unit sends advanced parties to prepare the assembly area and to provide guides for the main body. The unit moves with as much secrecy as possible, typically at night and along routes that prevent or degrade the enemy's ability to observe or detect the movement. The unit avoids congesting the assembly area and occupies it for the minimum possible time. While in the assembly area, each unit is responsible for their own force protection activities, such as local ground security. Additionally, the commander completes planning and attack coordination. The attacking force executes troop leading procedures and priorities of work to the extent the situation and mission allow. Preparations include—

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

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

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

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

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

Attacking units move from their assembly areas to their respective lines of departure with the same considerations as any other tactical movement. Depending on the distance and METT-T, commanders might move dismounted troops for some or all the distance by vehicle to avoid unnecessarily tiring foot-mobile troops. (See Chapter 15 for troop movements.) The number of columns a unit employs in their movement depends on the available routes and the friendly and enemy situation. The tactical situation and the order in which the commander wants subordinate units to arrive at their attack positions governs the march formation.

Units rapidly move through their attack positions, assume an appropriate tactical formation, and cross the line of departure. Units use their designated attack positions only as needed. For example, units might use an attack position as a place to refuel before crossing the line of departure, ensuring they have sufficient fuel to reach the objective. Units use attack positions when friendly conditions have not yet been set. Units should minimize the time they remain stationary in their attack positions. For infiltrating units, commanders might designate a point of departure instead of a line of departure. Heavy and motorized forces units typically use gaps or lanes through the friendly positions to allow them to deploy into combat formations before they cross the line of departure.

Preparation for an attack can include preparatory fires and conducting RIPs and forward passages of lines. Relieving units in contact or passing forward fresh units can maintain or reestablish momentum, change the direction of the attack, or exploit enemy weaknesses. Tactical commanders use artillery, mortar, fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, electromagnetic warfare, and information activities to conduct preparatory fire. They develop their preparatory fire from the top

down, with bottom-up refinement. Subordinate units most affected by preparatory fires use the bottom-up refinement process to ensure preparatory fires are timely and accurate. Preparatory fires can—

- Destroy the enemy.
- Disrupt the enemy's reconnaissance and security forces.
- Suppress, neutralize, or disrupt high value or high payoff targets.
- Gain fire superiority through the degradation of enemy fire support assets.
- Suppress enemy forces.
- Facilitate the attacking force's maneuver.
- Deceive the enemy.
- Degrade the enemy.

These preparatory fires might initially destroy or only disrupt the enemy's reconnaissance and security forces and their positions if attacking forces are in contact with the enemy's disruption zone. In either case, units conduct preparatory counterfires to degrade the enemy's fire support systems and help achieve fire superiority.

As part of the preparation process, commanders ensure that attacking maneuver forces have the necessary logistics assets to conduct the operation and maintain the attack's momentum. This logistics effort must anticipate future maneuvers to ensure the uninterrupted advance of maneuver forces.

See Chapter 16 for details about a RIP and Chapter 17 for details about a forward passage of lines.

EXECUTING AN ATTACK

The attack is violent and aggressive, orienting on the enemy. Leaders use their initiative to shift combat power and resources as needed to maintain momentum and take advantage of opportunities to defeat the enemy. They avoid becoming overly committed to their initial plans; rather, they use those plans during execution to help frame new decisions, mitigate unexpected enemy action, reinforce success, and exploit enemy errors. Four critical aspects of an attack include—

- Gaining and maintaining enemy contact
- Disrupting the enemy
- Fixing the enemy
- Decisive action and maneuver.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Units gain and maintain contact with the enemy, typically through a movement to contact. An important aspect to this activity is employing reconnaissance and security forces to deprive the enemy of information while increasing friendly understanding of the situation.

The enemy attempts to resist these efforts by establishing security areas to make early contact with the attacking forces to determine their capabilities, intent, most likely COA, and to delay or disrupt their approach. Enemy commanders will endeavor to use their security forces to defeat attacking reconnaissance assets and hide their locations, capabilities, and intent. The enemy seeks to understand the attackers while creating enough uncertainty in the attackers' mind to compel them to either abandon their attack or return to a movement to contact.

The attackers defeat the enemy's counterreconnaissance efforts by using stealth and deception, increasing security and reconnaissance unit's combat power, and creating redundancy in the intelligence collection plan. The commander seeks to understand the disposition of the enemy force, such as fire support assets, major elements, and enemy reserves and reinforcements. Winning the fight in the enemy's security area helps the attacker gain understanding, retain the initiative, recognize and exploit opportunities, and increase its tempo.

Disrupt the Enemy

The attacking force seeks to disrupt the enemy's defensive plans, tempo, and timetables, causing them to prematurely commit or piecemeal their forces. Units can do this by disrupting the enemy's fire support systems so the unit can maneuver to mass for the decisive action or using interdiction to disrupt enemy attempts to employ its reserve. Units can also use complex methods, such as synchronizing disruption across all the enemy's warfighting functions. For example, the attacker might allow the enemy's C2 network to properly function while executing military deception activities. As the enemy begins to react, friendly forces then attack the enemy C2 system using multiple means to cause confusion and uncertainty.

Disruption continues throughout the attack with the goal of supporting the main effort, and then supporting transitions to exploitation, pursuit, or the defense. Disruption also allows the unit to exploit enemy vulnerabilities and react to changing situations and unexpected developments more rapidly than the enemy. Targets for disruption include enemy C2 facilities, ISR assets, fire support systems, reserves, and CSS nodes. If a unit executes a shaping action too early, the enemy has time to recover and respond before friendly forces conducting the decisive action can complete their maneuver.

Fix the Enemy

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

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

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

Decisive Action and Maneuver

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

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

Movement From the Line of Departure to the Probable Line of Deployment. Units transition from troop movement to maneuver as they cross the line of departure. They move aggressively and as quickly as the terrain, tactical formation, and enemy situation allow. They move forward using appropriate formations and movement techniques assisted by the supporting unit's fires and information capabilities, emphasizing speed and simplicity. Fire and movement are closely integrated and coordinated within the battlespace geometry of maneuver, direct and indirect fires, and CAS. Applying effective suppressive fires facilitates friendly movement, and friendly movement facilitates the placement of more effective fires. Whenever possible, the attacking unit uses avenues of approach that avoid strong enemy defensive positions; takes advantage of all available cover and concealment; and places the unit in positions of advantage such as on the flanks and rear of the defending enemy. Where cover and concealment are not available, supporting units increase their rates of suppressive fire and employ obscurants to cover and conceal movement. Any delays in establishing suppressive fires and obscuration prior to crossing the PLD might require a delay for the attacking unit in their assault positions.

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

As the attacking force moves from the line of departure to the PLD, they use formations that best balance firepower, tempo, security, and control specific to the situation. They minimize formation changes to avoid losing momentum or presenting vulnerabilities to the enemy. If the attacking force must change formations, they do so based on thoroughly trained drills. Depending on the depth of the enemy's security area and likely enemy COAs, the attacking unit might employ approach march techniques such as forward or flank security. See Chapter 3 for combat formations, Chapter 4 for approach march, and Chapter 15 for movement techniques.

Between the line of departure and the PLD, supporting efforts occupy successive support-by-fire positions to support and overwatch the advance. The attacking unit seizes intermediate objectives only to eliminate enemy positions or bring additional suppressive fires to bear. The emphasis is on employing maximum combat power to overwhelm resistance as quickly as possible. The attacking unit overruns or bypasses small enemy units to avoid weakening the main effort's combat power. Fire support assets and information capabilities support maneuver, execute shaping missions, destroy enemy security forces, and engage targets of opportunity.

Actions at the Probable Line of Deployment or Assault Position. The attacking unit maintains the pace of its advance when approaching the PLD. Supporting units occupy their support-by-fire positions before the assault force crosses the PLD. Attackers use tactical SOPs, battle drills, prearranged signals, connecting files, RFLs, TRPs, and similar control measures to deconflict battlespace geometry between maneuver and support elements.

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

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

The most critical factor in all suppression is to deliver effective direct and indirect fires. Only fire that presents inflicts casualties will suppress or destroy the enemy. The next most important factor in suppression is sustainability. The supporting elements use a rapid rate of fire to achieve initial fire superiority, then lessen the rate of fire to the minimum rate necessary to sustain the desired effect. The leaders of support units raise and lower their rates of fire according to enemy action and the needs of the assault force, such as when the force moves through a danger area. It is critical that supporting and maneuver unit leaders continuously coordinate to ensure that effective suppression covers the assault force until they close with the enemy. Coordination is typically expressed either in minutes (e.g., 10 minutes of suppression remaining) or in terms of the clock (e.g., "the maneuver unit needs the rate of fire increased at 1617").

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

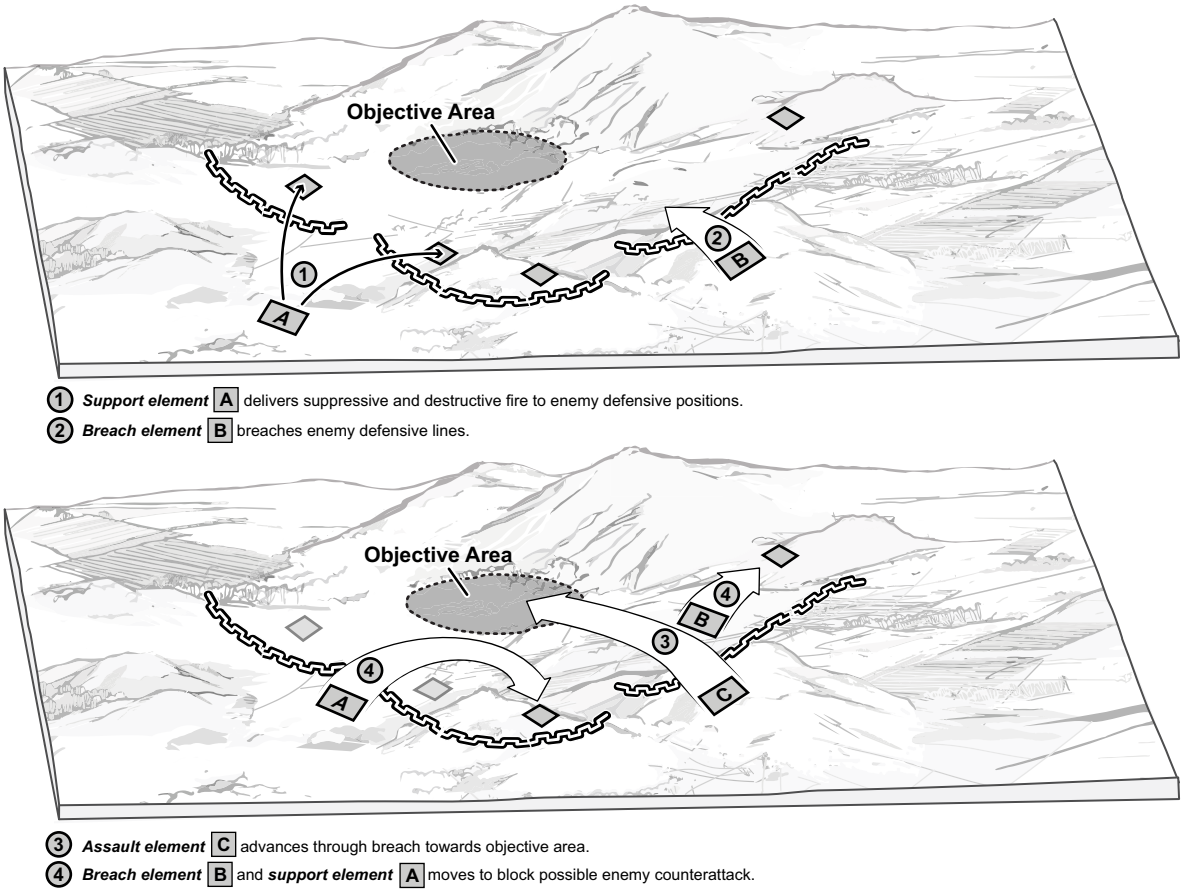
Actions on the Objective. The friendly force employs overwhelming and simultaneous fire, movement, and shock action during the final assault. This violent assault destroys, defeats, or drives the enemy from the objective area. Mounted infantry can dismount before, on, or beyond the objective. As the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

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

The attacking unit must isolate and destroy portions of a well-prepared, integrated enemy defense, in sequence. Friendly forces must isolate, suppress, obscure, and bypass selected enemy positions. For example, smoke delivered by field artillery and mortars in front of the objective—between the force and the enemy—screens friendly movement and obscures the enemy's weapon systems. Fires placed on and beyond the flanks of the objective isolate the enemy's position. These fires include smoke, high explosives, improved conventional munitions, and precision guided munitions delivered by a mix of field artillery, fixed- and rotary-wing CAS. In addition, the commander might employ short-duration scatterable munitions in conjunction with terminally guided munitions to

help isolate and impair the enemy's ability to counterattack (their use must not impede friendly exploitation and pursuit operations). Information capabilities can be used to cut or degrade information system links between the enemy's maneuver force and their supporting artillery.

The attacking unit generates overwhelming combat power in sequence against isolated centers of resistance. The assault element commander can task-organize the element to assault one portion of the objective at a time. For example, within the assault company of a battalion attack, two platoons might suppress the enemy while one platoon seizes a portion of the company objective. This initial platoon, having seized a foothold, then assumes a suppression role to allow a second platoon to continue the assault. The third platoon may have a third portion of the objective assigned to them to seize in turn. The enemy might attempt to reinforce their defending forces or counterattack during the friendly force's attack. Once the attacking force reaches the far side of the objective, selected elements clear remaining pockets of resistance while the bulk of the assault force prepares for a possible enemy counterattack. After the assault force reaches the objective, the support force leaves their support-by-fire position and rejoins the assault force or moves to a blocking position to counter possible enemy counterattacks. See Figure 5-1 for an example of an attack on an objective area.



1 ***Support element*** A delivers suppressive and destructive fire to enemy defensive positions.
2 ***Breach element*** B breaches enemy defensive lines.
3 ***Assault element*** C advances through breach towards objective area.
4 ***Breach element*** B and ***support element*** A moves to block possible enemy counterattack.

Figure 5-1. Attack on an Objective Area Example.

Mounted Assault. Mounted assaults increase tempo and shock action, conserve the troop's energy, and provide protection from small-arms and indirect fires. They are best employed against weak, hastily prepared, disorganized resistance, or when attacking with overwhelming combat power. The commander might choose to dismount short of the objective and attack through, dismount on the objective and reduce it, or dismount beyond the objective and attack from the rear of the enemy position. Commanders and their staff base the decision on the enemy force's capabilities, friendly force position, and other METT-T elements.

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

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

Dismounted Assault. Commanders and their staff consider the following conditions when determining whether to conduct a dismounted assault or when to dismount infantry:

- Does terrain favor dismounted operations?
- Is the enemy in prepared positions with obstacles that prevent maneuver across the objective?
- Does the enemy have a strong anti-armor capability?
- Are tanks (attached from a joint or combined partner) are not available to lead the assault?
- Is stealth required to close on the objective?
- Will a mounted assault stall on or short of the objective?

Consolidation. Consolidation is organizing and strengthening one's forces in a newly captured position so that it can be used against the enemy, whether as a defensive position or as an assembly area for follow-on offensive operations. Regardless, consolidation consists of preserving the success of the attack and protecting the force while preparing to transition to the next mission. Actions taken to consolidate gains include—

- Maintaining contact with the enemy.
- Establishing security and conducting reconnaissance.
- Establishing a hasty defense against enemy counterattacks and indirect fires.

- Eliminating enemy pockets of resistance.
- Updating the intelligence collection, fire support, and information plans.
- Preparing for additional missions.

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

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

After the objective is cleared of enemy forces, the attacker occupies positions to defend against potential enemy counterattacks and indirect fires. Typically, an attacking unit does not occupy vacated enemy positions because the enemy is familiar with them and can target them, additionally they are usually facing the wrong direction and not covering likely enemy counterattack routes. Therefore, the attackers should position themselves away from established enemy positions, usually on the next defensible piece of terrain. The attacking unit conducts the standard priority of work associated with the defense (see Chapter 8), to include updating intelligence collection, fire support, and information plans. Fire support assets displace forward to cover the success of the attacking unit and to support follow-on missions, whether offensive or defensive in nature.

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

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

- Redistributing or resupplying basic loads of ammunition, fuel, repair parts, and supplies.
- Matching operational weapon systems with crews.
- Combining attrited units to form mission-capable units.
- Replacing key personnel.

- Reporting unit location and status.
- Recovering, treating, and evacuating casualties, enemy prisoners of war (EPWs), and damaged equipment.
- Reestablishing unit cohesion.

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

Follow Through. Commanders at all levels plan for one of two sequels in the follow-through phase: exploit success or transition from the offense. For a force executing an attack, follow through requires planning for exploitation. For a force already conducting an exploitation, follow through requires planning for pursuit. Both forces plan to avoid a culminating point and use follow-and-support or follow-and-assume missions (see Appendix C for more information). Forces that will cease offensive operations after the attack plan to transition to either defensive or stabilization activities (see Chapter 3).

Beginning with consolidation, fire support assets and information capabilities reorient and move quickly to support a renewal of offensive operations. The ACE continues to attack the enemy, covering both preparations to renew the offense and the displacement of combat support and CSS assets. Rear area security operations and mobility operations focus on deconflicting issues concerning dislocated civilians and clearing routes to allow for repositioning and displacing resources.

Generally, a defending enemy force attempts to hold a position until nightfall so they can withdraw under the cover of darkness. Therefore, attacking units maintain pressure, continuing the attack at night, overrunning or bypassing enemy rear security elements. These actions enable the unit to maintain contact with the enemy, keep the enemy off balance, and make the enemy force's withdrawal extremely difficult. Ideally, friendly forces isolate major enemy elements and prevent the enemy from reconstituting a coherent defense.

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

METHODS OF ATTACK

Methods of attack include——

- Spoiling attacks.
- Counterattacks.
- Reconnaissance in force.

- Raids.
- Ambushes.

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

Spoiling Attack

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

A commander conducts a spoiling attack to—

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

Conducting a spoiling attack entails risk by committing, and perhaps losing, combat power that could otherwise support the defense. Commanders consider the following when planning a spoiling attack:

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

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

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

Counterattack

A counterattack (see Figure 5-2) is a method of attack that part or all a defending force conducts against an enemy attacking force to regain ground lost, cut off or destroy enemy advance units, or eliminate the enemy's reason for attacking. A unit conducts a counterattack to seize the initiative from the enemy through offensive action. A counterattacking force can maneuver or attack by fire to defeat or destroy an enemy force, restore the original position, or block an enemy penetration. Counterattacks can serve as the decisive action around which the rest of the defense is organized, for example a mobile defense. Regardless, once initiated, the counterattack typically becomes the commander's decisive action. See Chapter 8 for information on the defense.

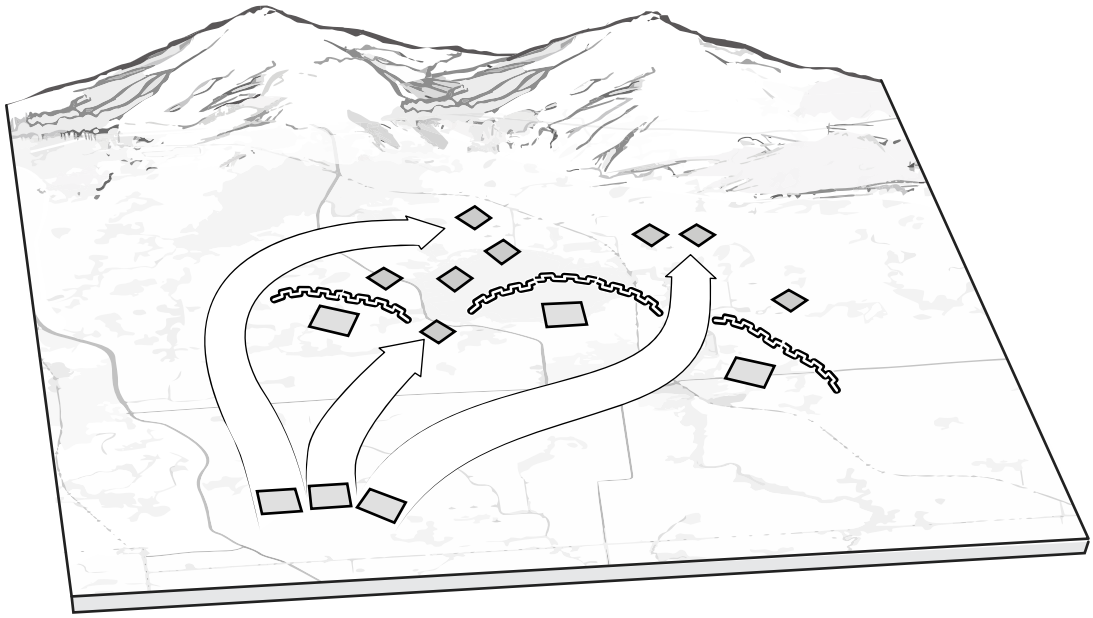


Figure 5-2. Counterattack Example.

The commander plans and conducts a counterattack to strike the enemy when and where it is most vulnerable, usually as the enemy commits the main effort to defeating the friendly defense. As in any other attack, the commander assigns either terrain- or force-oriented objectives to counterattacking forces, and the maneuver of the counterattack force is supported by other elements of the defense. The two forms of counterattacks are local and major:

- Local counterattacks are usually hasty operations conducted on order, using whatever forces are available to retake positions lost to enemy action or to exploit targets of opportunity. The force often consists of surviving defending forces or the reserves of subordinate units and is loosely organized into a security force and a main body.
- Major counterattacks are preplanned decisive actions integral to the defensive SOM. They are executed to—
  - Seize the initiative from an enemy force through offensive action after an enemy force launches an attack.
  - Defeat or block an enemy penetration that endangers the integrity of their entire defense.
  - Attrit an enemy force by defeating or destroying isolated portions of it.

In both counterattacks, waiting for an enemy force to act first may reveal the enemy's main effort and help planners create an assailable flank to exploit.

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

Planning a Counterattack. The commander plans to counterattack the enemy force when they are vulnerable, such as when defensive actions and obstacles disrupt enemy units creating gaps and exposing flanks and rears of the attacking force, or upon capturing a position, when the enemy is experiencing disorganization. Opportunities for effective counterattacks are usually brief; the commander must rapidly assess the situation, and the force must swiftly execute the counterattack.

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

Preparing a Counterattack. For major counterattacks, preparation includes determining the conditions for committing the counterattack, decision points, and desired effect of the attack. Planners position intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to support the commander's decision-making.The keys to a successful counterattack are surprise, control, and coordinated fires.

Surprise. Surprise allows the counterattacking force to seize the initiative and dictate tempo. If total surprise is not possible, it must be so nearly complete that the targeted enemy force does not expect the attack until it is too late to react effectively. Thorough planning and preparation help achieve surprise; however, when time is limited, boldness and audacity of action can surprise the enemy as well.

Control. Control is necessary in a counterattack to synchronize it with other defensive efforts, deconflict battlespace geometry, and avoid unnecessary exposure of the counterattack force to enemy reactions. The commander designates the objectives that will orient the counterattack force on the decisive point, tasks necessary mobility operations to support the maneuver of the counterattack force and uses OPSEC and counterreconnaissance measures to hide this process from the enemy. Selecting assembly areas, routes, and other control measures for the counterattack force balances speed against the need to surprise the enemy.

Coordinated Fires. The commander coordinates direct and indirect fires, CAS, and information activities for the counterattack force by adjusting the planned positions of weapon systems and the actions of information capabilities to obtain maximum effectiveness against the enemy. As with

any attack, fires and information activities seek to isolate and fix the targeted enemy force to prevent escape or reinforcement. These fires must inflict maximum damage before the enemy can respond to the counterattack.

Executing a Counterattack. As the enemy enters the main battle area (MBA) of the defense, shaping actions set the conditions for the success of the defense. In a major counterattack, these conditions are tied to a decision point. Maneuver elements and ISR assets provide a steady flow of information to the commander. When the decision point is reached, the commander commits the counterattack force. The security force of the counterattacking unit conducts the same tasks as in any other attack, striking enemy security assets and helping fix the enemy force. The main body of the counterattacking unit conducts the decisive action, while the reserve of the counterattacking unit prepares to reinforce success or exploit opportunity. Upon a successful counterattack, the defending commander either reconstitutes the defense or transitions to offensive operations.

Units conduct counterattacks in the same way they conduct any other attack. Subordinates initiate local counterattacks with available forces when those actions fit within their higher echelon commander's intent. A local counterattack should be swift and violent. Units exploit enemy disorganization, such as the confusion that temporarily exists in an attacking force after it seizes a defended position. A rapidly mounted local counterattack may yield better results than a more deliberate counterattack executed by a higher echelon because of the speed at which forces can launch them.

Units may conduct local counterattacks to retain or seize positions on the flanks of a strong enemy penetration. This prevents enemy forces from widening the penetration while forces from other defending units engage the penetrating enemy forces. Holding these flanks can also prevent the sacrifice of positional depth because the limited gap in the defensive position prevents an attacking enemy force from fully exploiting its success.

Reconnaissance in Force

A reconnaissance in force is a method of attack conducted to obtain information and to locate and test enemy's disposition, strength, and reaction. It is used when knowledge of the enemy is vague and there is insufficient time or resources to develop the situation. A reconnaissance in force is typically conducted to test enemy reactions or cause the enemy to reveal themselves for targeting. Commanders assign this operation when an enemy force is operating within an area, and they cannot obtain adequate intelligence about the enemy force by other means. Units may also conduct a reconnaissance in force in restrictive terrain where an enemy is likely to ambush smaller reconnaissance forces. Units at company-level and above can conduct a reconnaissance in force. A reconnaissance in force is an aggressive reconnaissance, conducted as an offensive operation with clearly stated reconnaissance objectives. It differs from other reconnaissance operations because it is usually conducted only to gain information about the enemy and not the terrain. The commander plans for both the extrication of the force or the exploitation of success. For more information on reconnaissance operations, see Chapter 13.

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

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

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

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

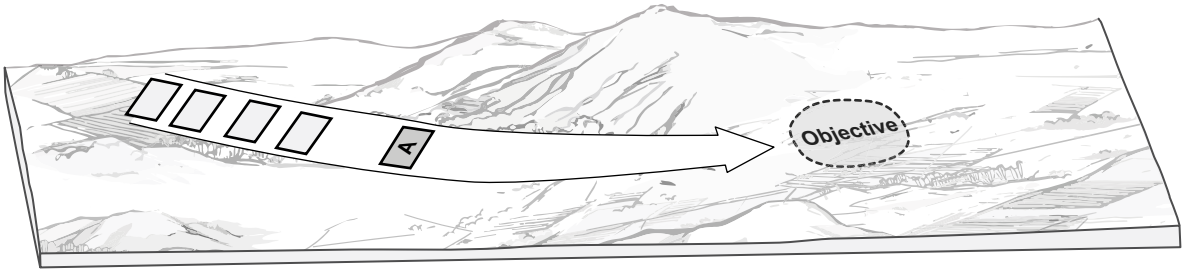
Preparing and Executing a Reconnaissance in Force. The preparation and execution process for a reconnaissance in force is similar to that of other types of attacks. Since the reconnaissance in force serves as a shaping action for a larger operation, the decisive action of the reconnaissance in force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

Raid

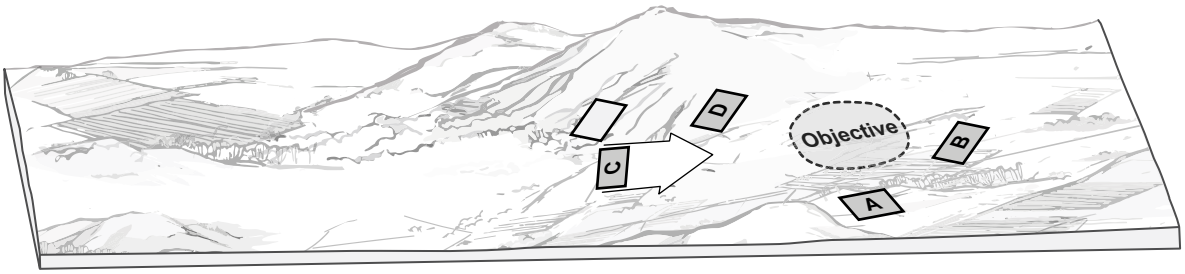
A raid is a method of attack, usually small scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain. It ends with a planned withdrawal after completing the assigned mission. Raids usually involve battalion-sized or smaller forces for one of the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

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

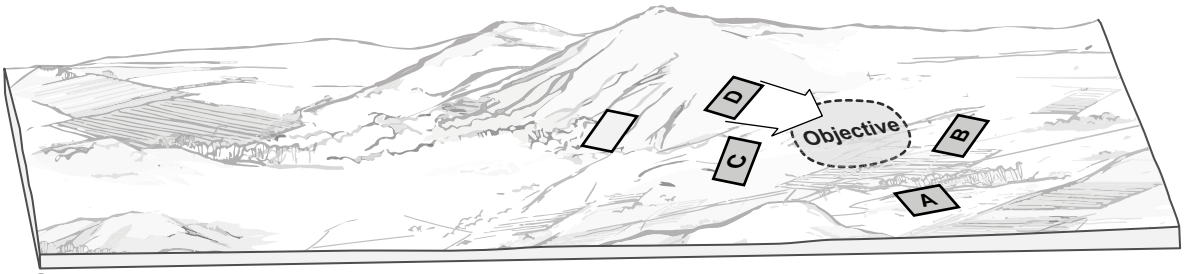
Raids are different than other types of attacks because of the planned withdrawal. The raid force is organized into a command element, reconnaissance element, support element, assault element, security element, and a reserve. Raids are usually conducted in five phases: movement to the objective area, isolation of the objective area, assault on the raid objective, actions on the objective, and withdrawal (see Figure 5-3).



1 Raid force approaches the objective area. ***Reconnaissance element*** A is the lead element to approach the objective.



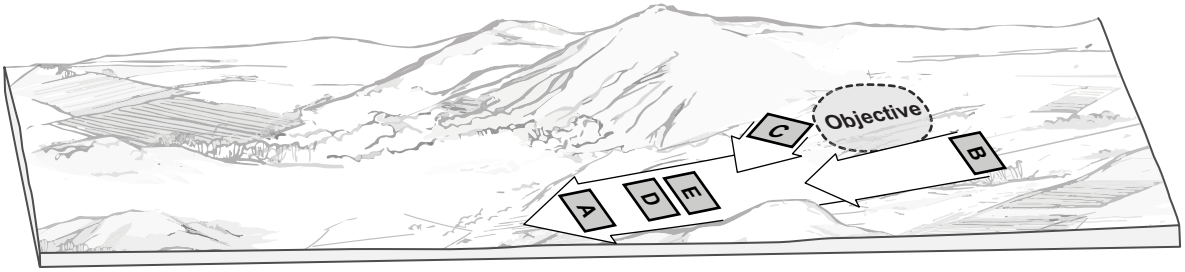
2 ***Security element*** B isolates the objective area. ***Support element*** C moves to support the assault element.



3 ***Assault element*** D attacks the objective. ***Support element*** C provides fire support to the assault element.
Security element B maintains isolation of the objective area. ***Reconnaissance element*** A plans a withdrawal route for the raid force.



4 ***Assault element*** D conducts actions at the objective. ***Reserve element*** E provides follow on support to the assault element.



5 ***Reconnaissance element*** A leads the withdrawal, followed by the ***assault element*** D, ***reserve element*** E, and ***support element*** C.
Security element B withdraws last from the raid area.

Figure 5-3. Five Phases of a Raid.

Phase 1: Movement to the Objective Area. The reconnaissance element is the first element in the raiding force to approach the objective area. Marines can be inserted early to meet intelligence collection requirements, establish routes, post guides, and determine tentative support-by-fire and security positions, rally points, LZs, etc.

Phase 2: Isolation of the Objective Area. The security element isolates the objective area from outside support or reinforcement, to include enemy air. The support element moves to appropriate positions to support the assault element.

Phase 3: Assault on the Raid Objective. The assault element attacks the objective under the direct and indirect fires of the support element and CAS. The security element maintains isolation of the objective area while the reconnaissance element begins taking actions designed to facilitate the withdrawal of the raid force.

Phase 4: Actions on the Objective. The assault element conducts actions on the objective (e.g., destroying critical facilities). The reserve is available to follow and support or follow and assume.

Phase 5: Withdrawal. The raiding force withdraws from the objective area and is extracted. The reconnaissance element leads the way, followed by the assault element and reserve. The support element withdraws from its overwatch positions in trace of the assault element, and the security element departs last.

Raids are usually deliberate operations, and planning is, therefore, thorough and detailed. Planners use a somewhat reverse planning sequence, beginning at phase 4 with establishing the decisive action that must occur on the objective, and working backwards toward initiating actions required for phase 1. Actions at the objective area form the basis for all other planning. The size of the friendly force and the nature of the target and enemy dictate logistic and fire support requirements. The landing, departure, or insertion locations are determined according to the direction of attack. Rehearsals follow this reverse planning methodology as well, beginning with rehearsals for actions on the objective.

Ambush

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

Ambushes can be categorized as hasty or deliberate, and near or far. A hasty ambush is an immediate reaction to an unexpected opportunity conducted using SOPs and battle drills. A deliberate ambush is planned as a specific action against a specific target. Near and far ambushes are differentiated by the proximity of the enemy. All forces can conduct an ambush.

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

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

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

Establishing and rehearsing effective SOPs and battle drills constitutes the planning for hasty ambushes. Deliberate ambushes follow similar planning considerations as other types of attack. Information requirements are enemy focused, such as size, organization, weapons and equipment carried, route and direction of movement, and times the target will reach or pass certain points on the route. During terrain analysis, leaders identify sites for at least four different areas: the ambush site, the kill zone, security positions, and rally points. Additional planning considerations for an ambush include—

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

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

In a linear ambush formation, the assault and support elements deploy parallel to the target's route of movement—the long axis of the kill zone—subjecting the target to flanking fire (Figure 5-4). The size of the target that can be trapped in the kill zone is limited by the size of the area that can effectively be covered by the support element's weapons. Obstacles, covered by fire,

trap the target in the kill zone. Other obstacles, placed between the kill zone and the ambush force, guard against enemy counter ambush drills. Gaps are left in these obstacles to enable the assault element to pass through them. The advantages of the linear formation are its ease of control in all visibility conditions and its effectiveness in close terrain that restricts the enemy's movement. Disadvantages are the increased use of obstacles necessary for employment in open terrain and the risk of the enemy being so dispersed that it is larger than the kill zone.

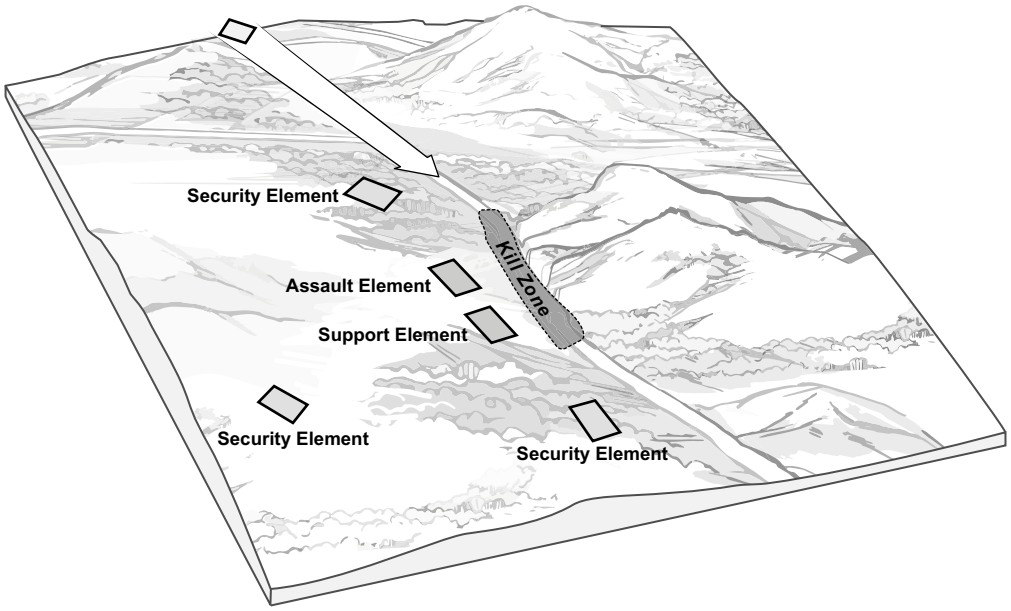


Figure 5-4. Linear Ambush Example.

The L shaped formation (Figure 5-5) is a variation of the line formation. The long leg of the "L" is parallel to the kill zone and is typically occupied by the assault element, which provides flanking fire. The short leg of the "L" is at the end of the kill zone and at right angles to it. It is typically occupied by the support element, which delivers enfilading fires and blocks forward movement of the enemy. The commander can employ an L shaped formation on any route of movement—there is no requirement for a "bend." The limiting factor is the length of the beaten zone down which the supporting element can effectively deliver fires. The other advantages and disadvantages of the L-shaped ambush are similar to those of a linear ambush.

An area ambush is typically used by company- or larger-sized elements engaging significant enemy forces likely to be dispersed over the route of movement. The goal for area ambush is to fracture the enemy force into smaller pieces incapable of supporting one another and subject to individual destruction. It is most effective when enemy movement is primarily restricted to trails or roads. The area should offer several suitable point ambush sites (Figure 5-6). The commander designates a central ambush site at which the main effort will deliver the decisive action. Outlying ambushes are supporting efforts designed to disrupt or delay the enemy's ability to escape from, or reinforce, the central ambush site. Usually, the actions of the outlying ambushes key off the initiation of the central ambush. But commanders can initiate actions in any way they see fit to best shape the engagement and deliver the desired effect. For example, the commander may want to initiate an outlying ambush to encourage the enemy to begin reacting, making them more vulnerable to the central ambush.

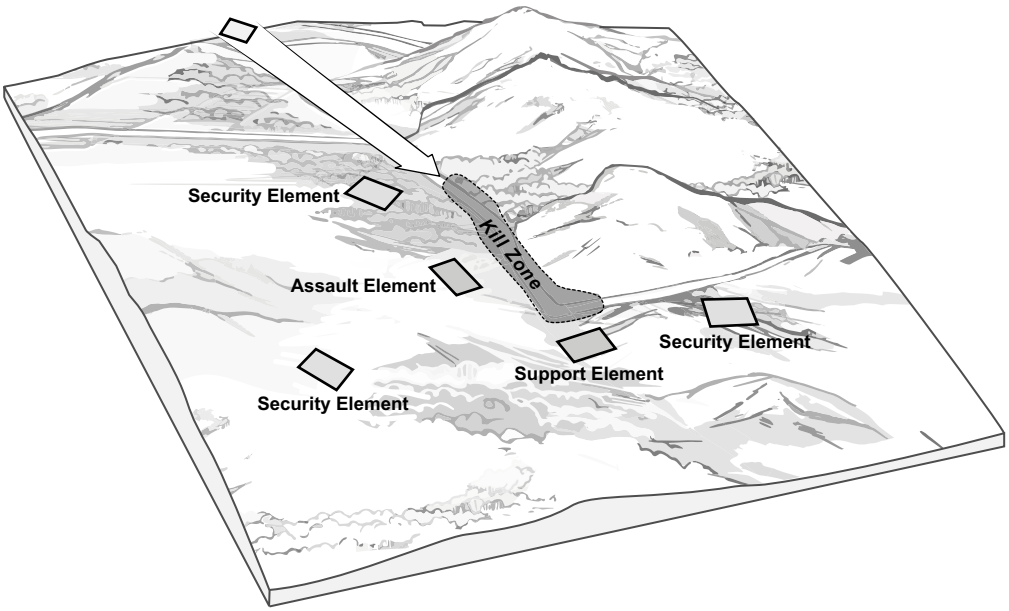


Figure 5-5. L-Shaped Ambush Example.

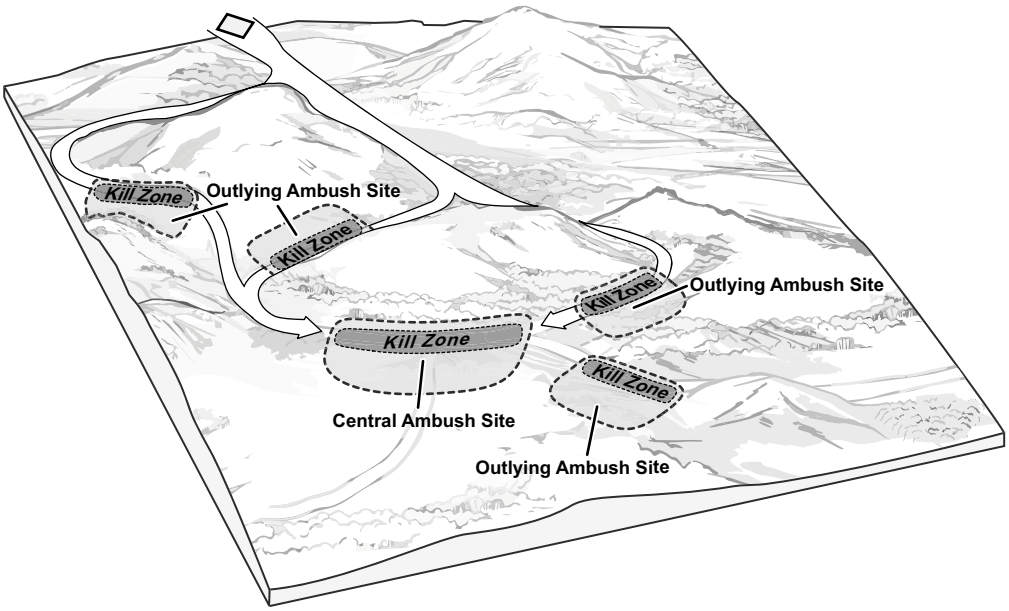


Figure 5-6. Ambush Area Example.

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

- Approach of the enemy or target (not always the same thing).
- Initiate the ambush (this should be a mass-casualty producing signal initiated by a reliable weapon system or explosive).

- Assault, and shift and cease fires, to initiate the assault element's actions and support their movement and attack.
- Withdraw from the kill zone or ambush site.

Preparing an Ambush. Commanders deploy ISR assets to further develop the plan and maintain situational awareness. The ambush force leaves friendly lines, follows the designated routes, and occupies an ORP. The commander conducts a leader's reconnaissance with key personnel to confirm or modify the plan. Changes to the plan are immediately disseminated. Movement to and occupation of the ambush site is deliberate and controlled with an emphasis on stealth and force protection. Leaders enforce camouflage, noise, and light discipline.

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

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

On the commander's order, the ambush force withdraws to the ORP, reorganizes, and starts its return march. At a previously established location, units that are platoon-sized or smaller, halt and disseminate any information obtained from the ambush to all elements of the ambush force. Larger units forgo this halt, using C2 systems to immediately pass information to higher headquarters. In the event the ambush fails, and the enemy's reaction threatens the survival of the ambush force, units conduct a retrograde to the ORP. The method of retrograde depends on the effectiveness of the enemy response, but at a minimum the commander positions the support element to cover the withdrawal, employing obscuration techniques and fires capabilities for protection.

CHAPTER 6.
EXPLOITATION

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

Exploitation is integral to offensive operations and is the primary means of transitioning a tactical success into a larger or operational advantage. A battalion attack supports regimental objectives. An exploitation conducted by that same battalion would likely support division objectives. Exploitation capitalizes on the physical and psychological effects created on enemy forces by completing their tactical defeat. It profits on the enemy force's disorganization, and the confusion and apprehension within their command and control by making permanent what otherwise would only be a temporary tactical advantage. Exploitation can be decisive.

Exploitation applies to all units, activities, and circumstances and can take place at any point in an operation. Infantry companies can exploit intelligence gained in a cordon and search, and regiments can exploit the envelopment of an enemy defense. Attacking forces create the conditions for exploitation (e.g., conducting a penetration) or exploit sudden opportunities (e.g., an enemy flank collapsing unexpectedly).

A unit can conduct exploitation as part of its immediate actions or as a preplanned endeavor. A battalion can exploit a successful breach to gain access to the enemy's positions and accomplish its immediate mission. The battalion's parent regiment can then exploit the battalion's success by passing another unit through it to continue the attack. Commanders use their intent and mission-type orders to enable subordinates to recognize and exploit opportunities that deliver results greater than those planned. As a rule, the main effort is the element most likely to exploit local success. But all elements of an attacking force are prepared to exploit opportunities if presented and commanders remain flexible and willing to shift the main effort to take advantage of enemy mistakes and weaknesses. If the main effort is not able to exploit success, commanders use a reserve or pass fresh forces (i.e., follow and assume) into the lead. If preplanned, units conducting exploitations as contingency missions are similar to the size of the attacking units.

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

A major exploitation is a specific contingency mission assigned to a large unit in anticipation that an attack by another unit of equivalent size will succeed. Divisions and regiments typically conduct a major exploitation; although, a MEF can conduct a major exploitation as part of a joint or combined multi-corps operation.

Local exploitation by the committed force follows a successful attack. A unit conducts a local exploitation when it capitalizes on whatever tactical opportunities it creates while accomplishing its offensive mission. Whenever possible, the lead attacking unit transitions directly to the exploitation after accomplishing its mission in local exploitation. If this is not feasible, the commander can pass fresh forces (follow and assume) into the lead. The commander acts quickly to capitalize on local successes. Working within their higher commander's intent, subordinate commanders use their initiative to launch exploitations. When initiating a local exploitation, the commander informs higher headquarters if there is the possibility of general collapse and to initiate pursuit operations.

FORCE ORGANIZATION

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

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

Commanders might receive additional support and resources to continue exploitation, such as an infantry battalion receiving the support of an additional maneuver company or receiving assault support from the ACE. Higher headquarters typically retains control of these supporting forces.

These additional forces receive either a follow-and-support or a follow-and-assume mission. Units that are assigned follow-and-support missions assist the attacking force by relieving the main effort or reserve of tasks that would slow their advances. Units that are assigned follow-and-assume missions assist the attacking force by conducting a forward passage of lines to replace the attacker's main effort or reserve as they approach their culminating point. These additional forces exchange liaison teams with the attacking force to facilitate support or the passage of lines. See Appendix C for more information on follow-and-support and follow-and-assume missions.

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

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

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

CONTROL MEASURES

Exploitation uses fewer control measures than many other operations because of the uncertain enemy situation and the need to provide subordinate commanders with the maximum flexibility to take advantage of fleeting opportunities. Planners develop control measures as part of the planning process. The commander issues these control measures as part of the attack order to facilitate command and control when the force transitions to exploitation.

As units conduct an exploitation, their boundaries can change often as they take advantage of opportunities or react to enemy contact. Common control measures units can use are—

- Contact points to facilitate communication between subordinate units.
- Permissive FSMCs, such as CFLs, to ensure rapid and adequate fire support during the advance.
- Obstacle-restricted areas to prevent friendly obstacles from hindering movement and obstacle zones on the flanks to enhance security.
- Phase lines and subsequent objectives to control and orient the exploitation, although focus remain on continuing or completing defeat of the enemy.
- An LOA, if a culminating point can be anticipated or as necessary based on other restrictions.

PLANNING AN EXPLOITATION

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

Commanders have two general methods to exploit battlefield success. The first method is to employ the forces that achieved the initial battlefield success. In this method, commanders expect those forces to exploit their own success. This is typical at low-tactical echelons, such as at battalion echelons and below, at all points along the range of operations. Commanders select this method when an attacking unit has accomplished its mission with minimum loss, and it is the force most readily available to continue the advance. However, it may become necessary to reorganize and resupply these forces while they are still moving to maintain the exploitation's momentum.

The second method is employing forces other than the unit that achieved the initial battlefield success. This other force may be the echelon reserve force or specifically designated follow and assume force. In this method, this other force is committed by moving around, over, or through the forces that achieved the initial success. This method is generally preferred when the attacking echelon still has essential tasks to accomplish, is still actively engaged with enemy forces, or requires reorganization before it can continue the advance. Regiments and larger units conducting exploitations commonly use this method.

The original plan of attack contains the foundation for exploitation. In hasty operations, it consists of actions like battle drills. Commanders plan for decentralized execution during the conduct of an exploitation. The commander's intent prepares subordinates to exercise initiative throughout the operation. Commanders state the purpose of the exploitation, which may be to force the retrograde of enemy forces from an area, encircle enemy forces so they cannot withdraw, expand a lane or gap, attack along a flank, or destroy enemy artillery and other fire support systems. The intent must describe the desired end state. That intent also determines the force's main and supporting efforts. In deliberate operations, it is a branch or sequel tentatively identifying forces, objectives, and subordinate AOs. Exploiting forces use the original plan as the baseline from which they take initiative, issuing FRAGORDs and the updated commander's intent and end state. For example, the commander may issue a FRAGORD to designate a new main effort to execute an encirclement. Fragmentary orders should designate—

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

In maneuver planning, the attacker seeks to avoid driving the enemy back on to their strengths, whether those strengths are terrain (e.g., a defendable choke point), capabilities (e.g., coherent command and control or shortening supply lines), or both. The attacking force is careful to not overextend the exploiting force's capabilities, thereby potentially exposing them to defeat. Maneuver planning must take into account mitigating risk to the exploitation force in terms of security for their flanks, rear, and LOCs.

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

Forces conducting major exploitations, usually at the regiment-level and higher, typically maneuver on a wide front and on at least two axes. The forces on each axis are capable of independent action, depending on the mobility of the force, the road net, and other aspects of the terrain. The forces advance using the techniques and formations appropriate to METT-T. In exceptional circumstances, when the enemy cannot effectively resist, or can only conduct weak and sporadic defense, the commander can temporarily choose not to retain a reserve but to commit all forces to the exploitation. See Chapter 3 for discussions on combat formations and Chapter 4 for movement to contact.

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

Information activity planning, which may require a longer lead time, begins before the exploitation operation. The actions and activities of information capabilities are synchronized and coordinated with each other and with fires and maneuver to confuse and disrupt the enemy. Examples of information capabilities that support the commander's exploitation goals include electromagnetic warfare, tactical deception, and encouragement to surrender.

As in any advance, the commander and staff considers and plans for both mobility and countermobility operations. As the friendly force shatters the enemy's defensive plan, mobility operations are more likely to center on gap crossings, breach lane and route improvement, and mitigating hasty obstacles. Mobility is critical not only to maintain the momentum of maneuver

elements, but also to ensure the steady flow of logistics to support the advance. Countermobility operations focus on protecting the exploitation force, such as supporting screening forces on the flanks of the exploitation force.

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

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

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

EXECUTING AN EXPLOITATION

Exploitations are either on order or event driven and are tied to the progress of the attack and the appearance of unforeseen opportunities. They are gradual or sudden transitions. The conditions necessary to conduct an exploitation or the event that signals the beginning of an exploitation operation are tied to some combination of the attacking force accomplishing the mission, the mission, their ability to continue operations, and the state of the battlespace in terms of METT-T.

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

- Threats to, or the use of, weapons of mass destruction to forestall collapse.
- Increasing rearward movement, particularly fire support, reserves, and CSS units.
- Preparing to, or demolishing, facilities, installations, equipment, and supply stockpiles.
- Various units intermixing their vehicles and personnel in combat formations or convoys.
- An increasing number of captured EPWs and abandoned equipment and materiel.

- Enemy fire decreasing in intensity and effectiveness or becoming disjointed and unsynchronized.
- Enemy resistance considerably decreasing, becoming sporadic and disjointed, and friendly company- and battalion-sized units beginning to defeat enemy battalion- and regimental-sized units respectively.
- Reports confirming the capture or absence of enemy leaders.
- Friendly forces overrunning enemy artillery, C2 facilities, and supply points.

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

- Attriting or defeating enemy reserves prior to their commitment.
- Destroying enemy countermobility and antiair assets prior to their employment against the exploitation force.
- Disrupting enemy units attempting to reestablish a coherent defense.
- Disrupting enemy sustaining actions.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

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

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

Disrupt the Enemy

The commander's decision to exploit a situation presumes that the enemy has already been somewhat disrupted. The exploiting force uses all available resources to maintain or increase this disruption and prevent the enemy from reconstituting an effective defense. At the regiment level and above, commanders maintain disruption by combining the rapid maneuver of ground

elements with the ability of higher headquarters to shape the battlespace in the deep fight against enemy reserves and uncommitted forces. The ACE operates to the front of ground maneuver forces to destroy high payoff targets and provide situational awareness to ground commanders conducting exploitation operations. The LCE transitions forward, using preplanned logistic packages and decentralized support to prevent maneuver elements from experiencing a culminating point. Commanders mitigate risk and achieve security using speed—rapid advances keeping the enemy force off balance and degrading their intelligence and surveillance capabilities. Exploiting and continually disrupting the enemy means never allowing the enemy an opportunity to recover from the initial blow.

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

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

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

Fix the Enemy

Fixing sets up the enemy for defeat by the main effort—the decisive action. When possible, the exploiting unit uses bypass criteria to overrun or bypass enemy elements, which continues disruption across the entire force. Larger units or specific critical elements of the enemy force are fixed to shape the conditions necessary for their defeat. The exploitation force fixes enemy units in positions out of supporting distance of each other, setting them up for destruction in detail. They prevent enemy units from maneuvering to defend key terrain. Additionally, the exploitation

force suppresses, interdicts, and pins the potential enemy reserves, uncommitted forces, C2 nodes, and fire support assets in place. As the exploitation unfolds, commanders seek to rapidly identify any enemy force or capability around which an effective defense may coalesce, and then fix that enemy force or capability for defeat by either the exploitation force or follow-on forces.

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

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

Decisive Action and Maneuver

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

Follow Through

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

CHAPTER 7.
PURSUIT

Pursuit operations begin when an enemy force attempts to conduct retrograde operations. At this point, the enemy becomes most vulnerable to destruction because they have lost internal cohesion. An aggressively executed pursuit can leave the enemy trapped, unprepared, and unable to defend, faced with the options of surrender or complete destruction. Pursuits include units rapidly shifting, continually moving during the day and at night, hasty attacks, containing bypassed enemy forces, capturing numerous EPWs, and a willingness to forego some synchronization with other forces to maintain contact with, and pressure on, a fleeing enemy. Pursuits require swift maneuver and attacks by forces to strike the enemy's most vulnerable areas. A successful pursuit requires forces to be adaptable, initiative by commanders at all echelons, and a high operational tempo during execution. A pursuit differs from the exploitation in that its primary function is to finish destroying the targeted enemy force.

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

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

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

Because of the resources required to conduct a pursuit, the division level or higher typically makes the decision to undertake this offensive operation. This does not restrict the execution of the pursuit to the division level, though units below the regiment generally only participate in a pursuit. Once the pursuit begins, the commander accepts prudent risk, maintains contact with the enemy, and pursues retreating enemy forces without issuing further orders. The commander must

be aware of any approaching culmination point. Enemy forces usually retrograde on their supply bases, and potentially on fresh units, while friendly forces become less effective as they expend resources faster than they can be replaced. Reasons to stop the pursuit include—

- Presence of fresh enemy forces.
- Greatly increased resistance.
- Fatigue.
- Dwindling supplies.
- Diversion of friendly units to security missions, increased need to conduct immediate civil security and civil control tasks.
- The need to contain bypassed enemy units.

During planning, the unit staff develops a decision support template that depicts decision points, timelines associated with the movement of forces and the flow of the operation, and other key items of information to avoid or forestall a culmination point. There are two basic methods for conducting a pursuit: direct pressure and combination (see Figure 7-1).

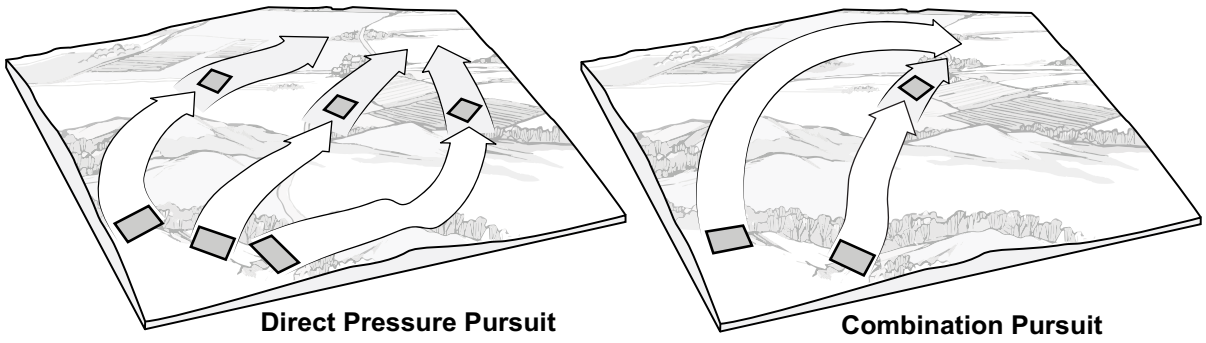


Figure 7-1. Pursuits.

DIRECT PRESSURE

In the direct pressure method of pursuit, the commander employs a single force to maintain pressure on the retrograding enemy by conducting operations along the same retrograde routes used by that enemy. Commanders typically choose this option in various situations, such as when—

- The enemy defense has been shattered and a general pursuit is warranted.
- The commander does not have a subordinate force with a sufficient mobility advantage to maneuver behind a retrograding enemy.
- The commander lacks the resources to enable an encircling force to survive and sustain itself until linkup with the direct pressure force.

Restrictive terrain or a disciplined withdrawal conducted by a cohesive enemy may also warrant this method of pursuit. The friendly force uses all the forms of offensive maneuver to maintain pressure on the enemy, slow their withdrawal, prevent the reconstitution of the defense, and destroy them in detail.

COMBINATION

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

FORCE ORGANIZATION

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

CONTROL MEASURES

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

headquarters the flexibility to operate against the enemy and conduct encircling force operations ahead of the direct pressure force. The rear boundary separates the direct pressure force from the follow-and-support force.

Control measures for the encircling force are identical to those used during an envelopment (see Chapter 3). The commander must designate a route, an axis of advance, or an AO adjacent to the direct pressure force that allows the encircling force to move parallel to, and eventually ahead of, the fleeing enemy force. The commander can designate a terrain objective as a guide for the encircling force. However, the commander might rapidly and frequently change this objective based on the progress of the encircling force and the enemy. The objective should be a terrain feature that provides the encircling force defensible terrain that the enemy cannot easily bypass. The commander often selects choke points, such as defiles and bridges, as objectives for the encircling force.

The commander establishes a boundary, RFL, and other linkup control measures between the encircling and direct pressure forces before the encircling force reaches their objective. (See Chapter 23 for more information on linkups). If possible, the commander uses follow-and-support forces to relieve the encircling force of flank and rear security responsibilities—freeing them to focus on engaging the withdrawing enemy.

PLANNING A PURSUIT

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

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

The mobility of the direct pressure and encircling forces must be equal—preferably superior—to the withdrawing enemy. If there is no inherent mobility differential, the commander must plan to create one. This may be done by the direct pressure force's actions, which slow and disrupt the

enemy withdrawal, creating countermobility effects from targeting choke points and gaps, continuing information activities against enemy C2 functions, and adding mobility to the pursuit force (e.g., vehicles, assault support).

If using the combination method of the pursuit, commanders plan to create encircling forces strong enough to defend themselves from annihilation while slowing or fixing the enemy until they can linkup with the direct pressure force to destroy the enemy. Depending on the method of envelopment—which might depend on METT-T as the pursuit begins—a commander might use more than one encircling force, choosing which is the main effort. (See Chapter 3 for more information on envelopments.) Other missions that the encircling force can receive include destroying weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means or linking up with amphibious or air assault forces.

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

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

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

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

The mobility and distance requirements associated with a pursuit, particularly the combination method, place a heavy demand on fires and information planning. Because of the lead times on some activities, information planners must prepare for potential follow-on actions further forward than the rest of the staff in planning for pursuits. As in exploitation, planners seek to synchronize and coordinate information capabilities with maneuver and fires to magnify the disruption, chaos, and despair amongst hostile forces. Tactical and military deception, electromagnetic attack, leaflets that enable easy surrender, and other actions reinforce the effects generated by the

disintegration of the enemy defense and the success of the pursuit. Combined with these information efforts, fires planning relies heavily on the ACE's ability to not only operate against the enemy in depth, but also to provide timely and accurate fire support to the encircling force which is likely to be beyond typical fire support system ranges. If possible, indirect fire assets accompany the encircling force. Both fires and information planners must seek to push assets and systems forward to keep up with the pursuit and provide timely support to maneuver elements.

Pursuit planning must ensure the timely execution of mobility and countermobility operations to sustain the friendly force's advance and hinder the enemy's withdrawal. Regardless of the enemy's withdrawal—disorganized retreat or disciplined retrograde—mobility operations include all aspects of breaching, gap crossing, and clearing activities to include route improvement to support combat support and CSS elements. Countermobility operations for engineers typically include flank security for the direct pressure force, support for encircling force security, and reinforcing the efforts to contain bypassed enemy units.

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

EXECUTING A PURSUIT

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

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

At the first indication of an enemy retrograde, the unit that discovers the enemy's rearward movement acts to maintain contact to ensure the enemy does not break contact and conduct an orderly retreat. These forces form the initial direct pressure force and as the situation permits and reform into the necessary security, main body, and reserve elements. Higher headquarters supports the transition to pursuit in two ways. First, it provides immediate support to the direct pressure force, seeking to augment them and further develop the situation. Second, higher headquarters immediately reorients intelligence collection efforts to support the information requirements of the direct pressure force and the information the commander and staff need to make further

decisions in support of the pursuit operations. Some of the decision-making requirements include the nature and disposition of retreating enemy formations, likely enemy COAs, and the location and activities of enemy reserves and uncommitted forces. In addition, the commander considers employing an encircling force in terms of routes, objectives, and threats.

As the pursuit force gains information, the commander decides which pursuit method to use (direct pressure or combination) and conducts the planning and orders necessary to rapidly adjust task organization and support concepts accordingly. The priority during this time remains the direct pressure force.

Disrupt the Enemy

As the situation develops and friendly forces transition to pursuit, they focus on maintaining and increasing the disruption of the enemy to prevent them from reconstituting an effective defense or escaping destruction. Regardless of the pursuit method, the friendly force should not provide the enemy an opportunity to develop and execute options that could potentially hinder the pursuit. Consequently, the direct pressure force synchronizes fires and information activities with continued aggressive attacks and advances to deepen enemy confusion, slow their decision-making cycle, and increase disruption.

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

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

As the direct pressure force advances, gaps typically open between elements moving forward at different rates, depending on terrain, enemy resistance, and other variables. Follow-and-support forces follow in trace of both the direct pressure and encircling forces to take over security tasks and mitigate risks. Further, follow-and-support forces—

- Conduct additional mobility operations to support the logistic requirements of the pursuit force's advance.
- Conduct countermobility operations to protect against enemy counterattacks.
- Relieve pursuit forces from containing bypassed enemy units.

- Provide rear area security.
- Conduct necessary civil-military operations.

The designated reserve remains in a position where they can best affect the battle.

Fix the Enemy

The direct pressure force fixes the enemy by constant, unrelenting attacks that prevent the enemy from creating an effective defense and forcing them to continually deploy to slow the friendly advance. The encircling force supports fixing the enemy by completing the envelopment, preventing the enemy from being reinforced or retreating. As discussed, the pursuit force can conduct numerous envelopments to destroy the enemy in detail. If such an instance, as the encircling force envelops to fix the local enemy in place, the commander reconstitutes a new encircling force to continue operations forward. The direct pressure force, using information capabilities and activities and the ACE, fix enemy reserves and uncommitted forces, preventing them from influencing the battlespace. Follow-and-support forces conduct continuing actions designed to free combat power for the pursuit and enable rear area operations that support the direct pressure and encircling forces. The reserve prepares to counter enemy actions, exploit opportunities, and conduct the decisive action if directed to do so.

Decisive Action and Maneuver

Once fixed, the enemy would either surrender or attempt to defend, conduct a breakout, counterattack, or any combination of these actions. (See Chapter 19 for offensive and defensive considerations of encirclements.) Once the enemy is fixed, the pursuit force endeavors to prevent the enemy from organizing a perimeter defense. The commander designates either the direct pressure force, the encircling force, or the reserve as the main effort. The pursuit force supports the main effort by employing local attacks, fires, and information capabilities to shape the enemy's actions while the main effort attacks the decisive point—typically a critical concentration of enemy combat power, key C2 nodes, or critical infrastructure and sources of logistic support (e.g., water supplies).

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

Follow Through

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

Pursuit Throughout the Competition Continuum

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

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

PART III.
THE DEFENSE



Commanders use defensive operations to destroy enemy forces; retain terrain, resources, and population centers; and regain the initiative. They accomplish this using the fundamentals of the defense and the three types of defensive operations—area defense, mobile defense, and retrograde. There is also one unique, associated method—counterlanding in support of an amphibious defense.

CHAPTER 8.
DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

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

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

Units conduct the defense using the same decision-making, planning, and doctrinal fundamentals introduced in Chapter 2. Commanders use purpose-based, spatial-based, or combination battlespace frameworks assigning main and supporting efforts, and a reserve, to accomplish the mission.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Defending commanders strive to regain the initiative from attacking enemy forces. This is a primary feature of the defense. Disruption, flexibility, maneuver, mass and concentration, operations in depth, preparation, and security are all defensive characteristics used by commanders to regain the initiative. Their ability to synchronize their decisive, shaping, and sustaining actions improves the probability of a successful defense.

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

Maneuver

The defense is not static. Regardless of the type of defense, commanders endeavor to use maneuver in the defense to provide themselves flexibility while adding uncertainty for the attacker. Maneuver serves as an offensive component of the defense. Maneuver allows the defender to take full advantage of the battlespace, achieve positions of advantage over the enemy, and mass combat power against the attacker. Maneuver also encompasses rear area operations and the action of security elements to defeat enemy counterreconnaissance efforts and shape the battlespace.

Preparation

One of the defense's inherent strengths is that the defender arrives in the battlespace before the attacker and uses the available time to prepare. Even in time-constrained environments, defenders can study the terrain and select positions that allow them to mass combat power on likely approaches. They combine natural and man-made obstacles to canalize attacking forces into engagement areas, coordinate and rehearse actions, and deploy reconnaissance and security forces. These preparations increase defense's effectiveness up to, and even during, the engagement.

Mass and Concentration

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

Flexibility

Having the ability to prepare the defense allows the defenders to build flexibility into their plans. Units achieve flexibility by using maneuver, defenses in depth, and reserve forces. Specifically, the commander and staff conduct detailed planning for contingencies to counter and take advantage of the enemy's different COAs. The commander and staff designate supplementary and alternate positions, develop, and rehearse counterattack plans, and outline plans to transition from the defense to the offense. Maintaining flexibility in the defense helps ensure mission success by preventing the enemy attacker from translating any local success into a decisive action.

Using Terrain

The defenders take the opportunity to learn and exploit every aspect of terrain and weather to their advantage. Terrain in the defense is only valuable if a force gains advantage by having or controlling it. Commanders visualize possible enemy avenues of approach, determining which terrain enables the defense to maximize effective fire, cover, concealment, movement, and surprise. While using the strong points of the terrain to their advantage, the defenders strengthen any weak points relevant to the defensive SOM by reinforcing and integrating natural obstacles with man-made obstacles. The defenders use terrain to enable their forces to win the defensive battle.

Mutual Support

Mutual support strengthens the defense by supporting the massing of combat power and protecting the defenders from the attackers' attempts to impose their will. Mutual support is that support which units render each other. It is achieved when defensive positions are in such a way that the enemy cannot attack one position without coming under fire from at least one other. The

degree of mutual support obtained depends on the terrain, range of weapons, and visibility. Ideally, the space a force is capable of defending is directly related to its ability to provide mutual support between the units. To neutralize mutually supporting positions, attackers must disperse fire away from their main objective, diluting the effects of their efforts. Mutual support is essential at all levels.

Defense in Depth

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

Surprise

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

Knowledge of the Enemy

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

Local Security

Local security are those security elements and activities established and conducted near a unit to prevent surprise and mitigate enemy actions. Commanders provide security to their forces through information activities, force protection measures, and the employment of reconnaissance and security elements. Security operations prevent enemy ISR assets from determining friendly locations, strengths, and weaknesses; provide early warning; and execute shaping actions that disrupt enemy preparation and attacks. Force protection efforts preserve combat power. Information activities employ information capabilities to deceive the enemy, create hesitation and doubt, and disrupt their operations.

TYPES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

There are three types of defensive operations: the area defense, the mobile defense, and the retrograde. There is also one unique, associated method—counterlanding in support of an amphibious defense. Although they are significantly different, provide different opportunities, and pose different problems, they all share the previously discussed characteristics of the defense and contain static and mobile elements. All four employ aspects of the offense, such as spoiling or counterattacks, in the defensive SOM (see Chapter 5 for more information about methods of attack).

Area Defense

In an area defense, the bulk of the defending force is disposed in selected tactical localities where the decisive battle is to be fought. Principal reliance is placed on the defending forces' ability to maintain their positions and control the terrain between them. The reserve is used to add depth, to block, or restore the battle position by counterattack. The focus of the area defense is on retaining terrain where the bulk of the defending force takes up positions in mutually supporting, prepared locations. Units maintain their positions and control the terrain between these positions through direct and indirect fires and maneuver. Shaping actions focus on disrupting and attriting the enemy as it enters the battlespace. The decisive action is conducted by massing fires, possibly supplemented by a counterattack. The commander uses the reserve to reinforce fires, add depth, block, restore compromised defensive positions, seize the initiative, and destroy enemy forces. Units at all echelons can conduct an area defense. The area defense is the most likely type of defense used to support consolidation and reorganization as well as transitions between offense, defense, and stabilization activities. See Chapter 9 for more information about area defense.

Mobile Defense

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

Retrograde

A retrograde consists of any movement or maneuver of a command to the rear, or away from the enemy. The enemy might force retrogrades, or a commander can execute them voluntarily. The higher commander of the force executing the retrograde must approve the retrograde before its initiation. The retrograde is a transitional operation; it is not conducted in isolation. It is part of a larger SOM designed to regain the initiative and defeat the enemy. There are five methods of retrograde: delay, withdrawal, retirement, denial, and stay-behind. See Chapter 11 for more information about retrogrades.

Counterlanding

A counterlanding prevents the enemy from attaining amphibious objectives through the buildup of combat power. Units use counterlanding to defeat the enemy's lodgment and create conditions for a return to offensive action. Marine Corps forces employ two counterlanding methods in support of the larger amphibious defense—an area defense that seeks to prevent an enemy lodgment or a mobile defense that seeks to defeat an enemy lodgment. Selection of either counterlanding method is also informed by numerous factors such as the defender's available combat power, ability to contest and survive enemy fires, and ability to act within periods of relative advantage and disadvantage, etc. See Chapter 12 for more information about counterlandings.

COMMON DEFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures provide the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation and allow the defenders to rapidly concentrate combat power at the decisive point. Beyond the control measures discussed in Chapter 2, control measures used in the defense include those necessary to designate a security area, MBA, and rear area. See Chapter 14 for more information about security operations. Control measures common to the defense are discussed below.

Battle Positions

A battle position is a defensive position oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend or attack to deny or delay the enemy from using certain terrain or avenues of approach. The battle position is both a defensive method and a graphic that depicts the location and general orientation of a defending force. Commanders use battle positions across all types of defenses. The battle position is not an AO and does not mandate that the entire force must exist within its bounds. Units, whether battalion-sized task forces or squads and sections use battle positions. They may be established on any terrain applicable to the mission and METT-T, such as a forward slope or reverse slope. A commander can assign all or some subordinates battle positions within the AO.

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

There are five battle positions—primary, alternate, supplementary, subsequent, and strong point. When assigning battle positions, the higher commander designates the primary; subordinate commanders designate and prepare alternate, supplementary, and subsequent positions as time and other resources permit and if the terrain or situation requires them.

Primary Position. The primary position is one that provides the best means to accomplish the assigned mission. The commander assigns this position to subordinates in conjunction with their missions as part of the overall defensive plan.

Alternate Position. An alternate position is "a position to be occupied when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuitable for carrying out the assigned task. The alternate position is so located that the original task can be accomplished" (*USMC Dictionary*). The alternate position accomplishes the same mission as the primary position, covering the same area. These positions add flexibility and maneuver to the defense and the defender's likelihood of survival by enabling the defender to engage the enemy from multiple positions. While the defender typically leaves the primary position only out of necessity, it is possible for the defensive SOM to deliberately use primary and alternate positions in sequence.

Supplementary Position. A supplementary position is one that provides the best means to accomplish a task should the primary and alternate positions be untenable. Supplementary positions add flexibility to the defense by enabling a unit to react to different enemy COAs while still taking advantage of defensive preparation. The unit retains a primary position focused on the most likely enemy COA.

Subsequent Position. A subsequent position is one that a unit expects to move to during battle. A defending unit may have a series of subsequent positions, such as during the execution of the delay method of a retrograde. Each subsequent position is part of the defensive SOM and may have its own alternate and supplementary positions.

Strong Point. A strong point is a defensive method that retains key terrain and denies avenues of approach by establishing a heavily fortified, all-around position prepared for extended occupation and operations if a unit is cut-off or surrounded. A fortified area "a defensive system that contains numerous strong points disposed in depth and width in such a manner as to be mutually supporting" (*USMC Dictionary*). Fundamentally, a strong point is a battle position that a unit is expected to hold indefinitely, and activities therein are focused on the terrain upon which it sits. Consequently, commanders prepare strong points for all around defense and position them on key terrain. Commanders also establish strong points when anticipating that enemy actions will isolate a defending force retaining terrain critical to the defense. Before assigning a strong point mission, the commander ensures that the assigned force has sufficient time and resources to construct the position. A general rule is that an effective strong point typically requires a one day effort from an engineer unit the same size as the unit defending the strong point. Usually, companies and battalions occupy strong points. While units smaller than a company may execute a perimeter defense, they generally lack the manpower to secure a perimeter large enough to contain all the required assets and supplies associated with a strong point.

Direct Fire Control Measures

Using direct fire control measures is critical in the defense because defense relies on massing fires that generate effects. Chapter 2 discusses direct fire control measures in depth.

Disengagement Line

A disengagement line is a phase line located on identifiable terrain that, when crossed by the enemy, signals to defending elements that it is time to displace to their next position. The unit may use disengagement lines when executing the delay method of the retrograde or when they do not wish to become decisively engaged. Disengagement criteria consists of items such as the number of enemy vehicles by type, friendly losses, or enemy movement to flanking locations. Commanders may designate multiple disengagement lines, one for each system in the defense.

Final Protective Fire

Final protective fire, an FSCM, is unique to the defense. It is "an immediately available, prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas" (*DoD Dictionary*). Its primary purpose is to support the defeat of an enemy's final assault into a friendly defensive position. Both direct- and indirect-fire weapons can provide FPFs. The commander can assign only one FPF to each firing battery or platoon. An FPF is a priority target for an element or system, and those fire units are laid on that target when they are not engaged in other fire missions. See Chapter 2 fore more information on FSCMs.

Forward Edge of the Battle Area

The FEBA, being more static than the FLOT, applies only to defensive operations. The FEBA is not specifically a boundary, but rather a phase line generally demarking the MBA from the security area—close operations from deep operations. The FEBA reflects the commander's intent as it applies to coordinating fire support and defensive maneuver. The FEBA is often associated with the planned limit for the effects of direct fires.

Main Battle Area

The MBA's size depends on METT-T, the type of defense the commander chooses to conduct, and where the commander plans to execute the decisive action. The commander organizes forces within the MBA according to the type of defense chosen.

COMMON DEFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The concept of hasty and deliberate operations also applies to the defense. The more time available, the more deliberate and effective a defense can be. Commanders compensate for the lack of time in the defense by maintaining a larger-than-normal reserve or accepting greater risk. The general rule in the defense is that preparation is continuous. Every moment the enemy does not attack and every lull between attacks is additional time to improve the defense and the defensive plan by—

- Increasing the effectiveness of the security area.
- Establishing additional alternate and supplementary positions.
- Refining the defensive plan to include branches and sequels.
- Conducting defensive rehearsals.
- Maintaining vehicles and equipment.

Commanders can create preparation time through shaping actions and aggressive security forces actions to delay and disrupt the enemy. See Chapter 11 for more information about delays.

Subsequent chapters address the various defensive operations and the activities outlined above. However, the following paragraphs address planning considerations common to the defense.

Command and Control

The defensive mission generally imposes few restrictions on defending commanders, allowing them to use terrain, distribute forces, and maneuver as they see fit within assigned boundaries. However, they face significant challenges from an enemy who holds the initiative, typically has superior force, and actively seeks to disrupt the defensive plan and dictate the tempo of the engagement. To mitigate these challenges and to create conditions that enable for a return to the offense, the defender creates defensive plans that are inherently flexible, but closely coordinated.

The commander accomplishes command and control using mission-type orders and information and feedback to inform decisions. A well-developed and implemented intelligence collection plan provides clear understanding of the battlespace, the enemy, and decision points. The commander and staff then design a defensive plan—with a special emphasis on wargaming—that makes the maximum use of available resources and terrain, masses combat power at the point of decision, optimizes preparation time, and incorporates static and mobile elements. Building flexibility into the plan is critical because as the fight unfolds, commanders may have to shift shaping actions, adjust subordinate unit AOs and task organization while in contact, repeatedly commit and reconstitute the reserve, and execute branches and sequels.

Finally, commanders and staff ensure that subordinate defensive plans are compatible with the main plan and each other. Multidomain combined-arms rehearsals are conducted emphasizing decision points, the control of fires, and alternate enemy COAs. Coordination points are established between units, and they ensure that boundaries and seems are adequately disguised to mitigate the enemy's ability to identify and exploit them. During this process, commanders determine resource shortfalls and seek to mitigate them.

Command and control in the defense must also account for the following:

- Defenders face unique challenges in terms of maintaining unit cohesion. Defenders may need to create ad-hoc units on short notice, such as forming a detachment left in contact (DLIC) prior to a withdrawal, and attackers will endeavor to leave the defender with little or no time for orderly reorganization and reconstitution. Commanders use unit SOPs to ease interoperability among units and portions of units, train to function in chaos and adversity, and focus on mission accomplishment.
- Attackers will seek to exploit unit boundaries. Commanders mitigate this by selecting boundaries that do not increase coordination issues and ensuring subordinate units' defensive plans align with the higher plan and are coordinated and rehearsed. Commanders also ensure that subordinate commanders physically meet with adjacent, supporting, and supported units. Coordination includes intelligence collection plans, location and composition of security forces, obstacle plans, fire plans, information plans, and air defense coverage areas. If

physically tied in, units strengthen their boundaries by integrating them (e.g., at the boundary, one squad of Company A is positioned in Company B's AO and vice versa).

- Command posts in the defense tend to be more static than in the offense and can expect to be actively targeted by the enemy. Commanders and staffs seek to balance the needs of command and control with survivability and plan for displacement and redundancy. Commanders place themselves at points of friction and where their influence will produce the greatest effect.

Maneuver

Maneuver is an inherent part of any defense and provides units with flexibility and the ability to shape the defensive battle. Typically, the defender uses maneuver to disrupt and delay enemy forces as they pass through the security area, act decisively against them in the MBA, limit their ability to exploit any successes, and create opportunities for exploitation and a transition to the offense after defeating them.

Security. The security area begins at the FEBA and extends as far to the front and flanks as security forces are deployed, typically to the forward boundary of the AO. Forces in the security area conduct reconnaissance to furnish information about the enemy and to delay, deceive, and disrupt the enemy. Units conduct operations in the security area to confuse the enemy about the location and nature of the commander's defensive plan, prevent the enemy from observing preparations and positions, and keep the enemy from delivering observed fire on the positions. Conducted aggressively and effectively, friendly actions in the security area offset the attackers' inherent initiative in choosing the time and place to attack by forcing the attackers to deploy prematurely and disrupting their tempo and formations.

Beginning as the enemy approaches the security area, the defending force acts against the depth of the enemy's formation in both time and space throughout the attack. If practical and acceptable, commanders do not cede the security area to the enemy, but rather use it as maneuver space in which to continue to conduct operations against the attacker. Failing that, supporting arms, the ACE, and information activities continue to range the depth of the enemy, seeking to destroy or disrupt the employment of key units and assets, such as artillery and reserves.

Commanders at all echelons counter enemy ground reconnaissance activities through active and passive measures. From divisions pushing forward independent units to conduct cover operations, to a platoon pushing forward a listening post, commanders must not permit enemy ISR assets to determine the precise location and strength of defensive positions, obstacles, engagement areas, and reserves. While typically associated with the security area, security operations are conducted throughout the battlespace, including rear areas, to destroy enemy reconnaissance efforts. Units implement OPSEC and other force protection measures to deny the enemy information about friendly dispositions. See Chapter 14 for more information on security operations.

Use of Terrain. While the attacker seeks to dictate tempo and the time and place of engagement, the defender typically—even when time is constrained—can choose and occupy the terrain they will defend. The terrain chosen should optimize the defending force's capabilities while minimizing and mitigating those of the attacker. An infantry force defending against an armored threat will seek restrictive terrain that eliminates enemy's mobility and firepower advantages while maximizing the infantry's survivability and maneuverability prospects. Similarly, defenders

seek terrain that offers cover and concealment for themselves while compelling the attacker to cross large open spaces. Beyond merely choosing suitable terrain, the defender uses the time available to add reinforcing obstacles to existing terrain to restrict the attackers' maneuver options. In a similar manner, the defensive force may seek to deny terrain to the enemy in one area to force the attacker into terrain more favorable to the defender. See MCTP 3-34B for information on reinforcing obstacles.

The defending commander selects terrain that allows massing friendly combat power but compels the enemy to choose formations or deployment methods that lead to piecemeal commitment. Commanders accomplish this by analyzing likely avenues of approach, and then using obstacles and defensive techniques to create conditions that disrupt and delay the enemy while maximizing the employment of defensive capabilities (e.g., antitank missiles). This allows an outnumbered defender to create favorable force ratios and employ force multipliers, such as information activities and indirect fires on terms of advantage. Terrain features that favor defensive operations include—

- A series of parallel ridges across the line of hostile advance.
- Unfordable streams, swamps, lakes, and other obstacles on the front and flanks.
- High ground with good observation and long range fields of fire.
- Concealed movement routes immediately behind defensive positions.
- Limited road network in front of the line of contact to confine the enemy to predictable avenues of approach.
- A good road network behind the line of contact that allows forces to reposition as the battle progresses.

Mass and Concentration. Forces seek to deliver overwhelming combat power at the point of decision. Using maneuver in the defense allows the defender to rapidly shift combat power, conduct economy of force operations, and employ a reserve when and where needed. The decisive action in the defense is typically enemy oriented because—

- A key purpose of any defense is to retake the initiative and return to offensive operations.
- Even if the defensive mission is terrain-oriented, the defender must defeat the enemy force to successfully protect or retain that terrain.

In an area defense, commanders choose where to defeat the enemy and build engagement areas that concentrate combat power at that point. In a mobile defense, commanders also choose where to defeat the enemy and use the reserve to deliver the decisive action. Even during a retrograde, commanders choose key points where they can concentrate combat power to disrupt and delay enemy advances or pursuit.

In the defense, there are numerous ways to mass combat power and generate the desired effects. As discussed above, using fires, air support, and information activities throughout the depth of the enemy's advance sets the conditions for decisive action in the close battle. Similarly, a commander may begin employing weapon systems at their maximum range, bringing an ever-increasing volume of firepower as the enemy advances—for example, heavy antitank weapons begin firing, then medium antitank weapons as the range closes, and then light antitank weapons. These types

of techniques seek to disrupt, delay, attrite, and, if possible, defeat the enemy as far forward of friendly defensive positions as possible. They are generally applied against enemy forces of similar or larger size than the defender. The major disadvantage is that these techniques disclose friendly positions early, risking their destruction.

Conversely, defenders may use surprise to mass combat power at the point of decision. While commanders still seek to shape the battle in the security area, they use "massed surprise" fires—the equivalent of a defensive ambush—in the close battle. This method synchronizes the simultaneous delivery of indirect-, direct-, and air-delivered fires, and information activities (e.g., electromagnetic warfare) at once and at a relatively close range. This type of technique is generally applied when the main effort of the defense is a counterattack and the unit seeks to shock and stun the enemy with effective fires prior to delivering the attack. It is also ideal when facing isolated enemy units, when using a reverse-slope defense, or where the enemy is less capable or smaller than the defender. The major disadvantages are the difficulties in synchronizing fires in larger formations and the danger that the enemy's attack's mass and momentum could carry them into friendly positions anyway.

Force Capabilities. The type of defense a commander chooses, and the employment of maneuver in that defense, is based on the nature of the enemy and the type of friendly forces available. Commanders with amphibious assault vehicles should select a defensive SOM that increases their tactical mobility and protection. Combat vehicles provide defending forces with the ability to maneuver, occupy static protective positions, and then return immediately to maneuver. They are ideal for conducting security operations, executing counterattacks, and operating in challenging environments such as CBRN.

Dismounted infantry forces facing a large force seek to base their defenses on close terrain and prepared fighting positions to maximize their advantages in relative mobility and short-range infantry and antiarmor weapons. Commanders can conduct vertical envelopments to exploit exploiting the mobility of this method to rapidly shift combat power, occupy a blocking position, conduct rear area security (e.g., react to an enemy vertical envelopment), reinforce flanks, and reinforce encircled friendly forces. See Chapter 18 and MCTP 3-01B, *Air Assault Operations*, for more information on vertical envelopments.

The speed, mobility, and versatility that the ACE brings to the defense can be crucial in offsetting many of the attackers' advantages. Beyond those tasks often associated with CAS, the ACE can execute screening operations to the front and on the flanks of the defender, range and conduct attacks throughout the depth of the enemy's assault, and cover obstacles by observation and fire in the security area. In addition to typical assault support roles, the ACE can counter the enemy's ability to conduct vertical envelopments, close gaps in the defensive plan before the arrival of maneuver forces and disrupt or delay enemy attempts to exploit success. The role of the ACE beyond delivering fires in support of maneuver should not be overlooked in defensive planning. Commanders must be cognizant of the limited assets and support times of aviation fires platforms to augment the defensive plans of ground units. Units employ direct air support in preparation to shape the fight as far out in front of the defense as possible, while rotary-wing or fixed-wing CAS is employed at decisive times in the close tactical fight.

Assured Mobility. In the defense, all three aspects of assured mobility—mobility, countermobility, and survivability—are present. All demand attention, but with limited time, limited engineering assets, and limits on resources, the commander must establish priorities among the three. Commanders should coordinate closely with the LCE to determine what is possible and balance that against the defensive tactics they choose to use. A dismounted infantry force operating in restrictive terrain against an armored enemy is likely to prioritize countermobility and survivability tasks. A commander choosing to use a mobile defense in which the reserve will conduct a counterattack as the decisive action is likely to prioritize mobility operations. Regardless, the defense places a heavy demand on assured mobility considerations and on Class IV and V materials. See MCTP 3-34A, MCTP 3-34B, and MCTP 3-34C for more information and details on employing assured mobility concepts.

Mobility. Mobility actions include creating, improving, and maintaining routes to support logistic activities, the rapid movement of combat power within the defensive plan, and the maneuver of the reserve. Routes must support the movement of combat and tactical support vehicles. Since the enemy will likely target these routes, critical tasks for engineers include creating bypasses and alternate routes as well as positioning themselves to support mobility requirements during the conduct of the defense. The priority of mobility support is given to routes used by counterattacking forces and then routes used by maneuver forces displacing to subsequent positions. Other mobility actions include coordinating gaps in obstacles and, at higher levels, creating LZs and tactical landing strips to support the defensive plan.

Countermobility. Countermobility efforts focus on denying mobility to the enemy and are balanced against likely, future friendly mobility needs. Destroying a bridge may deny the enemy an avenue of approach, but it also may eliminate counterattack opportunities and complicate future offensive maneuver. Countermobility activities seek to integrate reinforcing obstacles with existing obstacles and terrain to create a greater effect. Tasks include—

- Supporting the commander's shaping and decisive actions by halting, delaying, and disrupting enemy movement.
- Canalizing the enemy into engagement areas.
- Denying avenues of approach.

To do this, Marines use obstacles to create block, turn, disrupt, and fix effects. Obstacles are integrated into observation and fire plans, are concealed whenever possible, and receive priority focus from counterreconnaissance and security activities.

Because the effects that countermobility actions might generate on future mobility, and because of the nature of countermobility resources (e.g., scatterable munitions), obstacle emplacement is tightly controlled. Commanders designate the unit responsible for establishing and securing each obstacle. They could retain execution authority for some obstacles or restrict the use of some obstacles to allow other battlespace activities to take place. The commander allows subordinate commanders some flexibility in selecting the exact obstacle positions. However, all units must know which gaps or lanes—through obstacles and crossing sites—to keep open for movements, as well as the firing and self destruct times of scatterable munitions to prevent delays in movement. Commanders must be specific and clear in their orders for executing reserve obstacles and closing lanes.

Defensive improvement is continuous. Given time and resources, the defending force constructs additional obstacle systems in depth, paying special attention to assailable flanks and rear. The rear is particularly vulnerable if there are noncontiguous AOs or nontraditional threats. Obstacle systems can provide additional protection from enemy attacks by forcing the enemy to spend time and resources to breach or bypass them. The defending commander tries to predict enemy points of breach based on terrain and probable enemy objectives. The defending force develops the means to counter enemy breach attempts, such as coordinated fires, and reestablishes obstacles by using scatterable munitions or other techniques. Forcing the enemy to breach an obstacle can be a technique used to make the enemy vulnerable to destruction.

Tactical and protective obstacles are constructed primarily at company level and below. Small-unit commanders ensure that observation and fires cover all obstacles to hinder breaching. Deliberate protective obstacles are common around fixed sites. Protective obstacles are a key component of survivability actions. They are tied in with FPFs and provide the friendly force with close in protection. Commanders at all echelons track defensive preparations, such as establishing Class IV and V supply points and start or completion times of obstacle belts and groups. The commander and staff plan how the unit will restore obstacles the enemy has breached. Units use artillery, air, or ground systems to reestablish minefields. See Chapter 21 and MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacles and obstacle integration.

Limited Visibility. The attacking forces' ability to create limited-visibility conditions—including thermal neutralizing smoke—and the smoke and dust associated with a battle requires defending units to rapidly modify their defense to one that is effective during limited visibility. Therefore, defenders simultaneously plan for daylight and limited-visibility operations. Whether the attack comes during the day, during the night, or spans the two, the defending force is unlikely to be able to adjust their positions. For example, defenders may choose to position themselves closer to avenues of approach that are more conducive to limited-visibility operations. The enemy will likely take advantage of limited-visibility conditions to attack, conduct reconnaissance operations, breach, or reduce defensive obstacles, conduct infiltrations, or advance closer to friendly positions.

Defending units can expect enemy forces to take advantage of limited-visibility conditions to—

- Conduct reconnaissance operations to locate the defending force's weapons, defensive obstacles, and positions.
- Breach or reduce defensive obstacles.
- Move elements through gaps caused by reduced weapon ranges.

While Marine Corps units have significant night vision capabilities, limitations on fields of view and depth perception place some restrictions on their utility in the defense. Limited-visibility conditions generate psychological effects on the defender and attacker. These conditions affect defensive maneuver in the same manner as they affect offensive maneuver—requiring tighter formations, increasing cross-country navigation difficulties, and slowing movement rates. To overcome potential limited-visibility problems, defensive planning considers the following:

- Focusing long-range detection equipment, such as radar, sensors, and thermal-imaging devices, on well-defined avenues of approach. Employing multiple means in the same area of interest improves the likelihood of detection.
- Employing combat power along terrain features the enemy is likely to use for orientation in the darkness, such as wood lines and water courses.

- Increasing the numbers of infantry, scouts, observation posts, combat patrols, etc., deployed forward and between defensive positions to detect and slow enemy movement (particularly enemy infiltration attempts) and protect obstacles against enemy breaching attempts.
- Employing obstacles and early warning devices to slow the advancing enemy and alert defenders.
- Rehearsing displacement and movement plans. Defending units moving over rehearsed routes should be able to move faster than an enemy force moving through unfamiliar terrain.
- Planning for illumination on or behind likely engagement areas to silhouette enemy forces while leaving defenders in shadows and darkness.
- Ensuring that any adjustments to the defense for limited-visibility conditions are completely reversed by daylight and vice versa.

When the friendly units have superior night-vision technology, commanders can use smoke and bispectral (blocking visible and infrared light) obscuration. While using smoke as a redundant targeting mark is a conventional use, other uses include denying the enemy the ability to determine and target friendly positions or use their target-acquisition optics and impairing the enemy's ability to navigate and maintain formations. As with all smoke and thermal obscurants, proper placement is critical to avoid generating limited-visibility effects against friendly forces. See MCTP 3-10E for more information on using smoke as an obscurant.

Enemy Vertical Envelopment. Some potential enemies plan to use airborne and air assault units, in various numbers and sizes, against defending US and allied forces. Defeating these enemies begins with the MAGTF taking steps to counter them before they launch and during their movement to the drop zone (DZ) or LZ. Ground combat element and rear area security commanders, when faced with a potential vertical envelopment, rely on IPB to determine, and prioritize each potential DZ or LZ. They establish systematic surveillance of these areas to warn of enemy attempts to insert forces. Units assigned to defend potential landing sites position themselves at the most likely points of enemy entry, develop positions at other sites, and rehearse movement and occupation tasks. Weapons are positioned to maximize the coverage of DZs and LZs while minimizing battlespace geometry issues. Defenders develop fire support plans that make use of conventional munitions and scatterable munitions. Engineers place obstacles on sites of potential enemy vertical envelopment, and commanders consider using countermobility operations along the routes the enemy will most likely use to depart their DZs and LZs.

If enemy forces successfully execute a vertical envelopment, the defensive response must contain and counterattack the enemy force before they can become organized and reinforce. The MAGTF isolates the enemy by helping to reestablish air superiority while indirect fires and CAS fix and disrupt the enemy in place. Security forces gain and maintain contact, developing and shaping the situation for deploying the main effort. The main body, if not already in position, deploys to contain and fix enemy forces, and then executes offensive operations to defeat them. If the enemy is successful in consolidating and reinforcing, the defensive priority shifts to containing the enemy and creating the conditions for eventual offensive action. If an enemy vertical envelopment is a likely COA, commanders must consider how they will shape their battlespace and organize and resource subordinate units, considering that vertical envelopment will likely be conducted in conjunction with other offensive actions. It is probably beyond the capability of units at the regiment-level and below to defend against both a ground assault and a vertical envelopment.

Fires

In the defense, units use the fires warfighting function to neutralize, suppress, or destroy enemy forces; to delay or disrupt the enemy's ability to execute a given COA; and to enhance the effects of massed direct fires. Fires and information activities support the commander's decisive and shaping actions.

Indirect Fires and Joint Fires. Defending commanders combine information activities with indirect fires and CAS to shape the battle and support the main effort. The defensive SOM uses fires and air support to execute the single-battle construct. Not only do they conduct shaping actions as the enemy advances, but even as the battle moves into the MBA, indirect fires and air support continue to target and defeat critical enemy assets, reserves, and follow-on forces throughout the battlespace, conducting simultaneous actions that defeat the attacker's bid for victory while contributing to the defender's main effort. Indirect, joint, and air-delivered fires enable units to generate effects across the entire enemy force at once—not just provide sequential responses to their advance.

Indirect fires have the greatest effects on the enemy when they are synchronized with air-delivered fires, direct fires, and the defensive SOM. Such integration must take place from the beginning of planning. To accomplish this, the defending force ensures that all elements of the fire support chain—from joint fire observers to naval gunfire liaison officers—understand the commander's intent for fires and the defensive SOM. The force distributes fire support assets throughout the AO, closely linking weapons systems with redundant target acquisition means (e.g., UAS, ground reconnaissance assets). Fire support control measures are permissive and placed as close to friendly positions as possible to facilitate engagement. High-payoff targets and high-value targets along with their engagement priorities are determined through the lens of the single battle.

Air- and ground-delivered fires contribute significantly to the commander's shaping actions because of their range and flexibility. Commanders use fire support assets to disrupt the enemy's preparations, such as attacking likely enemy assembly areas, logistic hubs, and interdicting enemy movement. Fires support friendly reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance efforts and high-payoff targets are attacked continuously and as early as possible.

Commanders use counterfires against enemy fire support assets as shaping actions, and the timing of counterfires requires consideration. The advantages of engaging in the counterfire battle early usually outweigh the risks to the defending force, particularly when the defender has superior fire support. However, when commanders are forced to balance limited fire support resources against other shaping requirements or are concerned about the survivability of those assets, they may choose to delay counterfires until the enemy enters the MBA. Having friendly fire support assets that can rapidly shoot and move and effective counterreconnaissance efforts are other important considerations in counterfire timing.

The commander and staff plan fires to support counterreconnaissance activities and the security force. These fires should assist in destroying enemy reconnaissance assets, deceiving the enemy regarding the location of the MBA, and supporting the security force commander's SOM—specifically supporting canalization, disruption, delay, and the security force's withdrawal

criteria and plan. The latter, to include battle handover to units in the MBA, requires detailed consideration and rehearsal. To deconflict battlespace geometry, commanders use NFAs over reconnaissance and security force elements.

Indirect, joint, and air-delivered fire planning for the close battle in the MBA focus on disrupting the enemy's attack (e.g., breaking tempo, fragmenting MDCA efforts), preventing the enemy from massing combat power, and creating vulnerabilities for the main effort to exploit. Commanders accomplish this by integrating fire support with direct fires and achieving MDCA effects at critical points, such as choke points, obstacles, and engagement areas. Fires in the MBA support rearward passage of lines for the security force, and forward passage of lines for reserves. Fire support assets can close obstacle gaps and fortify breached obstacles. Other fire planning considers—

- Suppressing enemy direct and indirect fire systems and air defense assets to support friendly defensive maneuver, particularly counterattacks, disengagements, and repositioning.
- Isolating enemy forces that have penetrated the defensive area from their reserves and follow-on forces.
- Allowing for flexibility in reallocating and reprioritizing fire support assets and targets to respond to the enemy's main effort, counter unexpected enemy actions or success, and support friendly exploitation of opportunities.

Air and Missile Defense. As in the offense, the GCE's primary means of air defense are passive air defense measures and the ACE's execution of antiair operations in accordance with the joint force air component commander's counterair plans. The goal of such plans is to develop an environment in which the defender can operate unimpeded by interference from enemy air, missile, or UAS threats. When conducting an area defense, commanders can easily integrate the defensive SOM with air defense planning, usually prioritizing the main effort. When conducting mobile or retrograde defenses in the presence of an enemy air threat, commanders must choose if and when to prioritize air defense coverage of supporting effort, main effort, and reserves.

The GCE's active antiair measures employ small arms and are most effective against unmanned aircraft or enemy rotary-wing aircraft. However, the GCE's primary contributions to antiair operations are passive air defense measures. The two types of passive air defense are attack avoidance and damage-limiting measures; both rely on cover, concealment, and deception.

Attack avoidance focuses on not being seen and, therefore, not targeted by enemy air threats. Avoiding aerial observation requires the same skills and principles as avoiding ground observation—hiding, blending, and disguising positions by selecting advantageous positions, exercising camouflage discipline, and constructing material to augment existing concealment. Damage-limiting measures of passive air defense are similar to those used to protect against indirect fire threats—dispersion, protective construction, and cover. See MCTP 3-01A, *Scouting and Patrolling*, for more information on camouflage and concealment, and see MCTP 10-10B for more information on air defense.

Information Activities

The information activities and planning considerations for the defense are similar to those discussed in Chapter 3. The commander and staff still analyze and determine those decision makers, whether individuals, groups, or populations, that require influence to support the defensive SOM. Depending on the defensive action, information activities range from degrading enemy C2 capabilities to directing the movement of civilians to evacuation centers.

Commanders still ensure the control of electromagnetic emissions and frequency hopping. However, where possible, they use closed fiber-optic systems to protect communications, computers, and other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems.

Commander's may find discernibly different relationships among local populations when conducting offensive maneuver or maintaining a defense. These relationships can be driven by numerous factors, to include history, culture, recent actions, and politics. This issue is more than one of military expediency—such as keeping dislocated civilians off routes critical to military operations or relinquishing some of the territory of friendly populations—it is also an issue of politics and emotion. These considerations might constrain available COAs. For example, the military may not be allowed to trade space (and the friendly population associated with it) for time. Regardless of whether such constraints exist, commanders must synchronize their information capabilities to support defensive COAs that maximize the probability of success while minimizing or mitigating the effects on the friendly populace.

Intelligence

During planning, the commander and staff use the IPB process and implement an intelligence collection plan to learn and understand the terrain, identify probable enemy objectives and approaches, and develop appropriate NAIs and TAIs. (See MCRP 2-10B.1 for a detailed discussion of terrain analysis.) Commanders study how the enemy tends to operate, to include patterns they may have established. Commanders consider enemy capabilities, such as their ability to conduct air attacks or infiltrate forces behind friendly units, and the presence of follow-on enemy forces capable of continuing or exploiting attacks. Commanders also consider enemy vulnerabilities to friendly actions such as counterattacks, interdiction, information activities, and canalization by obstacles.

The commander's IPB and intelligence collections should plan to identify as many of the following requirements as early as possible:

- Locations, dispositions, composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the advancing enemy force.
- Location of critical enemy capabilities—C2 nodes; engineer units and assets; indirect fire weapon systems and artillery control and counterbattery assets; air defense units; information assets; and logistic resources and units.
- Likely enemy operational points of interest—reconnaissance objectives or goals, possible assembly areas, potential air assault or airborne areas, staging areas for follow-on forces, withdrawal and reinforcement routes.
- Potential enemy weaknesses, including timetables for most likely COAs, gaps between enemy formations, assailable flanks, and other enemy vulnerabilities.

- Civil considerations—locations, numbers, and intentions of civilian populations, to include likely routes and directions of movement for dislocated persons.
- Weather and terrain effects on current and projected operations.

Because commanders must "see" the enemy throughout defensive operations, commanders ensure that their intelligence collection plan will survive contact with the enemy so they can acquire needed information. This requires establishing redundancy among ISR resources and providing for their resupply and reconstitution.

Logistics

Force sustainment in the defense priorities for the defending force are typically obtaining ammunition and the materials needed to construct obstacles and defensive positions. Commanders ensure that their logistic officers and supporting logistic units understand the commander's intent, the defensive SOM, and branches and sequels—particularly rapid transitions to offensive operations. To both limit the risk to CSS units and increase logistic responsiveness, the commander considers stockpiling and caching critical supply items within the security area and MBA—including destruction plans, if necessary, to deny their use to the enemy. Commanders can apply this concept to maintenance as well—using well-supplied, forward-positioned, multifunctional maintenance contact teams to minimize the risk to logistic units while enabling the quick repair and return of many types of equipment without the need for evacuation.

Supply. Units err on the side of maintaining full stocks of supply items in case enemy actions disrupt resupply. They conduct resupply during times when an enemy attack is least likely. This might or might not be during limited-visibility conditions, depending on enemy capabilities. Although logistic commanders are responsible for the defense of their units, defending commanders often use camouflage or smoke to aid resupply and reduce the chances of detection.

The defending force must not underestimate the transportation, manpower, and lead times associated with supplying construction materials for defensive preparations and for constructing those positions and obstacles. Planners may have to factor logistic limitations and strong points into their defensive SOM. If a commander must retain critical terrain and a strong point is not logistically feasible, then the commander develops other defensive types and methods to accomplish the mission.

Medical Support. Defending forces generally receive more rapid and responsive medical support than attacking forces because their relatively static position allows more time to prepare for casualties. Medical planning includes preparing for robust use of ambulances and ambulance exchange points to quickly evacuate casualties to places of safety. Depending on the nature of the enemy threat (e.g., a significant air defense capability that hinders air evacuation), higher levels of trauma care may be pushed forward to stabilize patients before further evacuation to definitive care is possible. Commanders consider building in "reserve" capacity to allow for rapid response to mass casualties—such as extra, pre-staged ambulances.

Security. Placing and moving logistic resources in the defense requires balancing responsive support and exposure to risk. Commanders include CSS units into the defensive plan, factoring in placement, rear area terrain management, movement planning, and traffic control. Ideally, commanders seek to maximize CSS capabilities of units while minimizing their security

requirements. A combat logistics battalion that is spending most of its time in self-defense will not have the time or resources to efficiently exercise their functions. Conversely, trying to create a risk-free environment for that battalion requires assigning combat power away from the defense or positioning the battalion too far away from potential threats to be effective.

Logistics security requirements vary with types of defenses as follows:

- Because area defense security attempts to check or limit enemy advances in terms of terrain, logistic functions may be placed closer to the FEBA (remaining deconflicted from the movement requirements of maneuver units).
- A mobile defense uses terrain as maneuver space; commanders must simultaneously protect logistic functions from enemy penetration and support an active, maneuver-based defense. This requires task organizing and pushing specific logistic functions forward in direct support of maneuver elements, while emplacing higher-echelon support deeper into the rear area.
- Retrograde defense strives to provide maneuver units with the maximum resupply and support possible before an operation commences, and then falls steadily back on safeguarded logistic units far to the rear in new, planned defensive positions. In a manner similar to the way some artillery batteries provide fire support while others displace, CSS units can displace rearward in echelon with maneuver forces, providing continuous support though accepting greater risk. For more information on tactical logistics, see MCTP 3-40B.

Health Services. Planning for health services in the defense in terms of evacuation routes and ambulance exchange points varies with different types of defensive operations and enemy capabilities. An area defense conducted in an urban environment most likely precludes aerial casualty evacuation at or near the point of injury. Similarly, the vulnerability of LOCs in an envelopment might preclude ground casualty evacuation. Planners must coordinate and integrate CASEVAC with casualty collection points and treatment plans across the warfighting functions.

When designating a casualty collection point, the unit commander determines whether medical personnel will be at the casualty collection points, considering the risk versus the availability of personnel. Medical personnel might not be available to staff these points; therefore, combat lifesavers and ambulatory patients might be required to perform self-aid, buddy aid, or combat life support. The casualty collection points should be identified on operational overlays and planned by phase for operations. The casualty collection point planning considerations include site security, proximity to the landing zone, cover and concealment, and access to evacuation routes. Leaders should provide guidance on aid and litter teams, distribution of casualty equipment, and proper avoidance of choke points. Medical personnel are responsible for activity inside the casualty collection point and the supported unit leaders are responsible for activity outside the casualty collection points.

To establish the tactical casualty flow, leaders must be able to answer the following questions:

- Where will the casualties evacuation site be located?
- Will ground, air, or water assets conduct evacuation to the casualty collection point?
- How will evacuation be conducted to the casualty collection points?
- What are the distances and travel times?

- Would casualties be able to make it that far? If not, what parts of the plan need to be corrected?
- Who will evacuate the casualties (CASEVAC or MEDEVAC)?
- Are medical assets positioned to ensure continuity of care?

For more information on tactical casualty treatment, see MCTP 3-40B.

Force Protection

Unit survivability is critical in any defensive operation. Force protection preserves subordinate unit capabilities. Commanders remain attuned to changes in enemy tactics and adapt force and individual protective measures accordingly. In the defense, commanders consider—

- Conducting personnel recovery in accordance with METT-T. Commanders ensure there are reasonable plans—such as designating rally points—for units and personnel to execute unassisted recovery operations in chaotic and rapidly changing ground situations.
- Integrating the elements of battlespace geometry into the defense SOM to avoid friendly fire incidents—particularly during counterattacks and mobile and retrograde types of defenses.
- Conducting operational security from information protection to counterreconnaissance and from camouflage to antiterrorism.
- Mitigating and operating in a CBRN environment within the METT-T construct.
- Adhering to general safety guidelines, to include conducting daily battle rhythm activities in limited-visibility conditions and during construction of defensive positions.
- Allowing for explosive ordnance disposal, with a special emphasis on force awareness of the quantities and locations of unexploded munitions in and around defensive positions as a result of enemy indirect fire.

Survivability. Mobility in the defense focuses on enabling units to move rapidly between positions and engage the enemy from those positions. Defensive planning must strive for maximum survivability, making every attempt to mitigate enemy detection and safeguard the Marines. This is particularly true of units assigned terrain-focused missions. Beyond the construction of rudimentary individual- and single-weapon fighting positions, the defense primarily relies on engineer support. In defensive planning, commanders must carefully consider engineering priorities—to include construction and material limitations—in prioritizing not only among mobility, countermobility, and survivability tasks, but within those tasks as well. A battalion commander's priorities could be overcoming an obstacle in an engagement area, supporting the battle position of the main effort overlooking that engagement area, or improving the route for a counterattack force, addressing other positions and other obstacles only if time permits.

Survivability tasks include using engineer equipment to assist in preparing and constructing trenches, command post shelters, as well as radar, artillery, and combat vehicle fighting positions. They address protecting supply stocks against blast, shrapnel, incendiaries, and CBRN contamination. Commanders provide guidance on the level of protection, such as hull defilade or overhead cover, system priorities, and early use of specialized engineer systems that can construct survivable positions. Commanders also address standards, such as overhead protection against 82 mm mortars, while engineers advise the commander on the costs in terms of time and material to meet those standards. The commander's priority in engineer survivability planning

during defensive operations is determining the most appropriate locations and standards for the construction of survivable positions. MCTP 3-34C provides additional information about constructing and maintaining survivable positions.

In accordance with METT-T, units can conduct survivability moves between their primary, alternate, and supplementary positions. A survivability move involves rapidly displacing a unit, command post, or facility in response to direct and indirect fires, the approach of an enemy unit, a natural phenomenon, or as a proactive measure based on intelligence, meteorological data, and risk analysis of enemy capabilities and intentions (including weapons of mass destruction).

DEFENSIVE FORMS

Commanders arrange and employ forces to solve the tactical problem. The defensive forms provide commanders with the tools they need, in the combinations they see fit, to execute an area, mobile, retrograde defense, or counterlanding. Each defensive form—sector, battle position, strong point, linear, perimeter, and reverse slope—has its own purpose and unique considerations.

Sector Defense

Commanders incorporate sectors into their defensive SOM when they want to provide subordinate commanders maximum latitude to accomplish assigned tasks. For instance, a battalion commander might task a company with delaying the enemy and then provide them a defensive sector in which to generate that effect. The designated unit's company commander might choose to use a combination of ambushes and battle positions within the assigned sector to create the delay. The extent of the assigned sector is based on METT-T but should be no larger than what the unit can influence. Sectors are not the same as AOs because units assigned sectors have none of the responsibilities associated with AOs. For this reason, defensive sectors are typically assigned only to company-sized units or smaller.

Battle Position Defense

As discussed earlier in this chapter, battle positions are both a defensive method and an intent graphic that depicts the location and general orientation of a defending force. Commanders employ this defensive form when their defensive SOM requires the force, or a portion of the force, to orient relative to terrain. For example, a company may occupy a battle position to disrupt, delay, or block enemy movement along an avenue of approach to set the conditions for the rest of the battalion to counterattack. Or that same company might occupy a battle positions as the battalion's main effort to concentrate fires in an engagement area. Commanders employing battle positions as part of their SOM must consider the time and material necessary to prepare them.

Strong Point Defense

Commanders establish a strong point when the mission requires retaining terrain indefinitely and when it is possible that the defending force may be isolated for periods of time by enemy action. The physical position of a strong point is considered a technique of battle position, but its unique purpose makes it a valuable tool when the defending force must maintain control of key terrain. Strong points are labor and material intensive, requiring significant investment in engineering resources and support. They may be linked together to form fortified areas, or they may serve as the anchor for a mobile defense.

Linear Defense

Commanders use the linear defensive form in conjunction with linear obstacles (e.g., ridgelines, rivers, valleys), either with or without man-made obstacle augmentation. Although the linear defensive form may be incorporated into any type of defense, it is typically associated with area defenses because the commander accepts less risk by not allowing the enemy to cross the obstacle. Forces conducting this defensive method either defend along or behind the obstacle depending on the larger defensive SOM.

An area defense is typically used to defend forward along a linear obstacle. Security forces conduct shaping actions forward of the obstacle, conducting a rearward passage of lines while units in the MBA use the linear form to conduct the decisive action. Any enemy attempts to penetrate or seize a bridgehead should be isolated and counterattacked. A bridgehead is, "an area of ground held or to be gained on the enemy's side of an obstacle" (*USMC Dictionary*). A mobile defense is typically used to defend behind a linear obstacle. The commander tasks minimal forces to conduct the linear form. They act as a fixing force, using the obstacle to help them delay, disrupt, and canalize the enemy advance, leaving the enemy vulnerable to a counterattack by the main effort. The commander may counterattack penetrations or bridgeheads quickly or may lure the enemy further into the defensive battlespace to generate greater destruction.

Because it is extremely difficult to deploy in strength along the entire length of a linear obstacle, the defending force must conduct economy of force measures in some areas. Consequently, the linear form is most effective when used in conjunction with others forms. For example, commanders might use sector defensive forms in the security area to disrupt and attrite the enemy, the linear form to fix the enemy, and a defense in depth to contain and eliminate penetrations. Failure to work in these types of defenses leaves the defending force vulnerable to enemy penetrations or bridgeheads the defending force cannot contain.

Perimeter Defense

The perimeter defensive form is a tool applied to all military operations. In terms of the defense, it is useful in all three defense types and can be used in conjunction with any of the defensive forms. A perimeter defense orients in all directions. It is usually employed by battalions or smaller, though it can also be employed by larger units executing base security functions. Commanders employ the perimeter defensive method in the following situations:

- When holding key terrain (e.g., a strong point) or protecting important assets.
- When providing for immediate self-protection or when bypassed by advancing enemy forces.
- When the defensive SOM does not tie in adjacent units physically.

A primary characteristic of a perimeter defense is a secure inner area with most of the combat power located on the perimeter. The security area is maintained through aggressive patrolling and security operations. Another characteristic is the ease of access for resupply operations. The commander coordinates direct and indirect fire plans to prevent friendly fire with neighboring units and noncombatants. Usually, the reserve centrally locates to react to a penetration of the perimeter at any point.

Perimeters vary in shape depending on the terrain and situation. If the commander determines the most probable direction of enemy attack, the part of the perimeter covering that approach may be reinforced with additional resources. The perimeter shape conforms to the terrain features that best use friendly observation and fields of fire. Commanders can increase the effectiveness of the perimeter by tying it into a natural obstacle, such as a river, which allows defending units to concentrate their combat power in more threatened areas.

Force Organization. The characteristics of the defense apply to the perimeter defensive method in the same manner as any other type or method of defense. Units using this defensive method have security, main battle, and rear areas. They seek to shape operations in the security area and provide depth and mutual support within the MBA—the perimeter. The commander uses security forces, MBA forces, and a reserve. Depending on METT-T, the defending force either employs all their combat power in one of two techniques.

In the first technique, commanders place all subordinate units in positions along the perimeter (see Figure 8-1). The perimeter is divided into subordinate unit AOs with boundaries and contact points. Each subordinate unit provides their own security force for patrolling and other security operations. The commander either constitutes a reserve in the center or uses the least engaged unit. This force organization maximizes combat power on the perimeter, reduces the possibility of friendly fire incidents within the perimeter, and creates depth through in the security area. Risks in this technique include a disjointed effort in the security area and ineffective reactions to enemy penetrations of the perimeter.

In the second technique, commanders seek to create greater depth in the defense by employing inner and outer perimeters (see Figure 8-1). For example, the regimental commander can assign each battalion an AO, and direct them to employ their companies in a “two up, one back” technique that creates an inner and outer perimeter and provides depth within the position itself. The inner perimeter provides the reserve, the outer perimeter the main effort, and the regiment’s third battalion can serve as the security force.

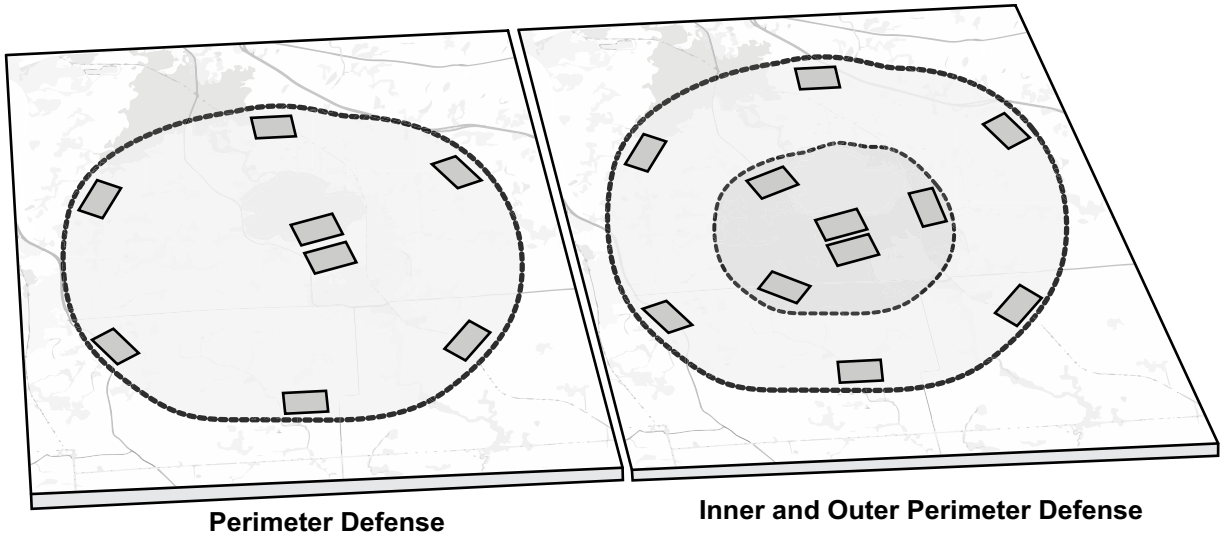


Figure 8-1. Perimeter Defense Techniques.

Control Measures. The commander in a perimeter defense designates the trace of the perimeter, battle positions, contact points, and lateral and forward boundaries. The commander can use engagemnent areas, TRPs, FPFs, and principal direction of fire as fire control measures. The commander designates checkpoints, contact points, passage points, and passage routes for use by supporting efforts conducting reconnaissance and security operations.

Planning a Perimeter Defense. Defending commanders face four significant decisions when planning perimeter positions. First, placing the position where it enables units to accomplish the mission. Second, determining the most likely enemy COAs, as the enemy is unlikely to attack from all directions at once. Third, creating the position making the best use of the terrain available. Fourth, locating the position where resupply is possible. For example, a commander tasked with defending a critical highway junction might have the unit establish a perimeter defense on high ground overlooking the junction. The position allows the junction to be controlled by fire while the high ground offers the best terrain available and provides a relatively secure LZ for resupply.

Commanders forming a perimeter do not merely cede the security area to the enemy. The success of a perimeter defense primarily relies on the defensive depth, early warning, and shaping space the security area offers. At a minimum, commanders typically employ their organic reconnaissance assets, such as the scout-sniper platoon, to provide early warning and counterreconnaissance and to disrupt enemy plans (e.g., emplacing mortars). Commanders may augment this effort with sensors, target acquisition radar systems, aerial surveillance, squad-size or smaller observation posts, ambushes along likely avenues of approach, and aggressive patrolling. Commanders may also choose to create independent security forces that operate outside of the perimeter to deny advantageous terrain to the enemy and create the conditions necessary for the main effort's decisive action.

When planning the defensive SOM, commanders and staff account for the terrain, internal tactical mobility, and likely enemy COAs. In open terrain, defending forces can cover physical gaps in the perimeter with fires. In restrictive terrain, defending forces compensate for restricted fields of fire and observation by narrowing frontages, shrinking the size of the perimeter, and physically linking adjacent units. This may require commanders to organize their forces with all combat power forward.

The commander considers tactical mobility requirements internal to the position to enable the rapid movement of forces and the reserve (particularly when using inner and outer perimeters), to create depth within the perimeter, and to enable the execution of basic logistic functions free from enemy observation and interference. This is particularly applicable to units employing combat vehicles that need to consider the creation of alternate, supplementary, and hide positions.

The defending force decides upon the most likely enemy COAs to create a defensive SOM and allocate combat power accordingly. While the perimeter defensive method provides for all-around security, the defender accepts significant risk by trying to defend everywhere equally. The force uses METT-T to determine likely enemy actions, counter them, and seek opportunities for offensive action. Accordingly, commanders integrate obstacles with fires and observation and seek to enable enough space within the perimeter for defensive maneuver, such as alternate positions for antiarmor weapons and proper placement for the reserve. Fire support planning is typical of the defense. If the defending force is isolated, commanders seek to use external fire support assets

before internal resources. Defensive positions within the perimeter are placed to decrease the ability of the enemy to simultaneously suppress them with the same fires (i.e., forcing the enemy to split their forces to deal with friendly positions vice allowing them to mass combat power).

Executing a Perimeter Defense. The defending force begins the defensive fight by executing shaping actions in the security area. Depending on resources that are available, the defender works to defeat enemy reconnaissance efforts, disrupt enemy movement, and deny the enemy's use of likely support-by-fire and assault positions. As the attack progresses, reconnaissance and security assets use supporting arms and the commander employs information activities to further break up enemy formations and tempo.

Attacks against the perimeter can consist of anything from enemy long range sniper, mortar, and rocket fire attacks to suicide demolition squads and attacks by enemy ground and air forces. Regardless, friendly supporting arms, antiarmor, and crew-served weapons leverage natural and reinforcing obstacles to engage the enemy at long ranges. If the attack comes within small-arms range, other weapons on the perimeter engage the enemy and FPFs are used, if required. Friendly forces maneuver within the perimeter, using other positions to increase their chances of surviving, limit enemy options, and counter threats. Should the enemy penetrate the perimeter, the reserve blocks the penetration or counterattacks to restore the primary defensive positions. If the commander uses an unengaged force to constitute a new reserve, the commander must retain sufficient forces to defend the vacated sector, unless the situation forces the commander to assume that degree of risk.

After successfully defending the perimeter, the unit pursues withdrawing enemy forces, as able, either physically or through fires. If defending forces do not transition to the offense, they immediately begin to reconstitute the defense and reestablish the security area. The staff modifies the defensive SOM as much as practicable to present the enemy a different tactical problem should they choose to attack again.

Reverse Slope Defense

The reverse slope defensive form is used in conjunction with other defensive forms when the commander wishes to mask the main defensive positions from enemy observation and fires. Defenders at the battalion level and below typically use this form when the enemy has a qualitative or quantitative advantage that makes a forward slope defense untenable, when defenders seek to use surprise in conjunction with the decisive action, or both. Additional considerations include the following:

- The crest and forward slope offer little or no cover and concealment, was lost, or was not seized.
- Friendly units on the flanks can adequately cover the forward slope.
- The defending force is in contact with the enemy and is forced to assume a hasty defense.

A successful reverse slope defense relies upon denying the enemy the topographical crest. Although the defender may not occupy the crest in strength, controlling the crest by fire is essential for success. The goal is to force enemy forces to try and cross the exposed crest while denying them effective use of their supporting arms against a defender located on the reverse and counter slopes. Firing from covered and concealed positions in these areas, using obstacles to maximize effects, and having the ability to maneuver that a forward slope defense would deny

them, the defending force maintains a distinct advantage over enemy forces exposed on the topographical crest. Enemy forces that do push forward of the crest remain exposed, disoriented, and canalized into unfamiliar terrain, kill zones, and engagement areas.

Commanders choosing to use the reverse slope defensive method accept risk in limiting their observation and ability to engage the enemy forward of the topographical crest. Often, the best terrain to employ obstacles and create engagement areas is forward and once security forces withdraw, the enemy is largely unimpeded in conducting maneuver and preparations for their assault. Commanders must also consider that surprise is one fundamental advantage of this defensive method, and once the enemy overcomes that effect, the defending force may be at a considerable disadvantage. Finally, a reverse slope defense allows the enemy the advantage of attacking downhill. See Figure 8-2 for slope components.

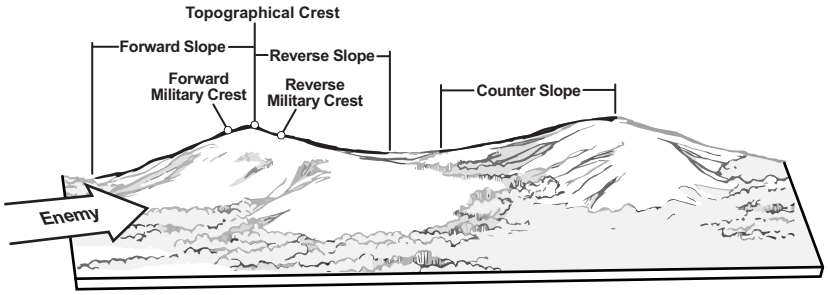


Figure 8-2. Slope Components.

Force Organization. When executing the reverse slope defensive form, the commander uses the security, MBA forces, and reserve forces associated with the defense. The security force executes reconnaissance tasks, placing elements where they can observe the forward slope, the terrain forward of it, and likely enemy avenues of approach. Other security elements attack enemy reconnaissance assets, delay the enemy, disorganize the enemy's attack, and deceive the enemy regarding the exact location of the main defense. The defending force can source assets from the reserve to occupy observation posts near or forward of the topographical crest to provide long range observation of the enemy's flanks and front.

The MBA forces position themselves to mass fires on enemy forces attempting to cross the topographical crest. The MBA forces capitalize on the characteristics of the defense, maneuver, terrain, and multiple positions to prevent the enemy from penetrating or effectively targeting friendly positions. Figure 8-3 depicts the use of an oblique defilade to ensure coverage of the crest. The force in the MBA assists the security force in maintaining observation and fires over the forward slope as long as possible to disrupt enemy attempts to seize and push beyond the topographical crest. Whenever possible, commanders use other maneuver elements to support units in reverse slope positions by placing them where they can observe and generate effects on the forward slope.

The reserve counterattacks enemy penetrations, maneuvers against exposed enemy flanks, and can serve as the decisive action of the defense. Depending on METT-T and acceptable risk, the defending force can employ the reserve in limited attacks across the topographical crest to disrupt enemy forces on the forward slope. Commanders might place the reserve on the counter slope to support the main battle force by fire or by maneuver, if the terrain allows.

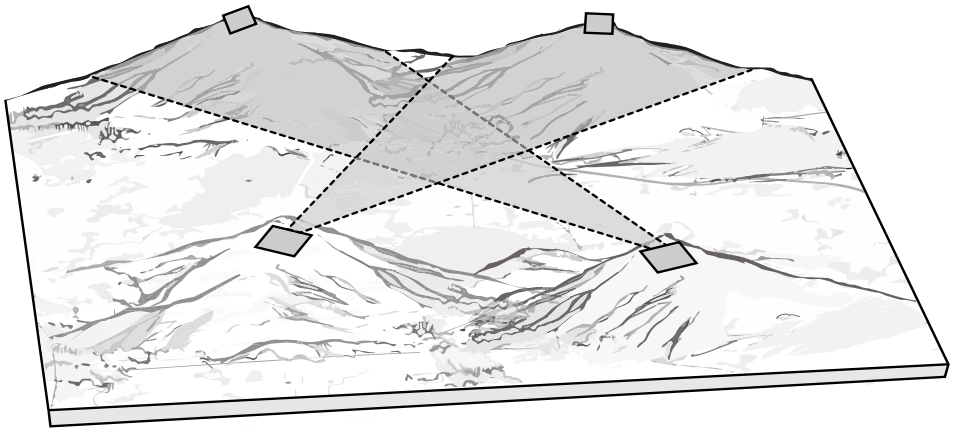


Figure 8-3. Oblique Defilade.

Control Measures. Defensive control measures introduced in previous chapters apply equally to the reverse slope defense. Units establish engagement areas and obstacles on the reverse slope. The topographical crest usually marks the far edge of the engagement area. The defending force must dominate the topographic crest by fires to prevent the enemy from successfully engaging it.

Executing a Reverse Slope Defense. As with any impending attack, friendly security forces try to observe and disrupt enemy preparations while at the same time deny the enemy's the ability to do the same. As the enemy advances, security forces use any combination of maneuver and observation to disrupt, delay, and canalize the enemy through fires and combat. Security force commanders endeavor to operate in a manner that does not disclose the main defensive positions and make a determined effort to leave forces in place to observe the forward slope.

As the enemy advance reaches the forward slope, the security force or the main battle forces establish observation of the enemy and use indirect fires to delay, disrupt, and attrite the enemy. If it aligns with the METT-T, commanders use the forward slope positions to provide cover while they withdraw to engage the enemy deep and as a tactical ruse to further mislead the enemy as to the location of the main defensive positions. As the enemy nears the topographical crest, commanders use integrated obstacles and direct and indirect fires to prevent enemy occupation and use of the crest. Observers use indirect fires on the forward slope to further break up the enemy's momentum and attempts to recover and reorganize.

As the enemy attack stalls and hesitates on the topographical crest, commanders might choose to employ the reserve. The reserve can: provide additional fires from the counter slope to support the main effort; maneuver to enemy flanks and attack by fire; or counterattack and expel the enemy from the crest. Commanders may also use the reserve to prolong the effectiveness of the reverse slope defense, using the reserve to counter enemy attempts to bypass the defense.

TRANSITIONS

Units conduct transitions when—

- The mission changes.
- The enemy's actions or TTP change.

- Additional functions are added to a unit.
- The environment changes (e.g., urban to rural).
- The AO changes.
- Task organization changes.

Successful defensive operations transition to offensive operations or stabilization activities. Unsuccessful defenses transition to other types of defenses, such as a retrograde.

Transition to Offensive Operations

A unit transitions from the defense to the offense because they are ordered to do so, have planned to do so after some defensive criteria is met, or unexpected events present an opportunity to do so. Ideally, commanders consider a transition to the offense as part of their defensive planning, anticipating when and where the enemy will reach a culminating point or become vulnerable to offensive action. Although they must guard against enemy deception, Marines look for indicators of such conditions, to include the following:

- Enemy forces begin to transition to the defense.
- Enemy forces suffer heavy losses.
- Enemy forces are committed piecemeal in continued enemy attacks.
- Enemy reserve forces are identified among attacking forces.
- Examination of captured or killed enemy personnel and captured or destroyed enemy equipment and supplies shows that the enemy force is unable to adequately sustain itself.
- The tempo of enemy operations decreases.
- Local counterattacks meet with unexpected success.

To successfully transition to the offense after achieving initial success, the friendly force must establish momentum and capitalize on both the psychological boost that friendly forces receive, and the despair and confusion enemy forces endure. Although there will be an inevitable pause during the transition, commanders must minimize transition time to prevent the enemy from establishing an effective defense. Commanders achieve this by pushing security forces forward during the transition to maintain contact with and pressure on the enemy and avoid enemy deception operations. Simultaneously, commanders redeploy and reorganize for the attack with actions such as moving fire support assets forward and transitioning engineer priorities from countermobility and survivability to mobility.

Commanders also plan to transition their logistic effort, shifting focus from supporting the defense of a known location to supporting advance and maneuver (e.g., shifting from stockpiling construction materials to pushing fuel forward). Planning for the transition from defense to offense also enables CSS assets to take advantage of the time available to conduct tasks such as deferred equipment maintenance and medical treatment that further aid the offense.

Units can use two basic techniques when transitioning to the offense. The first and generally preferred technique is to attack using forces not previously committed to the defense. These forces may come from the reserve, be pulled from units not in contact, or be formed with reinforcements. These previously uncommitted forces are likely well-organized, rested, and in a position to plan

and prepare, and combat ready for offensive action. Their use mitigates delays that can occur when the main battle force is still decisively engaged. When employing these units, the commander will have to adopt economy of force operations or temporarily abandon AOs and accept risk to generate sufficient combat power.

The second technique is to transition to offensive operations using the currently defending forces. This technique generally has the advantage of being more rapidly executed and thus be more likely to catch the enemy by surprise. The speed gained by this type of execution results from not having to conduct an approach or tactical road march from reserve assembly areas or, in the case of reinforcements, move from other AOs and reception, staging, organization, and integration locations. Speed also results from not having to conduct a forward passage of lines (see Chapter 17). The primary disadvantage of this technique is that forces suffering from exhaustion may have to be replaced if the operation is not expected to culminate quickly.

Transition to Stabilization Activities

Civil considerations are inherent to all military operations. Just as a force conducting offensive operations must plan to interact with a potentially hostile population, forces conducting defensive operations can expect to deal with friendly civilians seeking aid or trying to flee the area. Beyond this, however, are situations when stabilization activities become a unit's primary focus of effort.

Units change their focus of effort from defensive to stabilization activities when the mission changes (e.g., ordered to conduct rear area security), the situation changes, or hostilities end (e.g., friendly territory is successfully retained). If the latter, this transition should be accomplished per previous planning efforts—stabilization activities that support transition to civil authority cannot be afterthoughts. It follows that setting these transition conditions can significantly affect the planning and execution of the preceding defensive operations. As the unit transitions from the defense to stabilization activities, the commander—

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

CHAPTER 9.
AREA DEFENSE

An area defense capitalizes on the strength inherent in closely integrated defensive organization on the ground. Conducting an area defense helps consolidate and reconstitute forces necessary to transition to offense operations or stabilization activities. Commanders may assign subordinate units area defense missions as part of a larger type of defense.

The purpose of all defenses is to defeat the enemy and transition to the offense. All defenses use terrain to their advantage. The area defense, however, focuses on retaining, denying, or clearing specified terrain. A friendly force conducts, or is directed to conduct, an area defense when—

- Terrain limits maneuver space, restricting the movement of the defending force but also affording natural lines of resistance and limiting the enemy to a few, well-defined avenues of approach.
- The reserve is unavailable or is constrained by terrain, lack of mobility, or enemy air superiority.
- The forces available are less mobile than the enemy and when the depth of the AO is limited.
- There is enough time to organize the position and terrain allows for mutual support.
- Employing precision weapons or weapons of mass destruction by the enemy is possible.
- Conducting force protection while transitioning from the offense or stabilization activities.

The two methods of area defense are defense in depth and forward defense. Both demonstrate that area defenses are not merely static, but also employ all characteristics of the defense including maneuver. Static actions in the area defense usually consist of fires from prepared positions. Maneuver actions include repositioning units between prepared positions (or forward operating bases), counterattacks to enemy penetrations, and spoiling attacks to disrupt an enemy attack (see Chapter 5).

FORCE ORGANIZATION

Regardless of whether commanders choose a spatial- or purpose-based battlespace framework, they organize the force into security, MBA, and reserve forces to execute the defensive SOM (see Figure 9-1). See Chapter 2 for discussion of battlespace frameworks.

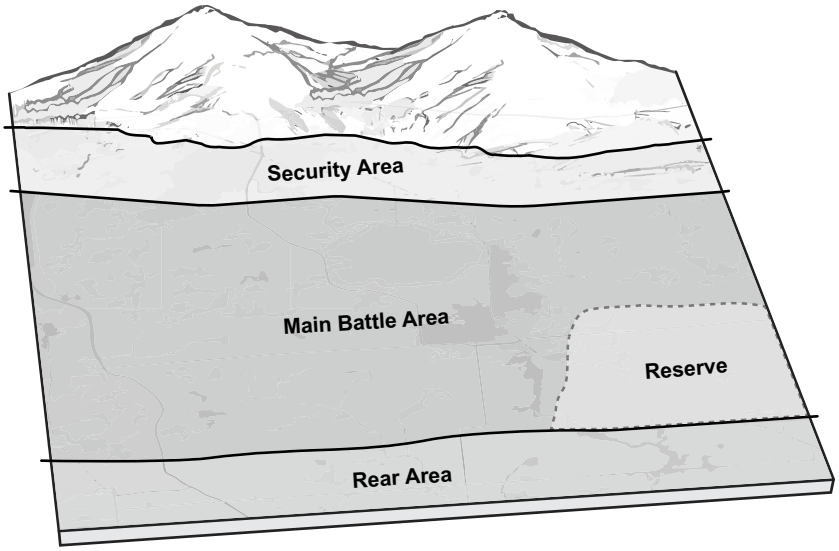


Figure 9-1. Organization of Forces for an Area Defense.

Security Forces

Security forces in the area defense conduct the reconnaissance, counterreconnaissance, and security tasks discussed in Chapters 8, 13, and 14. With the area defense's focus on terrain, the security force adds depth to the overall defensive effort and provides the ability to interrupt enemy preparations through spoiling attacks and using supporting arms and defensive actions to delay, disrupt, and attrite their advance. Ideally, the security force's actions compel the enemy to conduct a movement to contact. The commander places a high priority on quickly identifying and attacking the enemy's main effort. Commanders may assign screen, guard, or cover missions depending on METT-T and the resources available (see Chapter 14). While commanders must balance combat power requirements between the security force and MBA forces, they ensure that the security force has, at a minimum, the resources necessary to provide early warning of enemy action and to protect themselves from unexpected enemy contact. Commanders must convey the acceptable risk to the security force or the disengagement criteria in quantifiable terms, such as friendly strength levels, time, or event. Assigning a force to conduct rear area security is a decision based on METT-T, the size of the unit's rear area, and available combat power.

Main Battle Area Forces

The MBA is where the main force executes the decisive action. Main battle forces consist of the main and necessary supporting forces who will be executing the defensive SOM—halting and defeating or destroying the enemy. In the area defense, the commander and staff build the MBA force around key terrain and high-payoff targets, using fires from mutually supporting, prepared positions supplemented with counterattack and force repositioning to retain terrain. The main effort in the area defense often involves close combat given the priority regarding terrain retention.

Reserve

In the area defense, the force plans to succeed without using the reserve. The reserve is primarily created to exploit opportunities, seize the initiative from the enemy, counter unexpected enemy actions, or restore the integrity of the area defense against enemy success.

Examples include—

- Reinforcing the defense of committed forces, such as extending their flanks to prevent envelopment.
- Relieving depleted units and providing for continuous operations.
- Reacting to threats directed against the friendly force's rear area.
- Covering a retrograde movement.

It might be difficult for commanders executing an area defense to constitute a reserve given the demands on combat power that terrain retention entails and because attackers will seek to overmatch combat power against defenders. While tempting to either forgo establishing a reserve (company commanders and below form reserves based on METT-T) or use the "least engaged unit," these options end up being self-defeating because they rob commanders of crucial flexibility. In the area defense, commanders can resolve this by placing their most mobile assets in reserve. This provides the reserve with the mobility needed to perform their mission and enables commanders to accept risk elsewhere in the battlespace because they have a force that can rapidly respond to enemy threats.

Other alternatives include using security forces as a reserve once they retrograde back through friendly lines, although commanders must then accept considerable risk to the security force mission (i.e., security forces must withdraw in time to reconstitute themselves as a reserve) and the reserve mission (i.e., enemy action may significantly degrade security forces rendering them ineffective). Another option is to divide the reserve into smaller units spread throughout the battlespace. This is effective when terrain significantly affects the reserve's mobility; however, it creates risk in that it becomes difficult to mass the reserve if necessary. Finally, commanders accept prudent risk and place the reserve where they feel the reserve is most likely needed. This is also effective when terrain affects reserve mobility and when commanders need the impact of the entire reserve if committed. This last option is similar to others in that, in restrictive terrain, the reserve is unable to rapidly respond to opportunity or crisis elsewhere.

CONTROL MEASURES

Commanders organize an area defense by, at a minimum, using boundaries and AOs to establish security, main battle, and rear areas and assign responsibilities to subordinate units. When possible, the boundaries of the security force coincide with those of the MBA force. The security area should be deep enough to require the enemy to displace its combat support and CSS assets (e.g., artillery and maintenance units) forward to carry the attack into the MBA. This makes those assets vulnerable to friendly maneuver and supporting arms. Other area defense control measures include engagement areas, the FEBA, handover lines, strong points, TRPs, NAIs, TAIs, and other fire-coordination control measures. Chapters 2 and 8 define these control measures.

Commanders ensure the plans of their subordinates support the overall defense and are deconflicted from each other by using control measures such as contact points and phase lines. Commanders are responsible for overall battlespace geometry and movement planning between the positions of subordinate units—particularly when planning passage of lines for security forces and reserves. See Chapter 17 for information on rearward and forward passages of lines.

PLANNING AN AREA DEFENSE

The primary factor when planning an area defense is terrain—the nature of the terrain, its centrality, the balance of forces that dictates its use; area defense is a terrain-driven mission. In planning, the staff determines how to integrate available forces, fires, and obstacles with the existing terrain to isolate and defeat the enemy. The second factor is gaining the time necessary to prepare a coherent, coordinated, and effective defense that enables selected defensive positions to defeat the enemy by fire, absorb the enemy attack, and launch local counterattacks. Once dug, defensive positions cannot be moved. Without proper time to prepare, the unit risks committing to a faulty defensive SOM. See Chapter 8 for general defensive planning considerations.

One key to addressing terrain and time is that selected defensive positions can provide mutual support and concentrate fires to build depth in the security and MBAs, create maneuver within the defense, and take full advantage of the terrain. Commanders also consider whether the unit will eventually be able to transition to some sort of offensive operation—remaining static in an area defense over time provides the enemy opportunity to better prepare and eventually overwhelm the defender.

Commanders assigning the defensive mission define the area to defend. The ideal area defense is one in which effective mutual support exists throughout the breadth and depth of the defender's tactical positions. This allows commanders to use multiple defensive methods, such as sectors and battle positions, and increase flexibility. However, commanders assigned the defense over broad fronts often must conduct noncontiguous operations. Commanders assigned shallow AOs experience reduced flexibility and must fight well forward.

Therefore, commanders planning an area defense may be given, or may choose between, the two methods of area defense. The two methods are not exclusionary; part of a unit may conduct a forward defense while another part conducts a defense in depth. Commanders choose the defense in depth when the mission and METT-T enable the defending force to allow terrain and space to absorb the momentum of the enemy attack. Commanders choose a forward defense when the mission and METT-T do not allow for significant enemy penetration into the defensive area.

Defense in Depth

The defense in depth method is typically the preferred option. Forces using this method absorb the momentum of the enemy's attack by forcing the enemy to attack repeatedly through mutually supporting positions arranged in depth. Figure 9-2 depicts a defense in depth with units deployed in noncontiguous AOs with enemy avenues of approach. Along with the general considerations for an area defense, commanders select the defense in depth method when the—

- Mission is not restrictive and allows the unit to fight throughout the depth of the battlespace.
- Terrain does not favor a defense well forward, and there is more easily defendable terrain deeper within the AO.
- AO is deep compared to its breadth, and there is significant depth available.
- Cover and concealment on or near the FEBA are limited.
- Enemy has greater combat power than the defender.
- Enemy has precision munitions or is likely to use weapons of mass destruction.

The use of the defense in depth requires the use of significant engineer and other resources dedicated to survivability and countermobility. But the depth of the defense gives the friendly force's fire support assets time to deliver destructive effects throughout the battlespace and affords the defending force multiple opportunities to concentrate overwhelming combat power against the attacking enemy. The defense in depth also provides more reaction time for the defending force to respond to the attack. Between the time the security forces provide their first warning and the time the enemy commits to a COA, the staff is able to receive and process continuous information on the attacker's intentions and capabilities and respond accordingly, reducing the risk of an enemy force penetrating the defense from an unexpected direction.

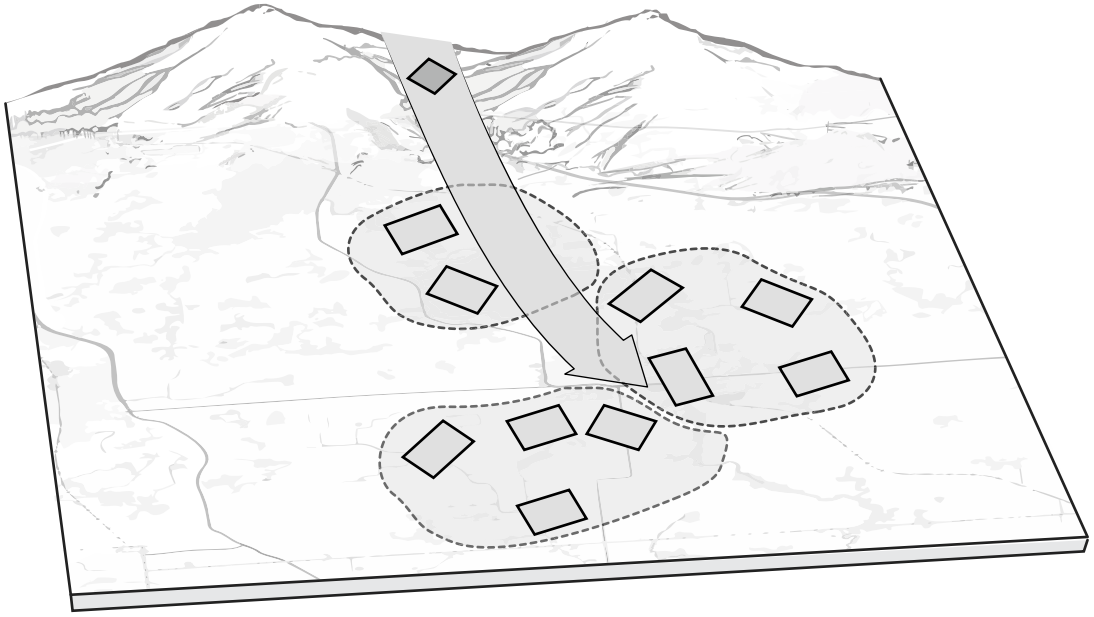


Figure 9-2. Defense-in-Depth Example.

Forward Defense

When using the forward defense method of the area defense, commanders concentrate significant portions of their available combat power into engagement areas along the FEBA. The intent is to prevent significant enemy penetration into the defensive area. Commanders conducting a forward defense fight to retain these positions along the FEBA and violently counterattack any enemy penetration. Commanders accept risk in that, if the enemy penetrates the defense, the lack of depth may enable the enemy to rapidly exploit success. In general, commanders execute the forward defense when terrain must be retained for political, military, economic, or other reasons. In addition to the general considerations for using an area defense, commanders select the forward defense method when—

- The best defensive positions are located along the FEBA.
- Natural obstacles are located near the FEBA.
- There is natural engagement areas near the FEBA.
- Cover and concealment in the rear portion of the AO are limited.

Logistic Considerations

In addition to the typical logistic considerations for the defense discussed in Chapter 8, there are two that commanders must plan for in the area defense. The first is that area defenses require prepared defensive positions that demand significant construction time and material support. The second is that because area defenses are tied to terrain—and may take place in restrictive terrain where mobility is a concern—logistic functions may be pushed forward to enable rapid CSS. Therefore, logistic planners must ensure they do not place so many supplies and assets forward that they become vulnerable to destruction or capture should the enemy advance.

PREPARING AN AREA DEFENSE

When assigned or transitioning to a defensive mission, the commander employs the elements of design in considering the tactical problem and providing the staff with initial planning guidance for problem framing. If not immediately, then early in the planning process the commander will make the decision to employ an area defense. This early decision enables all MAGTF elements to begin planning and preparing for the mission—involving tasks such as obtaining and pre-positioning ammunition and barrier material.

While a defending force may execute the area defense in a hasty or deliberate manner, effective area defenses require the maximum available amount of time. Consequently, initial preparations after the commander's decision to execute an area defense involve significant reconnaissance and security efforts to acquire information that helps refine planning and preparation and to conduct shaping actions that increases preparation time. Available ISR assets are used to answer the commander's critical information requirements. Within the force's capability, OPSEC guidelines, and METT-T, security forces and supporting arms are employed to delay and disrupt enemy attack preparations by targeting and attacking them. If a commander determines that it is likely the enemy will attack before the defending force is prepared, the commander might have to commit substantial forces to security operations or conduct a spoiling attack—particularly if conducting deliberate operations.

Upon receiving their warning orders, defending units conduct reconnaissance, whether a simple map reconnaissance or a more detailed leader's reconnaissance on the ground of their assigned defensive areas and positions. As soon as practical, units establish their security areas and then occupy their defensive positions. Once security is established, units may begin to receive and pre-position supplies such as construction and barrier materials. Units rely on their SOPs and METT-T to establish and refine their defensive priorities of work. Those priorities might be—

- Establishing local security and deploying a security force.
- Identifying engagement areas where the commander wants to engage and destroy the enemy.
- Conducting fire support planning, such as determining preplanned targets, TRPs, trigger lines, and FPFs to support the engagement areas.
- Positioning key weapon systems to engage the enemy in the engagement areas and developing range cards and sector sketches.
- Positioning observers to see both targets and trigger lines.

- Positioning obstacle groups to support the effects generated by various weapon systems.
- Designating and clearing fields of fire.
- Preparing primary fighting positions based on the anticipated fighting conditions, such as the time of day and weather conditions.
- Emplacing obstacles and surveying indirect fire targets to support those obstacles.
- Providing concealment and camouflage for fighting and survivability positions as they are constructed.
- Positioning CFZs over friendly positions by establishing sensor coverage and quick-fire links between the sensor and shooter. These CFZs are planned by the supporting artillery unit based on commander's guidance and an assessment of the available radar positioning and operational capabilities.
- Installing night and limited-visibility aids, such as thermal hot spots and chemical lights on TRPs.
- Updating range cards and sector sketches as required.
- Preparing alternate fighting positions.
- Designating and preparing supplementary positions.
- Designating hide positions and rehearsing movements to and from fighting positions. (Units may place their combat and tactical vehicles in hide positions at any time while preparing the defensive position.)
- Positioning the reserve.
- Establishing contact points with any adjacent units so that the defensive efforts of both units can be tied together.
- Deconflicting the plans and fires of adjacent units.
- Emplacing communications assets to support the unit's primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency communications for each primary, supplementary, and alternate positions.
- Improving mobility on counterattack routes and other routes to be used by the reserve.
- Pre-stocking ammunition in revetments or bunkers where it can survive the enemy's preparatory fires.
- Rehearsing movements under daylight and limited-visibility conditions to include forward and rearward passage of lines.
- Establishing sleep and rest plans.
- Continuing to improve the defense.

Just as reconnaissance and security activities begin even as planning and preparation continue, so do OPSEC and counterreconnaissance activities. Commanders employ camouflage, tactical ruses, deception, and smoke to confuse and deceive enemy reconnaissance assets. Units quickly establish wire communications among various subordinate elements to reduce their electromagnetic signature. The conduct and evidence of preparation and rehearsals are mitigated by hiding or camouflaging spoil from digging, as well as by altering when individual units conduct rehearsals and how they conduct them (e.g., mounted units moving by foot instead of by vehicle, or by only

one vehicle per platoon). Since the location, composition, and movement of the reserve are critical elements of information for the enemy, commanders work diligently to camouflage, conceal, and avoid detection of their reserve.

As time and resources allow, the defending unit improves communication routes throughout their defensive positions to ease movement of supplies and forces, particularly the reserve. The leadership rehearses the plan using MDCA. Individual elements rehearse how to move from their hide positions to their primary positions and how they will occupy alternate and supplementary positions to continue to engage the enemy if the enemy's attack progresses into the unit's defensive positions. These rehearsals establish the time necessary to conduct these movements under different environmental conditions. Commanders modify their existing plans based on the results of rehearsals and changes in METT-T.

Commanders include logistic leadership in the maneuver rehearsal to verify that routes for support do not cross or conflict with routes used by reserve forces or other maneuver elements. Commanders should balance the use of ammunition caches against the defending unit's ability to guard them. Also, commanders should ensure that alternate supply routes are adequate to accommodate contingency plans and that units can effectively switch to alternate MSRs.

EXECUTING AN AREA DEFENSE

The successful area defense relies on actions in the security area to disrupt and attrite the enemy, and static, mutually supporting defensive positions arranged in depth that concentrate combat power to fix and defeat the enemy. The reserve is used to reinforce these efforts, exploit opportunity, or defeat unexpected enemy actions. Commanders use alternate and supplementary positions and local counterattacks to add further depth and flexibility to the defense.

The phasing of defensive operations depends on how the commander decides to solve the tactical problem. In general, and subject to the needs of the commander and the mission, units conduct offensive operations in five phases:

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

The first three phases listed are almost always shaping actions. Depending on the circumstances, either of the last two phases may be the decisive action.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Depending on METT-T and planning considerations, the commander may or may not have assigned the security force to conduct both reconnaissance and security tasks. Regardless, as operations begin, the initial focus of friendly forces in the security area and beyond is to win the reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance fight. This fight begins immediately, even as

preparations and planning continue elsewhere in the AO. Friendly ISR assets employ stealth, supporting arms, technical means, and standoff to gain and maintain contact and observation of the enemy. At the same time, security and aviation forces search for and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements to conceal the defending force's dispositions, capabilities, and intent. Doing so forces the enemy to attack with limited information—making them susceptible to deception and canalization—and fight on ground of the defensive commander's choosing.

As the enemy prepares to attack, friendly reconnaissance efforts identify enemy assembly areas, units and capabilities, C2 nodes, and critical assets such as breaching resources. The staff uses this information to modify the defensive SOM, finalize planning and preparation, and take advantage of opportunities. As the enemy's attack begins, reconnaissance focuses on identifying enemy units committed to the attack and their capabilities; the enemy's intent and direction of attack; locations of supporting arms, air defense assets, and command and control; and the depth and nature of follow-on forces. As more information becomes available and multiple source reporting increases its reliability, the commander and staff use the information, experience, and military judgment to address decision points and determine when the enemy commits to a COA.

The single-battle construct underscores the significance of gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy throughout a military engagement. Even as the enemy attack presses through the security area and into the MBA, designated reconnaissance and security forces remain forward, providing continuous information on enemy actions and enabling the commander and staff to support the main effort by executing precision engagement against enemy C2 and logistic nodes and identifying enemy flanks for counterattack. In the planning phase, the commander and staff determine which elements remain forward and under what conditions, and their displacement criteria. The commander retrogrades reconnaissance assets with the security force, replacing them with technical means of ISR depending on METT-T and if the resources are available.

Disrupt the Enemy

The defending force begins disrupting the enemy as soon as possible after gaining and maintaining contact. This is not a "phase" of the battle as much as an ongoing activity that takes place throughout planning and preparation and into execution. At a minimum, the defending forces employ supporting arms and information activities against enemy critical vulnerabilities. During this time, commanders may choose to commit combat power to spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations to further delay and disrupt—and perhaps even dissuade—enemy attack preparations. If commanders do so, they do so with the planning and execution considerations discussed in Chapters 3 and 5. Additional considerations include when and how to phase forces conducting these types of activities back into the defensive SOM.

As the enemy's attack enters the security area, the security force conducts activities designed to gain information, disrupt the enemy forces' tempo and formations, limit their options, and ideally, compel them to conduct a movement to contact against a prepared defense. The security force employs fire support and information capabilities to disrupt enemy forces' decision-making process and their ability to coordinate and synchronize actions. Using ambushes, limited counterattacks, battle positions, and other defensive methods, the security force compels enemy forces' to repeatedly deploy, breaks up their formations, disrupts their ability to mass combat power, and neutralizes their initiative. Once the process of disrupting the attacking enemy begins, it continues throughout the defensive operation.

As the battle in the security area unfolds, there are three possible outcomes. First, the security force could experience unexpected success, so severely disrupting and degrading enemy forces that they either retreat or become effectively fixed. Both reactions would present the commander with an opportunity to conduct offensive action with the commitment of the reserve and security forces. Second, the security force could accomplish its mission, delaying and disrupting enemy forces and setting them up for defeat by the main effort in the MBA. Third, the security force might fail its mission, allowing the enemy attack to advance into the MBA. In this case, the commander still expects to win in the MBA, but employs the reserves against the enemy in ways that directly support the main effort.

Aside from the case of unexpected success, when the security force accomplishes its mission or reaches its displacement criteria, the security force (including reconnaissance elements), or designated elements of, conducts a rearward passage of lines and battle handover with main battle forces. The displacement and retrograde is conducted as quickly as possible to minimize the security force's vulnerability to enemy fire, using multiple passage points, gaps, or lanes along the FEBA. Engineer assets close obstacle lanes as the security force completes its retrograde while maintenance and recovery assets position themselves to rapidly remove vehicle casualties from passage lanes.

Depending on enemy pressure, the security force's withdrawal can take place in mass or in sequence. The employment of fires, smoke, and information activities helps the security force break contact and facilitates the passage of lines. Combat support and CSS elements of the security force leave the security area early to avoid hampering the movement of maneuver forces. Transfer of responsibility between the security force and MBA forces occurs forward of the FEBA at the handover line. (See Chapter 17 for more information on passage of lines.) If forces are left in the security area to continue shaping and disruption actions, the commander must ensure fires and maneuver are deconflicted between the security areas and the MBAs.

As the security force complete the battle handover they prepare for their subsequent tasks. The nature of those tasks depends on the defensive SOM. When the defending force is critically short of combat power, the security force can move immediately to pre-designated positions within the MBA, such as those associated with flank security, or they may immediately form the reserve. In both cases, a lack of resources could force the commander to accept the risk associated with employing a disorganized and potentially degraded force in such significant roles. Most often, the security forces move to an assembly area that allows them to reconstitute and reorganize prior to executing their subsequent tasks and follow-on missions. The presence of security forces in the assembly area allows the commander to immediately employ the existing reserve if desired, relying on the security forces to become the new reserve as they reassemble, resupply, and reorganize. However, it may be some time before security forces are ready for commitment.

Fix the Enemy

In the area defense, the friendly force begins to fix the enemy with shaping actions that delay, disrupt, and attrite the main enemy forces, isolate them from support, and disrupt follow-on forces. The friendly force completes fixing the enemy using obstacles and defensive positions in the MBA that pin the enemy in one or more engagement areas for destruction. The main effort defeats the enemy in these engagement areas either by fires, by counterattack, or both.

As the security force hands over the battle to the MBA force, direct and indirect fires and information activities synchronize to continue the disruption and attrition begun in the security area. Through fixed defensive positions and obstacles that use turn, disrupt, and block effects to canalize the enemy, Marines remove the enemy's options for maneuver while breaking up their main force into isolated segments incapable of maintaining mutual support. Friendly supporting efforts occupy these defensive positions and associated engagement areas, displace between them when required, and conduct local counterattacks to set the conditions necessary for the main effort's success. The commander can employ the reserve to prevent the enemy from executing an unexpected COA. Concurrently, forces remaining in the security area employ supporting arms and maneuver to continue to attack and disrupt enemy command and control, follow-on forces, and logistic resources.

Maneuver

As the enemy attack approaches the MBA, friendly forces prepare to execute the decisive action. In the area defense, the decisive action is typically the massing of combat power in an engagement area against the enemy main body. The defender uses the strength of prepared positions, camouflage, concealment, and hide positions to offset attempts by the attacker to suppress and neutralize friendly positions. The defender's main effort uses a combination of obstacles and massed fires to defeat the enemy while supporting efforts in the main battle and security areas continue to attack and disrupt enemy follow-on forces, command and control, and logistics.

If the decision has not already been made, as the enemy advances deeper into the MBA the defending commander selects a COA based on the enemy's perceived intent. The enemy seeks to place overwhelming combat power against what is perceived as weaknesses in the defense (a general attacker-to-defender ratio of three-to-one could easily become a local six-to-one ratio or higher), and the defensive SOM hinges on placing the main effort and combat power in a position to restore a more favorable force ratio. Consequently, if the enemy is taking unexpected actions or if friendly shaping efforts fail to compel the enemy to maneuver in the desired manner, the commander considers committing the reserve to restore the situation, execute branch plans, and displace the main effort to supplementary and subsequent positions. When committing the reserve to reinforce a position or restore the situation, the defending forces must deconflict traffic priorities, establish control measures, delineate command relationships, and mitigate battlespace geometry.

As the enemy commits its main effort, defending forces continue to execute the SOM. Gaps between defensive positions are kept under surveillance, covered by fire, or when necessary, covered by displacing units. Units respond to enemy penetrations in their battle positions and sectors with local counterattacks or by repositioning to alternate positions. A unit does not abandon a position unless it is in accordance with the defensive SOM or a higher commander grants permission to do so. Enemy gains that threaten the overall integrity of the defense cannot be allowed to consolidate. The friendly unit destroys enemy forces by committing the reserve directly against them or at exposed flanks that isolate the enemy penetrations for later defeat. The security force completes its reorganization and resupply and becomes available as a reconstituted reserve. The defensive force continues to attack the enemy throughout the depth of the AO.

With the enemy main body fixed, the defensive main effort executes its mission, massing combat power to defeat the enemy. The main effort may execute local counterattacks to enhance the destructive effects of fires and information activities on the enemy. In general, the lowest possible echelons conduct these local counterattacks, though commanders remain wary of piecemeal commitment.

The maneuver phase in the MBA culminates in one of three ways. First, the defensive effort is successful, and the commander must determine how to best exploit the enemy's defeat. Second, the defensive effort reaches a stalemate, and the commander must determine how to best adjust to the new enemy advance or how to restore the original defense through reinforcement and counterattacks by higher units. Third, the defensive effort fails, and the commander must determine whether the situation can be stabilized and if not, how to transition to retrograde activities. Only the commander who ordered the defense can designate a new FEBA and authorize a retrograde operation.

Follow Through and Counterattack

If the defense is successful, the commander counterattacks with the reserve and other available forces to maximize the damage inflicted by either attacking the enemy remaining in the MBA or pursuing a retreating enemy. Depending on METT-T, the commander uses this counterattack to restore the defense, transition the defending force to offensive operations, or establish security and cover the passage forward of other forces committed to the offense by higher command. The commander does not counterattack as an automatic response to an enemy penetration, nor does the commander commit the reserve solely because the enemy has reached a particular phase line or other location—a counterattack is an instrument used to support the main effort and the defensive SOM. The defending force relies on prior planning to best carry out a counterattack and to seize the initiative and tempo before the enemy has time to recover. The enemy is vulnerable immediately after the failure of an attack because—

- Defensive preparations are hasty.
- Enemy forces are dispersed, extended in depth, weakened, and not organized for defense.
- Enemy attacks rarely culminate on ground ideally suited for defense.
- Physical fatigue and the psychological effects of defeat can heighten vulnerability to attack.

Local counterattacks are designed to restore the defense; a broader action is designed to wrest the initiative from enemy forces and then defeat them. If the commander commits to wresting the initiative away from the enemy and transitioning to the offense, friendly forces must set the conditions necessary for success by establishing favorable, relative combat power.

If the defensive battle leads to a stalemate with both forces left in contact, the defending force commander seeks to retain the initiative and set the conditions for the next encounter. Since the area defense focuses on terrain retention from prepared positions, the defending force relies on the construction and depth of its defenses and maintains their positions. To reorganize and assault again, the commander uses repairs and improvement of defensive positions; tactical shifts in positions to confuse the enemy; attacks against enemy command and control, fire support, and logistic resources; and follow-on units to neutralize the enemy's efforts. Because there is considerable risk in moving out of prepared positions while still in contact with the enemy, the

defending force only considers major shifts to the SOM when METT-T indicates a significant change in the enemy's posture. For example, the arrival of fresh enemy forces and their ability to generate high force ratios could require a unit to change to the defensive SOM.

Because an area defense focuses on terrain retention, the commander has only limited options if the defending unit is unable to maintain the integrity of its defense. Only the commander ordering the defense can authorize a retrograde, and permission may only come if the force risks destruction. However, contingency planning for a retrograde should be part of the defensive plan since a retrograde, already a risky operation, becomes very dangerous if conducted ad hoc—the difference between a retreat and a route. Chapter 11 addresses retrograde in detail.

CHAPTER 10.
MOBILE DEFENSE

The mobile defense destroys the attacking enemy through maneuver and offensive action (see Figure 10-1). The commander retains most of the available combat power in a reserve as the main effort—a major counterattack. The commander commits the minimum possible combat power to the security and MBA forces to shape the enemy's advance and set the conditions for the counterattack. In the mobile defense, terrain is only retained relative to its value in defeating the enemy through maneuver and offensive action. This is what distinguishes it from the area defense, where the focus is on retaining terrain and then denying the enemy that terrain by fixing them in a series of interlocking positions and destroying them, primarily by fires.

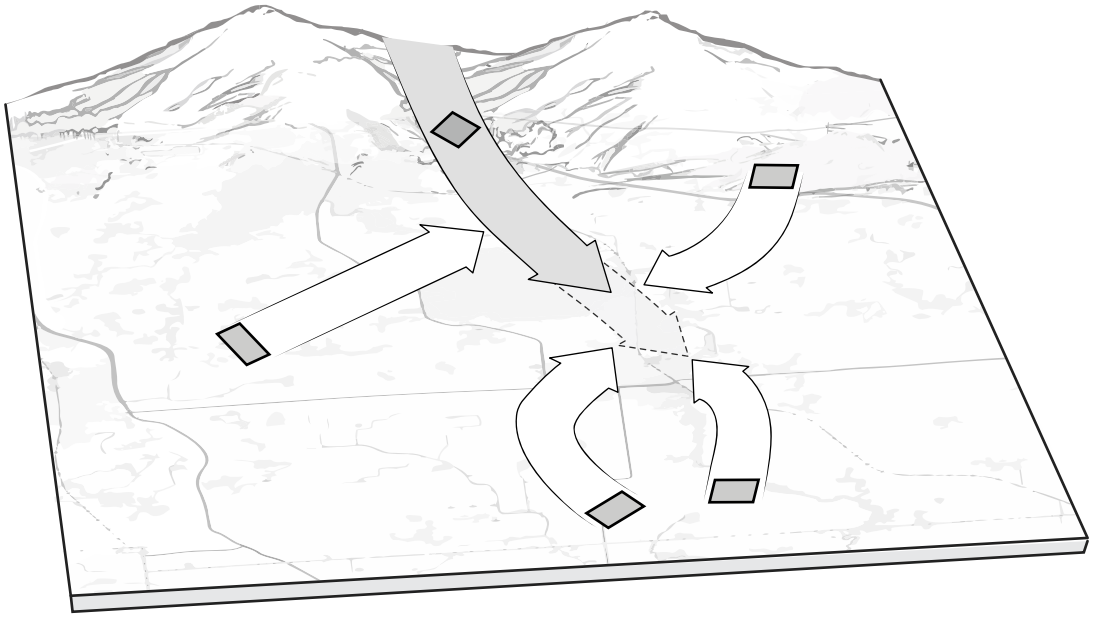


Figure 10-1. Mobile Defense Example.

Commanders choose to use the mobile defense when their mobility is equal or greater than that of the enemy, when they are free to use terrain as maneuver space, or when the depth of the assigned AO allows for a battle of fire and maneuver. Defenders can conduct a mobile defense in any environment. Additional conditions suited to conducting a mobile defense are—

- The assigned defensive frontage is too great for an effective area defense.
- Time and resources for preparing defensive positions are limited.
- Sufficient direct, indirect, and aviation fires are available to support the rapid concentration of combat power.

- The defender seeks security from weapons of mass destruction through maneuver and dispersion of forces.
- The mission does not require denying the enemy specific terrain.
- The AO lacks well defined, or many, avenues of approach.
- The commander deliberately seeks to use a defensive battle to quickly transition back to the offense.

Commanders conducting a mobile defense accept enemy penetration into their AO and use shaping actions, obstacles, local counterattacks, and even battle positions to control such penetrations, deceive the enemy as to the nature of the defense, and create conditions for the main effort counterattack. However, the attacker controls the initiative and determines the time and place to attack. Risks associated with the mobile defense are—

- Supporting efforts in the security area and MBA may be isolated and defeated because of unexpected enemy actions or under resourcing in favor of the main effort.
- A mobile defense conducted in a noncontiguous AO provides the enemy with substantial maneuver space that can prove difficult to effectively counter.
- The enemy may interdict, delay, or disrupt the reserve's ability to strike at the decisive point.
- The enemy may successfully defeat shaping actions, entering areas not anticipated by the defensive commander and gaining significant momentum as it enters the MBA.
- The defending force may not gain an accurate picture of the enemy's intent and dispositions until it is too late to effectively react.
- The decentralized operations required by the mobile defense increase the potential for friendly fire incidents.

FORCE ORGANIZATION

The mobile defense uses security, fixing, and reserve elements—the reserve, acting as the main effort, may consist of one-half to two-thirds to the defender's combat power (see Figure 10-2). While the mobile defense may be executed at any level, it is typically employed at the regiment and above given the combat power requirements necessary to resource it.

The security and fixing elements receive the minimum amount of combat power necessary to accomplish their missions. The security element conducts those tasks typically associated with the security area—reconnaissance, counterreconnaissance, and shaping actions in the face of an enemy advance (the commander could create a separate reconnaissance force). The fixing element acts across the MBA to create the conditions necessary for the commitment of the reserve—shaping or containing the enemy advance by turning, blocking, and delaying the attacking enemy force. The fixing element executes its portion of the battle by combining elements of an area defense with defensive methods associated with delaying actions. The reserve is the defender's main effort. The reserve delivers the decisive action when the effects generated by the security and fixing forces make the enemy vulnerable to offensive action and defeat. The reserve is the commander's bid for

success and must have more combat power and mobility than the force it seeks to defeat. For this reason, the reserve contains most available combat power and relies on the security and fixing elements to reduce the enemy force to a manageable level.

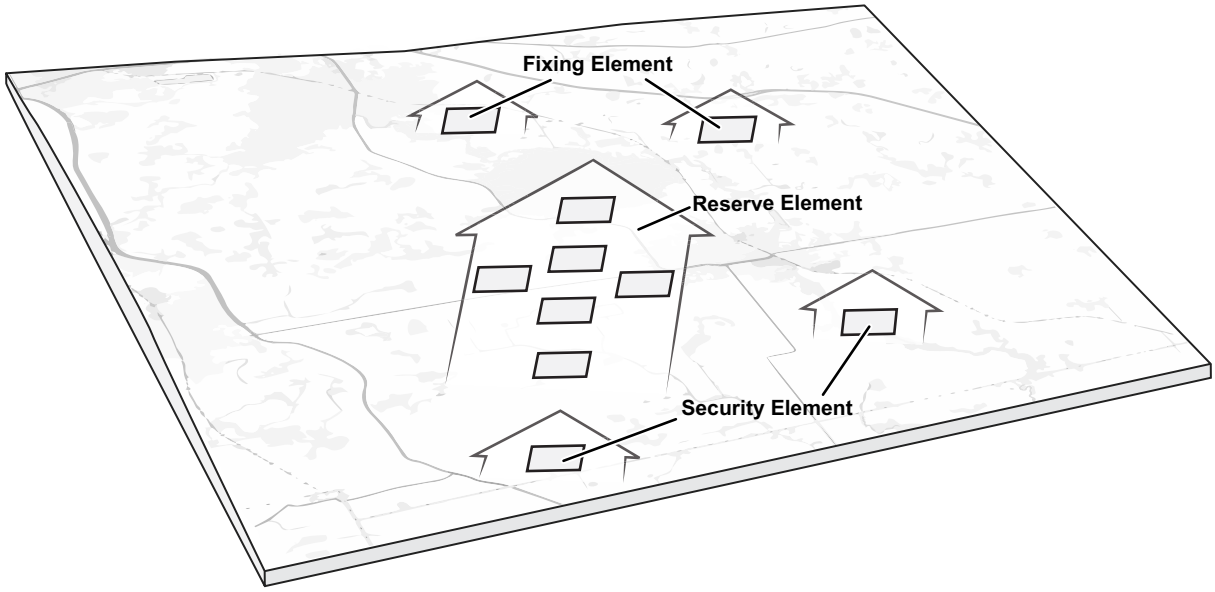


Figure 10-2. Organization of Forces for a Mobile Defense.

Resourcing a reserve in a mobile defense is difficult and requires the defending unit to assume risk. The commander's most critical decisions are when, where, and under what conditions to commit the reserve. The commander usually accompanies the reserve to be placed at the point of friction so they can resolve any issues that may delay or impede the reserve's decisive employment.

CONTROL MEASURES

The minimum control measures necessary to execute the mobile defense are the AOs of the security and fixing forces and the reserve's line of departure or line of contact, objective, LOA, and axis of advance or AO. Additional control measures for the security and fixing forces depend on the defensive SOM and may include battle positions, phase lines, engagement areas, TRPs, and FPFs. The commander may designate attack-by-fire and support-by-fire positions, passage points, contact points, and passage lanes to support the reserve. Because the mobile defense combines elements of the defense and the offense, those basic control measures discussed in Chapters 2, 3, 5, and 8 may apply. The commander and staff may have to determine and transmit these control measures rapidly while units move to take advantage of an opportunity to commit the reserve in a decisive counterattack.

PLANNING A MOBILE DEFENSE

The two fundamental planning concerns in the mobile defense are creating the conditions to successfully commit the reserve and committing the reserve. The following paragraphs address specific planning considerations by warfighting function for the mobile defense in addition to those addressed in Chapter 8.

Maneuver

A mobile defense is only viable if friendly forces have equal or greater mobility than that of the enemy. The friendly force gains and maintains relative mobility advantages over the enemy by having the necessary resources (e.g., vehicle and assault support) or by limiting the enemy's mobility using obstacles, attrition, and suppression. Most of the unit's countermobility assets support the fixing force while most of the mobility assets support the reserve. Situational obstacles provide a tremendous advantage to the defender during a mobile defense because they enable economy-of-force measures. The defender uses situational obstacles to exploit enemy vulnerabilities, exploit success, separate enemy follow on forces, and provide flank protection.

As part of planning, the commander and staff determine the follow-on tasks and mission of the security force once the enemy passes through the security area. After conducting shaping actions to disrupt and delay the enemy, the security force—or elements of it—may withdraw back through the fixing force and reconstitute as an available maneuver force or may remain in the security area continuing to disrupt and harass the enemy's reserve, follow-on forces, logistic elements, and C2 assets. The amount of combat power available to the commander is a key element to this decision; however, the commander must remember that the security force will be returning from actively engaging the enemy and may remain unavailable for some time until reconstituted and reorganized.

While civil considerations are basic to all operations, the status and movement of civilians are critical considerations during the mobile defense because of the reliance on maneuver and tempo. In the area defense, with the focus on terrain retention, civil considerations apply primarily to the rear area. In the mobile defense, civilian attempts to avoid advancing enemy formations and locations where combat could have immediate and negative impacts on the ground maneuver of defending units, unless steps are taken to account for their presence and provide them alternative routes. Ideally, host-nation civilian or military organizations will provide civilian traffic regulation and immediate essential services along designated civilian evacuation routes. However, if the host nation cannot perform these tasks, the defending unit will have to perform them.

Fires and the Information

The planning for fires and information activities in the mobile defense entail offensive and defensive considerations. Fire support assets and information capabilities must support the shaping actions of the security and fixing forces. They must support the security force's actions to disrupt, delay, and break the enemy's tempo and cover the withdrawal of security forces and reconnaissance assets. Fire support assets and information capabilities must also support the fixing force's SOM that will likely entail displacement between positions, use of battle positions and engagement areas, while still maintaining the ability to effect enemy follow-on forces, C2 nodes, and logistics resource in the deep area.

Conversely, the placement of fire support assets, the employment of aviation, and the use of information activities must support the rapid shift to the offense as the reserve is committed. It is unlikely that the battle handover between the fixing force and the reserve will be final or complete. Some of the fixing elements will likely still be engaged throughout the MBA while the commander may still have requirements for shaping actions in the security area and deeper. The fire support and information plans must account for these various phases and requirements, prioritize support, carefully determine placement and the movement of assets, and deconflict battlespace geometry. The MDCA rehearsal is a priority that should be conducted even during hasty operations.

Logistics

Like fire support and information planners, logisticians must consider how to support a defense that is characterized by a deep AO, considerable dispersion of forces, and constant displacement of those defensive forces. Logisticians must compare these requirements against the offensive demands of the reserve as they commit to the attack. Designating the reserve as the main effort prioritizes logistic planning—just as the commander accepts risk elsewhere to provide sufficient combat power to the reserve, so to do logisticians accept risk to other parts of the force to maximize support to the reserve.

Combat service support provided to the security element is minimal and in accordance with general logistic planning considerations contained in Chapter 8. Logisticians attach critical logistic elements (e.g., maintenance) to the security element, pre-position limited essential supplies, and rely on the security element to self-haul the supplies they need to operate. The fixing element relies on similar measures, stockpiling supplies in known defensive positions and along movement routes. Equipment and personnel casualty evacuation, likely to be substantial in the fixing element, is executed along predetermined routes and phased according to how the engagement proceeds. Determining which routes and ambulance exchange points are active and when will be an important function of information management. However, the fixing element does receive material support and resource priority for countermobility activities.

The focus of the logistic effort is to enable the main effort success. Logistics planning is like that of any attack. As the engagement unfolds, commanders must carefully weigh any changes to the logistic plan that risk weakening the reserve.

PREPARING A MOBILE DEFENSE

The priority of work in preparing the mobile defense is given to the defensive positions, routes, and countermobility requirements of the fixing element—these must be in place if the defending force hopes to create the conditions in which the counterattack can succeed. This is closely followed by route improvement for the reserve to speed and support their attack when committed. Simultaneously, the defending force aggressively employs ISR assets to track enemy positions, preparations, and indicators of intent. The security elements deploys and begins counterreconnaissance operations.

The reserve assembles in one or more areas depending on the width of the AO, the terrain, enemy capabilities, and the commander's intent. Before the enemy attack begins, the reserve may deploy some or all its reserve elements forward in the MBA to—

- Deceive the enemy regarding the purpose of the force.
- Occupy dummy battle positions.
- Create a false impression of unit boundaries.
- Conduct reconnaissance of routes between the reserve's assembly areas and potential objectives.

EXECUTING A MOBILE DEFENSE

This publication divides the execution of a mobile defense into the five phases, introduced and described in Chapters 3 and 9. These phases are—

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

The first three phases listed are usually shaping actions within a mobile defense. The maneuver phase is typically the mobile defense's decisive action, while the follow-through phase is usually a branch or sequel operation.

Gain and Maintain Enemy Contact

Even before the defending unit begins to prepare and occupy the defense, reconnaissance elements—either independent of or subordinate to the security element—move forward, gain contact with the enemy, and focus on discovering the enemy's strength and capabilities, locations, and intent. The commander tasks other ISR assets to determine the location of follow-on elements, critical assets, command and control, and enemy reserves. Determining the enemy's intent and when they commit to a COA is critical information for the staff and enables adjustments to the defensive SOM and changes to the plan.

Simultaneously, the security elements moves forward and establishes the security area to conduct its assigned mission of screen, guard, or cover depending on resourcing. The security element focuses on impeding the enemy's ability to conduct reconnaissance and observe friendly preparations. Information activities during this period support the security element by jamming enemy communications, deceiving the enemy regarding the nature of the defense, and introducing hesitation into the enemy's C2 decision and planning processes.

Disrupt the Enemy

The commander could decide to disrupt enemy preparations by executing spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations in conjunction with information activities and fires. If the commander decides to preserve combat power for use elsewhere, Marines can still disrupt enemy preparations through supporting arms and information activities. These two elements of fires continue to support delaying and disrupting the enemy as the enemy begins its advance into and through the security area.

Security elements engage the enemy forces as they penetrate the security area. In conjunction with ISR assets, they seek to determine or confirm the enemy's main effort and selected COA. The security element conducts shaping actions designed to disrupt and delay the enemy's advance using fires coordinated with ambushes, local counterattacks, battle positions, and obstacles. Fires and information activities provide support to the security element's fight while continuing to engage the enemy in the deep area, targeting enemy C2 assets and interdicting enemy reserves and follow-on elements.

As the enemy advance continues through the security area and into the MBA, the security element executes one of two actions. They may use the AO as maneuver space and remain in the security area, supporting the actions of the fixing element in the MBA by continuing to disrupt and harass the enemy's reserve elements, follow-on element, C2 assets, and logistic resources. The security element may withdraw from the security area, passing through the fixing element to reconstitute and reorganize in the rear to become another maneuver asset.

Fix the Enemy

The commander and staff monitor the fight in the security area, and as the enemy enters the MBA, makes any necessary changes to the plan to either take advantage of security element successes or mitigate failures. If not already evident, the defending commander and staff determines the enemy's main effort and intended COA and adjusts the defensive plan as needed. The fixing element begins to engage the enemy to generate the conditions necessary to commit the main effort. The defending force uses the entire AO to allow the enemy to advance and become vulnerable to the decisive action. The various supporting efforts that comprise the fixing element use combinations of different defensive methods (e.g., battle positions, sectors, strong points) to canalize, delay, disrupt, and attrite the enemy's advance. Fires and information activities support the defensive SOM by reinforcing the efforts of the fixing element, deceiving the enemy as to the nature of the defense, and by disrupting the enemy's ability to command and control.

The fixing element retains terrain only when—and only for the time necessary—they are supporting the defensive SOM, such as when blocking one avenue of approach to compel the enemy to use another. Fixing elements withdraw and reposition as necessary, not only to continue to engage the enemy, but also as tactical ruses to encourage enemy advances along the preferred routes. The fixing element uses obstacles to reinforce its operations, also making use of prepared routes to efficiently and effectively conduct displacements, maneuver, and local counterattacks to shape the enemy's attack.

Any reserve elements placed forward to assist in tactical ruses and deception retrograde to the reserve's assembly area as the enemy enters the MBA. If left forward the security element—or elements that remained in place—continues to support the fixing element's efforts by harassing, disrupting, and destroying enemy resources and units in the security area. If withdrawn, the

security element becomes an additional reserve that can assist the fixing element in the event of unexpected enemy actions or success. Because the success of the mobile defense depends upon the striking power of the reserve, the commander only considers pulling elements from the reserve when the fixing element is threatened with defeat. But even in this case, the commander's best choice would be to accommodate the new situation and commit the entire reserve to new objectives. The enemy cannot be strong everywhere, and what appears to be failure can still be translated into success by aggressive, offensive action at the right place.

Maneuver

Throughout the battle, ISR assets and combat reporting provide the commander and staff with the situational awareness and understanding necessary to initiate the reserve's movement and attack. The defending commander and commander of the reserve remain collocated to facilitate communication and understanding. As the fixing force's fight in the MBA unfolds, the commander's staff makes changes to the reserve's force-oriented objectives (or terrain-oriented if needed to provide orientation) based on the new situation. As critical events trigger planned decision points and the combat power of the reserve becomes overwhelming relative to the targeted enemy force, the reserve departs the assembly area and begins its attack (see Figure 10-3).

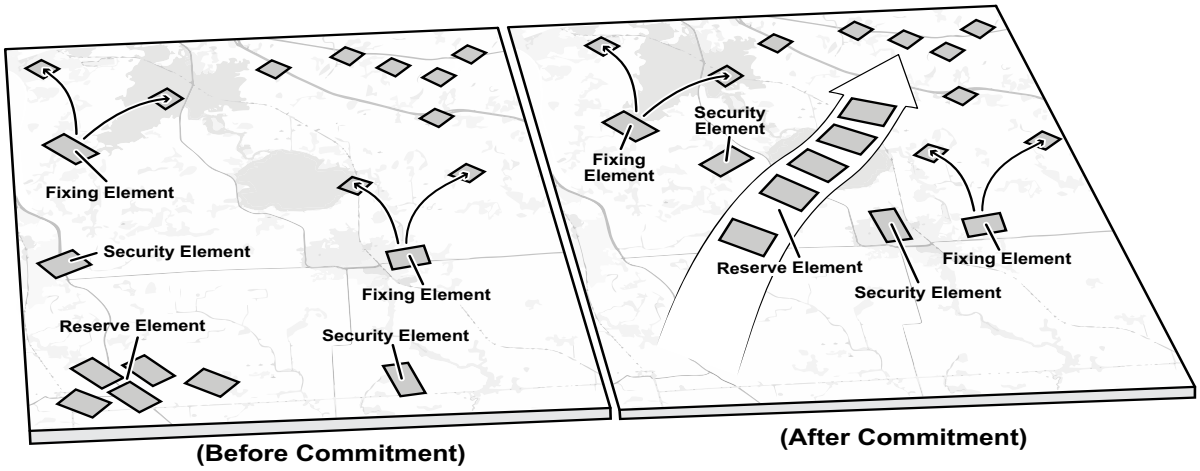


Figure 10-3. Mobile Defense Before and After Committing the Reserve.

The reserve executes the counterattack rapidly and violently, avoiding piecemeal commitment and employing all combat power necessary to ensure success. The security and fixing forces continue to conduct shaping actions designed to delay the enemy's response to the attack and thwart or disrupt attempts to react. Continued defensive actions and local counterattacks by supporting efforts present the enemy commander with multiple problems and dilemmas that support the reserve's decisive action.

The reserve conducts the attack in accordance with those considerations and TTP associated with offensive operations (see Chapter 5). When committed against a force-oriented objective, the reserve typically executes the approach-march method of a movement to contact. The reserve commander might use follow-and-support and follow-and-assume forces (a withdrawn and reconstituted security force may serve in one of these roles). Relying on the presence and actions of the fixing and security forces, speed and momentum, and supporting arms for security, the

reserve commander accepts risk and attacks rapidly and aggressively. The reserve capitalizes on the psychological and physical paralysis and hesitation the enemy will feel from a sudden, massive assault and the forced transition from attacker to defender.

Engineers travel well forward to enhance the reserve's mobility. A competent enemy will be aware of threats to their flank and conduct countermobility actions to mitigate those threats. The reserve's obstacle-clearing detachment searches for existing obstacles and clears the route as much as possible. Follow-on combat or general engineers expand breach lanes, improve trafficability, and may improve expedient bridges or replace them with more durable structures. As able, combat engineers with fixing forces transition their focus from countermobility to mobility operations (e.g., reopening passage lanes through friendly obstacles to support maneuver).

Follow Through

In a successful area defense, local counterattacks restore the defense. Prior planning, preparation, and usually outside force commitment are required to transition the success of the area defense into an offense. In a mobile defense, success translates much easier, much more quickly, and much more effectively because of the reserve's combat power. As the reserve overwhelms the enemy's attack, the commander considers the options for exploitation and pursuit (see Chapters 6 and 7). A reconstituted and reorganized security force often provides the commander with a readily available force to compel the enemy into a defensive posture. In those cases where a higher commander ordered the mobile defense as a means to return to the offense, other forces will be poised to pass through the reserve and continue the attack.

If the mobile defense ends in a stalemate with both forces left in contact (e.g., the attacker successfully withdraws under pressure from the reserve), the defending force commander seeks to retain the initiative and set the conditions for the next encounter. The defending force maintains pressure on the enemy using supporting arms, information activities, and attacks against limited objectives. The defending commander faces difficult choices if forced to restore the defense. The mobile defense is predicated on maneuver, surprise, and offensive action. It will be difficult to replicate these against a renewed attack by the enemy who will be appropriately wary and prepared. If the same conditions continue to exist that led to the choice of a mobile defense in the first place, the commander must significantly change the defensive SOM to present the enemy a new tactical problem. Other options include requesting reinforcements, changing the type of defense, or maneuvering to defend on different ground.

If unable to maintain the integrity of the mobile defense, the defending unit retrogrades. Only the commander ordering the defense can authorize a retrograde and permission may only come if the force risks destruction. However, contingency planning for a retrograde should be part of the general defensive plan since a retrograde, already a risky operation, becomes very dangerous if conducted in an ad hoc manner—the difference between a retreat and a rout. Given the nature of the mobile defense, the blending of enemy and friendly forces, and the relative lack of prepared positions, retrograde operations will be difficult. The contingency planning conducted for the retrograde should be thorough to successfully execute a withdrawal. Chapter 11 addresses retrograde in detail.

CHAPTER 11.
RETROGRADE

The enemy may force retrograde activities or a friendly force may execute them voluntarily. In either case, the higher commander of the force executing the activity must approve the retrograde. Retrograde activities are transitional; they are not considered in isolation. There are three core methods for conducting a retrograde: a delay, withdrawal, or retirement. There are two unique, associated methods—denial and stay-behind.

There are two primary reasons a force conducts a retrograde. The first is to disengage from operations to preserve the force or avoid combat under undesirable conditions. The second is to reposition forces to create a more favorable environment in which to resume operations. Both reasons are fundamentally tied to changing existing circumstances to create a more advantageous situation. The following other advantages are fundamentally associated with one of the two primary reasons:

- Gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.
- Resist, exhaust, and damage an enemy in situations that do not favor an area or mobile defense.
- Draw the enemy into an unfavorable situation or extend the enemy's LOCs.
- Conform to movements of other friendly troops.
- Simplify logistics by shortening LOCs.
- Position the force where they can safely conduct reconstitution.
- Adjust the defensive scheme, such as to secure more favorable terrain.
- Deceive the enemy.

In each core retrograde method, a force moves to the rear, using combinations of combat formations and marches. (Chapter 3 discusses combat formations; Chapter 15 discusses troop movement.) The commander may use all three methods singularly or in combination with other offensive or defensive operations. Designating main, supporting, and sustaining efforts in the retrograde is based on determining which action allows the force to change existing circumstances to more favorable ones. It is often associated with the actions of the security force or reserve.

Retrogrades can negatively affect the attitude of a unit more than any other type of activity because it may be viewed as a defeat. A commander must not allow retrograde operations to reduce or destroy unit morale because a retrograde demands discipline and aggressiveness. The commander's personal involvement, focused task and purpose, proper planning, and efficient execution will help counter any negative effects of the operation on unit morale. After completing a retrograde, the commander can reconstitute the force.

DELAY

A delay is a planned method of retrograde in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. A delay wears down the enemy so that friendly forces can regain the initiative through offensive action, buy time to establish an effective defense, or determine enemy intentions as part of a security operation. Typically, in a delay, inflicting casualties on the enemy is secondary to gaining time. For example, a flank security force conducts a delay to provide time for the main body to reorient and establish a viable defense. Commanders might execute delays when they do not have enough combat power to effectively attack or defend. Units might conduct delays when ordered to do so as part of a shaping action or economy of force effort.

The delaying force generally seeks to avoid decisive engagement, but its ability to do so is based on the amount of time they seek to delay the enemy and the importance of the delay to the overall situation. Conducting a delay as a shaping action is different than conducting a delay to support a parent unit's ability to complete a retrograde across a river. The delaying force's ability to trade space for time requires depth within the AO. The amount of depth required depends on several factors, including the following:

- Amount of required time to be gained and degree of acceptable risk.
- Relative combat power and mobility of friendly and enemy forces.
- Nature of the terrain and the ability to shape the AO with obstacles and fires.

Ordinarily, the greater the available depth, the lower the risk involved to the delaying force and the greater the chance for success. A delay succeeds by forcing the enemy to repeatedly deploy its force, fight through a series of defensive positions, and consolidate and reorganize before continuing its advance. To succeed, the delaying force must pose a significant enough threat to force the enemy to repeatedly deploy and maneuver vice merely bypass. Delaying forces displace to subsequent positions before the enemy can decisively engage them in their current positions. Determining the length of time a delaying force can remain in a position without having to become decisively engaged is primarily a function of relative combat power and METT-T.

Force Organization

Units of all sizes conduct delays. The delaying force organizes into a main body, a security force, and a reserve. The security force usually conducts a screen forward of the initial delay positions. The main body, which contains most of the delaying force's combat power, employs one of the two forms of delay—delay from subsequent or alternate positions. When using subsequent positions, the main body deploys as a complete unit. When using alternate positions, the main body divides into two, roughly equal parts and occupies sets of positions. (See Chapter 8 for more information on the types of positions.) The commander uses the reserve to contain enemy penetrations between positions, to reinforce fires into an engagement area, or to help a unit disengage from the enemy. These missions require that the reserve has the mobility and strength to strike with such force that an enemy has no option but to react to it.

Control Measures

The minimum control measures for a delay consist of an AO with associated boundaries, coordination or contact points, and passage points or lanes. Additional control measures consist of those typically associated with the defense (e.g., phase lines, battle positions, trigger lines, disengagement lines) depending on the defensive SOM (see Chapter 8). The commander designates contact points in front of, between, and behind units to assist coordination, ensure continuity of the delay, and draw attention to enemy avenues of approach into unit flanks. Chapter 17 addresses passage points and passage of lines.

The defending commander or the delaying force commander can use one or more delay lines. A delay line is a phase line, forward of which the enemy must be delayed for a specified time or until a specified event. Designating delay lines imposes a high degree of risk on the delaying unit. The delaying unit must do everything in its power—including accepting decisive engagement—to prevent the enemy from crossing that line before the time indicated. A delay line may also be event driven. For example, a commander can order a delaying unit to prevent penetration of the delay line until supporting engineers finish constructing a rearward obstacle belt.

Forms of Delay

The two forms of delay are from subsequent and alternate positions. The delaying force and the subordinate elements can employ the forms of delay separately or in combination. For example, the individual elements of the main body might use alternate positions when conducting the main body's larger execution of a subsequent position form of delay. The form a commander chooses is driven by available combat power, the nature of the terrain, and the amount of time associated with the delay (see Table 11-1). The more limited the combat power in relationship to the size of the AO, and the less time the enemy must be delayed, the more likely a commander will keep the main body together as a single element, using subsequent positions. Conversely, the greater the amount of combat power available relative to the size of the AO, and the greater the length of time required to delay the enemy, the more likely a commander will divide the main body into two or more elements using alternate positions.

Table 11-1. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Forms of Delay.

Form of Delay	Use When	Advantages	Disadvantages
Delay from Subsequent Positions	• AO is wide. • Forces available do not allow themselves to be split.	Masses fires of all available combat elements.	• Limited depth to the delay positions. • Less available time to prepare each position. • Less flexibility.
Delay from Alternate Positions	• AO is narrow. • Forces are adequate to be split between different positions.	• Allow positioning in depth. • Allows more time for personnel to rest and equipment maintenance. • Increases flexibility.	• Requires continuous coordination. • Requires passage of lines. • Engages only part of the force at one time.

The defending force uses a delay from subsequent positions when the assigned AO is so wide that available forces cannot occupy more than a single set of positions (see Figure 11-1). This tier might be one set of mutually supporting battle positions occupied by the entire main body along a single avenue of approach. The tier could consist of a set of battle positions, each along a different

avenue of approach, arranged across the AO along the same phase line. Regardless, the entire main body is committed forward and retrogrades from one tier back to the next. The risk a commander accepts in the form of delay is that a single enemy penetration can rapidly disrupt the integrity of the delay effort because of the lack of depth and flexibility.

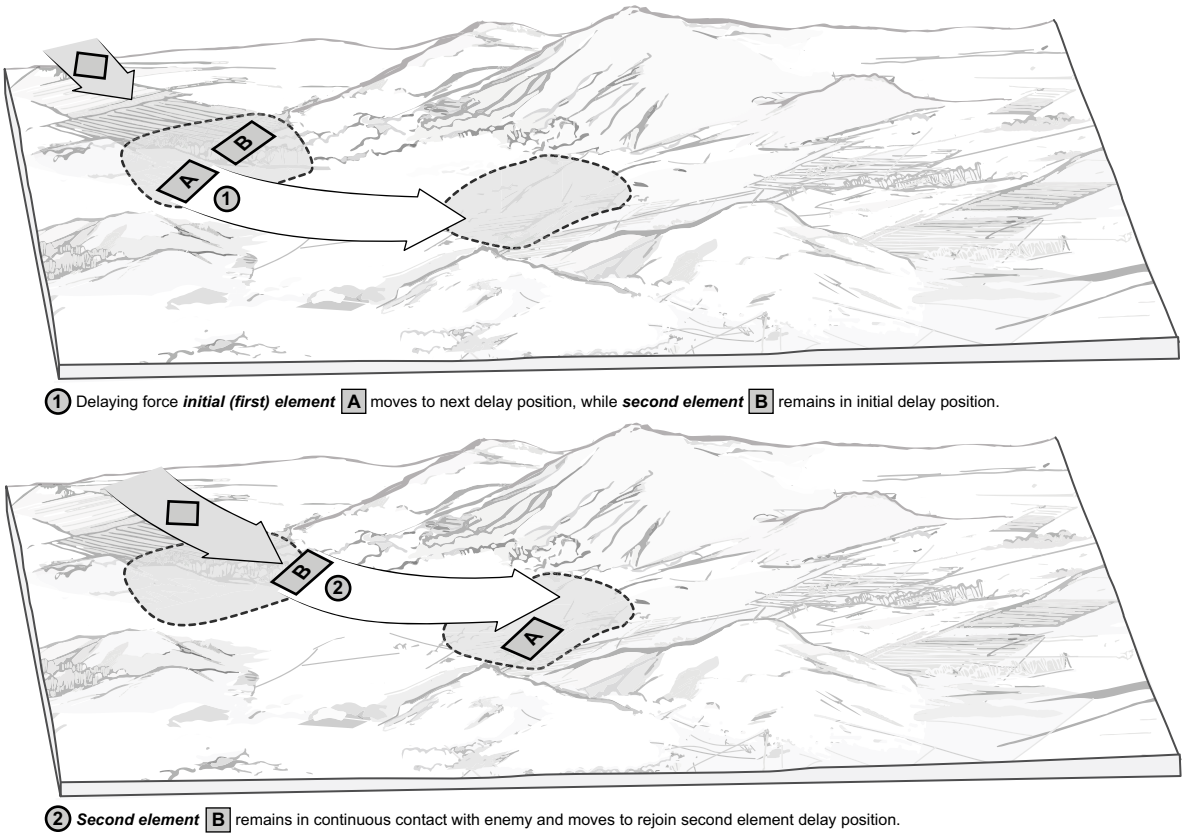


Figure 11-1. Delay From Subsequent Positions.

The preferred form of delay is from alternate positions (see Figure 11-2), where two or more elements in a single AO occupy delaying positions in depth because it allows for greater flexibility and maneuver. The defending force uses alternate positions when adequate combat power and depth of maneuver space are available. As the first element engages the enemy, the second occupies the next position in depth and prepares to assume responsibility for the operation. The first element disengages and passes around or through the second element. It then moves to the next position and prepares to reengage the enemy while the second element takes up the fight. Alternate positions are typically used when the delaying force operates on a narrow front. A delay from alternate positions is particularly useful on the most dangerous avenues of approach because it offers greater security than a delay from subsequent positions. However, it requires more forces and continuous maneuver coordination. Additionally, the delaying forces risk losing contact with the enemy between delay positions.

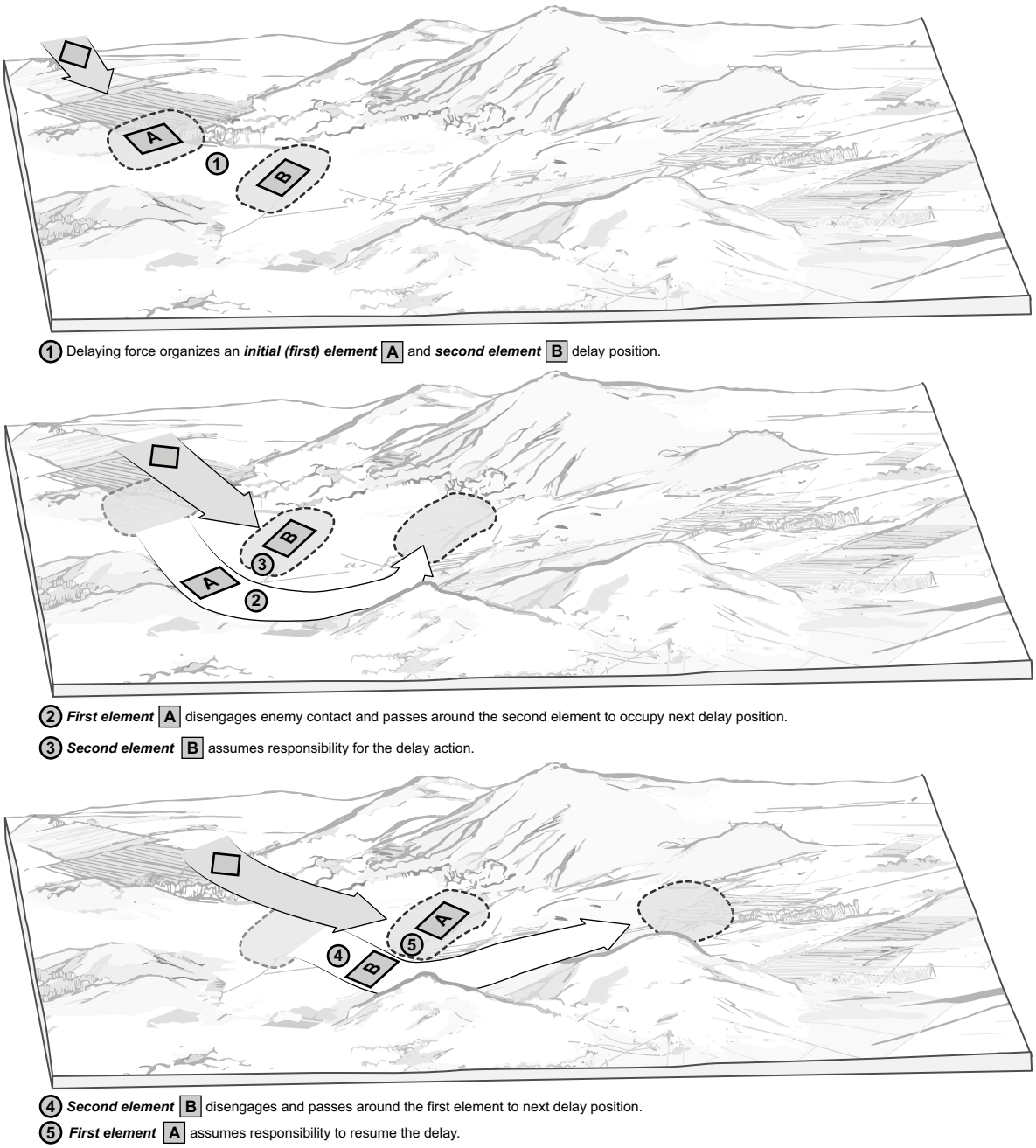


Figure 11-2. Delay From Alternate Positions.

Planning a Delay

A successful delay includes all the planning factors for the defense discussed in Chapter 8. Beyond these, the delaying force commander and staff must plan for decentralized execution and dispersal of friendly forces, the requirement to maintain a mobility advantage over the attacker, operating on extended frontages and in proximity to the enemy, and the complications that may come when the delaying force is acting as the rear guard—such as casualty and equipment evacuation, closing obstacle lanes, etc. Subordinate commanders must have the flexibility to take immediate action to inflict maximum destruction on the enemy and retain the integrity of their forces.

The delaying force's mission is central to all other planning. When tasking forces to conduct a delay, the commander provides them with specific guidance on the following:

- Is the delay time or event driven?
- What is the level of acceptable risk to the delay force?
- How much freedom of maneuver does the delay force have?

This guidance enables the delaying force commander to determine how to create the required effect. The commander can develop a framework to determine how best to arrange obstacles and forces to delay the enemy. Obstacles covered by fires in choke points force the enemy to deploy and create the conditions necessary for a breach. After delaying forces execute the breach, they regroup on the other side before resuming their advance. Engaging the lead elements of an enemy column may force them to deploy, but inflicting casualties will force them to consolidate and evacuate equipment and personnel, resulting in a delay. For these reasons, the task to delay is typically given to battalions and is rarely given to units below the company level. Companies and below usually receive defend tasks coupled with displacement criteria—for example, "destroy four vehicles and then conduct a displacement to position X."

In general, when force preservation is critical, commanders provide the force with broad tasks and purposes and the freedom of maneuver to accomplish them. This is most evident when a force conducts a delay as part of a shaping action in support of an area or mobile defense. In this case, the delay is part of a larger series of shaping actions and the commander likely has subsequent tasks for the delaying force. The delaying force delays the enemy as long as possible while avoiding decisive engagement, displaces upon meeting some criteria such as the enemy reaching a disengagement line, and then retrogrades for follow-on missions.

Conversely, a delaying force given a specific task and purpose, defined battle positions and control measures (e.g., delay lines), is indicative of mission accomplishment taking precedence over force preservation. In this case, the success of the delay could be crucial to other critical events occurring, such as enabling the friendly main body to escape over a bridge over a major river. The delaying force accepts the risks associated with decisive engagement to provide the defending commander either a specific amount of time or to delay until a particular event takes place. The delaying forces do not displace until either the mission is accomplished, they are ordered to displace, or they are overwhelmed.

The delaying force commander plans to operate in an ISR-scarce environment, particularly when conducting the delay in support of a retrograde (when conducting a delay in the security area of an area or mobile defense, it is likely the higher commander will leave ISR assets forward). The commander ordering the delay considers the how to echelon organic and supporting ISR systems rearward while still partially covering the AO during the delay. The delay force's intelligence priorities are to detect the enemy forces' advance and determine their intent and likely COAs. This enables the delaying force commander or staff to adjust the SOM if necessary to effectively employ forces. The ISR assets focus on detecting enemy attempts to bypass or envelop the flanks or strike the rear of the delaying force. The ISR assets also focus on detecting any enemy attempts to cut off the delay force through airborne, air assault, and attack aviation units.

Despite the difficulties associated with coordinating an operation across multiple avenues of approach without becoming decisively engaged, commanders do not attempt to direct the details of the fight—doing so risks losing the flexibility and rapid reaction inherent in maneuver warfare. Rather, commanders rely on control measures, triggers, information feedback, and their judgment and that of their subordinates to conduct command and control. Defensive commanders consider assigning delays to their more experienced and capable subordinates.

A delay typically consists of multiple displacements that force the enemy to deploy over and over against potential threats. The defending and delaying force commanders develop displacement criteria—first for the entire delaying force, and then for subordinate elements of the delay force. The mobility of both the enemy and the friendly force provides the baseline consideration for realistic displacement criteria. An infantry force operating in complex terrain engages the enemy at shorter ranges, displaces more often, and displaces shorter distances than an armored force in open terrain. After considering relative mobility, other considerations for displacement criteria include the terrain; the combat power available to the delaying force in terms of maneuver units, engineering support, and fires; and the effects the delaying force must generate on the enemy.

Once disengagement criteria are set, subordinate units consider how to execute this difficult evolution in the face of the enemy. Disengagement plans include the following:

- A maneuver plan for tactical elements after disengagement—who moves along which route and when?
- Fires and information activities to cover the disengagement by suppressing and disrupting the enemy (e.g., smoke, aviation delivered fires, tactical deception).
- Adequate control and FSCMs such as FSCLs, handover lines, start times, and contact and passage points if moving back through friendly lines (executing a delay from alternate positions).
- The earliest time for command posts, combat support, and CSS elements to move.
- Designation of units responsible for closing lanes through obstacles and executing reserve obstacles.

The delaying force commander and staff uses the IPB process and METT-T to identify ground and air avenues for enemy attacks and friendly counterattacks. Using AOs or sector defensive methods, each likely enemy avenue of approach is assigned to one subordinate unit. The commander either accepts risk by not covering unlikely routes or covers other avenues with ISR assets. The cross coordination between units on different avenues of approach is critical, not only for battlespace geometry issues, but to ensure that units do not get cut off when one or the other withdraws or displaces. The commander and staff help mitigate this, if necessary, by assigning initial and subsequent delay positions along the avenues of approach and any other control measures (e.g., phase lines, trigger lines) to ensure coordination and synchronization across units.

Executing a delay calls for creativity in tactical problem solving. Commanders should not underestimate the ability of the ACE to not only support delays but conduct them as well. Using reconnaissance abilities and available firepower, elements of the ACE can create considerable delays among enemy forces, to include spoiling attacks and counterattacks depending on enemy air defense capabilities and the availability of friendly supporting arms to suppress them. In

addition, air assault support can provide the delaying force commander increased options in rapidly displacing and repositioning maneuver units, logistic resources, and reconnaissance assets. Having the ability to engage the enemy with maneuver units and aerial delivered fires, withdraw ground forces to an LZ, and move them to another position to again engage the enemy provides significant mobility advantages to ground forces (see MCTP 3-01B).

Similarly, defending commanders consider assigning delay missions to their most mobile forces. Motorized and mechanized units provide superior tactical mobility in most terrain—even restrictive terrain since, in the case of the defense, the defender has the advantage of selecting and improving the ground on which to conduct the delay. In cases where terrain or resources dictate committing dismounted forces to a delay mission, the defending commander still provides some sort of motorized or mechanized resource they can use to constitute a reserve that can rapidly intervene to extract elements of the force from unfavorable positions.

Beyond methods of movement, the delaying force also creates greater mobility than the enemy by using engineering, fire support, and information resources. The priority of effort is countermobility—bridges prepared for demolition, obstacles covered by massed fires, and information measures that degrade and disrupt enemy command and control. Second to the countermobility effort is mobility activities, such as improving routes between delay positions and establishing traffic control plans to properly prioritize combat, combat support, and CSS element displacement. The delaying force should be able to construct numerous obstacles and deliver long range fires that continually force the enemy to deploy into assault formations, delaying their movement. The only exception to this is when the delaying force is conducting shaping actions in support of an area or mobile defense, vice retrograde. In these cases, the engineering assets and fire support available will be a function of the needs of the larger defensive operation. Finally, the delaying force addresses survivability by relying on organic means (e.g., digging individual fighting positions), coupled with well-chosen terrain (e.g., using the reverse side of a slope to provide hull defilade), using covered and concealed egress routes, and avoiding decisive engagement.

While critical to the delaying force, the extended frontages and ranges common to retrograde operations make providing and massing fires difficult. Therefore, units assigned to delay in support of a retrograde often have more than the usual allocation of fire support assets. The robust employment of the ACE is critical in providing this support and helping offset risk to towed artillery systems being overrun by a mobile enemy. The overall defending commander balances this risk against anticipated requirements for subsequent operations. The exception to this is when a delaying force is conducting shaping actions for an area or mobile defense. In these cases, the combat power available to the delaying force will likely be subordinate to the larger defensive plan.

Logistic planning entails many of the same concerns as that of fires planning—balancing the need for the delaying force to accomplish their mission against the risk of logistic assets being overrun by a mobile enemy. Complicating the delaying force's mission is that personnel and equipment casualties will have to be evacuated, requiring careful consideration of priorities and disciplined execution. Combat service support organizations should plan to echelon their assets throughout the AO, allowing the delaying forces to fall back on support, which then signals CSS elements to echelon rearward. The presence of CSS elements operating along the same movement routes as C2, combat, and combat support units heightens the need for traffic control, availability of alternate routes, and prioritization planning.

Prepare a Delay

The general defensive preparations outlined in Chapter 8 also apply when conducting a delay. Resources—including the time available—determine the extent of preparations. The delaying force commander assigns the highest priority to reconnaissance—gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy is fundamental to delaying their advance. Simultaneously, preparing positions is a priority for the force. Except in the rare circumstance where the delaying force will accomplish their mission from just one set of positions, preparing subsequent positions receives a higher priority than it would in either an area or mobile defense. Engineers base their priorities of work on the defensive SOM—the positions closest to the enemy may only support shaping actions that allow the defending force to create the delay effect elsewhere. It is not always possible to complete all preparations before starting the delay operation. Consequently, delaying units continue to prepare and adapt plans as the situation develops.

Units use battle positions in the delay as in any other defense. The difference is not in task and purpose—battle positions in the delay focus on an avenue of approach—but in preparation. In other types of defenses, a battle position is likely the primary fighting position from which a unit will accomplish their task and purpose, whereas any given battle position in a delay is just one of numerous positions. Although a delay SOM also has its supporting and main efforts, general position preparation places more emphasis on reconnaissance, flank and rear security, and preparing routes for displacing than it does on protective obstacles, FPFs, and ammunition stockpiling. In the delay, battle positions are sometimes referred to as delay positions.

While rehearsals are important in any military operation, the delay operation's requirement to repeatedly engage the enemy and displace rearward to do it again, coupled with branches and sequels that could include local counterattacks and commitment of the reserve to exploit unexpected opportunities, make rehearsals paramount. At a minimum, the commander and subordinates execute an MDCA rehearsal that focuses on timing, triggers, and employing multidomain combined arms. Small units and crews should practice moving to their various positions in daylight and limited-visibility conditions.

Execute a Delay

The security force deploys well forward to gain and maintain contact with the enemy, executing reconnaissance and security tasks (particularly when other ISR resources are scarce). The security force seeks and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements, rendering the enemy unable to collect information which will lead to confusion for the enemy and forcing its forces to hesitate and move more cautiously. As the enemy's advance guard enters the security area, the security force disrupts and delays it without becoming decisively engaged, seeking to determine the enemy's intent and COA. Supporting arms and information activities engage and influence the approaching enemy as far forward of the delay positions as possible.

As the enemy approaches, the security force moves by bounds back toward and through main body positions, keeping the enemy under observation until the handover with the main body is complete. They avoid compromising friendly positions by moving through the delay element's flanks of, avoiding friendly engagement areas and TRPs unless terrain and the tactical situation make it necessary. Depending on the SOM, the security forces either halt and reorganize behind the main body for follow-on tasks or continue their withdrawal back to and through the main defensive lines where they begin reconstitution and await the rest of the delaying force.

As the security force hands over the battle to the main body, the delaying force commander makes any final decisions or adjustments to the SOM based on enemy actions and their apparent intent. The main body executes the SOM using either alternate positions, subsequent positions, or a combination of both. Actions by the main body include ambushes, local counterattacks, employment of supporting arms and information activities, battle positions, and at higher levels, use of area and mobile defenses within assigned AOs (e.g., the main effort for a regiment conducting a delay might be the area defense of a subordinate battalion).

The delay force preserves the force's freedom of maneuver by engaging the enemy with sufficient force to temporarily stop the enemy's advance. Unless the mission demands it, the delaying force avoids decisive engagement. The delaying force uses obstacles, fires, information activities, and defensive positions in depth to slow and canalize the enemy while exploiting its own mobility to confuse and defeat the enemy. Once a delay starts, units rapidly displace between positions. Whenever possible, friendly forces grasp any fleeting opportunity to seize the initiative, even if only temporarily. Doing so avoids passive defensive patterns that favor the enemy and rob the attacker of tempo and momentum. The delaying force may conduct strong counterattacks from unexpected directions to temporarily confuse and force the enemy commander to direct unplanned actions or commit enemy reserves and follow-on forces.

The delaying force commander uses the single battle approach so the delaying force can continually and simultaneously engage the enemy throughout the AO. All manner of fires and information activities are waged throughout the delay and across the enemy force. Depending on the nature of the enemy's air defense capabilities and the friendly force's ability to suppress them, the ACE conducts a range of activities to attack, disrupt, and delay the enemy throughout the battlespace. Fires and information activities assist delaying forces by—

- Introducing confusion into enemy decision-making processes and execution by degrading their ability to move, communicate, and conduct reconnaissance.
- Suppressing enemy overwatch, support-by-fire, and attack-by-fire positions.
- Supporting the disengagement and displacement of maneuver forces through fires, obscuration, closing breaches and lanes, and emplacing reinforcing obstacles.
- Destroying high payoff targets.
- Supporting limited counterattacks.

The aggregate effect of all these actions, however, remains focused on massing the combat power of the delaying force.

Within individual positions, subordinate commanders rely primarily on massed, surprise fires to create maximum damage and disruption to the enemy force. As enemy forces recover, reorganize, and begin to maneuver against the delaying force, the friendly force continues to direct destructive fires against them, tracking their actions and the progress of the engagement against displacement criteria. When the displacement criteria are met, or the delaying element risks decisive engagement or destruction, the element displaces under displacement fires using terrain and cover and concealed routes to break contact. Supporting arms fires target the vacated positions after the friendly force departs.

The delaying force remains flexible as the battle unfolds. Elements having unexpected success may still have to withdraw depending on the effectiveness of the delay elsewhere. The commander shifts combat power, to include the reserve, to allow threatened elements to disengage or to counter unexpected enemy moves (e.g., bypassing a delay position). If retained in the AO, the withdrawn security force becomes the new reserve. Whenever possible, retrograding elements of the main body pass to the flanks of positions rather than through them.

Throughout the operation, friendly forces fall back on logistic support. Combat service support elements remain one step ahead of the delay force's retrograde movement using maintenance contact teams and stockpiles of critical supplies to meet the immediate needs of elements in contact. Support priorities are Casualty and equipment evacuation, ammunition, and petroleum products. Maintenance operations prioritize evacuation over repair.

Terminating a Delay

A delay terminates when one of the following occurs:

- The delaying force conducts a rearward passage of lines and battle handover with the defending force.
- The defending force experiences unexpected success and becomes the basis for an area or mobile defense on appropriate terrain.
- The defending force experiences unexpected success and becomes the basis for a transition to the offense.

Regardless, the outcome of the delaying force's actions should be accounted for in the senior commander's main plan or in appropriate branches and sequels.

WITHDRAWAL

A withdrawal is a planned method of retrograde in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force and moves in a direction away from the enemy. It consists of two forms: under pressure or not under pressure. Subordinate units may withdraw without the entire force withdrawing. Withdrawals may be used in conjunction with other methods of retrograde—a delay may cover a withdrawal and a withdrawal may precede a retirement. Ideally, commanders seek to withdraw not under enemy pressure, though this is not always possible when an aggressive enemy becomes aware of a friendly force's withdrawal or intent to withdraw. A unit withdraws to an assembly area or a new defensive position.

Withdrawals are inherently dangerous because they involve moving units to the rear and away from what is usually a stronger enemy force. The heavier the previous fighting and the closer the contact with the enemy, the more difficult the withdrawal. Therefore, OPSEC is extremely important since competent enemy forces will attempt to exploit the withdrawal, using all available capabilities to try to turn the friendly force's withdrawal into a rout (OPSEC can be very difficult within a civilian population that is likely migrating rearwards as well). The attacking enemy may have ground and air superiority and continuously attempt to pursue, encircle, and destroy the withdrawing force. The attacking enemy will try to use a combination of direct pressure, enveloping forces, and fires to isolate the withdrawing friendly force for later destruction.

Force Organization

The commander typically organizes the withdrawing unit into a security force, a main body, and a reserve. On occasion, commanders may employ stay-behind forces. Unless there is sufficient planning time for the withdrawal, or circumstances dictate rapid changes (e.g., preventing an encirclement), commanders avoid changing or creating new task organizations to avoid complicating the operation.

The security force maintains contact with the enemy, simulates the continued presence of the main body, and covers the main body's withdrawal. To accomplish these tasks, the security force usually receives additional combat power and combat support, often serving as the main effort of the withdrawing force. The commander may create additional security forces to protect the flanks of the main body and to lead rearward movement, preventing enemy attempts to cut off or block it.

When withdrawing, particularly under pressure, the commander generally finds it difficult to resource a reserve but makes every effort to do so. The reserve provides the withdrawal force the flexibility to respond to unexpected enemy actions, extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces, and take advantage of enemy mistakes to conduct local counterattacks that disrupt and delay the enemy. The main body of the withdrawing force consists of all elements remaining after the commander resources the security force and the reserve.

Control Measures

The withdrawing force must balance the requirement to move combat power away from the enemy for a follow-on purpose with its need for self-protection. The commander' staff must closely coordinate and deconflict the rearward movement of combat, combat support, and CSS units while retaining the ability to generate decisive combat power at key times and places. Like a delay, the minimum control measures for a withdrawal consist of an AO with associated boundaries, coordination or contact points, and passage points or lanes. Additional control measures consist of those typically associated with the defense (e.g., phase lines, battle positions, handover lines, trigger lines, disengagement lines), depending on the defensive SOM. See Chapters 2 and 8 for more information on control measures.

Forms of Withdrawal

The two forms of withdrawal are withdrawal under or not under enemy pressure. In addition, a withdrawal can be assisted or unassisted. Assistance that the withdrawing force could receive from another force consists of support such as additional security and occupation of choke points and key terrain along withdrawal routes, management of movement and traffic control, fires, information activities, and logistics.

The most preferred form is to conduct a withdrawal not under enemy pressure. This provides the commander the simplest tactical problem, the easiest coordination requirements, and the most time to plan, execute, and establish new, more favorable positions. The commander can accept prudent risks, such as ordering the main body to move by road march instead of in tactical formations. The commander and staff also have time to properly plan for stay-behind forces if necessary. This is the least likely method when already in contact with a capable and competent enemy.

The least preferred form is to conduct a withdrawal under enemy pressure. This form forces the commander to weigh and balance force preservation against subsequent missions in the context of the level and nature of the enemy pressure. Will the force have to fight its way clear of the enemy every step of the way? How much might they lose doing so? Is the requirement to preserve the main body for follow-on missions so great as to warrant risking the destruction of the security force? A withdrawal under enemy pressure generally indicates a compressed decision and planning cycle that entails risk that the commander will seek to offset through the assistance of outside forces.

Planning a Withdrawal

Planning and coordinating a withdrawal is very similar to that of a delay. In both cases, the commander and staff begin design and problem framing with the assumption that the enemy will attempt to interfere with the withdrawal. Unlike a delay, where the lack of enemy action could mean the delay force stays in place, in the withdrawal, the friendly force is still leaving. Accordingly, the withdrawing commander and staff plans for enemy interference and develops decision points and triggers that allow the force to transition to a "not under pressure" withdrawal if enemy interference does not manifest. Further, the friendly force avoids any premature actions that would indicate to the enemy that a withdrawal was being contemplated. Regardless of whether the withdrawal is under pressure, the friendly force plans to—

- Break away deliberately from the enemy.
- Create a situation where the main body can displace rapidly, free of enemy interference.
- Retain sufficient combat power and logistic resources to support security forces throughout the operation.

In creating the SOM for a withdrawal, the commander and staff decide whether the entire force will attempt to withdraw simultaneously or by phases. While a simultaneous withdrawal allows for a rapid and deliberate break from the enemy, the variables of METT-T, lack of sufficient routes, and compliance of the enemy often do not allow for it. Therefore, the friendly force typically conducts the operation in phases, determining an order of withdrawal-by-element that balances speed of movement against the force's overall ability to protect itself.

The first factor the commander and staff consider is follow-on missions. Why is the force withdrawing in the first place and what must they be able to do once the withdrawal is complete? This helps determine and prioritize what combat power and resources are needed to successfully complete the withdrawal. The second consideration is how far the force must withdraw and what lies between them and the withdrawal position? The staff analyzes the availability of transportation assets and routes, how many combat support and CSS elements must also withdraw, and how their movement and the movement of the maneuver elements of the main body can be phased. The third consideration is how hard the enemy will press the withdrawing force. These three factors enable the commander and staff to make three interrelated key decisions: when to start the movement of selected combat, combat support, and CSS elements; when forward elements should start thinning out; and when the security force should begin its disengagement operations.

The security force—specifically the rear, as opposed to flanks or forward security force—is usually the main effort in either creating or preparing to create the space the main body needs to withdraw successfully. The first consideration for security force planning is whether a security

area exists between friendly and enemy forces. The existence of a security area increases the main body's ability to break contact. An enemy in close contact with friendly forces is more likely to see through deceptions and recognize the indicators of a withdrawal. A security area makes such knowledge of friendly positions and actions less likely. Commanders create an autonomous security force when a security area exists, such as a regiment designating one battalion to serve as the security force. This simplifies command and control, and OPSEC is little affected. When no security area exists or enemy and friendly forces are in close contact, commanders mitigate OPSEC concerns by creating an ad-hoc security force under a designated commander. In this case, each battalion in the withdrawing regiment would leave a company forward, continuing expected and known routines to simulate the presence of the main body.

Assigned tasks and resources determine whether the entire security force, or just portions of them, simulate the presence of the main body. Elements left in contact with the enemy employ information activities and techniques to deceive the enemy until it is too late for them to react. Regardless of how successful deception is, the security force commanders must expect to have to fight to provide the withdrawing force the time they need. Consequently, they develop disengagement criteria and instructions, while also ensuring that recovery, evacuation, and transportation assets are in place to aid disengagement and speed rearward movement.

Determining when and how to begin rearward movement begins with selecting times and conditions when the enemy cannot observe the activity, to include through electronic emissions and enemy or neutral satellites. If possible, habituating the enemy to the conduct of friendly activities during limited-visibility conditions—for example, routinely conducting resupply at night will likely inure the enemy to the sounds of withdrawing vehicles at night. Security is most critical in the early stages of the operation when most combat support and CSS elements begin displacing.

The primary decision a commander must make is how to both support the withdrawing elements and minimize the loss of logistic resources to enemy action. By concealing supplies along movement routes, CSS units can simplify support requirements and reduce the enemy's ability to interfere with logistic operations. This allows logistic units to withdraw earlier than they otherwise could. The commander carefully considers whether to place supplies in caches. Once cached, supplies are difficult to recover if the operation does not go as planned. Other than medical items, the withdrawing unit evacuates or destroys all supplies that they are unable to evacuate to prevent capture. The commander establishes destruction criteria, which is time or event driven, for each class of supply.

Preparing a Withdrawal

The withdrawing force dispatches forces and resources (e.g., advance parties and engineers) to prepare the new positions for occupation. The commander institutes the deception and associated information plans. In accordance with these activities and OPSEC guidance, CSS elements begin phasing functions rearward. If using caches to support the withdrawing force, they begin deploying them. Other nonessential activities across the warfighting functions phase rearward as well.

Planning for the withdrawing force's follow-on mission continues and the commander and staff modifies the withdrawal as necessary to support it. In an unassisted withdrawal, the withdrawing units establish their own security force and reserve. They reconnoiter and secure the routes they will use during rearward movement while sustaining themselves during the withdrawal. When

conducting an assisted withdrawal, withdrawing commanders determine their shortfalls or risks and seek to mitigate them by employing assisting forces or resources. As preparations begin, the commander makes initial liaison with the assisting forces, brings them into the planning process, determines tasks, and, as required, moves the assisting elements forward for employment.

Executing a Withdrawal

The security force is formed either based on a single unit or an ad-hoc blend from the forward-most units. They begin functioning as the rear guard, executing assigned tasks such as counterreconnaissance, tactical deception, delay as required, and limited offensive methods such as spoiling attacks or feints. Elements to conduct flank and forward security (direction of movement) begin their tasks if the SOM mandates. The command forms and locates its reserve in positions—generally to the rear in close support of the security forces—that enables the force to reinforce and assist the security forces by extricating heavily engaged elements and take advantage of opportunities to use offensive action (e.g., counterattacks) to prevent enemy interference with the withdrawal. In an assisted withdrawal, those forces and resources so assigned begin their missions to provide security, aid movement, and support other activities.

On order, the main body uses limited-visibility conditions, smoke, and deception to move rapidly rearward on multiple routes to intermediate or final positions. They may use multiple intermediate positions to phase and coordinate movement while enhancing protection. If under enemy pressure, the least engaged units retrograde first, while the security force and reserve act to support the movement of more heavily engaged units. Movement is disciplined and traffic management centralized even in the face of enemy pressure—units move along designated routes at given times. Designated combat support units maintain their positions to offer indirect fires, mobility, and countermobility support to the withdrawing force, while the rest move with CSS elements to their new positions. Remaining combat support units use various techniques to echelon rearward while providing support to the security, main body, and reserve forces. (See Chapter 15 for more information on movement techniques.) The ACE uses aerial delivered fires in the close and deep areas to prevent or disrupt enemy interference with the operation and employs assault support assets as required for the security, main body, and reserve forces.

After the main body withdraws to a safe distance, the security force begins its rearward movement. If using a DLIC, that detachment remains in contact until a designated time or event. Even if the enemy does not pursue the withdrawing force, the security force continues to act as the rear guard unless the commander assigns that mission to another element. If not pursued by the enemy, the security force can transition to more effective and speedy means of movement, such as a march column.

If the security element and reserve cannot prevent the enemy from closing on the main body, the commander commits some of or all the main body to delay or defend and prevent the enemy from further interfering with the withdrawal. In this event, the actions of the main body focus on creating the conditions that enable the retrograde to resume at the earliest possible moment. The enemy endeavors to fix friendly forces for their envelopment and destruction, and the commander disrupts these attempts by using alternate routes to avoid enemy attacks and employing a forward security element to hold open checkpoints or fight through enemy blocks.

Terminating a Withdrawal

Once the withdrawing force successfully disengages from the enemy, it executes one of three options. Its forces either withdraw to new positions that are part of the overall defense or they conduct a rearward passage of lines and occupy assembly areas for subsequent missions. In these two cases, they conduct reconstitution tasks and activities to rapidly regain effectiveness. Or, in the third case, once beyond the influence of enemy action, the withdrawing force transitions to a retirement and continues its rearward movement and next mission.

RETIREMENT

A retirement is a planned method of retrograde in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy. Units conduct the retirement method to reposition forces for future operations or to accommodate the current concept of operations. A retiring unit organizes for combat, but it does not anticipate interference from enemy ground forces. The retiring unit has either successfully completed a withdrawal or, more likely, its security is being provided by another unit. Still, since the enemy could employ unconventional forces, vertical envelopment, air strikes, or long range fires to interdict the retiring unit, commanders plan for enemy actions and organize the unit to fight in self defense.

Units conduct retirements as tactical road marches where security and speed are the most important considerations. If the force is transitioning from a withdrawal, the retirement begins when the security force completes its disengagement and can organize into a march formation. The retiring unit generally moves toward an assembly area, which should support the preparations for the unit's next mission. Routes used by the retiring force should support speedy and efficient movement but should also allow for effective defensive measures if required. One high-speed route may best support fast movement, but two, slower, parallel routes might also support fairly rapid retrograde while providing more defensive options to respond to enemy actions.

Force Organization

The commander usually designates security elements and a main body in a retirement (see Figure 11-3). Elements of the force organize into march columns—the formation and number of columns vary depending upon the number of available routes and the potential for enemy interference. The commander typically moves major elements to the rear simultaneously. However, a limited road network or a flank threat could require the unit to echelon its movement in terms of time and ground locations.

The factors of METT-T dictate the size and composition of the security forces. The primary security concern will be to the rear. Rear security acts to protect the rearmost columns from surprise, disruption, and attack. They also oversee stragglers and equipment evacuation. Commanders may establish flank security if necessary and typically establish an advanced guard augmented by a combat engineer detachment to focus on mobility actions. In a manner similar to delay and withdrawal, the commander can use single units to conduct these security tasks or could require each march column to provide its own forward, flank, and rear security.

The main body organizes in a manner opposite that of an approach march (see Chapter 4). Combat support and CSS units precede combat forces. When necessary, main body elements can reinforce the rear guard or any other security element. Commanders rely on the ACE and the organic fire support systems of the security forces to provide the first source of fire support. Combat support units within the main body can always be pulled and re-tasked if necessary. Information activities in support of the retirement are the responsibility of the overall commander of the retiring unit.

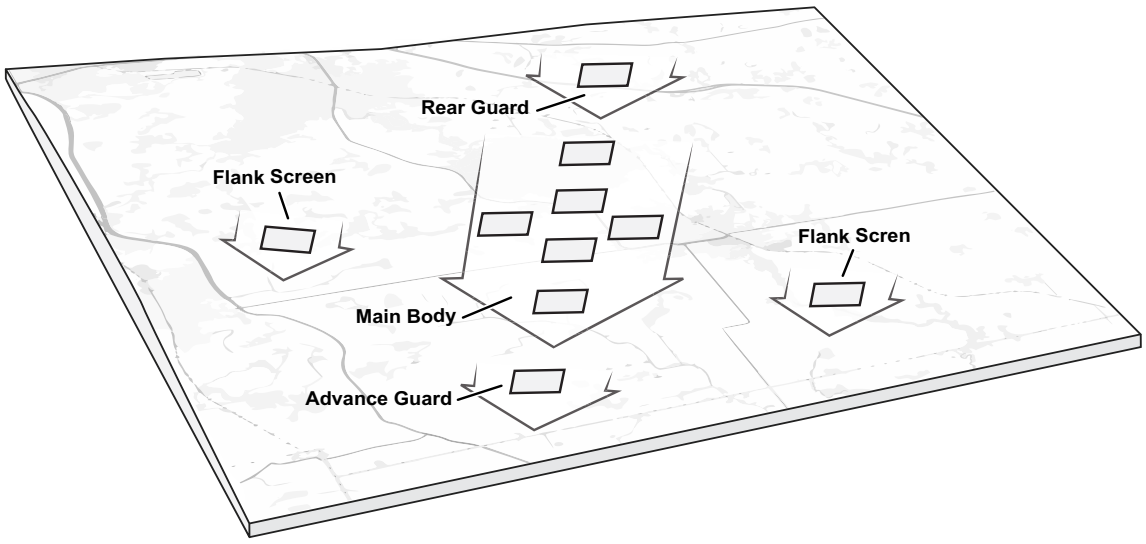


Figure 11-3. Forces Organized for a Retirement.

Control Measures

The control measures used in a retirement are the same as those used in a delay and a withdrawal. As in a withdrawal, thorough planning and strict adherence to routes and movement times facilitate an orderly retirement. The commander controls movement using movement times, routes, and checkpoints. See Chapters 2 and 3 for movement control measures.

Planning and Execution of a Retirement

Units executing retirements try to begin them from some state of stability. Transitioning directly from the withdrawal to retirement without allotting time to reestablish command and control, resupply, and reorganization is avoided if possible. Once an element assumes a march formation, it is prepared to initiate the retirement. The initial action is to move combat support, CSS units, and CSS resources to the rear. During the initial phase, the force retires in multiple small columns. As the distance from the enemy increases, smaller columns can consolidate into larger ones for ease of movement control. Where the force begins retirement, the factors of METT-T, and the availability and status of road nets influence the commander's decision regarding the size of various columns and when they might consolidate.

Commanders generally place engineer assets with the advanced guard to support mobility requirements, from road and bridge repair to route clearance. If there is a countermobility requirement, other engineer resources may travel with flank and rear security elements. Traffic management and equipment evacuation are planning priorities. The lack of an enemy presence does not lessen the requirement for smooth, efficient, and rapid execution. The retiring force still uses limited-visibility conditions, satellite observation windows, and deception to complicate enemy attempts to gain information on or influence the force.

Just as with a delay and withdrawal, the command must anticipate and plan for the effects retrograde movements will have on logistic support for the operation, particularly about maintenance, resupply, and equipment and casualty evacuation. Retirements increase the demand for transportation assets and MSR space. This results in greater demand for effective route management, consumption of Class III (and possibly Class V) supplies, and pre-positioned services and supplies. The amount and location of caches depends upon the nature of the retirement—if the area is being abandoned, then commanders must prevent the buildup of unnecessary resources and develop comprehensive plans for the complete evacuation of supporting functions. The commander establishes maintenance, recovery, and evacuation priorities and destruction criteria for inoperable equipment.

During a retirement, CSS units echelon their movements to maintain adequate support to the committed force—priority of support goes to the rear guard, which is likely falling back through a logistic gap created by the needs of the main body. Friendly forces keep MSRs open and decontaminated as necessary. Logistic units maintain maximum dispersion consistent with control and local security. Their goal is to provide uninterrupted support and maximum protection during the time it takes to conduct the retirement operation. Recovery and evacuation vehicles position themselves at critical locations to keep disabled vehicles from blocking movement routes. By echeloning support, the amount of time each CSS unit spends moving is reduced—time that prevents them from performing their primary support tasks. High priority assets may require added protection to prevent their loss or capture.

UNIQUE RETROGRADE SITUATIONS

Conditions that require conducting denial measures and stay-behind operations can arise during retrograde operations. These two methods of retrograde have their own unique planning and execution considerations.

Denial Measures

A denial measure is "an action to hinder or deny the enemy the use of territory, personnel, or facilities, to include destruction, removal, contamination, or erection of obstruction" (*DoD Dictionary*). Denial measures are not countermobility activities. Denial measures limit the enemy's benefits of occupying an area; countermobility limits the enemy's maneuver. There are times when an enemy unit will capture, or threaten to capture, friendly equipment and supplies, most often during retrograde. This may or may not be associated with the purpose of the enemy forces' operation, and captured supplies (e.g., POL) could ease their logistic burden, increasing the efficiency of their operations. The fundamental reason to conduct denial measures is to avoid providing the enemy any assistance. The principles of denial include the following:

- Destroy military equipment and supplies when friendly forces cannot prevent them from falling into enemy hands.
- Responsibility for conducting denial measures rests with the user of the equipment and supplies.
- If practical, denial measures should not preclude their later use by friendly forces (e.g., hiding vice destroying).
- It is unlawful to deliberately destroy medical equipment and supplies or make food and water unfit for consumption.

A unit's military equipment and supplies could expand to include military installations and any civilian equipment and supplies used by the friendly force. Under the law of war, the destruction of civilian property is only permitted when required by immediate military necessity. Determining whether there is sufficient necessity to justify destruction is a complex decision that requires considering moral, political, and legal considerations. Additionally, civil instability caused by destroying civilian property, material, and equipment could have adverse effects on friendly operations. The commander involves the staff judge advocate and civil affairs staff officer when planning denial measures.

The commander who orders denial measures must consider the potential value military equipment and supplies would have to an enemy when determining the priorities and the extent of the denial. High priorities for denial measures include—

- Classified equipment, material, and documents.
- POL.
- Sophisticated weapon systems or electronic equipment.
- Heavy weapons and associated ammunition.
- Communications equipment.
- Bridging equipment, rafts, and ferries.
- Air, sea, and land transport systems.

The commander issues detailed instructions to deny military equipment and supplies to prevent the enemy from using them. Denial must also prevent an enemy from repairing a system through the cannibalization of several systems. The unit must destroy the same parts in each type of system.

The commander and staff ensure that executing the denial plan does not adversely affect the unit's future operations. This includes carefully considering the force's demolition policy in relation to the purpose of the rearward movement and the contemplated subsequent actions of the force. Widespread demolitions during a retrograde may become a greater hindrance to a friendly force moving back into the area than to the enemy during the friendly retrograde. For example, destroying the transportation infrastructure increases friendly logistic difficulties once the area is recaptured. Removing or destroying militarily significant supplies and equipment (e.g., fuel, obstacle materials, rail cars) from an area requires friendly forces to bring similar assets with them when they reoccupy the area.

Units can expand denial actions to prevent the enemy from exploiting resources (e.g., fuel, minerals, the indigenous population), routes of communication (e.g., river locks, railroad switching yards, road interchanges, and bridges), and facilities (e.g., telephone exchanges, radio and television stations, the industrial plants of a region). The defending force can assist civil authorities in evacuating the civilian population. The defending force either removes the resources, supplies, and facilities from the area being abandoned to the enemy or destroys them in place.

Total denial measures can produce long term political, economic, military, and environmental effects. Total denial measures have operational, and possibly strategic, level impact. Total denial measures consume large quantities of transportation and engineer resources and require considerable time to plan and execute. Limited or partial denial measures are particularly suitable

if the defending force expects to regain control of the area within a short time. The removal or destruction of only a few key components can reduce a facility to limited utility, yet it allows for the facility's quick restoration of all functions once it is returned to friendly control. While limited denial measures may not affect the advance of properly supported enemy combat formations that have cross country mobility, they can seriously impede an enemy's road bound, and rail bound logistic efforts if executed with skill and imagination according to an overall plan.

Stay-Behind Measures

A stay-behind measure is a planned method of retrograde in which a unit is left in position to conduct a specified mission while the remainder of the forces withdraw or retire from an area. Units are either assigned a stay-behind mission, are inserted to conduct a stay-behind mission, or default to a stay-behind mission because of enemy actions that result in their bypass. The force should consist of enough combat, combat support, and CSS elements to protect and sustain their fighting capability for the duration of the mission. Stay-behind measures are not suicide missions and occur only when the commander has reasonable confidence that the stay-behind force will rejoin the main body, extract itself in alternative ways, or that the main body will fight its way forward to linkup with them. Examples of short duration stay-behind missions include units continuing shaping actions in the security area of an area defense or units holding on to key terrain from strong points in a mobile defense.

A stay-behind force's main purpose is to destroy, disrupt, and deceive the enemy by attacking enemy combat forces and command and control, combat support, and CSS resources. The longer the mission, the greater the risk to the force because of the danger that they will be located, encircled, and destroyed by the enemy. Resupply and casualty evacuation also become extremely difficult as the length of time associated with the mission increases. Commanders consider these factors, and METT-T, when creating disengagement criteria or formally assigning this mission.

Any type of force can conduct stay-behind operations depending on METT-T. Dismounted forces can be inserted via infiltration, air assault, or waterborne methods (a stay-behind operation is not a raid). The primary differences in the composition of a stay-behind force are terrain, logistic, and duration of the mission. A mounted force may remain behind, but its effectiveness will be limited by its ease of resupply. A dismounted force may have a comparatively smaller logistics requirement but will have survivability issues in open terrain.

Stay-behind activities eventually require the force to reenter friendly lines or linkup with other elements, often in more than one location. The stay-behind force may have to conduct a breakout from encirclement to do so (see Chapter 19). The commander and staff must carefully coordinate reentry and linkups to prevent friendly fire incidents. The return routes for the stay-behind force are the best covered and concealed routes available.

CHAPTER 12.
AMPHIBIOUS DEFENSE

An amphibious defense is a military operation to defeat an enemy amphibious operation. If the joint force fails to defeat the enemy amphibious force enroute or during debarkation, then ground units repel an amphibious assault through a counterlanding (part of an amphibious defense).

COUNTERLANDING

Counterlanding is a military operation that prevents the enemy from achieving amphibious objectives through the buildup or projection of combat power ashore. It occurs once amphibious defense and coastal defense has failed to prevent the enemy from being able to approach their amphibious objective area and commence to land forces. Successful counterlanding operations defeat enemy combat power ashore through ground-based multidomain combined arms augmented by joint efforts to isolate the enemy's landings. Marine Corps forces employs two counterlanding methods to support the larger amphibious defense:

- Area defense that seeks to prevent an enemy lodgment.
- Mobile defense that seeks to defeat an enemy lodgment.

Regardless of method chosen, commanders and staffs begin planning a counterlanding by examining an enemy’s most dangerous and most likely COA. The choice of counterlanding method is also guided by numerous factors such as the defenders’ available combat power, their ability to contest and survive enemy fires, and their ability to act within periods of relative advantage and disadvantage, etc.

Marine Corps units that opt to shape at the water’s edge and mount an area defense hold the ground with dug-in positions and limited reserves to prevent the enemy from gaining a lodgment. This COA is the costliest in terms of required personnel and resources but allows for the most detailed preparation and would be the least susceptible to deception activities. However, nearly 70 percent of all coastlines are suitable for landing when wheeled, tracked, heliborne, and air-cushioned landing craft are used. Rarely will defenders have the resources to be strong everywhere; therefore, there will be likely gaps an enemy can exploit in this method of counterlanding. Lastly, defenders would need to mitigate and survive destructive enemy fires against known and prepared positions.

When the defenders hold enough maneuver space and relative maneuverability, they can choose a mobile defense. Rather than attempting to predict the landing area, the defenders rely on joint and naval fires to delay and disrupt an enemy landing. Those forward defenses are in the security area and are used for shaping. The defender discerns the enemy’s main effort, then uses counterattacks as its decisive action against the enemy’s main lodgment. The objective is to destroy the enemy

force vice holding ground. The advantage is that the defender's forces are in the security area, not to defend terrain, but to sense. The security forces shape and delay through a combination of screen, guard, and cover missions, that set up the conditions for the decisive counterattack. Another advantage is, rather than trying to defend multiple shorelines and possibly hundreds of miles, manpower and resources are used more efficiently while complicating the enemy's targeting efforts. However, the three biggest disadvantages are—

- The attacker can gain a foothold that could be extremely difficult to reduce and destroy.
- The counterattack force must have more mobility ashore then the attacker has from the sea and the initial lodgment.
- The defender must correctly discern that the landing is the main effort and not a feint designed to draw them away from the main landing.

The defender only needs to sufficiently defeat, delay, or disrupt the attacker at any one of these stages. Therefore, if facing a situation in which the enemy landing can't be stopped by the larger joint and naval operation, the preferred course of action once the assault begins is shaping at the water's edge followed by a decisive counterattack to destroy the lodgment (e.g., shaping and then executing a mobile defense).

AREA DEFENSE METHOD

The area defense at the water's edge functions like any other method of the defense in its goal to attack and defeat the enemy landing to prevent the enemy from establishing itself ashore and forming a coherent lodgment. The area defense method of counterlanding is best when the defender is certain of the landing areas and is tactically located where the decisive battle is to be fought. In general, the focus of the area defense is to retain terrain for the purpose of defeating the enemy. In the case of an area defense in counterlanding, the purpose of retaining terrain forward in the landing area is to defeat the enemy's landing when the enemy is unable to land sufficient combat power to remain ashore and establish a lodgment. The area defense allows for depth and counterattacks—usually to retain terrain but not as the decisive action. In an area defense, the decisive action takes place in the engagement area. This type of an area defense uses one of the six defensive forms outlined in Chapter 8.

The defenders can expect the enemy amphibious assault force to transit in a formation that allows minimal targeting opportunities until it nears the assault area, where it will transition into a formation that will allow projection of maximum power ashore via over-the-horizon techniques. To have the greatest effect on enemy surface transports, Marine forces, in conjunction with the joint force, conduct expeditionary strikes of the landing force's surface and aerial targets as well as air assault and airborne assault forces conducting a vertical envelopment to support their landing.

Should the defender fail in this initial effort, then the focus turns to enemy vulnerability. Enemy surface assault forces are most vulnerable when they have just left the landing craft and have their backs to the water, with no supplies except what they have carried ashore. Those attackers who assault via vertical envelopment are most vulnerable when the units and aircraft are in the LZ

landing and debarking troops. The defender shapes at the water's edge and at any vertical envelopment locations to try and prevent the attackers from lodging and linking up. See Chapter 9 for a discussion on an area defense and Chapter 18 for a discussion on vertical envelopment.

MOBILE DEFENSE METHOD

The mobile defense destroys the attacking enemy through maneuver and offensive action. It allows the enemy forces to advance to a point where they are exposed to a decisive counterattack by the reserve (the decisive action is the counterattack). Its goal is to attack and defeat the enemy landing after it has established itself ashore in a lodgment. This type of counterlanding defense is best when—

- The defender is free to use terrain as maneuver space and has the battlespace depth for decisive maneuver through offensive counterattacks.
- The enemy has a significant precision strike capability that makes sitting in a static defense untenable.
- When the defender has equal or greater mobility than the enemy.

In a mobile defense the defender still shapes at the water's edge and at any enemy vertical envelopments. (See Chapter 18 and MCTP 3-01B for more information.) However, in this method, the goal is to discern the main effort from any feints or demonstration and, most importantly, determine when the enemy attack is most vulnerable to destruction through maneuver and offensive action. The commander retains the bulk of the available combat power in a reserve as the main effort—a major counterattack. In this mobile defense, the unit will bring forward the mobile reserve forces to conduct a large-scale counterattack to prevent the enemy from lodging and linking up—and ultimately to defeat the enemy. This will include waging heavy firepower strikes against enemy positions to isolate them on the battlefield and sever their connection with the sea and with adjacent units. The friendly force then focuses on destroying the most threatening enemy units. See Chapter 5 for more details on attacks and Chapter 10 for more details on a mobile defense to include organization, control measures, planning, preparing, and executing the different types of attacks in conjunction with a mobile defense.

FORCE ORGANIZATION

Once a counterlanding method is chosen, the commander organizes the force accordingly. The commander and staff may break down the counterlanding area into a sensing area, interdiction area, maneuver area, and support area. Figure 12-1 depicts a notional counterlanding area. At the operational level, planners conducting the tactical counterlanding efforts need to ensure close coordination with higher and adjacent joint and naval units to ensure that the enemy cannot exploit any seams between the execution of the counterlanding and the larger amphibious defensive efforts. The enemy should face a continuous set of challenges to their attempts to enter the amphibious objective area, project combat power ashore, and attempt to build and maintain their lodgment.

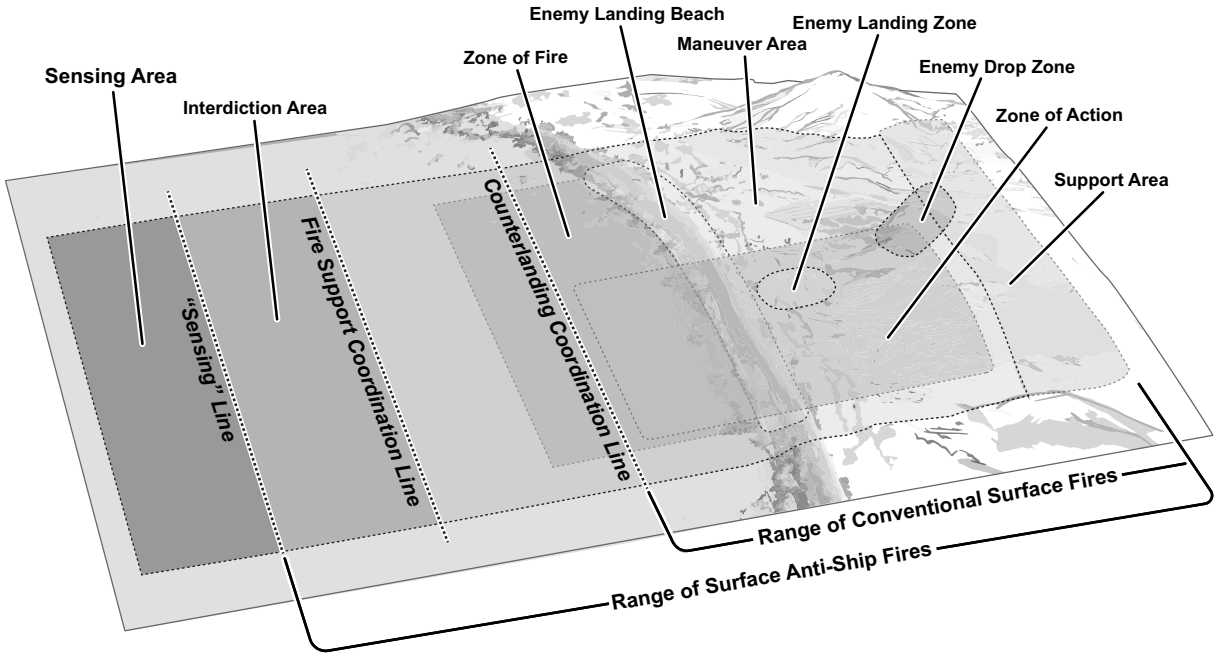


Figure 12-1. Notional Counterlanding Area.

Area Defense

There are two forms of area defense: defense in depth and forward defense. Both demonstrate that area defenses are not merely static, but also employ all characteristics of the defense including maneuver. Regardless of whether commanders choose a spatial- or purpose-based battlespace framework, they organize the force into security, MBA, and reserve forces to execute the defensive SOM. See Chapter 2 for discussion of battlespace frameworks and see Chapter 9 for a thorough discussion on an area defense.

Mobile Defense

The mobile defense uses security, fixing, and reserve forces—the reserve, acting as the main effort, may consist of one-half to two-thirds to the defender's combat power. While the mobile defense may be executed at any level, it is typically employed at the regiment-level and above given the combat power requirements necessary to resource it. See Chapter 10 for a thorough discussion on a mobile defense.

PLANNING A COUNTERLANDING

In planning for counterlanding in support of an amphibious defense, there are numerous requirements that must occur to achieve success. Outlined below are the unique planning requirements by warfighting area that are common to both area defense and mobile ground defense counterlandings in support of the larger amphibious defense.

Command and Control

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for command and control include the following:

- Use the pre-planned defense strength to create redundant and resilient command and control.
- Ensure rehearsals and coordination across all ground defensive elements.
- Prepare routes and positions and identify triggers for the reserve.
- Prepare for defensive and offensive follow-on operations.

Fires

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for fires include the following:

- In coordination with the joint and naval force—
  - Understand and be prepared to support the larger joint and naval efforts to defeat the enemy's attempts to shape the battlespace by seizing air, sea, and electromagnetic dominance.
  - Conduct counterreconnaissance to contest enemy reconnaissance and collections throughout all domains.
  - Conduct cyberattacks to gain access and manipulate enemy battle networks.
  - Conduct electromagnetic attack on amphibious ships and the landing force to create confusion.
  - Prioritize counter-space and counter-reconnaissance campaigns as critical.
  - Lay mine barriers and obstacles to limit the enemy forces' freedom of maneuver.
- Plan and employ coastal artillery, coastal antiship missiles, torpedo boats, and aviation assets, to attack the enemy as it begins to transit ashore.
- Identify enemy critical vulnerabilities that fires can affect, such as—
  - At what depth are the amphibious ships and their assault craft most vulnerable?
  - What are the vulnerabilities during movement, on landing beaches, ports, and landing zones to shape local or planned counterattacks?
- Lay surf and land mines along likely assault beaches.
- Reestablish minefields as enemy clears them (priority given to the surf zone).

Force Protection

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for force protection include the following:

- Defend critical friendly capabilities such as command centers, air bases, and tactically significant points on the battlefield.
- Prioritize engineering efforts (e.g., survivability, hardening, dug-in communication lines).
- Support efforts to defeat of enemy efforts to establish a maritime blockade.
- Contest the enemy's ability to use the air domain to create effects.
- Create air defense and antiship employment triggers that balance risk against desired effects.

Information

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for information include the following:

- Ensure protection of electronic systems.
- Control electronic emissions and frequency hopping; where possible, Marines should use closed fiber-optic systems.
- Use decoys and camouflage to protect US forces.
- Gain access to enemy networks.
- Employ multispectral decoys to create false targets like radar sites.
- Use obscurants (camouflage, etc.).
- Present false mobile targets to enemy sensors across the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Commit to deceive enemy forces on force positions, capability, and maneuver.

Intelligence

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for intelligence include the following:

- Plan for an intelligence cycle capable of operating without reach back to intelligence enablers in order to be prepared for command and control in a degraded or denied environment.
- Identify likely landing beaches and landing zones to help plan for the enemy's most-likely and most-dangerous courses of action. Marine should identify—
  - Likely landing craft loading locations, beaches, and time of assault.
  - Enemy direction of assault, its main direction ashore, and probable operational objectives.
- Plan for battlespace awareness throughtout all domains. This includes—
  - Planning for a robust and in-depth air, surface, and subsurface maritime, cyberspace, and electromagnetic reconnaissance to develop a persistent understanding of enemy disposition and deployments.
  - Planning for passive and active sensing throughout all domains, including the electromagnetic spectrum and space.
- Plan for a campaign of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance. Marines should develop the following:
  - A strong reconnaissance system to identify enemy marshalling areas and embarkation points.
  - A continuous surveillance on enemy amphibious ships to identify when they alter their course from convoy configurations to a formation to load out landing craft.
  - A plan for the continued surveillance of follow-on amphibious forces.
- Plan for an intelligence network and early-warning system, which includes the following:
  - Plan for manned and unmanned sensor operations.
  - Plan requests to use space assets to develop an understanding of enemy's deployments.
  - Plan to employ human intelligence to understand the enemy's assault campaign planning.

Logistics

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for logistics include the following:

- Plan to rapidly replenish with CSS positioned as far forward as possible. This includes—
  - Ensuring beach defense units have adequate supplies of munitions.
  - Using prepositioned stocks to ensure the force has adequate supplies.

Area Defense. In addition to the usual logistic considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, commanders must plan—

- Construction time and material support for prepared defensive positions.
- Contested logistics needs.

Mobile Defense. In addition to the usual logistic considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 10, commanders must plan—

- To support a defense that will be characterized by a deep AO, considerable dispersion of forces, and constant displacement of those defensive forces.
- To determine the requirements of the prepared defense against the offensive demands of the reserve forces when they are committed to the attack.

Maneuver

Unique counterlanding planning requirements for maneuver include the following:

- Most forces should be dispersed, camouflaged, and electromagnetically silent to preserve their capabilities for later phases.
- Adjust ground defense positions based on intelligence of likely beach assaults and times.

Area Defense. In addition to the normal maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, commanders must plan—

- To hold coastal defensive positions as the MBA. This includes the following:
  - Plan for prepared positions that are camouflaged, concealed, and hide positions to offset attackers' attempts to suppress and neutralize friendly positions.
  - Plan for a combination of obstacles and massed fires to defeat the enemy while supporting efforts in the main battle and security areas continue to attack and disrupt enemy follow-on forces, command and control, and logistics.
- To prevent enemy consolidation and linkup by identifying key points within the defense that defenders should be focused on holding.
- To evacuate civilians from the MBA to the rear area.

Mobile Defense. In addition to the maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 10, commanders must plan—

- For the necessary resources (e.g., vehicle, assault support) required for the defender to gain and maintain relative mobility advantages over the enemy.
- To limit the enemy's mobility using obstacles, attrition, and suppression.

- Shaping actions to disrupt and delay the enemy.
- For movement of civilians that are displaced because of enemy action and the defender's reliance on maneuver and tempo.
- For the follow-on tasks and mission of the security force once the enemy passes through the security area.

PREPARING A COUNTERLANDING

When preparing for counterlanding in support of an amphibious defense, numerous requirements must be met to achieve success. Outlined below are the unique preparation requirements by warfighting area that are common to both area defense and mobile ground defense counterlandings in support of the larger amphibious defense.

Command and Control

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for command and control include the following:

- Continue to develop redundant and resilient command and control, expecting C2 assets to be targeted.
- Continue rehearsals and coordination across all ground defensive elements. This includes—
  - Rehearsing triggers and movements for the reserve along planned routes and into positions.
  - Continuing to prepare for defensive and offensive follow-on operations; rehearse as time permits.

Fires

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for fires include the following:

- In coordination with the joint and naval force—
  - Understand and be prepared to support the larger joint and naval efforts to defeat the enemy's attempts to shape the battlespace by seizing air, sea, and electromagnetic dominance.
  - Conduct counterreconnaissance to contest enemy's reconnaissance and collections throughout all domains.
  - Conduct cyberattacks to gain access and manipulate enemy battle networks.
  - Conduct electromagnetic attack on amphibious ships and the landing force to create confusion.
  - Prioritize counterspace and counterreconnaissance campaigns as critical.
  - Lay mine barriers and obstacles to limit the enemy forces' freedom of maneuver.
- Plan and employ coastal artillery, coastal antiship missiles, torpedo boats, and aviation assets, to attack the enemy as it begins to transit ashore.
- Lay surf and land mines along likely assault beaches.
- Reestablish minefields as enemy clears them (priority given to the surf zone).

Force Protection

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for force protection include the following:

- Defend critical friendly capabilities such as command centers, air bases, and tactically significant points on the battlefield.
- Defend against enemy air and missile attacks; avoid allowing the enemy to gain air superiority in the vicinity of assault areas and areas of defensive measures.
- Continue supporting efforts to defeat enemy attempts to establish a maritime blockade.
- Preserve multidomain targeting capabilities through concealment and deception in order to use those capabilities at key points in later phases.
- Keep force concealed until ready to attack.

Information

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for information include the following:

- Conduct deception operations that suggest forces have less than actual capability to conduct multidomain denial operations during later phases in order to protect them from targeting.
- Conduct military information support operations (MISO) seeking to foster doubt in enemy country's population about the merits of enemy assault operations.
- Create false networks and communications traffic correlated with physical and electromagnetic decoy operations to confuse enemy cyberspace-reconnaissance units.

Intelligence

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for intelligence include the following:

- Gain battlespace awareness throughout all domains.
- Conduct a campaign of reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance.
- Deny enemy attempts to collect reconnaissance on the force disposition.
- Monitor the established intelligence network and early-warning system.
- Conduct robust and in-depth air, surface, and subsurface maritime, cyberspace, and electromagnetic reconnaissance to develop a persistent understanding of enemy disposition and deployments. This includes—
  - Conducting passive and, when advantageous, active sensing throughout all domains, including the electromagnetic spectrum and space.
  - Geolocating entities of interest.
  - Conducting manned and unmanned sensor operations.
  - Conduct active sensing and jamming of electromagnetic emissions.
  - Monitor the electromagnetic communications spectrum to support force protection and other information activity requirements.
  - Use requested space assets to develop a persistent understanding of enemy deployments.
- Employ human intelligence assets and capabilities.

Logistics

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for logistics are discussed in the following sections.

Area Defense. In addition to the logistic considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, commanders must prepare for—

- Construction time and material support for prepared defensive positions.
- Contested logistics with adequate prepositioned stocks that can be rapidly replenished with CSS positioned as far forward as possible.

Mobile Defense. Commanders must prepare for—

- Critical logistic elements (e.g., maintenance) to be attached to the security force and the fixing force. Units should—
  - Pre-position limited essential supplies.
  - Rely on the security force and fixing force to self-haul the supplies they need to operate.
- Equipment and personnel casualty evacuation (likely to be greatest in the fixing element). However, both the security and fixing elements should consider—
  - Evacuating equipment and personnel along predetermined routes and phased according to how the engagement proceeds.
  - Which routes and ambulance exchange points are active and when. This is a critical function of information management.
- The fixing element to receive the priority of material support and resources for countermobility operations.

Maneuver

Unique counterlanding preparation requirements for maneuver include the following:

- Most forces should be dispersed, camouflaged, and maintain a low-electromagnetic profile to preserve their capabilities for later phases.
- Adjust ground defense positions based on intelligence of likely beach assaults and times.

Area Defense. In addition to the maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, commanders must—

- Plan a defensive SOM, placing the main effort and combat power in a position to restore a more favorable force ratio against the enemy's main effort and prevent enemy consolidation and linkup.
- Rehearse commitment of the reserve to restore the situation and execute branch plans, as well as rehearse the displacement the main effort to supplementary and subsequent positions.

Mobile Defense. In addition to the maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 10, commanders must—

- Plan for the necessary resources (e.g., vehicle, assault support) required for the defender to gain and maintain relative mobility advantages over the enemy.
- Plan to limit the enemy's mobility using obstacles, attrition, and suppression.
- Plan shaping actions to disrupt and delay the enemy.
- Plan to move civilians who are displaced because of enemy action and the defender's maneuver and tempo.
- Determine the follow-on tasks and mission of the security force once the enemy passes through the security area.

EXECUTING A COUNTERLANDING

In executing a counterlanding in support of an amphibious defense, numerous requirements must occur to achieve success. Outlined below are the unique execution requirements by warfighting area that are common to area defense and mobile ground defense counterlandings in support of the larger amphibious defense.

Command and Control

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for command and control include the following:

- Continue to implement redundant and resilient command and control.
- Continue to prepare for defensive and offensive follow-on operations; rehearse as time permits.

Fires

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for fires include the following:

- Continuously attack the enemy to keep it from establishing a coherent beachhead.
- Direct pre-planned fires on likely air assault landings.
- Conduct electromagnetic attack on landing forces to ensure they cannot communicate with their supporting amphibious ships.
- Separate landing forces from offshore support and follow-on echelons.
- Continue surveillance of follow-on amphibious forces.
- Separate landing forces from offshore support and follow-on echelons.
- Destroy the first lodgment and follow that with the sequential destruction of other landing zones.
- Focus fires on enemy command nodes and weapon emplacements during the landing.

Force Protection

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for force protection include the following:

- Continue to defend critical friendly capabilities such as command centers, air bases, and tactically significant points on the battlefield.
- Continue to defend against enemy air and missile attacks; avoid allowing the enemy to gain air superiority in the vicinity of assault areas and areas of defensive measures.
- Continue to support efforts to defeat of enemy attempts to establish a maritime blockade.
- Defend not just the likely assault beaches but also key airfields and any potential political targets in the assault area.

Information

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for information include the following:

- Continue deception operations.
- Continue MISO.

Intelligence

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for intelligence include the following:

- Gain battlespace awareness across all domains.
- Conduct a campaign of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance.
- Deny the enemy the ability to collect reconnaissance on the force disposition.
- Monitor the established intelligence and early-warning system.
- Continue air, surface, and subsurface maritime, cyberspace, and electromagnetic reconnaissance and surveillance efforts.
- Continue use of human intelligence assets and capabilities.
- Continue surveillance of follow-on amphibious forces.

Fires

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for fires include the following:

- Continuously attack the enemy to keep it from establishing a coherent beachhead.
  - Direct pre-planned fires on likely air assault landings.
  - Conduct electromagnetic attack on landing forces to ensure they cannot communicate with their supporting amphibious ships.
- Separate landing forces from offshore support and follow-on echelons.
- Destroy the first lodgment, following with the sequential destruction of other landing zones.
- Focus of fires during the landing should be on enemy command nodes and weapon emplacements; the goal is to sow confusion among the landing force.
- Continue surveillance of follow-on amphibious forces.

Maneuver

Unique counterlanding execution requirements for maneuver are discussed in the following sections.

Area Defense. In addition to the maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, commanders must consider the following:

- Prevent enemy consolidation and linkup.
- With an understanding of the enemy's main direction and probable operational objectives, move forces to contest enemy's advance.
- Through a combination of firepower and maneuver, the defensive forces break apart the integrity of the enemy assault force to prevent enemy force linkup, put them on the defensive, and seize the initiative.
- Commit the reserve to restore the situation, execute branch plans, and displace the main effort to supplementary and subsequent positions if—
  - The enemy is taking unexpected actions, or
  - Friendly shaping efforts fail to compel the enemy to maneuver in the desired manner.
- If the reserve is committed, the defending force must—
  - Deconflict traffic priorities.
  - Establish control measures.
  - Delineate command relationships.
  - Mitigate battlespace geometry.
- Gaps between defensive positions are kept under surveillance, covered by fire, or when necessary, covered by displacing units.
- Units respond to enemy penetrations in their battle positions and sectors with local counterattacks or by repositioning to alternate positions.
- A unit does not abandon a position unless it is in accordance with the defensive scheme of maneuver or a higher commander grants permission to do so.
- Enemy gains that threaten the overall integrity of the defense should not be allowed to consolidate. The force can prevent this by—
  - Destroying enemy forces either by committing the reserve directly against them or at exposed flanks that isolate the enemy penetrations for later defeat.
  - The security force completing its reorganization and resupply and becoming available as a reconstituted reserve. The defensive force continues to attack the enemy throughout the depth of the AO.
- Once the enemy main body is fixed, the defensive main effort executes its mission, massing combat power to defeat the enemy through local counterattacks to enhance the destructive effects of fires and information activities on the enemy.
- With the focus on terrain retention, civil considerations will apply largely to the rear area.

Mobile Defense. In addition to the maneuver considerations for the defense discussed in Chapters 8 and 10, commanders must plan for the following:

- Ensure countermobility assets support the fixing force while most of the mobility assets support the reserve.
- Use situational obstacles—
  - As economy-of-force measures to provide an advantage through the exploitation of enemy vulnerabilities.
  - To take advantage of success—
    - Through the separation of enemy follow-on forces.
    - To provide flank protection.
- After conducting shaping actions to disrupt and delay the enemy, the security force, or elements of them—
  - Might withdraw back through the fixing force and reconstitute as an available maneuver force.
  - Might remain in the security area continuing to disrupt and harass the enemy reserve, follow-on forces, logistic elements, and C2 assets.
- Civil considerations include—
  - Civilian status and movement are critical in the mobile defense, given its reliance on maneuver and tempo.
  - Civilian attempts to avoid advancing enemy formations and locations where combat occurs can have immediate and negative impacts on the ground maneuver of defending units—
    - Unless steps are taken to account for their presence.
    - Unless they are provided alternative routes.
    - Ideally, host-nation civilian or military organizations will provide civilian traffic regulation and immediate essential services along designated civilian evacuation routes.
    - If the host nation cannot perform these tasks, the defending unit performs them.

When defenders plan, prepare, and execute a counterlanding, they must consider that when an enemy conducts an amphibious assault, it must build up combat power on the beach from an initial zero while the attack is in progress. To establish an amphibious landing, the enemy must achieve a series of sequential victories against the larger joint and naval force. Once an enemy arrives at the objective area (having been subject to continuous disruption from the point of assembly to the objective), it must get ashore, resist counterattack, and force a decision before reaching the culminating point. Throughout this time, the enemy's back is to the sea, and they are vulnerable to isolation. They also may have little cover and little to no organic ground indirect fires. As a defender, all that needs to be done, in conjunction with the joint and naval force is to defeat the attacker at any of these stages to be successful.

PART IV.
RECONNAISSANCE, COUNTERECONNAISSANCE, AND SECURITY



Commanders use reconnaissance, in any domain, with the full range of available detection methods to obtain information about the activities and resources of an adversary. They also employ counterreconnaissance to prevent the adversary from doing the same to us. Finally, they conduct security operations to provide early and accurate warning of enemy operations, to provide the force being protected with time and maneuver space within which to react to the enemy, and to develop the situation to allow the commander to effectively use the protected forces.

CHAPTER 13.
RECONNAISSANCE AND COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE

Marines conduct reconnaissance missions to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographical, or geographical characteristics of a particular area. They conduct counterreconnaissance measures to prevent hostile observation of a force, area, or place. Reconnaissance, as it relates to ISR, primarily relies on the human dynamic rather than technical means and is a focused collection effort. Units perform reconnaissance before, during, and after operations to provide information for the IPB process and the staff to help formulate, confirm, or modify a COA. The four types of reconnaissance missions are route, zone, area, and force oriented.

Reconnaissance units identify terrain characteristics, enemy and friendly obstacles to movement, and the disposition of enemy forces and the civilian population. Reconnaissance supports and protects the force during movement and prior to the occupation of assembly areas. Reconnaissance supports maneuver by keeping units free from contact as long as possible and allowing the concentration of combat power at the decisive point in the offense and defense. Reconnaissance enables commanders to understand the environment and potential adversaries.

The Marine Corps conducts reconnaissance to gain and maintain contact with the enemy while preventing the enemy from affecting friendly forces. Although counterreconnaissance is complimentary to security, security does not equate to conducting counterreconnaissance. Rather, counterreconnaissance is a distinctive function that must be planned and resourced. Reconnaissance focuses on sensing and seeing the enemy, counterreconnaissance focuses on denying the enemy the ability to sense and see. In the multi-domain battlespace, these are not separate activities, but dual aspects of the same action—collecting and concealing information.

RECONNAISSANCE OBJECTIVE

Commanders orient reconnaissance assets by providing them reconnaissance objectives. Reconnaissance objectives result from the identification of priority information requirements during IPB. Reconnaissance objectives may be a terrain feature, geographic area, enemy force, adversary, or other mission or operational variable, such as specific civil considerations or the trafficability of a specific area. The reconnaissance objective is tied directly to a reconnaissance mission end state and represents the information that must be gathered.

The commander issues warning orders, FRAGORDs, and operation orders to create a framework for managing ISR assets during execution of the intelligence collection plan and throughout operations. This framework helps planners differentiate between surveillance requirements (i.e., the systematic observation of an area) and reconnaissance needs (i.e., a mission undertaken to obtain specific information). This framework also enables reconnaissance resources to act in concert, covering all the commander's reconnaissance objectives, while acting according to their strengths. For example, air reconnaissance can surveil objectives beyond the range of ground reconnaissance. Conversely, ground reconnaissance units can conduct missions in weather that precludes aerial reconnaissance. Similarly, if a division G-2 uses technical sensors and human intelligence sources to determine that the enemy is not in an area and the terrain there appears to be trafficable, then reconnaissance units may be reprioritized to other missions within the framework.

RECONNAISSANCE FUNDAMENTALS

There are seven fundamentals of successful reconnaissance operations. Commanders and staff—

- Ensure continuous reconnaissance.
- Do not keep reconnaissance assets in reserve.
- Focus on the reconnaissance objective.
- Rapidly report information.
- Retain freedom of maneuver.
- Gain and maintain contact.
- Rapidly develop the situation.

Ensure Continuous Reconnaissance

The unit conducts reconnaissance before, during, and after all operations. Before an operation, reconnaissance fills gaps in information about the enemy, the terrain, and civil considerations. During an operation, reconnaissance provides commanders with updated information that allows them to make decisions. This information could orient on the enemy, such as verifying disposition and intentions; civil considerations; or friendly activities, such as locations and status of units and resources during a CBRN event. After an operation, reconnaissance elements maintain contact with the enemy to determine the enemy's next move and collect information, to include terrain and civil considerations necessary for planning subsequent operations.

Operational pauses take place only when adjusting the pace of commitment or preparing for a planned, maximum effort. When current operational information is adequate, reconnaissance elements gather information for branches and sequels to current plans. Reconnaissance is continuously conducted as part of all security missions, including the conduct of local security for forces not in contact. As operations transition between the various offensive, defensive, and stabilization activities, the nature of information requirements may change.

Keep Reconnaissance Assets Committed

Reconnaissance assets, are never kept in reserve; however, reconnaissance elements may conduct necessary administrative, training, and logistic actions to maintain their capability while recovering from and planning for assigned missions. When committed, reconnaissance assets use all their resources to conduct reconnaissance for the assigned missions. Commanders consider all reconnaissance assets as committed assets with specific missions at all times. Exceptions to this rule apply to unique assets, such as armored vehicles and LAR, that have numerous other potential means of employment beyond reconnaissance missions.

Focus on the Reconnaissance Objective

The commander uses the reconnaissance objective to focus reconnaissance efforts, particularly when time, unit limitations, or enemy actions prevent the unit from accomplishing all reconnaissance tasks. Commanders of subordinate reconnaissance elements remain focused on achieving the objective regardless of what their elements encounter during the mission.

Rapidly and Accurately Report Information

Because information—particularly tactical information—can quickly lose its value, reconnaissance assets must rapidly and accurately collect and report information on the assigned reconnaissance objective. Reconnaissance units report exactly what they see and, if applicable, what they do not see. Seemingly unimportant data might be extremely important when combined with other information. Reports such as no enemy activity are as important as reports of enemy activity. The ability to report relies upon proper communications training and equipment.

Retain Freedom of Maneuver

Reconnaissance assets must retain battlespace mobility to successfully complete their missions. The enemy attempts to find and destroy friendly reconnaissance assets. If these assets are decisively engaged, reconnaissance stops and assets attempt to maintain relative mobility using clear engagement criteria and SOPs, employing movement and reconnaissance techniques and overwatching fires (to include indirect fire support). Stealth, initiative, and knowledge of the terrain and the enemy reduce the likelihood of decisive engagement and help maintain freedom of movement. When selecting routes, reconnaissance units use the IPB process to identify anticipated areas of likely contact.

Gain and Maintain Contact

Once a unit conducting reconnaissance gains contact with the enemy, they maintain contact unless the commander directing the reconnaissance orders otherwise or the survival of the unit is at risk. This does not mean that individual scout and reconnaissance teams cannot break contact with the enemy, but rather that the overall effort of the reconnaissance unit results in maintaining contact. Although there are different types of contact, reconnaissance units primarily conduct surveillance using stealth. Units conducting reconnaissance avoid combat unless it is necessary to gain essential information, in which case the units use fire and maneuver to maintain contact while avoiding decisive engagement.

Rapidly Develop the Situation

When a reconnaissance asset encounters an enemy force or an obstacle the nature of the threat must be quickly determined as situations can rapidly change. When facing an enemy force, reconnaissance assets must determine the enemy's composition, disposition, activities, and

movements and quickly assess the implications of that information. Reconnaissance assets must also determine the type and extent of an obstacle and whether it is protected by enemy fire support. Obstacles can provide the attacker with information concerning the location of enemy forces, weapon capabilities, and organization of fires. If a reconnaissance unit encounters the enemy, they typically conduct actions on contact while gathering information. See Chapter 3 for actions on contact.

RECONNAISSANCE METHODS

The reconnaissance methods include dismounted, mounted, aerial (manned and unmanned), and reconnaissance by fire. When deciding on which reconnaissance method to employ, commanders consider METT-T and the capabilities of their reconnaissance assets. When possible, commanders typically employ combinations of these methods to increase the reconnaissance operation's effectiveness.

Dismounted Reconnaissance

Dismounted reconnaissance is the most time-consuming method ground units use. However, it permits the most detailed information collection about the enemy, terrain, civil considerations, and infrastructure. A commander considers using dismounted reconnaissance when—

- Stealth is required, or security is the primary concern.
- Time is available.
- Detailed information is required.
- The reconnaissance objective is a stationary threat, fixed site, or terrain feature.
- Units expect, or has made, enemy contact through visual or electromagnetic means.
- Environment conditions favor dismounted reconnaissance or hinder mounted reconnaissance. (For example, terrain is muddy or swampy and is easier to traverse on foot.)
- The terrain or threat prevents using reconnaissance vehicles.
- Vehicles are not available.
- Terrain creates a visual dead space that prevents using optics or sensors.

Mounted Reconnaissance

The mounted reconnaissance method enables a more rapid tempo; however, it increases the potential compromise of reconnaissance operations. Mounted reconnaissance should take advantage of standoff capabilities provided by surveillance and weapon systems to observe and engage from increased ranges. A commander considers using mounted reconnaissance when—

- Time is limited.
- Distance to reconnaissance objective requires mounted movement.
- Stealth and security are not primary concerns.
- Detailed information is not required, or the mounted method affords the same scope as the dismounted method.

- Environmental conditions permit this type of reconnaissance. (For example, the terrain is relatively flat and dry and tracked and wheeled vehicles can traverse with little difficulty.)
- Enemy location is known.

Air Reconnaissance

Aerial reconnaissance units plan their missions in much the same way as ground units. They use the same type of operations graphic control measures and consider the same critical tasks. Aerial reconnaissance units organize aviation assets to accomplish missions by considering the same IPB aspects as ground forces. Commanders focus on air hazards to navigation and anticipated enemy air defense capabilities.

Air reconnaissance provides raw intelligence information to commanders and decision makers at all levels, who then convert it into useful intelligence information to reduce uncertainties when planning and executing operations. Intelligence gathered during air reconnaissance missions provides the staff with a rapid means of acquiring visual, imagery, and electromagnetic information on enemy activity and installations and the terrain. To execute air reconnaissance, the Marine Corps relies on a complementary mix of organic, theater, and national air reconnaissance sources to support its intelligence, planning, deployment, and operational phases. The G-2/S-2 and G-3/S-3 are responsible for considering the full range of US air reconnaissance capabilities in support of the assigned mission.

Marine aviation squadrons provide organic air reconnaissance support. They are designed to be multi-mission capable and provide air reconnaissance information in support of the unit. Although the Marine unmanned aerial vehicle squadron (also referred to as VMU) is the only dedicated air reconnaissance squadron, all Marine aircraft squadrons are equipped and trained to perform specific air reconnaissance operations (e.g., visual reconnaissance, photographic imager).

Manned Air Reconnaissance. Manned air reconnaissance assets of other Services within the theater may support operations. Raw data collected by these platforms may be transmitted over secondary imagery dissemination system networks for the unit to transform into actionable intelligence through a systematic process. The products from these platforms range from detailed imagery with precise global positioning system coordinates to verbal descriptions of an aircrew's visual reconnaissance. These assets may be requested to perform specific reconnaissance missions for the unit. Additionally, these assets may collect imagery for other missions that might be useful to MAGTF planners or units.

Unmanned Aircraft System Air Reconnaissance. Unmanned aircraft systems conduct air reconnaissance, which is best suited for executing route, zone, and area reconnaissance. Unmanned aircraft systems provide significant advantages over other reconnaissance assets. The primary advantages being they typically do not put friendly personnel at risk and have a relatively long loiter time. Both offer advantages to commanders, including the ability to—

- Observe areas and objectives where terrain or a threat can hinder ground or manned aerial reconnaissance.
- Operate at extended distances or extended durations, or both.
- Maximize standoff distance to retain the element of surprise and increase force security.

Units must have procedures to execute a battle handover between the UAS or small unmanned aircraft system (SUAS) and other reconnaissance assets or in case the data link between the UAS or SUAS and its operators is lost or corrupted. See MCTP 3-20G, *Air Reconnaissance*, for more information on UASs and SUASs.

Reconnaissance by Fire

Reconnaissance by fire is a reconnaissance method where a unit fires on a suspected enemy position to cause the enemy forces to disclose their presence. This technique is applicable when time is critical and stealthy maneuver is not possible. The fires may be either direct, indirect, or a combination. The advantage of indirect fire is that it does not give away friendly locations and usually causes enemy forces to displace from the impact area. However, reconnaissance by fire may not cause a seasoned or prepared enemy force to react.

Reconnaissance Under Limited-Visibility Conditions

Battlefield obscuration, fog, rain, and snowfall reduce visibility. Generally, reconnaissance during limited visibility takes more time than during periods of clear visibility. However, limited-visibility conditions provide better stealth and increase the reconnaissance assets' probability of survival. Units frequently employ dismounted reconnaissance patrols at night. These patrols use light amplification devices, thermal observation devices, and electromagnetic surveillance devices to compensate for limited-visibility conditions.

Mounted reconnaissance typically focuses on road networks during limited-visibility conditions. Because of temperature inversion, an enemy force can detect engine and track noises of friendly mounted reconnaissance elements more clearly and over longer distances at night. This makes mounted reconnaissance elements susceptible to ambush. Strict noise and light discipline, along with masking sounds, such as artillery fires, help mounted reconnaissance forces avoid compromise or ambush. High winds, extreme temperature, loose topsoil, or sand can adversely affect aerial reconnaissance. See MCRP 2-10B.1 for more information on the effects of weather and atmospheric conditions.

Characteristics and Employment of Reconnaissance Assets

Ground reconnaissance elements are generally limited in the depth to which they can conduct reconnaissance. However, they can operate under weather conditions that prohibit air reconnaissance operations. Reconnaissance conducted by manned and unmanned aviation platforms complements ground reconnaissance by increasing the speed and depth at which reconnaissance operations can be conducted over an area. Air reconnaissance operates over terrain that hinders ground operations (e.g., swamps, extremely rugged terrain, deep snow). Aviation assets can operate at a considerable depth, far in advance of dedicated ground reconnaissance elements focused on the close fight.

All Marines and units have the implied task to report information about the terrain, civilian activities, and friendly and enemy dispositions. Troops in contact report critical information about their contact. Patrols observing hostile activity report information about that activity. Combat service support elements conduct route reconnaissance, report enemy contact, and describe changes in trafficability. Civil affairs teams report information on the local populace and decision makers. However, the Marine Corps has units whose mission is to conduct reconnaissance—these units are force reconnaissance, reconnaissance battalion, the ACE, LAR, and Marine Corps special operations forces. While some occupational specialties, such as combat engineers and civil affairs, perform specific reconnaissance tasks, commanders primarily use their organic or attached reconnaissance elements—ground or air—and intelligence elements to conduct reconnaissance.

A command's organization, equipment, training, and policy determines which ISR assets are available to employ. leaders of reconnaissance assets are responsible for educating and advocating for the proper employment of their units. Commanders and reconnaissance leaders should use all available resources to satisfy information requirements, thereby ensuring ISR assets are not overtasked or overextended. See Table 13-1 for available ISR assets.

Table 13-1. Typical Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Assets.

Assets	Platoon	Company	Battalion	Regiment	Division	MEF
Observation post	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Reconnaissance patrol	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Combat outpost	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Scout platoon	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Light armored reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	
Chemical reconnaissance		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Artillery forward observation team	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX		
Artillery target acquisition systems		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Air defense target acquisition systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Ground surveillance radars	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Other military intelligence collection systems			AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Manned aircraft systems	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Unmanned aircraft systems	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Marine Corps special operations forces			AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX
Division reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	AAA
Force reconnaissance		AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Technical surveillance platforms	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

LEGEND

XXX Echelon controls or routinely tasks the asset.
AAA Echelon can routinely expect the information from that source to be made available to it.

TYPES OF RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS

The five types of reconnaissance missions are—

- Route reconnaissance.
- Zone reconnaissance.
- Area reconnaissance.
- Force-oriented reconnaissance.
- Special reconnaissance (only conducted by special operations forces).

A reconnaissance in force is a method of attack that units can use to accomplish reconnaissance tasks in certain circumstances (see Chapter 5 for more information on methods of attack).

Route Reconnaissance

Route reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain detailed information about a specified route and all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along that route. Route reconnaissance provides new or updated information on route conditions, such as obstacles and bridge classifications, and enemy and civilian activity along the route. The commander typically assigns this mission when considering using a specific route for friendly movement.

Force Organization. The commander assigns a route reconnaissance as a separate mission or as a specified task for a unit conducting a zone or area reconnaissance. A scout platoon conducts route reconnaissance over one route at a time. For larger organizations, the number of available reconnaissance units influences the number of routes that can be covered at one time. Integrating ground, air, and technical assets ensures a faster and more complete route reconnaissance—for example, air and technical assets can help focus ground efforts. However, a ground reconnaissance effort is essential if the mission is to conduct detailed route reconnaissance or clearing the enemy from the area around the route.

When task-organizing reconnaissance units for route reconnaissance, commanders may augment the route reconnaissance element with technical specialists, such as combat engineers or CBRN personnel. Combat engineers in an engineer reconnaissance team can quantitatively evaluate critical points along the route (e.g., determine military load capacity of bridges) and assess obstacles and CBRN personnel can determine whether contaminated terrain is along the route.

Control Measures. The minimum control measures necessary for a route reconnaissance are an AO, a start point, and a release point that define the section of the route on which the unit will collect detailed information. The AO should be wide enough and deep enough to allow the unit to conduct reconnaissance of all terrain from which the enemy could dominate the route. A line of departure and LOA create the rear and forward boundaries of the AO. The commander may add phase lines and checkpoints to coordinate reconnaissance, control movement, or designate critical points.

Tasks. The information requirements define the mission and reconnaissance objective. When a commander selects a specific route to support maneuver, logistics, or both, units conduct route reconnaissance. The information requirements will also affect the proposed purpose for the route selection for the mission. The following are route reconnaissance tasks:

- Use available capabilities to find, report, and—based on engagement criteria—clear all enemy forces that can influence movement along the route.
- Determine if the route can support proposed usage requirements.
- Reconnoiter all terrain that the enemy can use to dominate movement along the route, such as choke points, ambush sites, pickup zones (PZs), LZs, and DZs.
- Reconnoiter all built up areas, contaminated areas, and lateral routes along the route.
- Evaluate and classify (engineers conduct classification) all bridges, defiles, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts along the route.
- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built up areas) along the route.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Submit route-specific reports (e.g., bridge, tunnel, ford, ferry) to the unit that ordered the reconnaissance mission.

See MCRP 3-34.3, *Engineer Reconnaissance*, for additional information concerning route reconnaissance and the DoD forms for recording and reporting reconnaissance results.

Zone Reconnaissance

Zone reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, obstacles (including existing, reinforcing, and CBRN contamination), terrain, and enemy forces within an AO. Commanders assign zone reconnaissance missions when—

- They need additional information on a zone before conducting operations.
- The enemy situation is vague.
- They need information concerning cross-country trafficability.
- Knowledge of terrain limited.
- Combat operation have altered the terrain.

A zone reconnaissance may include several route or area reconnaissance missions assigned to subordinate units. A zone reconnaissance is typically a deliberate, time consuming process, conducted over extended distances. Typically, ground elements executing the zone reconnaissance move alongside each other, with other ISR assets reinforcing their efforts and covering potential gaps. When the reconnaissance objective is an enemy force, commanders may choose to forgo a detailed sweep of the entire area and focus assets on NAIs within the zone that would reveal enemy dispositions and intentions, and terrain likely to affect movement and maneuver.

Force Organization. General task organization considerations for organizing a zone reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a route reconnaissance. The primary difference is in size and scope. Given the large size of a zone and the detailed reconnaissance required, the

mission is typically assigned to a single commander of a large unit, such as a battalion or a designated commander overseeing the actions of multiple, dedicated reconnaissance units. If the force conducting the zone reconnaissance expects to encounter significant enemy forces within the zone, the commander provides the force with a reserve. This reserve should have adequate combat power to extract elements of the reconnaissance force from decisive engagement. If a unit conducts a zone reconnaissance beyond supporting range of the main body, the commander ordering the zone reconnaissance provides the reconnaissance unit with adequate fire support assets that can move with the reconnaissance unit.

Control Measures. The minimum control measure necessary for a zone reconnaissance is an AO. A line of departure and LOA create the rear and forward boundaries of the AO. The commander of the reconnaissance unit may subdivide the AO and employ control measures such as phase lines and contact points to coordinate the movement and actions of subordinate units. The commander may further designate the time that this physical contact takes place.

Tasks. The requirement to conduct a zone reconnaissance is established when a commander lacks sufficient information regarding an area in terms of threat and terrain. These information requirements define the mission and reconnaissance objective. The following are zone reconnaissance tasks:

- Use available capabilities to find, report, and—based on engagement criteria—clear all enemy forces within the zone.
- Determine the trafficability of all terrain within the zone, including built up areas.
- Locate and determine the extent of all contaminated areas in the zone.
- Evaluate and classify (engineers conduct classification) all bridges, defiles, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts in the zone.
- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built up areas) in the zone.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Report the above information to the commander directing the zone reconnaissance to include providing a sketch map or overlay.

Area Reconnaissance

Area reconnaissance is "a directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area such as a town, ridgeline, woods, or other features critical to operations" (*USMC Dictionary*). The area may consist of a single point, such as a bridge or an installation. There are two primary differences between an area reconnaissance and a zone reconnaissance. The first difference is size and scale—areas are smaller than zones and are not usually contiguous to other areas targeted for reconnaissance. The second difference is that units conducting an area reconnaissance first move to the area where the reconnaissance will take place, whereas units conducting a zone reconnaissance cross a line of departure and investigate the area in front of them. Additionally, an area reconnaissance typically takes less time to complete than a zone reconnaissance.

Force Organization. General considerations for organizing the area reconnaissance force are the same as for organizing a zone reconnaissance. The primary difference is that larger forces are unlikely to receive area reconnaissance missions.

Control Measures. The commander assigning an area reconnaissance specifies the area for reconnaissance with a single continuous line to enclose the area to reconnoiter. Alternatively, the commander may designate the area by using an AO. Commanders also designate a route into the area and a route from the area—ideally separate. The commander of the unit conducting the reconnaissance may use additional control measures to enable units to execute their assigned tasks.

Tasks. The tasks for an area reconnaissance are the same as for a zone reconnaissance.

Force-Oriented Reconnaissance

Force-oriented reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain additional, timely intelligence on a specific enemy or target unit. The ground reconnaissance element orients on that specific force, moving when necessary to observe that unit and report all required information as well as any other pertinent observed and collected information. The mobility of assigned ground reconnaissance forces should match or exceed that of the target. Units assigned force-oriented reconnaissance missions may act as subordinates within larger reconnaissance efforts, such as a zone reconnaissance. Additionally, a force-oriented reconnaissance might employ several different ground reconnaissance units, technical resources, and sensors, passing observation responsibility from unit to unit as the target moves, enabling other units to reposition as necessary. Enemy targets requiring such a focus likely have their own engagement criteria, and ground reconnaissance units should have adequate fire support to engage such targets if engagement criteria are met.

Force Organization. General considerations for organizing a force-oriented reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a zone reconnaissance. The primary difference is the distribution and maneuverability of assigned forces. Small forces focused on stealth and avoiding detection are suitable for static enemy targets, while widely distributed, mobile reconnaissance units integrated with extensive technical support and sensors are necessary for highly mobile targets. In such situations, commanders focus their ground reconnaissance units on areas where other assets and sensors are challenged (e.g., close or complex terrain) or contested (e.g., probable enemy contact, enemy sensor location). Commanders assigned force-reconnaissance missions should maintain a reserve that can extract elements of the reconnaissance force from decisive engagement or provide cueing and mixing to target observation efforts.

Control Measures. The minimum control measure necessary for a force-oriented reconnaissance is an AO. The commander of the reconnaissance unit may subdivide the AO and employ control measures such as phase lines and contact points to coordinate the movement and actions of subordinate units. However, overall control measures should be minimal to provide the reconnoitering unit flexibility in the execution of their mission.

Tasks. A force-oriented reconnaissance is conducted when a commander and staff determine there is a lack of sufficient information regarding a specific enemy force or unit. These

information requirements define the mission and reconnaissance objective. The following are force-oriented reconnaissance tasks:

- Determine the location, disposition, and depth of enemy forces.
- Report patterns, readiness, and changes in status of targeted enemy units and forces.
- Maintain constant observation to include movement.
- Maintain the ability to engage, direct the engagement, or a combination of both when engagement criteria are met.

Special Reconnaissance

Special reconnaissance combines reconnaissance and surveillance actions as a special operation in hostile, denied, or diplomatically or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not found in conventional Marine Corps units.

Marine Corps ground reconnaissance units are not special operations forces, although they do share many of the same TTP, terms, and equipment. The clearest distinction between these units is who they work for and where they operate on the battlefield. In accordance with United States Code, Title 10, *Armed Forces*, subtitle A, part 1, chapter 6, section 167, *Unified combatant command for special operations forces*, additional units or forces may be designated as special operations forces by the Secretary of Defense.

See JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, for detailed information relating to special operations forces and their organization. See MCRP 2-10A.6, *Ground Reconnaissance Operations*, and Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-18.4, *Special Forces Special Reconnaissance*, for additional information on special reconnaissance activities.

PLANNING RECONNAISSANCE COLLECTION

By integrating reconnaissance into the intelligence collection plan, the commander increases situational awareness of the battlespace. Reconnaissance planning ensures that reconnaissance assets are integrated, aggressively used, and support the commander's decision-making requirements.

Intelligence Collection Plan

Using the MCPP, commanders and staffs determine and prioritize information requirements, and assign available ISR assets to fulfill those requirements. In terms of offensive and defensive tactics, such requirements may consist of reconnoitering avenues of approach that support friendly movement, investigating key terrain, locating obstacles, or finding exploitable enemy flanks. The requirements of the intelligence collection plan are the primary drivers of reconnaissance objectives, tasks, and all subsequent planning. See MCWP 5-10 and MCTP 2-10A, *MAGTF Intelligence Collection*, for more information on the MCPP and the intelligence collection plan.

Reconnaissance Pull versus Reconnaissance Push

The operations cycle of planning, executing, and assessing is continuous. While any particular operation may begin with a deliberate planning and intelligence collection effort, as it unfolds, continuous intelligence collection and reconnaissance efforts help assess the success of friendly actions, identify enemy intentions and reactions, uncover opportunities to exploit, and identify threats to avoid. Commanders use and interchange two reconnaissance methods to ensure that the operations cycle outpaces the enemy's ability to react.

Operations based on reconnaissance pull use information provided by reconnaissance forces to guide friendly force activities. As commanders obtain combat information from available reconnaissance assets, which drives COA selection and tactical choices. Reconnaissance pull is preferred when the MAGTF can freely maneuver to exploit the enemy's weaknesses and during offensive operations as it takes advantage of the MAGTF's inherent flexibility and reconnaissance capabilities. MAGTF operations, such as operational maneuver from the sea, depend on reconnaissance pull to determine enemy dispositions and find or create exploitable gaps while avoiding obstacles and enemy strong points.

Operations based on reconnaissance push use information requirements of preplanned tactical operations to guide reconnaissance force employment. As commanders prepare to execute an operation or phase, they employ reconnaissance assets to determine specific information requirements to support COA development. Reconnaissance push is often used when the MAGTF is following a predetermined COA, targeting and destroying enemy forces is a priority, freedom of maneuver is limited, and when conducting defense operations. For more information on reconnaissance push and pull reference MCRP 2-10A.6.

Reconnaissance Guidance

Commanders provide reconnaissance guidance, which provides tasks, purpose, and objectives, to ensure subordinate units can develop the situation and achieve the objectives within the required timeframe. Commanders develop their planning guidance based on the RLT's mission, timeline, and intent to satisfy information requirements and identify opportunities to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. Commanders specify different reconnaissance guidance for each phase of an operation and adjusts the components of their guidance as necessary. Commander's guidance consists of four elements—

- Focus.
- Tempo of reconnaissance.
- Engagement/disengagement criteria, both lethal and nonlethal.
- Displacement criteria.

Reconnaissance Focus. Reconnaissance focus defines the unit's area of emphasis and includes four categories: threat, infrastructure, terrain and weather effects, and society. The higher commander's intent as well as the commander's initial assessment of information requirements and information gaps guides the focus for reconnaissance tasks. Focus helps the unit narrow the scope of operations to get the information most important to developing the situation for future operations.

Commanders and staff can further focus reconnaissance efforts by assigning specific reconnaissance objectives. The objective should directly support the end state defined in the commander's intent. For example, during offensive tasks an infantry regiment's reconnaissance unit's objective might be to locate an enemy's security force, to include its composition, disposition, and capabilities. During that reconnaissance mission, the unit could also address information gaps concerning terrain—collecting information on key terrain features that might affect friendly forces, the enemy's disposition, and the various COAs the regimental level staff might develop during planning. In stabilization tasks and activities, however, reconnaissance units might focus on locating improvised explosive device manufacturing sites. Planners use the information developed by terrain- or enemy-focused reconnaissance to update templated enemy COAs as part of a continuous assessment (through IPB) of the tactical situation and the operational environment.

Additionally, a reconnaissance objective might include gaining an awareness of how the local population affects military operations and how military operations effect the population. Organizations might have to conduct reconnaissance to gather information on the size, location, composition, and political temperament of the population. Such reconnaissance focuses on developing an understanding of the cultural and human factors that affect friendly as well as adversarial perceptions and operations, such as religion, ethnicity, language, and political or tribal organizations. Civil considerations also address infrastructure—the systems that support a specific area's inhabitants, economy, and government. Civil considerations that might be the focus of reconnaissance include areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events. Commanders use the reconnaissance objective to state the critical elements of the reconnaissance effort.

Reconnaissance focus allows subordinate reconnaissance units and commanders to prioritize tasks to accomplish, and the assets used to accomplish them.

Reconnaissance Tempo. Reconnaissance tempo refers to the level of detail and covertness required of the unit to best accomplish either reconnaissance tasks. Tempo is described by four terms: rapid, deliberate, stealthy, and forceful. "Rapid" and "deliberate" are levels of detail and cannot be applied at the same time. However, units can fluctuate between the two from phase to phase or even within sub-phases of an operation. "Stealthy" and "aggressive" indicates mutually exclusive levels of covertness.

"Rapid" tempo dictates that the reconnaissance operation is limited to a certain prescribed list of tasks or priority intelligence requirements (PIRs). Rapid tempo is applicable when time is of the essence and only a limited number of information requirements are necessary to accomplish the mission.

"Deliberate" tempo implies that units must accomplish all mission tasks to ensure mission success. Deliberate tempo allows the unit more time to answer all information requirements. Detailed and thorough reconnaissance and security tasks require time-intensive, comprehensive, and meticulous mounted and dismounted efforts to observe reconnaissance objectives and develop the situation.

"Stealthy" tempo includes restrictive engagement criteria to avoid detection and engagement. Stealthy reconnaissance typically takes more time than aggressive reconnaissance and uses dismounted scouts to take maximum advantage of cover and concealment to reduce signatures that lead to compromise. Units use stealthy reconnaissance when they have time available, require detailed reconnaissance, are likely to encounter enemy forces a specific area, encounter dangerous areas, and when restrictive terrain limits effectiveness of mounted reconnaissance.

"Forceful" tempo rapidly develops the situation through action by employing air and ground reconnaissance, technical means, and both direct and indirect fire systems. Forceful reconnaissance requires firepower, aggressive exploitation of action on contact, operational security, and training to survive and accomplish its mission. Forceful reconnaissance is applicable when time is limited, detailed reconnaissance is not required, terrain is open, environmental conditions allow for mounted reconnaissance, and when dismounted reconnaissance cannot complete the mission within existing time constraints.

Reconnaissance Engagement and Disengagement Criteria. Engagement criteria are protocols that specify those circumstances for initiating engagement with an enemy force. They can be either restrictive or permissive. The commander and staff visualizes engagement criteria by analyzing the mission, enemy, and troops and support available.

Commanders and staff must define the size or type of enemy force they expect subordinate units to engage or avoid, which drives planning for direct and indirect fires, and establishes bypass criteria. The commander and staff must consider information engagement and how the squadron interacts and influences the local populace.

Engagement criteria should be defined using precise doctrinal terms. The squadron commander issues specific planning guidance to define the engagement criteria. The staff and subordinate commanders refine that guidance into specific execution information. Examples include—

- Engagement criteria.
- Guidance for actions on contact.
- Bypass criteria.
- Reconnaissance handover criteria.
- Priority of fires.
- ROE or rules for use of force.
- FSCMs.
- Weapons control status.

Reconnaissance Displacement Criteria. Displacement criteria define triggers for planned withdrawal, passage of lines, or reconnaissance handover between units. The conditions and parameters set out in displacement criteria integrate the commander's intent with tactical feasibility. Conditions are either event driven (e.g., associated PIR being met, threat contact not expected in the area, and observed NAIs or avenues of approach denied to the enemy); time driven (e.g., latest time information of value time triggers are met); or threat driven (e.g., observation posts have been compromised).

Reconnaissance Management

The staff uses a mix of reconnaissance management methods, such as cueing, redundancy, and task-organizing to quickly collect the most critical information with the fewest assets.

Cueing. Cueing is "external actions or inputs that cause a surveillance or target acquisition device to turn on and search a suspect area" (*USMC Dictionary*). Cueing uses technical assets to conduct wide-area surveillance, which focuses the efforts of limited ground reconnaissance assets. For example, airborne or electronic systems can identify portions of an enemy force or determine adversary or enemy C2 nodes. The commander can then dispatch ground reconnaissance to verify and develop the information. Similarly, ground reconnaissance units can cue other ISR assets. Commanders employ reconnaissance assets based on their capabilities and use the complementary capabilities of other ISR resources to verify and expand information to support decision-making.

Redundancy. In intelligence collection, redundancy is a management method that uses several same-discipline assets to cover the same target and improves chances of collecting relevant information. Based on the information requirement's priority, the commander must decide which, if any, NAI needs to be covered by more than one asset. For example, when more than one asset covers the same NAI, a backup is available if one asset cannot reach the NAI in time, suffers mechanical failure, or it is detected and engaged by the enemy.

Task-Organizing. To increase a reconnaissance's asset's effectiveness and survivability the commander may task-organize additional assets under the unit's control. For example, to conduct a long-range area reconnaissance of possible river crossing sites an LAR company might receive an engineer reconnaissance element, additional infantry, and a logistic element. The engineers provide additional technical information on proposed crossing sites, the infantry provides additional combat power and protection for the vehicles, and the logistic element brings additional fuel and a self-recovery capability.

LOGISTICS

Because METT-T drives how reconnaissance assets are employed and sustained, logistics planners must be flexible. Reconnaissance elements must either carry a large basic load, receive logistic assets as part of task organization, or a combination of both. Smaller reconnaissance elements, such as division reconnaissance teams, typically combine large basic loads with aerial resupply to extend their operating distances and durations. Larger elements, such as LAR, might require additional refueling and maintenance capabilities to extend their ability to operate. Both examples must also consider evacuation of personnel and equipment casualties. Combining logistic demands with operational capabilities is part of the reconnaissance planning necessary to support the intelligence collection plan.

RECONNAISSANCE EMPLOYMENT

Reconnaissance is characterized as either stealthy or aggressive. A key factor in reconnaissance execution is the time available to conduct the mission. The commander recognizes the increased risk to the reconnaissance element and the main body when accelerating the pace of reconnaissance. To

reduce risk, units can employ air reconnaissance assets and technical means to surveil terrain or low-threat areas. Attack reconnaissance helicopters and other aerial platforms, as well as mounted and dismounted ground reconnaissance assets, are characterized as either stealthy or aggressive (depending on how they are employed).

Stealthy reconnaissance emphasizes avoiding enemy detection and engagement. It takes more time than aggressive reconnaissance. Stealthy reconnaissance takes maximum advantage of cover and concealment, limited visibility, and reduced battlespace signatures. However, because stealth cannot be guaranteed units attempting to conduct stealthy reconnaissance (e.g., dismounted scouts) must be trained to react if the enemy makes contact and have immediate access to supporting fires.

Aggressive reconnaissance is characterized by the speed and way the reconnaissance force develops the situation once they make contact with an enemy force. A unit conducting aggressive reconnaissance uses both direct and indirect fire systems and movement to rapidly develop the situation. A unit requires firepower, aggressive exploitation of actions on contact, OPSEC, and training to increase chances of survival and accomplish the mission when conducting aggressive reconnaissance. Mounted reconnaissance is typically characterized as aggressive. When determining whether to conduct mounted or dismounted reconnaissance, commanders consider METT-T. Specific conditions that might result in a decision to conduct mounted or aerial reconnaissance include the following:

- Time is limited.
- Detailed reconnaissance is not required.
- Air units are available to perform coordinated reconnaissance with the ground assets.
- The IPB process has provided detailed information on the enemy.
- Terrain is relatively open.
- Environmental conditions permit this type of reconnaissance (deep snow and muddy or swampy terrain greatly hinder mounted reconnaissance).
- Dismounted reconnaissance cannot complete the mission within existing time constraints.

The following conditions may cause a commander to direct a dismounted reconnaissance effort:

- Time is available.
- Detailed reconnaissance is required.
- Stealth is required.
- The IPB process indicates close proximity to enemy positions.
- The reconnaissance force encounters danger areas.
- Restrictive terrain limits the effectiveness of mounted reconnaissance.

In addition, see Reconnaissance Methods in this chapter for additional conditions to consider. MCTP 3-01A provides further information on dismounted scouting, tracking, situational awareness, and patrolling.

Typically, air reconnaissance units operate closely with ground reconnaissance units to maximize redundancy and provide mutual security. Assault support aircraft can insert surveillance teams at observation posts. Aircrews can observe, conduct electromagnetic surveillance, and provide

security and responsive fire support. Although rarely carried out, aircrew members can dismount to evaluate bridges, fords, or crossing sites. Aircraft units conducting air reconnaissance plan their missions in much the same way as ground units, using the same graphics, considering the same tasks, and accounting for IPB. The ACE routinely participates in creating the intelligence collection plan, which is critical to employing aviation in support of reconnaissance.

RECUPERATING, RECONSTITUTING, AND REORGANIZING RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

Commanders determine whether to reconstitute—by either regenerating or reorganizing—or recuperate reconnaissance units when they can no longer perform their primary missions. Recuperation—a short break for rest, resupply, and maintenance—is often sufficient to return units to effectiveness. Units can extend these recuperation periods to conduct refresher training, new equipment training, or any required specialized training for the next mission. Relieving units must complete a deliberate RIP to ensure continuous reconnaissance while maintaining contact with the enemy force.

Regenerating a unit requires significant resources. The organization two echelons above the unit being regenerated directs the regeneration procedure and coordinates for the necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies. If that headquarters lacks the necessary personnel or sustainment assets, they coordinate with the appropriate theater sustainment command supporting organization. For example, a regiment can regenerate one of its reconnaissance platoons from the infantry battalion. In the regeneration process, the regiment could use a combination of weapon system replacement, battle damage assessment and repair, typical replacement operations, and medical returnees to provide the needed resources. Units could use these resources, combined with training, to regenerate the platoon's degraded combat power. Alternatively, they could designate one of their maneuver companies to perform reconnaissance functions.

Reorganization includes actions to shift resources within an attrited unit to increase unit combat effectiveness. Reorganization may be conducted when the operational tempo is such that the risk of removing a unit from the operation may jeopardize the mission. There are two types of reorganization operations: immediate and deliberate. The type of reorganization operation executed is based on mission and the operating environment. Reorganization may include such measures as—

- Cross-leveling equipment and personnel.
- Matching operational weapons and equipment with teams and units.
- Forming composite units (joining two or more degraded units to form a single mission-capable unit).

Immediate reorganization is the rapid and usually temporary restoration of attrited units to minimum levels of effectiveness. Typically, the commander implements immediate reorganization in the combat position or as close to that site as possible to meet near-term needs. Deliberate reorganization is conducted when more time and resources are available. It usually occurs farther away from hostile activity than immediate reorganization. Procedures are similar to those for immediate reorganization; however, some additional replacement resources may be available. Also, equipment repair is more intensive and more extensive cross-leveling is possible.

CHAPTER 14.
SECURITY

Marines conduct security activities to protect the force from surprise and reduce unknowns. The force being protected could also be the civilian population, civil institutions, and civilian infrastructure within a unit's AO. A unit can conduct security operations to the front, flanks, or rear of the friendly force. The main difference between security operations and reconnaissance operations is that security operations orient on the force or facility being protected, while reconnaissance is enemy and terrain oriented. Security operations are shaping actions. As a shaping action, economy of force is often a condition of security operations.

There are three types of security activities:

- Screen is a type of security mission that provides early warning to the protected force. In a screen mission, Marines observe, identify, and report information, and only fight in self-protection.
- Guard is a type of security mission that protects the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground from observing and directing fire against the main body.
- Cover is a type of security mission that intercepts, engages, delays, disorganizes, and deceives the enemy to protect the covered force from surprise, develop the situation, and give the friendly unit time and space in which to respond to enemy actions.

Additionally, forces can be assigned rear area and local security missions:

- Rear area security consists of the measures taken before, during, and after an enemy airborne attack, sabotage action, infiltration, guerrilla action, or initiation of psychological or propaganda warfare to minimize the effects thereof.
- Local security are those security elements established near a unit, who are tasked to prevent surprise by the enemy and mitigate enemy actions.

The screen, guard, and cover, respectively, provide increasing levels of combat power and provide increasing levels of security for the main body. However, more combat power in the security force means less for the main body. Rear area security preserves the unit's freedom to move reserves, position fire support assets, provide for command and control, and conduct sustaining actions. Local security is an inherent function of force protection; the responsibility of every leader; and consists of immediate, organic, and self-protection measures (e.g., entry control points, perimeter security, internal guard). The commander designates the security area wherein the security force operates.

> **NOTE:** With regard to security operations, the terms, "stationary" and "moving" describe the actions of the main body, not the security force.

All MAGTF elements conduct local security and rear area security. Although the ACE can conduct screens, the GCE is the one element of the MAGTF specifically capable of conducting all types of security operations. Unit SOPs and well-developed support relationships with attachments facilitate effective security activities.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SECURITY OPERATIONS

Successful security operations depend on five fundamentals:

- Provide early and accurate warning.
- Provide reaction time and maneuver space.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

Provide Early and Accurate Warning

The security force provides early warning by quickly detecting the enemy force and reporting information to the main body commander. The security force operates at varying distances from the main body based on METT-T. At a minimum, they should operate far enough from the main body to prevent enemy ground forces from observing or engaging the main body with direct fires. The earlier the security force detects the enemy, the more time the main body has to assess and react to the changing situation. The security force is integrated with the main body's ISR collection efforts.

Provide Reaction Time and Maneuver Space

The security force provides the main body with enough reaction time and maneuver space to effectively respond to enemy actions by operating at a distance from the main body and engaging enemy forces. The amount of reaction time and required maneuver space and the distance at which the security force must operate from the main body are based on METT-T analysis. The main body commander accepts prudent risk in balancing the security needs of the force against the combat power necessary to accomplish the primary mission.

Orient on the Force or Facility to be Secured

The security force focuses all actions on protecting and providing early warning to the secured force or facility. Because the security force's movement is based on the main body's movement, the security force commander must know the main body's SOM to keep the security force between the main body and known or suspected enemy units. The value of terrain occupied by the security force hinges on the protection they provide to the main body commander.

Perform Continuous Reconnaissance and Counterreconnaissance

The security force aggressively and continuously seeks the enemy and reconnoiters terrain (including human factors). They conduct the reconnaissance missions, as required (see Chapter 13). The goal is to determine the enemy's COA so that it can be mitigated or exploited by the main body. Security forces collect information on the terrain to determine its potential use by the enemy

or friendly force. Stationary security forces conduct reconnaissance by using observation posts, aviation resources, patrols, intelligence collection assets, and battle positions. Moving security forces conduct reconnaissance by using various reconnaissance missions along with observation posts and battle positions.

The security force also conducts counterreconnaissance against enemy ISR assets to disrupt the enemy force's plan so friendly units can force enemy units to deploy into formations on the ground of those commanders' choosing. This also prevents the enemy from gaining intelligence on the friendly forces main' defensive force's composition and disposition and forces the enemy to attack into an unknown situation.

Maintain Enemy Contact

Once the security forces make enemy contact, they do not break contact unless directed by the main force commander. Whether stationary or moving, the security force's assigned security area must be large enough to allow maneuver depth (in space and in time) sufficient to maintain contact with the enemy while still providing the main body time and space to react.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY OPERATIONS

Control Measures

The minimum control measures for security operations are the boundaries necessary to create a security area. When operating to the front of the main body, a security force's lateral boundaries are usually an extension of the main body's lateral boundaries, and the rear boundary is typically the handover line. When operating to the rear the main body, a security force's lateral boundaries are also extensions of the main body's and the forward boundary is the main body's rear boundary. Boundaries for flank security depend on the SOM. Typically, the flank security force's provides security from the trail element of the advance security force or lead combat unit and to the lead element of the rear security force or main body rear boundary.

Security force commanders can further subdivide the security area to coordinate the actions of subordinate units, use battle positions and defensive sectors, and employ phase lines for screen or delay lines, displacement triggers, or handover lines. Given likely maneuver requirements, particularly for a moving security force, security force commanders typically employ internal checkpoints and contact points.

Force Organization

In organizing the security force, the primary consideration is the nature of the force to secure. The type of force being protected (moving or stationary) determines the limits of the security force's responsibilities, organizational requirements, and the amount of battlespace necessary to fulfill the security functions. Table 14-1 shows the typical size of security forces at various echelons. Since the security force must have equal or greater mobility than the force they are securing. Creating a security force often places demands for additional resources on the parent command—for example, an infantry company serving as an advance guard might require additional combat power and mobility assets.

Table 14-1. Typical Size of Security Forces for a Given Mission and Echelon.

Echelon	Security Mission			
	Screen	Advance Guard	Flank or Rear Guard	Cover
Battalion or Task Force	Platoon	Company or Team	Platoon	N/A
Regimental Landing Team	• Company • Team • ACE	Battalion Task Force	Company or Team	Battalion Task Force (+)
Division	• Battalion Task Force* • ACE	• Battalion Task Force* • Regimental Landing Team	Battalion Task Force*	Battalion Task Force (+)
MEF	• Battalion Task Force* • Regimental Landing Team • MEU • ACE	• Regimental Landing Team (+) • Division • MEB	• Battalion Task Force* • Regimental Landing Team • Division • MEU	• Regimental Landing Team (+) • Division (+) • MEU
Echelons above corps (joint force land component or numbered Army)	• Regimental Landing Team (+) • Division • MEB	• Division (+) • MEF	• Regimental Landing Team (+) • Division • MEB	• Division (+) • MEF
NOTE * Unless specifically stated, battalion task force refers to infantry, LAR, or reconnaissance battalion				
LEGEND N/A Not Applicable (+) reinforced				

Command and Control

Commanders place themselves where they can best direct the operation, often at most likely points of friction, or where they can observe the most dangerous avenue of approach. Commander placement, command post displacement, and combat train positioning are critical considerations when conducting moving security operations. Ideally, the security force seeks to place C2 and logistic assets behind masking terrain and along improved routes that provide lateral and in-depth mobility.

Intelligence

Security operations are integrated into the intelligence warfighting function. The security force's observations can have an immediate impact on the main body's intelligence picture. The main body commander and staff should ensure that security forces can access higher intelligence systems to increase situational awareness and reduce the risk of the security force having to wait upon the main body for information. When main body commanders establish flank security, they typically focus ISR collection efforts on that flank to identify threats and increase its effectiveness. Organic and inorganic ISR resources (e.g., remote sensors, UAS platforms, electromagnetic warfare) expand the area under surveillance and cue the security force. The ACE often serves as a screening force because it can detect and report enemy forces at extended ranges. Integrating the

security force into the intelligence collection plan and providing the force with ISR resources enables the it to concentrate limited combat power against likely enemy threats, react to enemy actions, and cover ISR gaps.

Maneuver

Security missions are usually time or event driven. The main body commander determines the requirement for a security mission in advance to provide enough time for the security force to establish themselves and prepare to execute the mission. The end of a security mission is based on—

- Actions by the main body (e.g., completing a specific mission).
- A fixed time period (e.g., not allowing the enemy to penetrate a phase line for two hours).
- Criteria based on the enemy force (e.g., size).

To terminate the security mission, the security force commander typically requires the permission of the main body commander to withdraw behind the security area's rear boundary.

The main body commander may impose special requirements or constraints, including engagement, disengagement, and bypass criteria. The main body commander may order the security force not to become decisively engaged or fall below a certain combat strength. The main body commander may be willing to accept decreased security, which results from either the loss of more terrain or reduced preparation time by the main body, to preserve the security force for later use.

Countermobility is critical in a security area. With integrated obstacles, the security force can maintain a mobility advantage over the enemy and delay and disrupt the enemy's plans. The security force might initially mass engineer support in the security area and then shift support to the MBA once those units are prepared to begin developing engagement areas. Engineering resources also enhance the security force's mobility by identifying repositioning routes and task-organizing engineers to provide breaching capabilities.

Security Area. The main body commander determines the location, orientation, and depth of the security area. The commander identifies specific avenues of approach and NAIs to be covered. Depth in the security area provides the main body with time to react to approaching enemy ground units. Occupying a deep security area allows the security force to destroy enemy reconnaissance assets without compromising critical observation posts or positions. It also prevents the enemy from penetrating the security area too easily and prevents gaps from occurring when observation posts or units displace or are lost. The wider the security area, the less the security force can take advantage of the increased depth. A shallow security area may require the commander to provide the security force with additional resources to provide needed reaction time—for example, a shallow security area may require the security force to guard the main body vice screen them.

After the security force analyzes the terrain in the security area, the commander—

- Establishes the security force's initial positions (usually a screen line) as far forward as possible.
- Assigns responsibilities for the avenues of approach and designated NAIs.

Next, the commander assigns responsibility for identified avenues of approach and designated NAIs. When conducting screen or guard operations, the initial screen line must be within supporting range of the main body while providing sufficient early warning.

When deploying into the security area, the security force must quickly establish the security area to meet mission requirements and provide the necessary level of security.

The security force moves into the security area using a tactical road march, movement to contact, or zone reconnaissance.

Tactical Road March. The fastest but least secure method is a tactical road march from the rear boundary of the security area to the initial positions. The security force moves to a release point on the rear boundary where subordinate elements deploy to occupy initial positions. This method is appropriate when enemy contact is not expected, time is critical, or the ACE is conducting a zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element finds no enemy in the security area.

Movement to Contact. The security force conducts a movement to contact from a line of departure (usually the rear boundary of the security area) to the initial positions. This method is slower but more secure than a tactical road march. It is used when enemy contact is likely, time is limited, terrain reconnaissance is not needed, or an aviation unit conducting zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element detects enemy forces in the security area.

Zone Reconnaissance. The most secure method for moving to the initial positions is to conduct a zone reconnaissance from the security area rear boundary to the initial security line positions or the forward limit of the security area. Given adequate time, this method is preferred because it allows the security force to clear the security area and become familiar with the terrain that they may have to defend. The security force reconnoiters potential subsequent positions and fire support system firing positions as they move to initial positions. A zone reconnaissance is appropriate when time is available and information about the enemy or terrain is unknown. Although this method provides information on the enemy and terrain in the area, it can also be time consuming. Using air reconnaissance forward of the ground units increases the speed and security of the movement.

Employment of the Aviation Combat Element. The ACE contribution is often critical to the success of the security mission. The ACE can—

- Employ assault support assets to increase the mobility of ground forces.
- Conduct screening operations in support of the main body and security forces.
- Cover gaps and conduct reconnaissance of areas between ground maneuver units.
- Assist in maintaining contact between the security force and the main body.
- Assist in clearing the area between the flank security element and the main body during moving flank security missions.
- Assist in disengaging ground units, particularly when conducting battle handover and passage of lines with the main body.
- Monitor terrain that is hard to reach or would require too much time to cover with ground reconnaissance assets.

Observation Posts. An observation post is a communications position from which military observations are made or fires directed and adjusted. They are occupied for a period of time to conduct observation over a specifically assigned area. They will not likely be a permanent concrete bunker. An infantry company could establish observation posts as part of an overnight defense, and an LAR platoon might occupy an observation posts for only a few hours before leap frogging ahead as the security force continues to move.

The security force commander and staff determine initial observation post locations along or behind the screen line to ensure effective surveillance of the sector and designated NAIs. The unit or asset that occupies each observation posts may shift its exact location to achieve the commander's intent. The staff may place more than one observation post along a high speed avenue of approach to allow an enemy contact to be tracked from one observation post to another, thus maintaining enemy contact without requiring security forces to displace. The security force commander tasks subordinate units to perform reconnaissance and combat patrols to cover gaps between observation posts. To prevent friendly fire incidents, the commander places a restrictive FSCM around observation post locations.

Observation posts can be either mounted, dismounted, or airborne. Marines in a mounted observation post use their vehicular optics and weapon systems, which facilitates rapid displacement. However, an enemy can detect them more readily than dismounted observation posts. Dismounted observation posts provide maximum stealth but lack the mounted observation post's speed. Two Marines should occupy an observation post for no more than 12 hours. Observation posts occupied for more than 12 hours should have a squad-sized element to ensure continuous operation. In addition, units can use observation posts as listening posts under limited-visibility conditions or in complex environments.

Conducting Moving Flank Security Operations. When conducting a moving flank, the security force moves into and occupies a security area. The security force can—

- Cross the line of departure separately from the main body and deploy to execute the mission.
- Cross the line of departure separately from the main body while lead elements conduct a movement to contact
- Cross the line of departure with the main body and conduct a zone reconnaissance outside the security area.

The security force then conducts a tactical road march, a movement to contact, or tactical movements parallel to the main body and establishes observation posts or occupies battle positions along the flank of the main body. This keeps the two forces from interfering with each other during deployment. It is appropriate when another force penetrates the line of contact, the main body is not in contact with the enemy and is moving quickly, the line of departure is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates that enemy contact is not likely in the area through which the security force is moving. It is the fastest but least secure form.

In the second arrangement, the security force crosses the line of departure separately from the main body, and the lead elements conduct a movement to contact. Follow on elements occupy positions as they arrive. This form is applicable when the main body is moving slower than in the first method, the line of departure is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates possible enemy contact. It is slower than the previous form but provides better security.

In the third arrangement, the security force crosses the line of departure with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the far limit of the security area. This form is applicable when the line of departure is also the line of contact, the main body penetrates the enemy defenses along the line of contact, the main body is moving slowly, and the enemy situation is not clearly understood. The security force may follow the lead element of the main body through the gap and deploy when the situation permits. This form provides increased security for both the security force and the main body but is the most time consuming.

Fires

The main body provides fire support to screening and guarding forces. The main body allocates additional artillery to support a covering force, which operates independently of the main body. If the security force is assigned a wide AO, the commander may have to position ground fire support assets to cover only the most likely enemy avenues of approach. This is particularly important for a screen because the screening force often relies on indirect and aerial delivered fires to delay or disrupt the enemy. Providing adequate fire support to the security force may require the main body to position artillery well forward in the formation and may affect MAGTF prioritization of ACE missions.

SCREEN

The screening force's primary tasks are to observe, identify, and report information; conduct counterreconnaissance; and fight only in self-protection. The screening force gains and maintains enemy contact consistent with the fundamentals of offense and destroys or repels enemy reconnaissance units by conducting counterreconnaissance. Typically, a screening force engages and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements within its capabilities—augmented by aviation and indirect fires—but otherwise fights only in self-defense. The screen has the minimum combat power necessary to provide early warning, which allows the main body to retain most of its combat power for commitment at the decisive place and time. A screen provides the least amount of protection of any security mission; and does not have the combat power to develop the situation.

Security forces us a screen to cover gaps between forces, exposed flanks, or the rear of stationary and moving forces. A unit can typically screen an avenue of approach two echelons larger than itself, such as an LAR company screening a regimental-size avenue of approach. The commander can place a screen in front of a stationary formation when the likelihood of enemy action is small, the expected enemy force is small, or the main body needs only limited time (once they are warned) to react. Designed to provide minimum security with minimum forces, a screen is usually an economy of force operation based on prudent risk.

A security force typically conducts a screen by establishing a series of observation posts and patrols to ensure adequate surveillance of the assigned area. The security force uses reconnaissance patrols (e.g., mounted, dismounted, and aerial), relocates observation posts, and employs technical assets to ensure continuous and overlapping surveillance.

Critical Tasks for a Screen

Units use screen tasks to—

- Prevent enemy ground element from passing through the screen undetected and unreported.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of all avenues of approach larger than a designated size into the area.
- Conduct counterreconnaissance to destroy, defeat, or disrupt all enemy reconnaissance elements according to engagement criteria.
- Locate the lead elements of each enemy advance guard and determine their direction of movement, when in the defense.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report any activity in the AO.
- Maintain contact with the main body and any security forces operating on the flanks.
- Impede and harass the enemy.

Screening Force Organization

Units executing a screen mission employ a main body and small reserve. The main body provides their own security, generally deploying into observation posts as determined by the number of avenues of approach and NAIs they are responsible for. The reserve is deployed to allow other security force elements to break contact with the enemy, extract units from endangered observation posts, and take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Control Measures

The control measures necessary to conduct a screen include phase lines, observation posts, named areas of interest, handover lines, and contact points.

Executing a Stationary Screen

Although a screening force may execute their mission against enemy forces up to two echelons above, a screening force covers operationally significant avenues of approach capable of use by enemy forces one echelon smaller. For example, a company may conduct a screen against enemy units up to a regiment in size but, when conducting IPB, the company will take into consideration avenues of approach down to platoon size. Which avenues of approach the company observes depends upon METT-T and the commander's judgment.

After entering the security area, the screening force establishes screen lines consisting of observation posts that, whenever possible, have overlapping fields of observation and integrate with higher-echelon sensors and collection assets. The screening force establishes patrols to cover areas that observation posts cannot observe. The commander positions the reserve force to respond to the most dangerous enemy COAs and support the most vulnerable friendly positions. When possible, the screening force establishes observations posts in depth on high speed avenues

of approach. The commander and staff plan for egress routes between the initial and subsequent screen lines to facilitate rapid movement. The commander and staff establish disengagement criteria, and the unit rehearses displacement moves.

The Marines at observation posts report the presence of enemy elements. Prompt, accurate reporting is essential to keep friendly forces manning the screen from being overrun or unknowingly bypassed. Once the enemy is detected, the observation post Marines employ fire support assets to engage the enemy at maximum range and either delay or prevent the enemy from penetrating the screen line. The screening force may destroy smaller enemy reconnaissance assets with direct fire, if fire support resources cannot accomplish this task.

As enemy pressure threatens the security of the observation posts, subordinate units report and prepare to withdraw. The screening force commander might authorize some observation posts to withdraw while others stay in place to report enemy actions. The screening force uses a combination of requests and withdrawal criteria to manage retrogrades.

As the screening force displaces from one screen line to another, they use rapid movement while maintaining contact with the enemy. The reserve remains in place as long as possible, ready to react and assist in the displacement of the main body. The commander may choose to divide the screening force and handoff observation and reserve duties among elements, using one of the methods discussed in Table 14-2. The screening force's C2 and CSS elements displace as required to maintain control, keep from being overrun, and evacuate personnel and equipment casualties. The force repeats this procedure as often as necessary.

As the screening force moves from one screen line to the next, the commander maintains communications with the main body. The main body commander decides whether the screening force can move behind a handover line and handoff the battle to the main body. When planning, the screening force commander develops branch plans that account for changes in mission—for example, transitioning from a screen operation to a guard operation to gain more time for the main body.

Executing a Moving Screen

A screening force may use several moving methods. Table 14-2 summarizes each method's characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

A screening force can maintain a moving screen along the flanks or rear of the protected force. The screen movement is keyed to time and distance factors associated with the main body's movement. Responsibilities for a moving flank screen begin at the front of the main body's lead combat element and end at the rear of the protected force. Responsibilities for a moving rear screen begin at the rear element of the main body.

The commander and staff consider METT-T when deciding which movement method to employ. See Chapter 15 for more information on movement techniques.

Table 14-2. Screen Movement Methods.

Method	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Bounding Overwatch (Alternate Bounds) by Observation Posts	• Main body moves faster. • Conducted by platoon or company. • Contact is possible. • Conducted from rear to front. • Typically conducted by company level and below.	• Very secure method. • Maintains maximum surveillance over the security area.	• Execution takes time. • Disrupts unit integrity.
Bounding Overwatch (Alternate Bounds) by Units	• Main body moves faster. • Conducted by platoon or company. • Contact is possible. • Conducted from rear to front.	• Execution does not take a great deal of time • Maintains good surveillance over the security area. • Maintains unit integrity.	May leave temporary gaps in coverage.
Bounding Overwatch (Successive Bounds)	• Main body is moving slowly. • Conducted by platoon or company along screen line. • Contact is possible. • Conducted simultaneously or in succession. • Unit should maintain an air screen during ground movement.	• Most secure method. • Maintains maximum surveillance. • Maintains unit integrity.	• Execution takes the most time. • Unit is less secure when all elements are moving simultaneously. • Simultaneous movement may leave temporary gaps.
Traveling Overwatch	• Main body is moving relatively quickly. • Performed as a route reconnaissance. • Enemy contact is not likely. • Unit should maintain an air screen on the flank. • Conducted along route of advance.	• Observation posts displace quickly. • Maintains unit integrity.	Least secure method.

Screening Operations During Limited Visibility

During limited visibility, the screening force uses all available night- and thermal-observation devices and electronic surveillance devices. Although the screening force can use technical ISR assets to offset limited visibility, they should also adjust techniques and procedures to the conditions. For example, the screening force commander can establish more observation posts—and listening posts—to cover avenues of approach that are masked in limited-visibility conditions. Implementing rigorous noise and light discipline and using various warning devices (e.g., trip flares) reduces the likelihood of compromise and increases the likelihood of enemy reconnaissance forces bypassing the observation posts.

GUARD

Unlike a screen, the guarding force is expected to fight to accomplish the mission. A guarding force's primary task is to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. They routinely engage enemy forces with direct and indirect fires, using uses all available means including decisive engagement, to prevent the enemy from observing and engaging the main body. A guarding force operates within the range of the main body's fire support weapons, deploying over a narrower front than a screening force to permit the concentration of combat power. The three methods of conducting guard operations are advance, flank, and rear guard.

A commander employs a guard when the significance of expected enemy contact requires additional security beyond that provided by a screen. The multiple requirements of the guard operation are often performed simultaneously over relatively large areas. The guarding force's exact size is determined by METT-T; however, Table 14-1 provides general guidance on the size of an echelon's guarding force.

Critical Tasks for a Guard

Units use guard tasks to—

- Destroy the enemy advance guard.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report activity in the AO.
- Conduct counterreconnaissance to destroy or defeat all enemy reconnaissance elements according to engagement criteria. Must prevent ground observation and direct fire against the main body.
- Continuously surveil avenues of approach into the AO.
- Impede and harass the enemy while displacing.
- Cause the enemy main body to deploy and then report the direction of travel.
- Prevent enemy ground elements from passing through the security area undetected and unreported.
- Destroy or cause the withdrawal of all enemy reconnaissance patrols.
- Maintain contact with the main body and any other security forces operating on the flanks.

Guarding Force Organization

The guarding force typically executes the guard task by employing an area defense, a delay, a zone reconnaissance, or a movement to contact within the security area.

Control Measures

The guard force employs the control measures associated with the method they are employing in the security area. The guarding force may choose to combine and employ multiple types of security activities, such as having a subordinate element conduct a screen to the guard force's front. Consequently, the guarding force commander may subdivide the security area into multiple AOs to support the selected SOM.

Advance Guard

An advance guard for a stationary or retrograding force operates defensively. They defend or delay in accordance with the main body commander's intent. An advance guard for a moving force operates offensively. The advance guard develops the situation so that the main body can use their combat power to the greatest effect.

An advance guard for a moving force typically conducts a movement to contact clearing enemy elements from the axis of advance or designated portions of the AO. Ground subordinate elements of a guarding force typically deploy to cover the axis of advance or the main body's AO. This enables the main body to move unimpeded, avoid delays, and defer deployment for as long as possible.

The advance guard can operate behind the security force of a higher echelon. For example, a division may use a reinforced LAR battalion as an offensive covering force, while each subordinate regimental column organizes one of the battalion task forces into an advance guard. In these situations, the higher-echelon security force initially develops the situation. The lower-echelon advance guards may—

- Coordinate and conduct the rearward passage of lines of the covering force.
- Reduce obstacles to create lanes or improve existing lanes as required to support the main body's maneuver.
- Eliminate enemy forces bypassed by the covering force.
- Coordinate and conduct a forward passage of lines through the covering force and fix enemy forces in the enemy's main defensive positions to allow the friendly main body to maneuver.

The movement of multiple security forces and the handoff of surveilling a detected enemy force from the higher echelon security force to the lower echelon security force are controlled using checkpoints, contact points, phase lines, handover lines, and disengagement criteria, in addition to other graphic control measures. At a minimum, the covering force's rear boundary is also the advance guard's forward boundary.

The advance guard engages in offensive and defensive operations. For example, in the offense the guarding force may conduct hasty attacks if they have sufficient combat power or may use a hasty defense on an exposed flank until relieved by the advance of the main body or flank security. Whereas in the defense, the guarding force may use counterattacks to exploit enemy weaknesses or various other defensive methods to disrupt and delay enemy advance.

Flank Guard

A flank guard is "a security element operating to the flank of a moving or stationary force to protect them from enemy ground observation, direct fire, and surprise attack" (*USMC Dictionary*). A flank guard protects an exposed flank of the main body. A flank guard is like a flank screen except that the staff plans defensive positions in addition to observation posts.

The main body's commander designates the general location of the flank guard's positions. The commander assigns an AO to each flank guard that is sufficiently deep to provide early warning and reaction time. However, each flank guard must remain within supporting range of the main body. To determine the guarding force's initial positions, the flank guard commander considers the front and rear of the flank of the main body, the axis taken by the main body, the enemy's capabilities, and the available avenues of approach. Once the flank guard makes contact with the enemy, it strives to defeat the enemy by attacking or defending, conduct a delay to develop the situation, or fix the enemy for destruction by the main body.

The flank guard moves to its initial positions using one of the movement techniques (refer to Chapter 15). Once the flank guard reaches their initial positions, it occupies defensive positions in assigned battle positions or within the assigned AO and establishes a screening element forward of these positions. In situations when knowledge about the enemy is vague, the flank guard maintains a large reserve.

When conducting a moving flank guard, a unit occupies a series of battle positions that cover potential enemy avenues of approach. The lead element of the moving flank guard does not reconnoiter battle positions or occupy them unless required when making contact. Instead, they maintain contact with the protected force's main body, reconnoiter the area between that main body and the flank guard's routes of advance, and reconnoiter the flank guard's route. They perform these tasks by conducting a zone reconnaissance (see Chapter 13). The fundamental factors that affect the flank guard's lead element are their mobility, the pace of the main body, and the width of the security area as measured from the main body's boundary to the flank guard's screen line. The size and combat power of the flank guard's lead element is based upon this width.

The rest of the flank guard marches along the route of advance and occupies battle positions as necessary. Engagement criteria for the route are the same as in a moving flank screen. The flank guard's commander designates battle positions parallel to the axis of the main body. The flank guard commander places these battle positions outside the flank guard's route of advance and along avenues of approach into the flank guard. The flank guard occupies observation posts along a screen line forward of these battle positions.

Because the flank guard is moving in one direction and orienting on providing protection to the secured force in another direction, the flank guard staff plans control measures for a moving flank are typically the same as a moving screen, and they include phase lines that facilitate this dual orientation. These control measures are typically associated with the moving screen, as well as phase lines that run parallel to the main body's movement. If the enemy attacks the protected flank, the guarding force uses these phase lines to control the delay or defense. The main body commander may also assign the flank guard an objective that secures the flank for the main body's objective or otherwise serves to orient the security efforts.

The flank guard regulates movement along the route of advance by the pace of the main body, the distance to the objective, and the enemy situation. The three techniques of movement are traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch (see Chapter 15). If the main body stops, the flank guard occupies blocking positions. As the pace of the main body changes, the flank guard changes movement techniques. The guarding force must not allow the flank guard to fall behind the main body or present a lucrative target by remaining stationary along the route. If the flank guard becomes overextended, the guarding force commander recommends one of the following COAs to the main body commander:

- Reinforce the flank guard.
- Reduce the size of the flank guard's AO.
- Screen a portion of the area and guard the rest.

Rear Guard

The rear guard consists of the rearmost elements of an advancing or a withdrawing force. They have the following functions:

- Protect the rear of a column from hostile forces.
- Delay the enemy during the withdrawal.
- Keep supply routes open during the advance.

The rear guard may consist of a security detachment to inform and cover the moving ground force. This occurs during offensive operations when the main body breaks contact with friendly forces defending the flanks or during a retrograde The rear guard for a moving force displaces to successive battle positions along phase lines or delay lines in depth as the main body moves. The nature of enemy contact determines the exact movement method or combination of methods used in the displacement (successive bounds, alternate bounds, or continuous marching).

During a retrograde, the rear guard accomplishes their defensive mission in the same way as any other guard operation after the main body clears the security area. As the main body moves, the rear guard moves to subsequent phase lines in depth. Contact with the enemy force could eventually be lost if the enemy does not pursue the retrograding friendly force. Conducting a defense or a delay is necessary if the enemy detects the retrograde movement and attacks. See Chapter 11 for retrograde operations.

COVER

A covering force operates independently from the main body to intercept, engage, delay, disorganize, and deceive the enemy before the enemy can attack the main body. They prevent surprise during the advance, protect the covered force, and develop the situation. They are usually a task-organized, independent maneuver force that operates beyond the range of indirect fires positioned with the main body. They have the necessary aviation, combat support, and logistic resources to operate as a self-sufficient unit and decisively engage the enemy. A covering force develops the situation earlier than a screening or guarding force, fights longer and more often, and engages larger enemy forces.

The covering force's distance from the main body depends on the main body commander's intentions and instructions, the terrain, the enemy location and strength, and the rates of march. The covering force's AO should be as wide or as long (depending on whether the force is covering to the front, rear, or flank) as the main body's AO. The covering force generally operates in the area forward of the FEBA.

Although a covering force provides more security and more tactical options than a screening or guarding force, they also require more resources. Before assigning a cover mission, the main body commander must weigh and validate mission requirements by balancing the combat power necessary to accomplish the decisive action against the combat power necessary for the covering force to operate. When the commander lacks the resources to support both, the main body commander must assign the security force a less resource intensive security operation (i.e., screen or guard).

Critical Tasks for a Cover

A covering force performs all the tasks of screening and guarding forces. A covering force for a stationary force performs a defensive mission, while a covering force for a moving force generally conducts offensive actions. A covering force typically operates forward of the main body in the offense or defense, or to the rear for a retrograde operation.

Covering Force Organization

The covering force typically executes its task by employing an area defense, a delay, a zone reconnaissance, or a movement to contact within the security area. The covering force commander employs and tasks subordinate forces and uses the control measures associated with the missions of area defense, a delay, a zone reconnaissance, or a movement to contact within the security area. In addition, the covering force prepares to conduct a passage of lines as part of the mission and maintains a sizable reserve to account for uncertain conditions. See Chapter 17 for more information on forward or rearward passage of lines.

Although a commander can organize and resource any force to serve as a covering force, covering forces are typically established at the battalion-level and above who have the necessary capabilities and C2 structure to cover the area typically assigned a covering force. A covering force is usually allocated combat support (e.g., artillery, information capabilities and combat engineers) and CSS (e.g., a specifically task-organized logistic detachment) beyond that typically given to a force of its size because they are operating beyond the main body's supporting range (MAGTFs are often ideal covering forces). The covering force also relies on the ACE to extend the force's ability to observe, cover gaps, and react to events. The covering force's mobility must equal, and preferably exceed, that of both the main body and the enemy. Depending on METT-T, using assault support assets can assist in achieving that mobility.

Offensive Cover

In the offense, the covering force (Figure 14-1) typically seeks to seize the initiative and shape the battlespace for the main body's decisive actions. Offensive cover tasks include—

- Performing zone reconnaissance along the main body's axis of advance or within the AO.
- Clearing or bypassing enemy forces within the AO.
- Denying the enemy information about the main body's strength, composition, and objective.
- Conducting counterreconnaissance to destroy or defeat all enemy reconnaissance elements.
- Preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body.

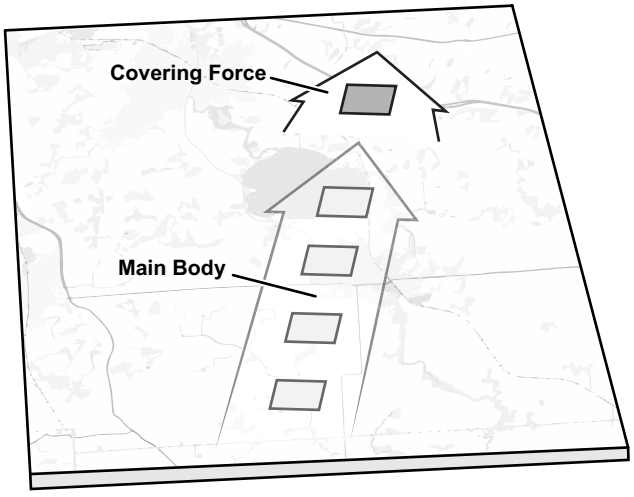


Figure 14-1. Cover Force.

Covering tasks against a defending enemy include—

- Penetrating the enemy's security area to locate enemy main defensive positions.
- Determining enemy strengths and dispositions.
- Locating gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive scheme.
- Defeating or repelling enemy forces as directed by the higher commander.
- Deceiving the enemy into thinking the main body has been committed and causing the enemy to launch counterattacks prematurely.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strengths or through weaknesses.

In a meeting engagement, covering tasks include—

- Destroying enemy's reconnaissance, advance guard, and lead elements of the main body.
- Determining the location of enemy assailable flanks.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strongholds or through weakened defenses.

The covering force executing offensive operations typically employs either a zone reconnaissance or a movement to contact. When developing the situation for the main body, the covering force can plan on either the main body passing through or maneuvering around their position. Because there is an inherent uncertainty involved in executing the cover task, the covering force maintains a large reserve to either exploit or recover the situation.

The covering force advances on a broad front, typically alongside their subordinate ground maneuver elements (except for the reserve). This force clears the enemy's security area, penetrates the enemy defenses, and fixes the enemy's main force in place for defeat by the main body. Unlike screening or guarding forces, the covering force does not bypass enemy forces unless ordered to do so by the main body commander.

If the covering force discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, they prepare to exploit the weakness and disrupt its integrity. The covering force commander immediately reports this to the main body commander, so the main body commander can divert follow on forces to support the penetration. The main body commander synchronizes the covering force's penetration with the other arriving maneuver units, combat support, and CSS to prevent counterattacking enemy forces from isolating and destroying the penetrating elements of the covering force.

When the covering force cannot advance, they defend and prepare to assist the forward passage of lines of main body units. They continue to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks. The covering force may guide main body units as they attack through or around the covering force. If the covering force has accomplished its mission, the main body attacks the enemy's weak point with previously uncommitted main body forces.

Flank Cover

When the main body commander perceives a significant threat to a flank, the main body commander can establish a flank covering force. That force conducts their mission in much the same way as a flank guard. The primary differences between the two missions are the scope of operations and the expectation that the covering force will defeat an enemy assault, not just delay or disrupt them. The force covering the main body flank remains in contact with the main body; however, covering forces are still required to independently operate.

Defensive Cover

In the defense, the covering force seeks to prevent the enemy from exercising the initiative which enables friendly forces to attack at a time of their choosing. Defensive cover gains time for the main body, enabling them to deploy, move, or prepare defenses in the MBA. Defensive cover accomplishes this by disrupting the enemy's attack, contesting the enemy's ability to keep the initiative, and establishing the conditions for friendly decisive actions. The covering force makes the enemy repeatedly deploy to fight through the covering force's position and commit their reserves and follow-on forces early to try to sustain momentum.

Defensive cover tasks include—

- Preventing the enemy from surprising and engaging main body.
- Defeating enemy advance guard formations.
- Maintaining continuous surveillance of high speed avenues of approach into the security area.
- Conducting counterreconnaissance to destroy or defeat all enemy reconnaissance elements.
- Preventing enemy ground observation of the main body.
- Causing the enemy's main body to deploy.
- Determining the size, strength, composition, and direction of the enemy's main effort.
- Destroying, defeating, or attriting enemy forces.
- Depriving the enemy of fire support and air defense umbrellas or requiring the enemy to displace these systems before attacking into the friendly MBA.
- Deceiving the enemy regarding the location of main body and main defensive positions.
- Avoiding being bypassed.

The defensive covering force defends, delays, and counterattacks, as required. If the covering force's AO has not previously been occupied, the force may have to reconnoiter and clear the area before establishing the cover. As in offensive operations, the support of the ACE is necessary to extend the covered area. Aviation units can screen less threatened areas, rapidly deliver fires to seize opportunities to engage the enemy or support of the covering force, provide mobility to elements of the covering force, and support logistics.

There is an inherent expectation then that at some point, the covering force will hand the battle over to friendly units in the MBA by conducting a rearward passage of lines. The covering force can handover the battle in stages depending on the battle. As they complete the battle handover, the covering force will either assume positions in the MBA, assume security responsibilities for the main body's flanks or rear, fall through the MBA to conduct reconstitution, or become part of the reserve. See Part III for more information on the defense.

REAR AREA SECURITY

Rear area security is conducted in all military operations, focusing on securing the installations and functions necessary to continue operations; controlling and protecting the population (whether friendly, neutral, or hostile); and protecting other agencies and forces conducting stabilization tasks. Military forces assigned to support civil authority perform activities related to the concept of rear area security. Protected forces range from higher headquarters through artillery and echelon reserves to the logistic base. Protected installations can be part of the logistic base or part of the area's infrastructure. Areas to secure range from specific points (e.g., bridges and tunnels) and terrain features (e.g., ridgelines, hills) to large civilian population centers and their adjacent areas.

Any MAGTF element, except the command element (which is still responsible for local security), can conduct rear area security functions. Depending on METT-T, the LCE and ACE may require augmentation from the GCE to undertake responsibility for rear area security. During traditional warfare, rear area security is typically an economy of force measure to ensure the continued conduct of logistics in support of military action. All rear area security operations incorporate and take advantage of the basic local security activities of all units regardless of their location within the AO.

Since civilians are usually present within any given AO, units executing rear area security can use different ROE than the rest of the force, requiring control measures that delineate between rear and forward areas, superb discipline and leadership, and continual training. When addressing these considerations, commanders must remember their primary responsibility remains the protection of the force.

LOCAL SECURITY

Local security is continuous, an inherent responsibility of command, and applies to all operations. It includes any local measure taken by units to prevent surprise, maintain the initiative, and mitigate enemy actions. It involves avoiding enemy detection or deceiving the enemy about friendly positions and intentions. It also includes finding any enemy forces in the vicinity and collecting information about their positions and intentions.

Units use both active and passive measures to provide local security. Active measures include—

- Using observation posts and patrols.
- Establishing specific levels of alert within the unit. The commander adjusts those levels based on METT-T analysis.
- Establishing stand to times.
- Actively training to maintain proficiency, avoid complacency, and reinforce rules on the use of force if necessary.

Passive local security measures include—

- Using camouflage, movement control, noise and light discipline, and proper communications procedures.
- Employing available ground sensors, night vision devices, and daylight sights to maintain surveillance over the area surrounding the unit.

COMBAT OUTPOSTS

A combat outpost is a reinforced observation post where Marines can conduct limited combat, stabilization, or other activities. During defensive or stationary operations, the commander at the regimental level can establish a combat post as an additional security measure. Using combat outposts is a technique for employing security forces in restrictive terrain that precludes mounted security forces from covering the area. They are also used when smaller observation posts are in danger of being overrun by enemy forces infiltrating the security area. Marines use combat outposts to extend the depth of the security area and to support and protect smaller observation posts. Both mounted and dismounted forces can employ combat outposts.

Planners use METT-T analysis to determine the size, location, and number of combat outposts a unit establishes, although their size typically ranges from squad to platoon level. A combat outpost must have sufficient resources to accomplish the missions, but not so much as to deplete the strength of the main body or create a significant support burden. It is usually located far enough forward of the protected force to prevent enemy ground reconnaissance elements from observing the protected force's actions.

The commander organizes a combat outpost to provide an all around defense against a superior enemy force. When the enemy has significant armored capability, the commander may give a combat outpost more than the standard allocation of antitank weapons. Forces occupying combat outposts can conduct aggressive patrolling, engage and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements, and engage the enemy main body prior to their extraction. The staff plans to extract friendly forces from the outpost before they are overrun by the enemy.

PART V.
ENABLING ACTIVITIES



Enabling activities connect offensive and defensive operations with stabilization activities. On their own, they are not decisive, but they help set conditions for the execution of all operations. They require either a deliberate planning effort or a well-developed and understood SOP to execute.

CHAPTER 15.
TROOP MOVEMENT

Troop movement is shifting troops from one place to another by any available means. Successful movement places troops and equipment at the proper place, at the proper time, ready for combat. The commander's ability to employ a force depends on its ability to move. The battlespace tempo dictates a unit's ability to conduct rapid and orderly movement to concentrate combat power at decisive points and times.

METHODS OF TROOP MOVEMENT

Troop movements are made by dismounted and mounted marches using—

- Organic combat and tactical vehicles.
- Motor transport.
- Air.
- Rail.
- Water.

The method employed depends on the situation, the size and composition of the moving unit, the distance the unit must cover, the urgency of execution, and the condition of the troops. It also depends on the availability and capacity of the different modes of transportation. When necessary, dismounted, and mounted marches can be hurried by conducting a forced march.

Dismounted March

Dismounted marches are typically by foot, with limited vehicle support. Dismounted marches increase the unit's maneuver options. Advantages include combat readiness (all personnel can immediately respond to enemy attack without the need to dismount), ease of control, adaptability to terrain, and independence from the existing road network. Their limitations include a slow movement rate and increased personnel fatigue—personnel become tired carrying heavy loads over long distances or large changes in elevation. A unit conducts a dismounted march when the situation requires stealth, the distance of travel is short, transport or fuel is limited, or the situation or terrain precludes using many vehicles.

Mounted March

A mounted march is conducted by combat and tactical vehicles. Mechanized and motorized units routinely conduct mounted marches. The speed of the march and the increased amounts of supplies that can accompany the unit characterize this march method. Heavy and motorized maneuver units are typically self sufficient to conduct mounted marches over short distances.

Light maneuver units and most combat support and CSS units require assistance from transportation elements to conduct mounted marches. Considerations for mounted marches over extended distances include—

- The ability of the route network to support the number, size, and weight of the tactical and combat vehicles assigned to or supporting the unit making the move.
- Available refueling and maintenance sites and crew rest areas.
- The need for recovery and evacuation assets.

Air Movement

Air movement is a continual, progressive operation that transports successive elements of the deploying force to the objective area. Units conduct air movements to move troops and equipment; emplace systems; and transport ammunition, fuel, and other high value supplies. Units can employ air movements as a substitute for ground tactical movements. Air movements are generally faster than ground tactical moves. The same general considerations that apply to air assault operations also apply to air movements. See Chapter 18 and MCTP 3-01B for more information on air assaults.

Rail Movement

Operating forces can use available railways to conduct troop movement. Railways can provide flexibility by freeing other modes of transport for other missions. Their use usually involves military and commercial assets, such as defense freight railway interchange railcars pulled by privately owned diesel-electric engines to transport heavy equipment and supplies along railroad right of ways from one rail terminus to another. Responsibility for coordinating the use of railroads lies within the theater logistics command.

Using rail transportation is contingent upon commanders and staff understanding rail's potential capabilities. Rail operations are limited to fixed routes that traverse areas outside the non-contiguous operational environment protected by combat forces. Establishing rail in a theater is based on initial planning that includes assessing the host nation's rail capabilities and infrastructure. The Marine Corps relies on the US Army's expeditionary railway center to provide this assessment as well as a feasibility study on the host nation rail capability. The expeditionary railway center can also advise on how to employ those rail capabilities. For additional information on rail operations and the expeditionary railway center, refer to ATP 4-14, *Expeditionary Railway Center Operations*.

Water Movement

Operating forces can also use available inland waterways to free other modes of transport for concurrent missions. As with rail movement, responsibility for coordinating the use of waterways and commercial assistance lies within the theater logistics command.

The waterway or sea mode of transport consists of assets such as ships, boats, and barges that transport commodities and personnel over a body of water like a lake, canal, or river. Army and Navy watercraft platforms primarily conduct water transport operational maneuvers and the intra-theater sealift of units, equipment, and supplies. They support marine-terminal and sea-based operations to conduct force closure and execute distributed support and sustainment of employed

forces. Operating as part of the joint force, these watercrafts and their organizations provide critical capability in mitigating an adversary's anti-access strategy and in overcoming area denial challenges present in the theater of operations.

To meet land maneuver requirements, watercraft have the following core competencies—

- Intra-Theater Lift. Watercraft are designed to perform missions related to intra-theater movement of combat power and sustainment. Although capable of deploying over strategic distances, watercraft are not strategic-lift platforms; rather, they are a critical link between strategic lift and land oriented tactical maneuver operations. This capability provides flexibility so units can tactically position and support the scheme of maneuver, with speed and magnitude.
- Logistics over the Shore. Lighters transport cargo from ship to shore or seabase to shore, reducing operational footprint ashore and provide an alternative to using piers and austere ports.
- Anti-Access/Port Denial. Circumvent enemy anti-access strategies by providing alternative water transport means for achieving combat power throughput when strategic and tactical ports are unavailable.
- Surface Infiltration. Watercraft are distinctly suitable as secure staging bases for various types of special operations, infiltration, and exfiltration operations.

Watercraft flexibility complements land maneuver forces' inherent speed and agility by allowing forces to be positioned close to the objective, but out of direct contact with enemy resistance. Further, the vessel's command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance enhance maneuver units' situational awareness while on the move and provides the capability to conduct mission planning and rehearsal while enroute to the objective. For additional information on watercraft and watercraft operations see, Army Doctrine Publication 4-0, *Sustainment*, and ATP 4-15, *Army Watercraft Operations*.

Forced March

Mounted or dismounted units can accelerate their rate of movement by conducting a forced march. Forced marches require speed, exertion, and an increase in the number of hours marched or traveled by vehicles each day beyond typical standards. Personnel and vehicles cannot sustain forced marches for more than a short period. In a forced march, a unit might not halt as often or for as long as recommended for maintenance, rest, feeding, and fuel. The commander must understand that immediately following a forced march, personnel and vehicles experience a temporary deterioration in their physical condition. The combat effectiveness and cohesion of the unit also temporarily decreases. The movement plan must accommodate the presence of stragglers and address increased maintenance failures.

Administrative Movement

Administrative movement is movement when there is little or no likelihood of enemy contact. It may use both military and civilian vehicles and places the priority on maximizing use of available vehicles and their cargo capacities. Units only conduct administrative movements in secure areas. Examples of administrative movements overseas include movements in secure rear areas and aboard secured forward operating bases. Although Marine Corps units do not conduct offensive and defensive operations inside the continental United States, rail and highway movement as well

as convoy operations within the continental United States are other examples of administrative movements. Since these types of moves are not tactical, the echelon logistic officer (G-4/S-4) usually supervises them. Once units deploy into a theater of war, commanders do not usually employ administrative movements.

TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

A tactical road march is used to relocate units within the combat zone to prepare for combat operations. The primary consideration is the relative speed of movement. Although units executing tactical road marches do not expect to encounter significant enemy ground forces, they conduct local security measures, maintain security against enemy air attack, and prepare to take immediate action against an enemy ambush (see Figure 15-1). Units expecting contact with significant enemy forces use other techniques, such as approach marches (see Chapter 4), combat formations, and movement techniques.

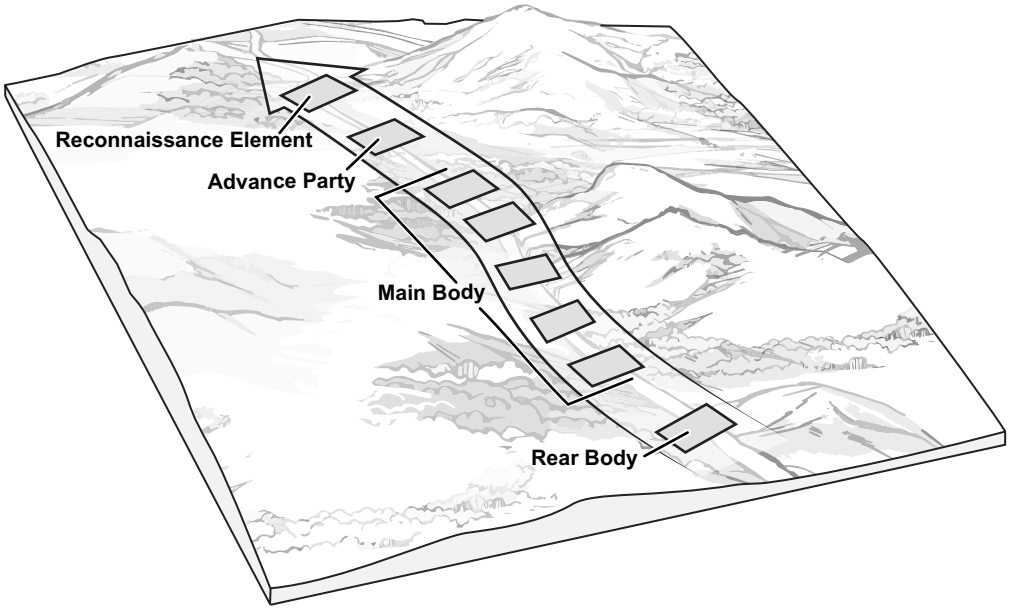


Figure 15-1. Tactical Road March.

Organization for a Tactical Road March

The organization for a tactical road march is the march column. A march column is a group of two-to-five units using the same route for a single movement, organized under a single commander for planning, regulating, and controlling. A march column has four elements: reconnaissance, advance party, main body, and rear body. An RLT conducting a tactical road march is an example of a march column. A march column's subordinate elements are a march serial and a march unit.

A march serial is a subdivision of a march column organized under a single commander. An example is a battalion serial formed from an RLT size march column. A march unit is the smallest subdivision of a march column; typically, a group of no more than 25 vehicles using the same route for a single movement organized under a single commander. An example of a march unit is a company from a battalion size march serial.

A march column provides excellent speed, control, and flexibility but limited flank security. It provides the ability to deploy forces to the front of the column. Units use a march column when speed is essential and enemy contact is unlikely. However, they space combat support resources, such as air defense and engineers, throughout the column to protect and support the movement. Reconnaissance elements augmented by engineer, CBRN, and other resources, conduct a route reconnaissance of the march routes. This reconnaissance confirms and supplements the IPB conducted by the commander's staff.

The MAGTF commander establishes a task-organized advance party that consists of personnel designated to form the nucleus of the arrival and assembly organizations. The primary tasks of the advance party are to arrange for the reception of the main body and provide force protection. They also coordinate the convoy's arrival at the destination. They might initially move with the main body but must arrive at the destination ahead of the main body. A unit's advance party usually accompanies the route reconnaissance effort to the designated assembly area. Unit SOPs establish the exact composition of the advance party and the transportation, security, communications equipment needs, and specific duties—an advance party is not the same as a forward command post. The advance party secures, reconnoiters, and organizes an area for the main body's arrival and occupation. They typically reconnoiter and confirm the tentative locations selected by the commander of the parent element, based on a map reconnaissance. When necessary, the advance party changes previously assigned unit locations within the assembly area. The advance party guides the main body into position from the release point to precise locations within the assembly area.

The main body of the march column consists of the remainder of the unit, including attachments other than the rear body. The rear body is the last march unit in a march column and typically consists of maintenance elements. They maintain communications with the main body. The function of the rear body is to recover disabled vehicles or control stragglers in a foot march. If the rear body cannot immediately repair a disabled vehicle, they tow the disabled vehicle and move the crew and passengers to a unit maintenance collection point located at a secure area near the movement route.

During extended road marches, halts are necessary to rest personnel, service vehicles, and adjust movement schedules. The march order or unit SOP regulates when to take halts. In motor movements, the leaders schedule short halts for every 2–3 hours of movement and halts may last up to an hour. Long halts occur on marches that exceed 24 hours and last no more than 2 hours. Long halts are not scheduled at night, which allows maximum time for night movement. During halts, each unit typically clears the march route and moves to a previously selected assembly area to prevent route congestion and avoid being a target. Units establish security and take other measures to protect the force. Unit leaders promptly notify commanders of the time and approximate length of unscheduled halts.

The commander must emphasize security during halts. Once a unit stops moving, there is a natural inclination for personnel to relax their vigilance. The commander addresses this by defining in the SOP unit actions for various types of halts, such as maintenance halts, security halts, and unexpected halts.

Graphic Control Measures

The commander directing a tactical road march often uses a strip map or overlay to graphically depict critical information about the route to subordinates. The overlay or strip map should show the route of march, start points, release points, checkpoints, critical points (e.g., bridges), light line, and traffic control posts (TCPs). Other graphic control measures for a tactical road march include assembly areas and phase lines.

The start point is a location on a route where the marching elements fall under the control of a designated march commander. All routes have a designated start point that is easily recognizable on the map and on the ground, such as a road junction. The start point is far enough from the assembly area to allow units to organize and be moving at the prescribed speed and interval as they cross it.

A release point is a well-defined point on a route at which the elements composing a column return under the authority of their respective commanders, each one of these elements continuing their movement toward their respective destination. Each start point must have a corresponding release point, which must also be easily recognizable on the ground. As marching units move through the release point, unit guides meet each march unit and lead them to assembly areas.

The commander designates checkpoints along the route to assist marching units in complying with the timetable. The movement overlay identifies critical points along the route where interference with movement might occur. The commander positions TCPs along the route to prevent congestion and confusion. The TCPs can be staffed by military police or unit personnel. These personnel report to the appropriate area movement control organization when each convoy, march column, and march serial arrives at and completes passage of their location.

A light line is a designated phase line beyond which vehicles must use blackout lights during periods of reduced visibility. Commanders at MEF and division levels establish light lines based on the risk that the enemy might detect moving vehicles using white light. A light line is a designated line forward of which vehicles are required to use blackout lights during periods of limited visibility.

A movement corridor is a designated area established to protect and enable ground movement along a route. Units establish a movement corridor to set the conditions to protect and enable movement of traffic along a designated surface route. Units conduct synchronized operations within the movement corridor such as reconnaissance, security, mobility, information activities (for forces that require additional command and control), force protection, and support to enable their movement. A commander might establish a movement corridor to facilitate the movement of a single element or the movement of several elements along a route. The AO commander might establish a movement corridor within an AO along an established MSR or a route designated for a unit's movement. The movement corridor typically includes the airspace above it to allow the establishing unit to conduct aerial reconnaissance and fires.

Forms of Tactical Marches

Units conducting tactical road marches employ three different forms: open column, close column, and infiltration. Each of these forms uses scheduled halts to control and sustain the road march. The METT-T analysis requires adjustments in the standard distances between individual Marines or vehicles. During movement, elements within a column might encounter many different types of routes and obstacles simultaneously. Consequently, parts of the column may be moving at different speeds that can produce an undesirable accordion like effect. The movement order establishes the order of march, rate of march, interval or time gaps between units, column gap, and maximum catch up speed for vehicles. March units report when they have crossed each control point. Throughout the movement, the units have air and ground security.

Open Column. Open column is typically used during daylight marches. It can be used at night with infrared lights and night vision equipment. Using an open column roughly doubles the column's length and thereby doubles the time it takes to clear a point when compared to a close column moving at the same speed. The open column is the most common form of movement because it offers the most security while still providing the commander with a reasonable degree of control.

Vehicle Distance. The distance between vehicles varies, depending on road conditions and weather, but is typically 50–100 meters with a vehicle density of 15–20 vehicles per kilometer. See MCTP 3-40F, *Distribution and Transportation Operations*, for more detail on vehicle distances.

Dismounted Distance. The distance between dismounted personnel varies from 2–5 meters to allow for dispersion and space for marching comfort. Any distance that exceeds 5 meters between dismounted Marines increases the length of the column and hinders control. A single infantry company, with intervals between the platoons, occupies roughly one kilometer of road or trail.

Close Column. The commander typically employs a close column for marches during darkness under blackout driving conditions or for marches in restricted terrain. This form of marching takes maximum advantage of the traffic capacity of a route but provides little dispersion. Marches under limited-visibility conditions are characterized by close formations, difficult command and control and reconnaissance, a slow rate of march, and good concealment from enemy observation and air attack.

Vehicle Distance. In a close column, the unit spaces vehicles about 20–25 meters apart with a vehicle density of 40–50 vehicles per kilometer. At night, vehicles are spaced so each driver can see the two lights in the blackout marker of the vehicle ahead.

Dismounted Distance. The dismounted equivalent to the close column is a limited-visibility march. The distance between individuals is reduced to 1–3 meters to help maintain contact and facilitate control.

Infiltration. The infiltration form of a tactical road march should not be confused with infiltration as a form of maneuver as discussed in Chapter 3. Infiltration provides passive defense against enemy observation and attack. It is suited for tactical road marches when there is enough time and road space and when the commander desires the maximum security, deception, and dispersion. The commander dispatches vehicles and personnel in small groups, or at irregular intervals, at a rate that keeps the traffic density down and prevents undue massing of vehicles or personnel. The

disadvantages of an infiltration are that more time is required to complete the move, column control is nearly impossible, and recovery of vehicles or stragglers by the rear body is more protracted. Additionally, unit integrity is not restored until the last vehicle or individual arrives at the destination, complicating the unit's onward deployment.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

A tactical road march is used to position units in the battlespace and focuses on rapid movement. When the emphasis of movement is on security and readiness for contact, units use the combat formations described in Chapter 3 in conjunction with three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Table 15-1 describes when a unit is most likely to use each technique.

Table 15-1. Movement Techniques.

Likelihood of Enemy Contact	Movement Technique
Not likely	Traveling
Possible	Traveling Overwatch
Expected	Bounding Overwatch

Movement techniques limit the unit's exposure to enemy fire and position them to react to enemy contact. The commander and staff select the movement technique based on the chance of enemy contact. While moving, individuals and vehicles use the terrain to protect themselves when enemy contact is possible or expected. They use natural cover and concealment to avoid enemy fires. The following rules apply—

- Do not present a silhouette against the skyline.
- Cross open areas quickly.
- Do not move directly forward from a concealed firing position.
- Avoid possible kill zones because it is easier to cross difficult terrain than fight the enemy on unfavorable terms.
- Avoid large, open areas, particularly when they are dominated by high ground or by terrain that can cover and conceal the enemy.
- Take active countermeasures, such as using smoke and direct and indirect fire, to suppress or obscure suspected enemy positions.

Traveling

Units use the traveling movement technique when speed is necessary and contact with enemy forces is not likely. All elements of the unit move simultaneously. Trailing elements may move in parallel columns to shorten the column and reaction time. For example, a company traveling in a wedge formation could have its platoons use the traveling technique.

Traveling Overwatch

Units use the traveling overwatch movement technique when contact with enemy forces is possible, but speed is important. The lead element and trailing element are separated by a short distance which varies with the terrain. The trailing element moves at variable speeds and may pause for short periods to overwatch the lead element. The trailing element keys their movement to terrain and the lead element. The trailing element overwatches at such a distance that, should the enemy engage the lead element, it will not prevent the trailing element from firing or moving to support the lead element (see Figure 15-2).

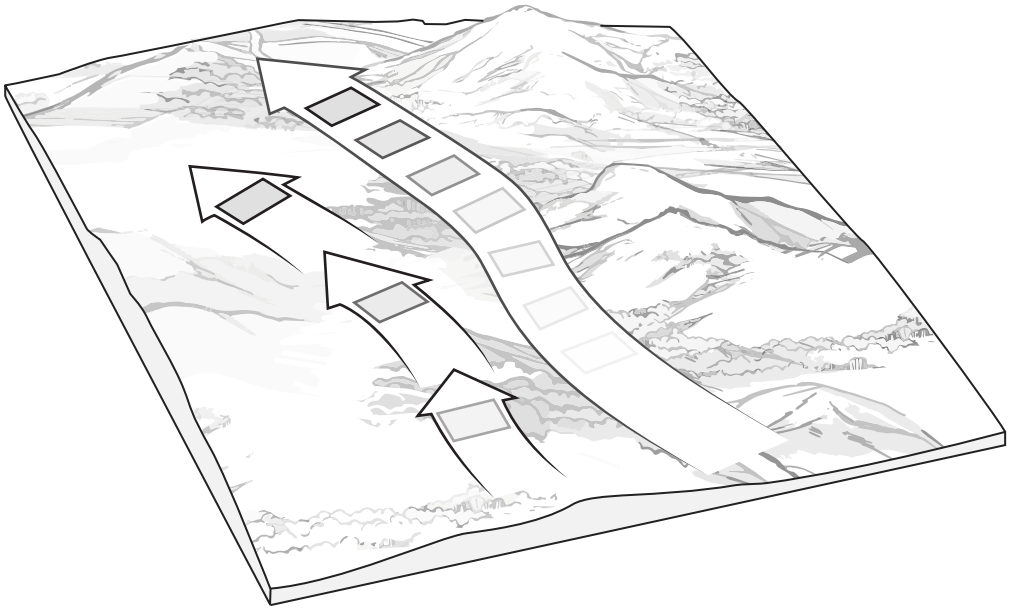


Figure 15-2. Traveling Overwatch.

Bounding Overwatch

Bounding overwatch is a movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is expected. The unit moves by bounds with one element always halted in position to overwatch another element while they move. The overwatching element is positioned to support the moving unit by fire or fire and movement. Units use the bounding overwatch movement technique when expecting to make contact with enemy forces. There are two types of this technique: alternate bounds and successive bounds. The successive bound form is more deliberate and offers more security. In both cases, the overwatching elements cover the bounding elements from covered and concealed positions with good observation and fields of fire against possible enemy positions. The length of any given bound is based on the terrain and the range of overwatching weapons.

When using alternate bounds, the lead element moves forward, halts, and then occupies a support-by-fire position that is always covered by the rear overwatching element (see Figure 15-3). The former rear overwatching element advances past the former lead element and takes an overwatch position. The initial lead element then advances past the initial trail element and occupies a new support-by-fire position. One element moves at a time. This method is usually more rapid than successive bounds.

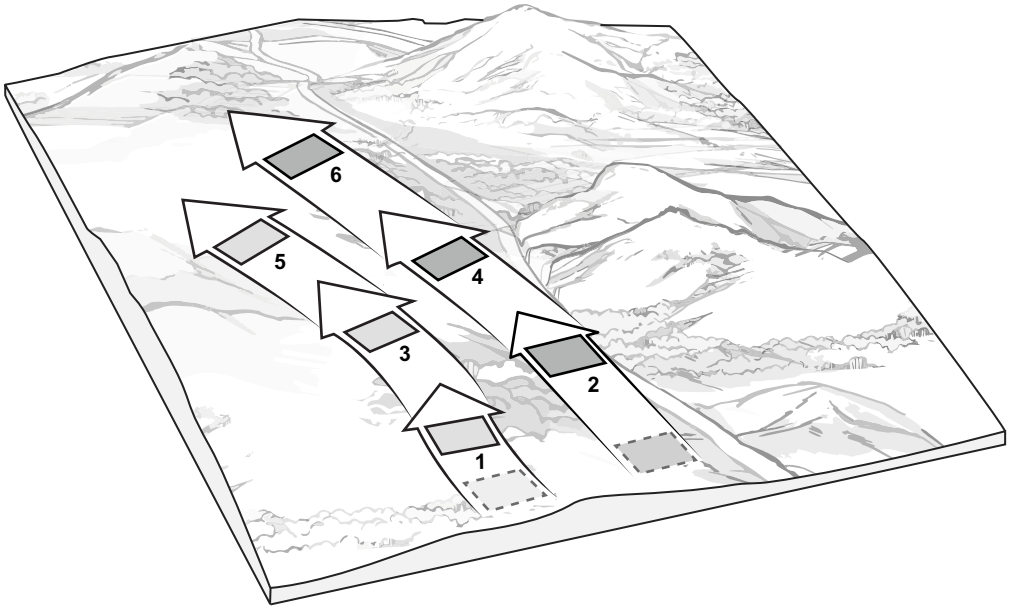


Figure 15-3. Bounding Overwatch Sequence Using Alternate Bounds.

When using successive bounds, the lead element covered by the trail element, advances and occupies a support-by-fire position (see Figure 15-4). The trail element advances to a support-by-fire position next to the lead element and halts. The lead element moves to the next position and the move continues. Only one element moves at a time and the trail element avoids advancing beyond the lead element.

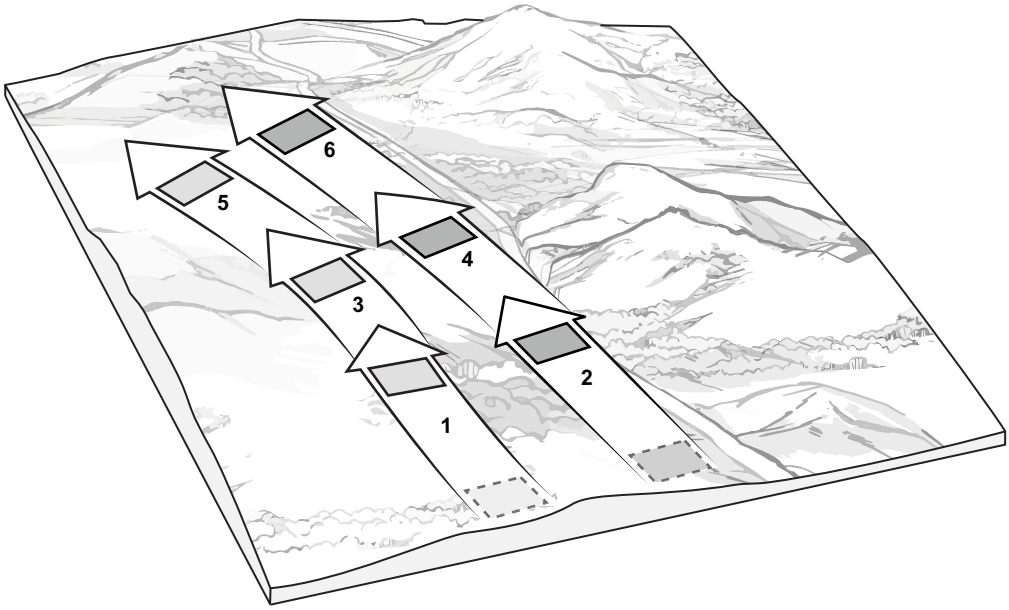


Figure 15-4. Bounding Overwatch Sequence Using Successive Bounds.

PLANNING A TROOP MOVEMENT

The objective of a move is for the unit to arrive at their destination ready to accomplish the mission. The goal of all movement planning is to ensure that the move occurs through a combination of discipline and flexibility in the context of METT-T. The commander employs unit SOPs, rehearsals, and coordination measures to ensure discipline. The commander allows for flexibility in the conduct of the move by changing movement methods, forms, and formations and through primary and alternate route selection.

The movement order is the result of the commander's planning process. Information found in the movement order includes the destination, routes, orders of march, rates of march, times that each serial (or march element for serial movement orders) will arrive and clear their start point, intervals, speeds, scheduled maintenance halts, communications, and the commander's location. Additionally, the order contains a strip map, logistic sites and services, and criteria for various battle drills and immediate actions such as activating an alternative route, using a linkup plan, or reacting to contact. See MCRP 3-40F.7 for information on tactical convoy operations.

Units that have limited mobility, such as a standard infantry battalion, can either conduct a shuttle with organic vehicles or request assistance from transportation units. Shuttling requires transporting troops, equipment, and supplies by a series of round trips with the same vehicles. Units may also shuttle by carrying successive parts of a load for short distances while the remaining personnel continue on foot.

Whenever possible, the units should use multiple routes to move. This reduces the length of columns, the vulnerability to enemy air attack, and the amount of time the routes are unavailable to other units. Multiple routes provide the units with the flexibility to react to unexpected situations and permit rapid concentration of combat power. The two primary disadvantages of using multiple routes are difficulty in exercising command and control, and that the unit may not have enough resources to provide logistic and maintenance support on all routes.

The simplest troop movement scenario to plan and conduct is one where the commander directing the movement controls the entire AO. In this situation, the commander can use the unit's C2 system. The headquarters ordering the tactical road march schedules the movement times and approves the routes, while the movement control organization allocates the required space and time on the approved routes. Otherwise, a higher headquarters must plan and control the movement.

If the movement results in a unit going outside the parent headquarters' AO, both permission from the unit owning the other battlespace and coordination through various movement control centers is required. The designation, maintenance, route security, and control of movement along routes within an AO are the responsibility of the owning unit unless the higher echelon's coordinating instructions direct otherwise.

The higher headquarters logistic staff usually coordinates the provision of CSS to moving units, although units carry sufficient fuel and lubricants in their unit trains to conduct local movements. In coordination with the engineers, the logistic staff ensures that routes are adequate for the projected types and numbers of vehicles and supplies. The staff knows the load carrying capability

of each route and the distances over which forces can be supported. Combat service support units determine if any logistic assets need to displace to support the mission. The commander also establishes halts for refueling as part of the movement plan.

The staff depicts the echelon traffic circulation plan on overlays using transportation control measures. The traffic circulation plan considers—

- The most restrictive route features and route designations.
- Direction of movement over each route.
- Location of boundaries, units, highway regulation points, TCPs, and principal supply points.
- Major geographic features and light lines, if applicable.
- Routes designated for one way traffic.
- Separate routes for logistic and tactical units.
- Current data on traffic regulation and control restrictions, obstructions, detours, defiles, capacities, surface conditions, and enemy activities that affect the highway net.

See MCTP 3-40B, *Tactical-Level Logistics*; MCRP 3-40F.7; and ATP 4-16, *Movement Control*, for more information on movement planning and execution.

PREPARING A TROOP MOVEMENT

Reconnaissance precedes unit movement regardless of method or environment. Beginning with timing travel from the assembly area to the start point, the reconnaissance element examines the route's trafficability, including the potential effects of weather (e.g., ice, snow, and rain). Reconnaissance also includes identifying potential alternative routes and choke points, such as defiles, bridges, and fords that could slow the march. The information learned by the reconnaissance is factored into the movement order, particularly the commander's consideration of necessary control measures at likely friction points. An advance party typically accompanies the reconnaissance element to perform tasks such as marking routes and battle positions, placing guides, and establishing TCPs. Commanders may resource the advance party with enough combat power to establish a security area beyond the new positions.

As the reconnaissance is conducted, the moving unit prepares by ensuring that they are fully supplied prior to beginning the movement. Ideally, the unit is self-sufficient over the duration of the move. However, commanders ensure they do not sacrifice speed and mobility by overburdening vehicles or personnel with extra supplies. The commander can pre-position CSS to support rapid and efficient refueling and resupply. The unit may change formations to facilitate these operations, such as using a column formation as they conduct a tail-gate resupply. Commanders also consider the effect of limited-visibility conditions on the movement and resupply evolutions where it is likely that large amounts of vehicles, equipment, and dismounted personnel will be intermingled.

EXECUTING A TROOP MOVEMENT

March discipline and following the unit's SOP and the movement order are fundamental to executing a movement. This includes staying on the route and maintaining start, passage, and clear times. Any deviation from the movement order might interfere with the movements of other units and have serious consequences. However, march discipline can only be maintained when executing realistic movement plans that match conditions and unit ability.

The strength and composition of the moving unit's security elements are based on METT-T. The units employ organic assets and supporting security assets to protect subordinate forces from enemy activities. The unit positions them to the front, rear, and flanks of subordinates' formations while moving and at halts to provide all around security for the main body. The unit also enhances security by adopting a march formation and movement technique that facilitate applying combat power in the direction from which enemy contact is expected.

Higher echelon logistic organizations can support some tactical movements. When the situation permits, logistic organizations establish maintenance, ambulance exchange, and supply points along the movement route of a supported tactical maneuver unit. Although procedures, amounts, and types of external support vary among major commands, each logistic organization ensures that these sites are operational at the designated times and locations. External logistics along the route may include aeromedical evacuation, maintenance, water, and POL. Maintenance sites generally consist of unit maintenance collection points where disabled vehicles can be moved for limited maintenance and Class IX supplies. Vehicles unable to continue the movement remain at a unit maintenance collection point and join their parent organization when repaired. The troop movement is complete when the last march unit clears the release point.

CHAPTER 16.
RELIEF IN PLACE

A RIP is an operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. A unit conducts a RIP as part of a larger operation, primarily to maintain the combat effectiveness of committed units. The higher headquarters directs when and where to conduct the relief and establishes the appropriate control measures. Usually, the relieved unit is in a defensive posture during the relief, even if the purpose of the relief is to resume offensive operations. A relief may also serve to free the relieved unit for other tasks, such as decontamination, reconstitution, routine rest, resupply, maintenance, or specialized training.

There are three methods of conducting a relief:

- Sequential. In a sequential relief, each element within the relieved unit is relieved in succession.
- Simultaneous. In a simultaneous relief, all elements are relieved at the same time. Simultaneous relief takes the least time to execute but is more easily detected by the enemy.
- Staggered. In a staggered relief, the commander relieves each element in a sequence determined by the tactical situation. Sequential and staggered reliefs can take place over a significant amount of time.

Like all operations, reliefs can be either hasty or deliberate depending on the amount of time available for planning and preparation.

FORCE ORGANIZATION

Although the mission dictates the RIP's purpose, to maintain OPSEC both units involved in a RIP are ideally a similar type, such as two mounted units or two dismounted units. The relieving unit usually assumes the same task organization as the unit being relieved and is assigned similar responsibilities and deployment configuration.

The relieving unit establishes advance parties to conduct detailed coordination and preparations for the operation, down to the company level and possibly to the platoon level. These advance parties infiltrate forward to avoid detection. They typically include the echelon's forward command post, which collocates with the main command post of the unit being relieved. The commander can also attach additional liaison personnel to subordinate units to ensure a smooth changeover between subordinate units.

CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures associated with a RIP are generally restrictive to prevent friendly fire incidents. At a minimum, these control measures include an AO with its associated boundaries, battle positions, contact points, start points, routes, release points, assembly areas, FSCMs, and direct fire control measures, such as TRPs and engagement areas.

PLANNING A RELIEF IN PLACE

Once ordered to conduct a RIP, the commander of the relieving unit contacts the commander of the unit to be relieved. The fundamental planning considerations are the time available to conduct the relief, METT-T, and how to execute the relief while mitigating vulnerability. After receiving the warning order, the relieving unit's commander collocates a command post—main or forward—with the main command post of the unit being relieved. At a minimum, the relieving unit sends forward an advance party to conduct communications and liaison. The warning order designates the time of relief, relieving and relieved units, and sequence of events.

In a deliberate relief, units exchange plans and liaison personnel, conduct briefings, perform detailed reconnaissance, and publish orders with detailed instructions. In a hasty relief, commanders abbreviate the planning process and control execution using oral and fragmentary orders. The relieving unit receives current intelligence, operations, and logistic information from the unit being relieved as well as from common higher headquarters, adjacent units, and subordinate elements. This information is pushed to the relieving unit as soon as a warning order is received to facilitate their planning. The relieving unit plans to leave a remain behind party for a period to assist the relieved unit after the relief is complete.

To mitigate tactical vulnerability, units concentrate on maintaining security throughout the operations process. The goal is to complete the relief without being discovered by the enemy. Consequently, commanders typically plan reliefs to transpire during periods of reduced visibility, such as night or fog. Concealing the relief from the enemy is a greater concern when the friendly force is already vulnerable or might present an opportunity for the enemy to exploit—such as a stronger force being relieved by a weaker force as part of an economy-of-force measure. The enemy should perceive only one unit's command structure in operation—that of the unit being relieved—until the operation is complete. This requires a knowledge of friendly vulnerabilities and enemy collection attempts.

While conducting a relief, the two participating commanders must decide on a time or an event that initiates the smooth passage of command—the transition of command and control from one commander to another. This usually occurs when the incoming subordinate commanders have assumed responsibility for their respective AOs and the incoming commander has the necessary command and control to control operations. At any given moment all units in the AO, regardless of parent organization, fall under the operational control of a single, designated AO commander—whether that commander is from the relieved or relieving unit. The intermingling of forces, inherent to the relief effort, places a significant demand on C2 information systems, which should form the metric by which the relieving unit measures the ability to assume control.

The relieving unit generally adopts the tactical laydown, positions, and fire plan of the unit being relieved, even if both will be subsequently changed. This preserves OPSEC and limits vulnerability during the relief. The exception to this is fire support assets. The fire support assets of both units support the relief, so the artillery and mortars of the relieving unit occupy firing positions near those of the unit to be relieved and carefully integrate themselves into the fire support plan. This maintains fire support if the enemy detects the relief and tries to exploit the situation. Units plan their fires to deceive the enemy and expedite the relief. Units maintain normal activity patterns. For example, a unit continues to expend the same average number of artillery rounds per day during the relief that they expended prior to the initiation of the relief. Commanders do not relieve fire support, combat support, or CSS units at the same time as the maneuver units they support.

Units conducting a RIP coordinate with the area air defense commander to obtain air and missile defense protection of identified choke points, battle positions, routes, and assembly areas. This is very important since the presence of both relieving and relieved units in the same battlespace can lead to congestion and vulnerability. The commander and staff coordinate with the air and missile defense unit providing area coverage of the relieving force to obtain IPB information, ROE, current air activity, present air and missile defense fire unit positions, airspace C2 information, and the area air and missile defense operation plan.

The relieving unit verifies the obstacle records of the unit being relieved. Handover of obstacles is a complex procedure. Initially, the engineer priority is on providing sufficient mobility to get the relieving unit into the AO. It focuses on those routes and lanes leading into the AO. Once the relieving unit arrives, the mobility and survivability effort transitions to support the relieving unit's continuing mission. The commander may require supporting engineers to assist with survivability tasks to support the relieving force.

The relieving unit is responsible for all logistic operations until the relief is complete. As the support elements of the unit being relieved displace, they leave their supply stocks to the relieving unit according to previously coordinated arrangements. If the units conducting the relief have different tables of organization and equipment or special support requirements, logistic planners must take this into account in planning the transition. Logistic planners ensure that both commanders know of any logistical limitations that might affect the relieving unit. The headquarters of the relieved unit coordinates traffic movement into and out of the AO.

When relieving coalition or multinational forces, commanders also consider the following:

- Dissimilar unit organizations may require special adjustments in assigned areas.
- Control of fire support may require special liaison.
- Language difficulties may require an increased use of guides and translators.
- Using relieved unit communications requires special signal arrangements and additional operators.
- Ammunition and equipment incompatibility may make exchanging assets more difficult.
- Potential civilian effects on the operations.

Units conducting crisis response, stabilization tasks and activities, or defense support to civil authorities may conduct transfers of authority in conjunction with a physical RIP. The general planning, preparation, and execution considerations of a RIP apply to the transfer of authority as well. Time of transfer and OPSEC, while always significant factors, are not usually as critical as they are in other actions, however speed and transparency are. In the case of supporting civil authorities, the focus is on ensuring that the delivery of support and services is not adversely affected by the relief and transfer. Excessive delay and co-mingling of forces should be avoided in both cases.

PREPARING A RELIEF IN PLACE

When a relief is necessary, it is concealed from the enemy as long as possible. While the units involved plan, prepare, and execute the RIP, their common higher headquarters and other units undertake actions to mask the relief. These include using information activities, demonstrations, feints, smoke, and harassing and interdiction fires. The common higher headquarters executes operations to attack and disrupt the enemy's uncommitted and reserve forces during the relief. Its intent is to fix or distract the enemy, so that the enemy does not detect or interfere with the relief efforts.

Upon receiving a warning order, the relieved and relieving units review their OPSEC plans and procedures. Commanders impose light and noise discipline. To maintain security during the RIP, the relieving unit makes maximum use of the relieved unit's radio nets and operators. Both units involved in the relief operate on the command frequencies and encryption variables of the combat net radios of the relieved unit at all levels. Commanders may impose radio silence or radio-listening silence. The relieved unit's communications officer oversees communications throughout the relief effort.

Commanders and leaders from the relieving unit conduct reconnaissance of the area for which they will assume responsibility. This leaders' reconnaissance includes the lowest echelon leader allowed by the tactical situation. The reconnaissance focuses on the route into the position the unit is to occupy, the positions themselves, the current disposition of the unit being relieved, and any obstacles that could affect troop movement. Both the relieving and relieved units conduct mutual rehearsals to discover any weaknesses in the plan and familiarize all elements of both forces with the plan.

If the relieving and relieved units are dissimilar (e.g., an infantry company relieving an assault amphibian company), then the commanders should allocate time for the construction of additional routes and vehicle positions if necessary. This particular preparation is postponed to the last moment to maintain OPSEC.

EXECUTING A RELIEF IN PLACE

On order, the relieving unit begins moving from their current location to assembly areas in the AO of the unit being relieved. In staggered or sequential methods of a RIP, individual elements of the relieving unit are pulled forward from their assembly area to their new positions according to the SOM. In the simultaneous method of a RIP, all elements of the relieving unit move forward from their assembly areas and transition simultaneously (though there may be some variation for traffic control, movement, etc.). Regardless of the method, the transition of individual elements happens as quickly as possible to avoid becoming vulnerable to enemy action.

As a subordinate unit of the relieving force moves forward from their assembly area to assume a position, using their lead element to establish a screen forward of the relieved unit's position (tactical situation permitting). The remainder of the relieving unit occupies positions behind the unit being relieved—ideally using the alternate and supplementary defensive positions of the relieved unit to limit vulnerability. The relieved unit continues to defend during this process.

When ready, individual elements of the relieving unit move forward and occupy their assigned positions. Crew-served weapons of the relieved unit cover this movement and are relieved last after exchanging range cards. At the appropriate moment, the relieving and relieved element leaders announce the passage of command. The relieved unit withdraws directly rearward to rally points and then further rearwards to assembly areas, keeping delays to their movement at an absolute minimum. If necessary, the relieving unit collapses its extra forward security and continues OPSEC measures. This general method is replicated from the lowest element to the relieving unit itself.

Relieving unit fire support assets occupy their positions near those of the relieved unit. The artillery and mortars of both units remain in place, mission capable, until all other elements of the relieved unit have displaced rearward. Similarly, CSS elements belonging to the relieved unit remain in place, providing support to the relieving unit until all elements of the relieved unit displace.

CHAPTER 17.
PASSAGE OF LINES

Passage of lines is "an operation in which a force moves forward or rearward through another force's combat positions with the intention of moving into or out of contact with the enemy" (*DoD Dictionary*). A unit conducts a passage of lines to continue an attack or conduct a counterattack, to retrograde security or main battle forces, or when one unit cannot bypass another unit's position. Conducting a passage of lines potentially involves close combat. It involves transferring the responsibility for an AO (i.e., battle handover) between two commanders. That authority is usually transferred when roughly two thirds of the passing force has moved through the passage point. If not directed by higher authority, the unit commanders determine—by mutual agreement—the time to pass command. They disseminate this information to the lowest levels of both organizations.

Commanders conduct a passage of lines to sustain the tempo of an offensive operation by passing fresh units forward, to free a unit for another mission or task, to pass counterattack forces forward, and to maintain an effective defense by passing the battle from one element to another. The headquarters directing the passage of lines is responsible for determining when the passage starts and finishes.

Units conduct a passage of lines under the two basic conditions indicated in the definition. A forward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through another unit's positions while moving toward the enemy. A rearward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through another unit's positions while moving away from the enemy. Ideally, a passage of lines does not interfere with the stationary unit's operations.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

A unit participates in a passage of lines as either the passing or stationary force. Conducting a passage of lines requires task organization only for collocating command posts and providing guides for the passing force. Both the passing force and the stationary force maintain their previous combat organization during the passage. If the passage of lines is conducted in the presence of the enemy, the stationary force is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the passing force to move forward. In a rearward passage of lines, after accepting the battle from the passing force, the stationary force is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the passing forces retrograde. See Chapter 8 for more information on rearward passage of lines in the defense.

CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures associated with a passage of lines are generally restrictive to prevent friendly fire incidents. As a minimum, they include the AO; assembly areas for the passing force; a handover line; and necessary contact points, passage points, passage lanes, routes, phase lines, and recognition signals. The headquarters directing the passage typically designates or recommends control measures and establishes start and end times for the passage. The force uses top-down planning and bottom-up refinement to coordinate exact placement of control measures since the stationary unit best knows the ground and the passing force best understands what they must do as they complete the passage. The parent unit commander can also use start points, release points, FSCMs (e.g., CFLs), and other control measures. The stationary unit establishes control measure for the passage in absence of parent unit guidance.

A passage point is a designated place where the passing units pass through the stationary unit. The location of this point is where the commander wants subordinate units to physically execute a passage of lines. In a forward passage of lines, the passage points marks the location where the passing unit is no longer bound by the restrictions placed on them by the stationary force. In a rearward passage of lines, the passage points marks the location where the stationary unit can restrict the movement of the passing force. Between the contact point and the passage point, the stationary unit controls the passing force's movement.

A lane is a route through, over, or around an enemy or friendly obstacle that provides safe passage of a force. The force can reduct and proof the route as part of a breaching operation, construct it as part of the obstacle, or mark it as a bypass. In a passage of lines, the lane should allow the passing unit to move rapidly through the stationary unit's area.

PLANNING A PASSAGE OF LINES

In ordering a passage of lines, higher headquarters is responsible for designating subsequent missions for both forces, when and under what conditions the battle handover takes place, time available, and control measures. Depending on the time available, a passage of lines may be conducted in a hasty manner using oral and fragmentary orders or in a deliberate manner using detailed planning, but neither should negatively affect the overall tempo of operations. The preferred manner is to conduct deliberate planning. This allows the stationary and passing forces to publish written orders, exchange planning and intelligence information, conduct briefings and reconnaissance, and conduct rehearsals.

There are four critical, linked factors, in planning a passage of lines:

- Create the conditions necessary for both forces to complete their missions after the passage.
- Maintain contact with the enemy and prevent their interference with the passage—a corollary to this is to determine what to do if the enemy attacks during the passage.

- Determine the moment, event, and conditions under which the battle handover between forces will take place.
- Creating the close coordination, control measures, and positive control necessary to mitigate the intermingling of forces during the passage.

If dissimilar units, such as mounted and dismounted forces, are directed to conduct a passage of lines, the planning, preparation, and execution principles remain the same. However, in execution, the amount and type of support the stationary unit can offer may be different. In some cases, such as an infantry task force supporting the passage of a mechanized battalion task force, higher headquarters may need to provide additional resources to the stationary unit. In this example, the infantry battalion would need additional logistic support to widen and improve passage lanes and provide evacuation to vehicle casualties during the passage.

After receiving the passage of lines warning order, the passing unit's commander and key staff collocate with the command post of the stationary unit to facilitate planning and a common situational understanding. If the passing unit cannot collocate with the stationary unit, they conduct extensive liaison instead. Beginning with the end state, the two units coordinate the following:

- Intelligence and combat information.
- Current maneuver, fires, information activities, and logistic plans, dispositions, and statuses—and their impacts on battlespace geometry.
- The addition of maneuver control measures and FSCMs, and the refinement of those directed by higher headquarters.
- Communications, call signs, frequencies, and long range and short range recognition symbols and vehicle markings.
- When and under what conditions the battle handover occurs.
- Movement control details such as primary and alternate routes, priorities for using routes and facilities, and the provision of guides.
- Reconnaissance by elements of the passing unit.
- Security and risk mitigation of CRBN attack.
- OPSEC measures required before or during the passage to include using limited-visibility conditions and smoke.
- Allocation of terrain for use by the passing force.
- Air defense up to and forward of the handover line.
- CSS for the passing unit is provided by the stationary unit, especially fuel, maintenance, and medical treatment.

The stationary unit is typically responsible for coordinating and providing indirect fires during the passage of lines. Fire support elements must be far enough forward to avoid the need to redeploy during critical stages of the operation. Employing additional indirect fire assets and their positioning must be planned and coordinated between the fire support coordinators of both the passing and stationary units. The movement, emplacement, and employment of additional assets are part of the battle handover criteria—for example, artillery units might emplace to support the forward passage of lines and then displace forward to continue their support of the passing unit.

Detailed air defense planning is essential for a passage of lines, because the passing unit is particularly vulnerable to congestion and slow movement through passage lanes. The ACE supplies air defense primarily by generating local air superiority. Passing and stationary units employ passive measures including movement control measures, camouflage, and using limited-visibility conditions to mitigate risk. A related consideration is the employment of friendly air in support of the passage of lines and risks of friendly fire incidents associated with fires coordination, intermingled forces, and a moving lead trace (either forward or rearward). The coordination and control of air support is part of the battle handover criteria.

Planners emphasize speed of execution. The plan ensures that necessary elements—guides, vehicle recovery assets, lane marking—are in place before committing the passing unit to movement. It becomes difficult and dangerous to try to control movement after elements of the passing unit commit to their start points and designated lanes. The plan controls the passing unit by using event driven criteria to drive when elements leave, or do not leave, their assembly areas. Whenever possible, the passing unit uses gaps between the stationary unit's positions vice lanes within those positions—a unit passes between two hilltop battle positions vice through lanes in those battle positions. This method reduces the risk of friendly fire, reduces congestion, and, because gaps are typically larger than lanes, may provide the passing unit more options for formations and deployment.

If forced to use lanes, a battalion task force requires at least two passage lanes to conduct a forward passage of lines, and one lane for a rearward passage of lines. An RLT requires a minimum of three passage lanes forward, and two rearward—assuming the battalions are conducting the passage one at a time. To increase speed, flexibility, and redundancy, the passing and stationary forces should plan additional and alternative routes and lanes in case the primaries become blocked, contaminated, or otherwise untenable. If possible, routes and lanes provide cover, concealment, and rapid movement of the passing force.

Within the stationary unit's AO, the passing unit typically has priority to use routes. Clearing and maintaining passage routes up to the handover line are the responsibility of the stationary force. The passing unit prepares to help maintain these routes and positions any attached engineer resources accordingly. The stationary unit controls traffic within the AO, until the passing unit assumes control. During the passage, the passing unit augments the traffic control capability of the stationary unit as required.

FORWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

The purpose of a forward passage of lines is to sustain the tempo of offensive operations or to enable a counterattack. It maintains pressure on the enemy by passing fresh forces forward while allowing the relief of previously committed forces. The stationary force controls and secures the AO far enough to the front that the moving force can pass through and form into an appropriate combat formation prior to contact with an enemy force. Generally, the stationary unit supports the passing unit, until the passing unit masks the stationary unit's direct fires. The stationary unit continues to support the passing force with fire support systems, until the passing unit moves beyond the supporting range of the stationary force. The stationary unit is also responsible for the

security of the line of departure of the forward passing unit, until they can assume that responsibility. After completing their passage, the boundaries of the forward passing force do not have to coincide with the boundaries of the stationary force.

Preparing a Forward Passage

The passing unit conducts reconnaissance from its location to the designated assembly areas and then moves to occupy them. As that occurs, key leadership continues to reconnoiter routes from the assembly areas to and through the stationary unit and the terrain beyond the stationary unit. The passing unit task-organizes to pass their elements through the stationary unit, facilitating deployment and subsequent operations.

The passing unit collocates its command post with the stationary unit. Additional fire support and information assets designated for the passage deploy and prepare for operations. Routes, lanes, and gaps are marked according to OPSEC, waiting until the last moment for final preparations, such as obstacle removal. Guides, vehicle recovery assets, and other movement mitigation measures are placed according to the plan.

Executing a Forward Passage

When the movement criteria are met, elements of the passing unit begin departing their assembly areas along designated routes to their start points and passage points. Once elements of the passing force depart the assembly area, they do not stop. If possible, they deploy into a combat formation as they pass through the stationary unit or, if not, as they reach the passage point and move to the designated area (e.g., attack position) for subsequent operations.

The passing unit's security element leads the passage. It presses beyond the stationary unit's security and establishes a screen, guard, or cover to protect the main body's deployment. Elements of the main body depart their assembly areas, pass through the stationary unit, and move to their designated areas—for example, attack positions if conducting an attack. The stationary unit continues to deliver direct and indirect fires, air support, and conduct information activities in support of the passing unit (e.g., tactical deception and electromagnetic warfare attack against enemy command and control). The passing unit might rely on support from the stationary unit or might organically augment that support. If, at a designated time in the movement, combat support and CSS elements supporting the passing unit displace forward. Depending on the nature of the passing unit's mission (e.g., an attack versus a pursuit) and requirement for support, this displacement is phased.

In a battle handover, the passing unit has established forward security and the preponderance of their combat power forward, and the forward command post is prepared to assume control of the battle. Although the passing unit commander assumes responsibility for operations forward of the handover line (e.g., security operations) as soon as the passage begins, transfer of responsibility, including fire support, should be completed before starting the subsequent operation. This allows the passing unit a moment to pause before committing to the follow-on mission.

Additional movement of combat power and support forward through the stationary unit may continue after the battle handover, but when the planned criteria are met, the passing unit establishes a new AO and owns the fight. Support by the stationary force continues while elements of the passing force, including the reserves, remain within direct-fire range. This includes

evacuating casualty and EPW, controlling dislocated civilians, and controlling routes and traffic management. Once forward of the handover line, these functions become the responsibility of the passing unit.

REARWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

A rearward passage of lines is used to pass the defense from one element to another and may or may not be conducted under enemy pressure. Commanders must determine how to allow the passing unit to either break contact with the enemy and pass through the stationary unit or pass that contact to the stationary unit and then conduct the passage.

Planning a Rearward Passage

The general planning principles discussed earlier in this chapter apply to the rearward passage of lines. However, rearward movement is likely to be more difficult and require additional planning considerations because—

- The enemy probably has the initiative, which reduces the time available to conduct passage reconnaissance, liaison, and planning.
- If the passing element is in action, its units are under enemy pressure, likely tired, and possibly disorganized.
- The stationary element may face friendly recognition issues because enemy forces may be intermingled with the passing element.

Communication between the commanders of the passing and stationary units is critical in a rearward passage. Planning must consider the worst-case scenario, which is that the passing unit is in direct contact with the enemy and is passing in staggered or incremental elements through the stationary unit, and work from there. In this case, the passing unit hands the stationary unit control of their elements still in contact with the enemy. This is usually completed after two-thirds of the passing force's combat elements move through the passage points. If the units plan for contingencies, then if the passing unit successfully breaks contact with the enemy or is not under pressure, both units can easily modify command and control and other arrangements.

To facilitate the battle handover, whether the passing unit is or is not under enemy pressure, planners create a security area in which responsibility transitions from the moving force to the stationary force. Planning also considers the various means of maintaining contact with the enemy. Usually, the stationary unit plans a handover line to the front of the FEBA and within the direct fire range and observed indirect fire range of the stationary force.

Preparing a Rearward Passage

After receiving the warning order, the passing unit begins planning and coordination and establishes communication with the stationary unit. In accordance with guidance from higher headquarters, the commanders establish a probable time to initiate passage. The passing unit conducts route reconnaissance to the passage points, through the stationary unit, and to

designated assembly areas to the rear. The stationary commander assigns responsibility for closing and executing obstacles, establishes guides and traffic control, and assumes general stationary unit responsibilities.

As soon as practical, the passing unit collocates the command post with the stationary unit. If circumstances prevent this, the units exchange liaison teams. Because the stationary unit is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the passing unit to move successfully, it is possible that some combat support and CSS elements will move forward of the stationary unit's primary positions to support the passing unit (see Chapter 11 for retrograde considerations of this nature)—examples include artillery, refueling, and maintenance. The stationary unit commander exercises prudent risk taking to balance the increased number of friendly troops forward against accomplishing the mission and the passing unit's survival.

Executing a Rearward Passage

The stationary unit begins supporting the operation by repositioning indirect fire assets, deploying logistic elements and guides, and stationing combat engineers to improve passage lanes and closing them after the last elements retrograde. The passing unit remains task-organized for retrograde and prepares to pass through the stationary unit leading with logistic elements, then the main command post (if not already collocated with the stationary unit), combat support, forward command post, and then maneuver units. As elements of the passing unit reach the passage point, they follow the stationary unit's movement restrictions.

As the passage begins, the stationary unit continues to aid the passing unit as much as possible. The logistic Marines in the stationary unit conduct personnel and equipment casualty evacuation as necessary. As required, the stationary unit commits refueling and maintenance support to the passing unit to ensure that vehicles do not stall or otherwise block passage lanes and routes between the passage point and the passing unit's designated assembly areas. The stationary unit's fire support assets answer calls for fire from the passing unit until battle handover occurs. The passing unit's fire support assets echelon rearward to provide continuous fire support for the passing unit until they disengage. Once the passing unit hands over control of the battle to the stationary unit, the stationary unit initiates and clears calls for all fires forward of its location. The same procedure applies to the dedicated air defense assets of the passing and stationary units.

If the enemy force continues to press its attack during the passage, the passing unit controls the battle from collocated command post until the battle handover occurs. At the battle handover, the stationary unit employs its own security force, and any elements of the passing unit still in contact with the enemy, to complete the transition. All remaining units not assigned to the stationary unit's security force complete their passage, and combat engineers close necessary passage lanes. The passing unit continues its rearward movement to the designated assembly areas where it conducts necessary reorganization and resupply before executing assigned tasks.

CHAPTER 18.
VERTICAL ENVELOPMENT

Commanders conduct vertical envelopments—airborne or air assault operations—to gain a positional advantage or envelop or turn the enemy. Although the assault force should attempt to achieve an unopposed landing when conducting vertical envelopments, they must prepare for the presence of opposition. At the operational level of warfare, airborne and air assault operations, along with amphibious operations, constitute joint forcible entry operations.

Joint doctrine regards air assault operations as a subset of airborne operations. The Marine Corps does not conduct airborne operations, though it has some units that may conduct insertion by parachute. However, when operating in the joint environment, the requirement to defend against vertical envelopment and conduct air assault, it is important that Marines understand that vertical envelopments allow commanders to—

- Threaten enemy rear areas, causing the enemy to divert combat elements to protect vital installations and hold key terrain.
- Quickly overcome distances, overfly barriers, and bypass enemy defenses.
- Extend the area over which the unit can exert influence.
- Disperse reserve forces while maintaining their capability for effective and rapid response.
- Exploit combat power by increasing tactical mobility.

Factors common to vertical envelopments are the reverse planning process, condition setting, and the effect of meteorological conditions (e.g., weather and light data). For more information on air assault, see MCTP 3-01B.

REVERSE PLANNING PROCESS

A reverse sequence of detailed planning and joint coordination characterizes vertical envelopment. Vertical envelopment plans include the following:

- Ground tactical plan.
- Landing plan.
- Movement plan.
- Loading plan (air assault only).
- Marshalling plan (staging plan in air assault).

Intelligence regarding the enemy and terrain characteristics of the objective area is vital to this planning process. The ground tactical plan is the basis for planning—the ground scheme of maneuver is the decisive action that accomplishes the mission of the vertical envelopment, such as supporting a turning movement or isolating the battlespace. However, each plan affects the others and changes in one plan can require adjustments in the other plans which is the essence of the single-battle construct. The commander determines if such adjustments entail acceptable risk. If the risk is unacceptable, the concept of operations changes. For example, the amount of lift available determines the feasibility of the ground tactical plan. If there are not enough assault support aircraft to conduct tactical troop transport and to put all the required forces in place at the required time, the commander adjusts the ground tactical plan as well as the other plans. Therefore, vertical envelopment planning requires close coordination between all elements of the MAGTF.

Setting Conditions

Setting the conditions for success is critical to vertical envelopments and form the basis for GO/NO GO criteria. The commander and staff must consider everything from the number of aircraft available to the presence of enemy forces in the objective area and determine the acceptable degree of risk in accordance with the importance of the mission. To provide the commander the information needed, vertical envelopments require early and continuous intelligence collection. Since the assault force will, at least for portions of the operation, rely entirely on external combat support and CSS assets, the gathering of information applies across the warfighting functions in terms of friendly and enemy capabilities. Commanders evaluate the air threat during ground force planning, particularly when their forces rely on external support provided by Marine aviation assets. Assessing the threat from both a ground and air perspective and how friendly actions affect these is important for setting conditions for follow-on actions. It is not enough to know the location of enemy air defenses and target them, the staff must understand the assault force's supply requirements and the ability to deliver those requirements, the likelihood of ground relief, and the ability to extract the force if necessary.

Meteorological Conditions

Meteorological conditions affect vertical envelopments more than other operations. Long range forecasts are vital to planning in terms of their effects on tactical operations and aircraft performance. To issue the execution order, the commander must know the current weather information at departure sites and pickup zones, along approach routes, and in the objective area. Activities conducted during marginal weather conditions may enhance the element of surprise, but they also increase the risk of accidents and potential failure. The ACE typically establishes weather criteria for GO/NO GO. During planning, ground commanders work with the ACE to develop contingency plans. The ground commander may have to postpone or cancel a planned operation or reduce the operational tempo because increased risk due to deteriorating weather conditions.

AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS

Friendly forces conduct air assault operations by using assault support aircraft to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. An air assault is a deliberate, precisely planned, and vigorously executed combat operation designed to enable friendly forces to strike over extended distances and terrain barriers to attack the enemy when and where the enemy is

most vulnerable. The commander and staff plan these operations using the reverse planning process, which starts with the ground tactical plan and works backward to the landing plan, the air movement plan (including escorts), loading plan, and staging plan.

> **NOTE:** This is only an abbreviated discussion offered for inclusion within the context of offensive and defensive tactics. Readers should refer directly to MCTP 3-01B for primary information on air assault.

Units conduct air assault operations to provide friendly forces a calculated advantage. Air assault operations allow the unit to maneuver rapidly regardless of obstacles and without ground LOCs and can support offensive, defensive, or stabilization activities. These operations embody the multi-domain combined arms concept through coordination and planning between the ACE and GCE. Infantry and air units are fully integrated with other members of the multi-domain combined arms team to form a Marine air assault task force (MAATF).

Typically, the MAGTF commander directs the formation of an MAATF and designates a mission commander (typically the supported GCE commander). The air mission commander, assault flight leader, escort flight leader, and the assault force commander are subordinate to the mission commander. The MAATF projects combat power throughout the unit's AO. The MAGTF commander achieves the unique versatility and strength of an MAATF by combining the capabilities of assault support aircraft—speed, agility, and firepower—with those of the GCE to form tactically tailored organizations that can be employed in various environments and missions.

An air assault operation generally takes place in the following sequence:

1. Planning.
2. Briefing.
3. Loading.
4. Air assault.
5. Landing.
6. Tactical ground operations.
7. Sustainment.
8. Ground linkup and air reposition.

Force Organization for an Air Assault

All MAGTF elements contribute to the creation of the MAATF. Support to the assault force commander is the focus for all contributors. The ACE provides assault support aircraft for lift and sustainment, attack aircraft for escort and CAS—and with UAS—ISR. Primary planning documents such as the aircraft availability table and the assault support landing table are prepared by the ACE with some GCE inputs and then provided to the GCE. The ACE can provide multiple capabilities to the ground force during the execution of air assault operations, while supporting their primary mission. Company through regiment infantry units usually form the nucleus of the MAATF and build key planning documents such as the manifests and serials to produce the assault support serial assignment table, which it then provides to the ACE. The LCE provides CSS to sustain the MAATF during the operation.

Air Assault Control Measures

As a minimum, the commander assigns each subordinate unit an AO. The MAATF selects LZs that support the ground tactical plan and offer the best survivability for the MAATF. Designating LZs within the unit's AO simplifies the provision of additional support to the unit. The MAATF commander also uses assault objectives and air routes to focus subordinate efforts. As necessary, the commander uses those attack control measures introduced in Chapter 5 to help control the force's maneuver once they enter the AO.

In air assault operations, the commander employs ACMs to control the movement of the assault, attack, electromagnetic assets, and cargo aircraft. Joint Publication 3-52 describes the use of airborne C2 measures.

Air Assault Planning Considerations

Commanders assign missions to a MAATF that take advantage of its superior mobility. However, the commander should not employ a MAATF without a detailed resupply plan in operations that require sustained ground combat. Before employ a MAATF, the commander plans to—

- Task-organize the MAATF as a multi-domain combined arms team.
- Ensure the air assault plan supports the MAATF commander's intent.
- Allow extra time for planning and preparing for limited visibility and adverse weather air assaults.
- Maintain small unit integrity throughout the air assault to ensure the units retain their ability to fight as a cohesive unit upon landing.
- Plan and posture fire support to provide suppressive fires along flight routes, on LZs, and on enemy air defense systems.

The foundation of an air assault operation is the commander's ground tactical plan, which supports the purpose of the vertical envelopment The ground tactical plan shapes all actions leading up to insertion of the ground force on the objective. Failing to understand the ground tactical plan by all forces employed in an air assault limits the subordinate leaders' ability to support the commanders' intent during decentralized execution of the mission. The MAATF staff prepares this plan based on input from all task force elements. Commanders ensure that all aircrews are familiar with the ground tactical plan and the ground commander's intent. The plan places task-organized assault units on or near objectives and battle positions to ensure they can seize objectives and quickly consolidate. If the air assault force cannot quickly provide adequate combat power in the objective area, they must land away from the objective and build combat power. The force then either assaults or occupies its position like any other ground combat unit; however, this diminishes the effectiveness of the air assault operation.

Preparing for Air Assault Operations

During the preparation phase, the MAATF and its supporting units conduct ISR to confirm or deny the results of the unit's IPB. Commanders adjust plan components, such as air movement routes and tables and the fire support concept, to reflect the current situation. Subordinate elements complete any directed task organization changes, resupply actions, and precombat inspections.

Executing Air Assault Operations

At the prescribed time, the unit moves from the staging area to assembly area to the PZ. The maneuver element loads the assault support aircraft according to the prescribed time in the air movement plan or as directed by the PZ control officer. Once loaded, the assault support aircraft take off in accordance with the air movement plan. Attack aircraft provide support to this movement. Other elements of the MAATF and MAGTF begin activities that protect the force and fires as required (e.g., electromagnetic warfare, information).

After passing the initial point, the assault force proceeds to the LZs. Embarked within the aircraft, serials denote groups of Marines that are easily accounted for if asset attrition requires execution of the bump plan in the PZ or enroute to the LZs. A bump plan ensures that essential Marines and equipment are loaded ahead of less critical loads in case of an aircraft breakdown or other problems.

The MAATF lands as planned unless changes in the tactical situation force it to abort or alter the landing. Aircraft crews keep personnel in their aircraft informed of the situation, particularly about changes to the original plan. The ground maneuver commander attempts to simultaneously land the unit with personnel and equipment to place the maximum amount of combat power on the ground in an area in the shortest possible time. Because units and aircraft are vulnerable in the LZ, units quickly debark. After the unit completes their consolidation of the LZ, the assault force executes the ground tactical plan. See MCTP 3-01B for more information on air assault.

CHAPTER 19.
ENCIRCLEMENT

A unit can conduct offensive encirclement operations designed to isolate an enemy force or conduct defensive encirclement operations as a result of the unit's isolation by the actions of an enemy force. Encirclements occur because combat operations at all levels are often chaotic, extend across large areas relative to troop density, and involve continual maneuvering to obtain positional advantage.

OFFENSIVE ENCIRCLEMENTS

The friendly force conducts offensive encirclements to isolate an enemy force. Typically, encirclements result from penetrations and envelopments or are extensions of exploitation and pursuit actions. As such, they are not a separate type of offensive activities but an extension of an ongoing activity. Encirclements could be planned sequels or result from exploiting an unforeseen opportunity. They usually result from the linkup of two encircling units conducting a double envelopment. However, they can occur in situations where the attacking unit traps the enemy against a major obstacle or impassable base, such as a river. The primary goals in an encirclement are isolating and defeating enemy forces. Ideally, an encirclement compels the encircled force to surrender. This is less costly to friendly forces than sieges or having to reduce the encircled enemy force.

Organization of Forces for an Offensive Encirclement

An encirclement operation usually has at least two phases—the encirclement and actions taken against the isolated enemy. Forces encircling the enemy force use task organizations similar to those of a movement to contact or envelopment (see Chapters 3 and 4) to include ensuring the tactical mobility of the enveloping force. Once isolation is complete, commanders either fix and contain or clear and destroy the enemy. If fixing and containing, the friendly force changes task organization to establish a perimeter and prepare for defensive action (see Chapter 8). If clearing and destroying the enemy, the friendly force organizes for offensive action (see Chapter 3).

Offensive Encirclement Control Measures

Control measures for an encirclement are similar to those of other offensive operations, particularly an envelopment, but with a few additional considerations. If the unit employs both inner and an outer encircling arms, the commander must establish boundaries between them. The commander places the boundary so that each element has enough space to accomplish the mission. The inner force requires enough space to fight a defensive battle to prevent the encircled force from breaking out. The outer force requires adequate terrain and depth to their AO to defeat any attempt to relieve the encircled force.

The commander who controls both converging forces establishes a RFL between them. The commander may also establish a free-fire area, which encloses the area occupied by a bypassed or encircled enemy forces (see Chapter 2 for discussion of FSCMs). The commander might also establish contact points.

Planning an Encirclement

Planning and execution guidance from the larger offensive plan typically set the conditions under which an encirclement will take place. Commanders may have developed sequel plans, but these are modified according to the conditions on the ground. The first part of planning focuses on encircling the enemy forces and preventing their relief. The second part of planning involves how to prevent the enemy force from escaping the encirclement and how to reduce them. Reduction may require fixing and containing until the enemy capitulates, or it may require friendly forces to clear and destroy the trapped enemy.

The commander and staff must determine whether there is any possibility of enemy relief forces arriving from outside the encirclement. If such a possibility exists, then the unit uses inner and outer encircling units. The inner encircling arms trap the enemy force and prevent them from escaping. The outer encircling arms prevent any enemy relief from reaching the trapped enemy forces. The inner encircling arms receive defensive missions while the outer encircling arms conduct security, offensive, or defensive missions to prevent the enemy relief force from making contact with the encircled enemy. Once the encirclement is complete, the inner and outer encircling arms form a perimeter (see Figure 19-1).

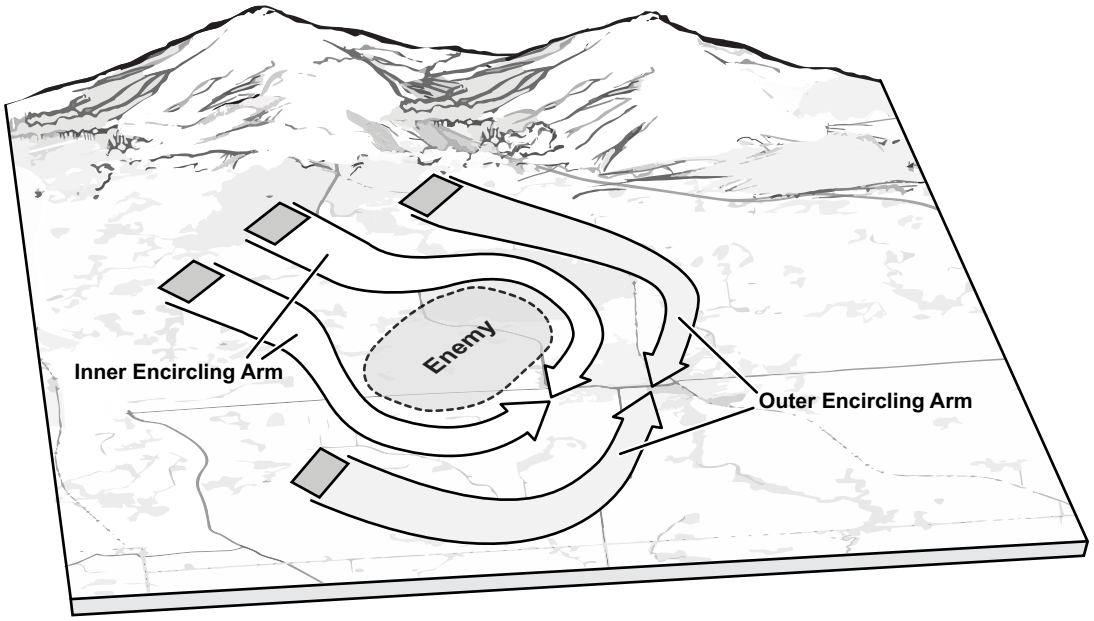


Figure 19-1. Inner and Outer Arms of an Encirclement.

The missions and orientation of inner and outer encircling units require different forces. The next step in encirclement planning involves what actions to take against the isolated enemy. Fixing and containing the enemy forces requires a less resource intensive, defensive posture. Clearing and destroying the enemy requires greater expenditures associated with the offense. The resources to

do either is dependent upon the mission of the higher headquarters. If the encircled enemy is bypassed, then local commanders may find themselves fixing and containing as part of an economy of force mission. If the encirclement was the decisive action, then commanders may find themselves receiving the assets and support necessary to complete the destruction or defeat of the trapped enemy force.

Although fixing and containing a bypassed enemy offers short-term resource savings, if the enemy force can be resupplied or has access to considerable supply stocks, then they remain a threat and require the constant presence of an encircling force that is at least equal in size. If the mission of the encircling force is to maintain contact with a bypassed enemy force, commanders apply the general defensive planning considerations outlined in Chapter 8 as well as the following:

- Determine the best use of available assets to maintain contact with the enemy and remain aware of their capabilities and intentions.
- Retain freedom of maneuver and develop limited offensive operations to maintain pressure on the enemy and prevent them from recovering and organizing attempts to exfiltrate or breakout from their encirclement.
- Keep the enemy isolated and incapable of receiving intelligence, logistic support, and fire support from enemy formations outside of the encirclement.
- Carefully control battlespace geometry to allow for maneuver while avoiding the increased dangers of friendly fire resulting from friendly forces facing inward on a surrounded enemy.

If the encircling forces' mission is to attack and destroy the encircled enemy force, they apply the general offensive planning considerations outlined in Chapters 3 and 5 in addition to the following:

- Maintain contact with the enemy and develop an aggressive intelligence collection plan to monitor enemy reactions to the encirclement, determine enemy intentions, identify enemy positions, and seek weaknesses to exploit.
- Carefully control battlespace geometry to allow for maneuver against the enemy while mitigating the increased dangers of friendly fire resulting from friendly forces facing inward on a surrounded enemy.
- Maintain constant pressure on the enemy to prevent them from consolidating positions, reorganizing, recovering their morale, or executing an exfiltration and breakout.

Executing an Encirclement

The encircling force attempts to reach narrow passes or gorges, bridges, and other critical points before the enemy while other portions of the friendly force attack and fix the enemy. If the enemy cannot be outdistanced, friendly forces attack their flanks to cut them off. Maneuver units receive additional engineer assets to enable friendly mobility while creating obstacles to limit the enemy's maneuver options and disrupt and slow their movement. The unit can conduct vertical envelopment to seize critical terrain that cuts enemy LOCs and escape options. The encirclement is complete when all enemy ground LOCs are cut and the two arms of the double envelopment linkup (or when one arm physically ties into an impassable obstacle, such as a river, against which the enemy is trapped).

As friendly forces maneuver, they focus on seizing key terrain that control routes and avenues the enemy might use to escape. It is inevitable that gaps and intervals will open between maneuvering forces and between occupied positions and a competent enemy will seek to exploit them. The commander employs the ACE to monitor and screen these gaps and intervals and maintains a mobile reserve, such as an air assault force, that can rapidly close them. Once the enveloping force completes the linkup that creates the encirclement, forces move quickly to reasonably close intervals between elements. The purpose of the encirclement is not to create a seamless, physical barrier around the enemy, but to prevent significant enemy forces from escape by occupying key terrain and being able to react to enemy attempts to create or exploit gaps.

If the unit establishes employing inner and outer encircling arms, the outer encircling arms generally mimic the actions and considerations of the inner arms, though their orientation is focused outward and on the prevention of a relief force reaching the trapped enemy. At a minimum, the outer arms establish a security area and conduct a guard mission. Commanders of the outer arms typically conduct area or mobile defenses along likely avenues of approach (see Chapters 8, 9, and 10) to physically prevent enemy intervention and contribute to the trapped enemy's isolation. If possible, forces executing outer encircling arm mission may conduct offensive operations designed to seize the initiative from enemy relief forces and create additional maneuver room for friendly forces. Regardless, the outer arms conduct operations necessary to prevent enemy interference with the inner encircling arms.

Reducing the Trapped Enemy Force

Once the encirclement is complete, commanders reduce the trapped enemy forces. If they choose to do so by fixing, containing, and bypassing, they reorganize their units and resources to create a task-organized containment force that deploys to maintain the enemy's isolation, block breakout attempts, and prevent its interference with friendly operations. The rest of the force reorganizes and prepares for subsequent missions.

If the commander decides to clear and destroy the encircled enemy force, it is done as rapidly as possible to free resources for use elsewhere Combat power is massed and concentrated against the enemy without respite until the enemy's complete destruction or surrender. A friendly force might eliminate encircled enemy forces by fires alone or by combining fire and maneuver. The five main techniques for defeating an encircled enemy are massed and synchronized fires, squeeze, hammer and anvil, wedge, and escape route.

The massed and synchronized fires technique is the preferred method for destroying an encircled enemy force as it relies on the strengths of precision munitions, indirect and aerial delivered fires, and information activities to defeat the enemy vice personnel. Using targeting techniques, the friendly force destroys targets that pose the greatest threat, resources that enable continued enemy resistance, and enemy command and control. Maneuver forces maintain pressure on the enemy, exploit opportunities created by the massing of fires, and clear the area of all enemy forces after their capitulation. The commander is prepared to switch to other reduction methods should enemy resistance continue, or units need precision munitions beyond supply capability. The commander uses the squeeze technique against enemy groupings of battalion size or smaller, using simultaneous, coordinated blows on the enemy from various directions to affect their capture or destruction (see Figure 19-2). Shaping actions destroy the enemy's ability to conduct command and control, conduct air defense, distribute existing supplies, or employ indirect fires. The friendly

force then uses fire and maneuver to attack enemy weaknesses around their perimeter. This prevents the enemy from resting, effectively employing its reserve, or maintaining a coherent defense. As the enemy's perimeter is reduced, the commander can remove units from the inner perimeter for other tasks.

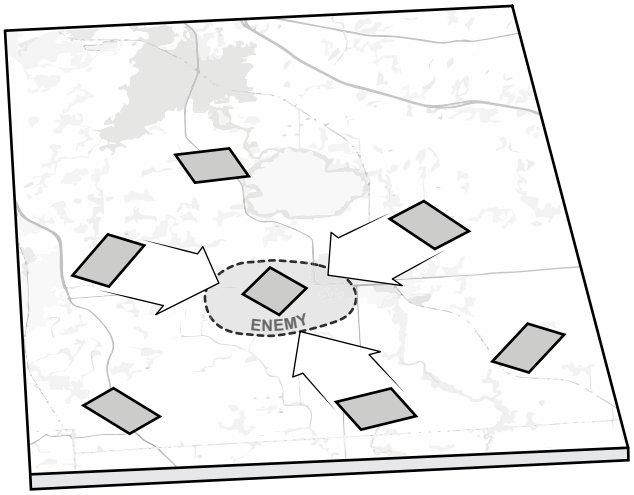


Figure 19-2. Squeeze Technique.

Commanders employ the hammer and anvil technique when time constraints dictate aggressive action to reduce the trapped enemy. The technique uses a stationary blocking force as an anvil on one or more sides of the inner perimeter (an impassable natural barrier will also suffice), while maneuver elements of the encircling force use offensive action as a hammer to force the encircled enemy force against the blocking force (see Figure 19-3). The maneuver force usually conducts the decisive action.

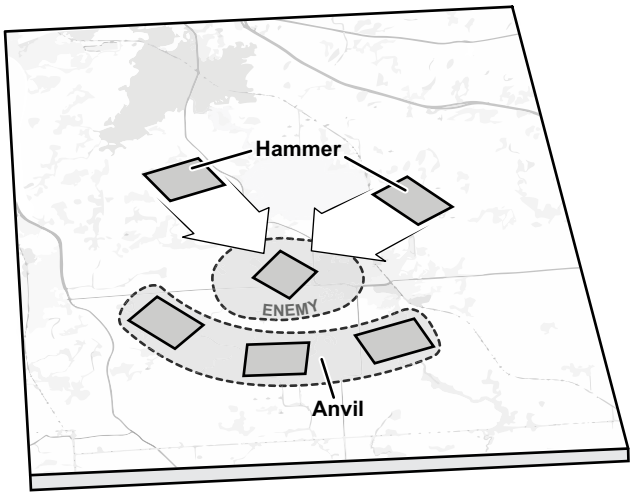


Figure 19-3. Hammer and Anvil Technique.

Commanders use the wedge technique to divide the trapped enemy into smaller pockets that can more easily be reduced by the friendly forces available. The wedge technique concentrates combat power against a small portion of the enemy to divide enemy forces within the pocket (see Figure 19-4). The rest of the encircling force maintains pressure on other encircled enemy forces to prevent them from reinforcing or supporting the threatened area. In general, commanders reduce one pocket at a time to avoid overextending the friendly force's capabilities.

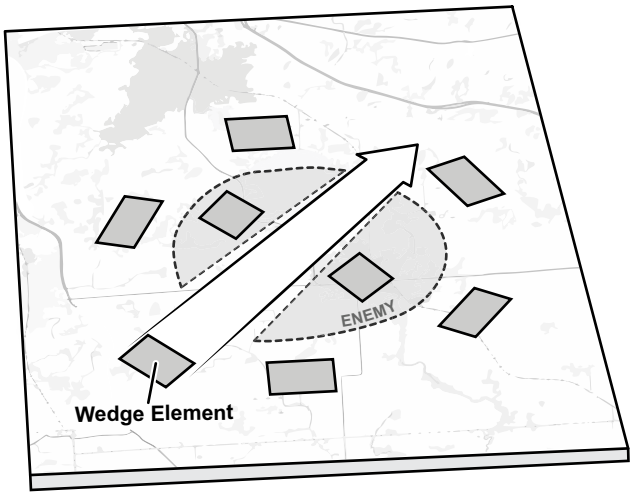


Figure 19-4. Wedge Technique.

Commanders employ the escape route technique (Figure 19-5) to avoid prolonged reduction operations or entice an enemy to leave strong, fortified positions. The technique involves leaving one or more gaps in encirclement to entice the enemy to attempt a breakout. Once the enemy force leaves the shelter of their defensive positions, they become vulnerable to attack, and destruction. Using information assets is critical to the shaping aspect of this technique.

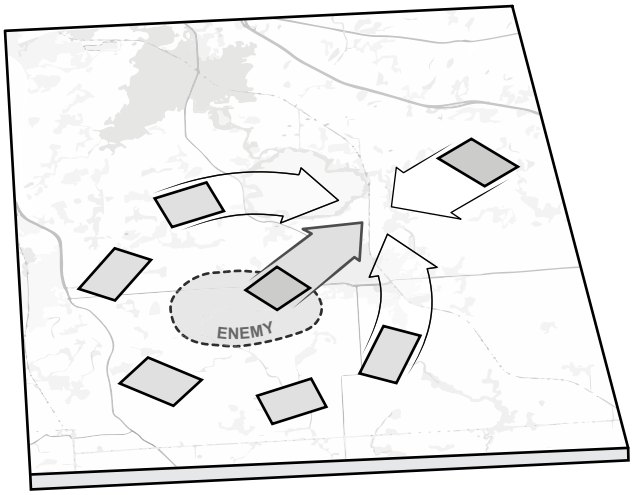


Figure 19-5. Escape Route Technique.

DEFENDING ENCIRCLED FORCES

Encirclement of a friendly force is likely to occur during highly mobile and fluid operations, when operating in restrictive terrain, or because of a deliberate tactical decision to mislead the enemy. Examples include encirclement because of offensive action or as a DLIC ordered to defend a strong point or tasked as a stay-behind force. Once encircled, the force has four choices: defend, breakout, exfiltrate, or attack deeper into enemy controlled territory. The commander's decision depends on the mission of the higher headquarters, METT-T, whether preparations for encirclement were completed (e.g., a strong point defense), whether resupply and casualty evacuation can be accomplished, and on the levels of the force's morale and fighting capacity.

As it becomes obvious that the unit is about to be encircled, the commander must quickly decide what assets stay and what assets to leave. In the confusion, it may be difficult to determine what units are being encircled or to identify the senior commander. However, the senior commander within an encirclement is quickly identified and assumes command over all encircled forces, taking immediate action to protect them. The commander immediately informs higher headquarters of the situation while the encircled units—

- Establish security.
- Reestablish a chain of command.
- Establish a viable defense.
- Maintain morale.

If the force is encircled, but not within contact of the enemy, the commander positions security elements as far forward as possible to reestablish contact with the enemy, create maneuver room, and provide early warning. Each unit clears their position to ensure no enemy forces remain within the perimeter and begin immediate, vigorous patrolling. The commander reorganizes fragmented units and stragglers under the control of other units, changes task organization across the force if necessary, and reestablishes communication with units outside the encirclement. In situations where encirclement was not prepared for or was unexpected, the survival of the force is dependent on rapidly organizing and hardening itself prior to undertaking any other actions.

Organization of Forces for an Encircled Defender

The encircled force establishes a perimeter defense maximizing the capabilities of the available forces. Forward units establish mutually supporting positions around the perimeter and in depth along principal avenues of approach. Units occupy the best available defensible terrain. It might be necessary to attack to seize key terrain, so that it is incorporated within the perimeter defense. Commanders establish a reserve force that is centrally located, uses interior lines, and mobile enough to react rapidly to anywhere on the perimeter. Once the commander assigns defensive AOs and battle positions, preparations are the same as in the defense. Encircled units make their defensive positions as strong as possible given time and resource constraints. The commander anticipates that the enemy will attempt to split the defenses of the encircled force and defeat them in detail. See Chapter 8 for information on the conduct of perimeter defenses.

Considerations for an Encircled Defender

Establishing command and control in unplanned or unexpected encirclements is a critical factor to the survivability of the force. In the case of strong points, combat outposts, and stay-behind forces, maintaining command and control while encircled has already been planned and prepared for. Beyond the basic functions of command and control however, coherent and reliable command is instrumental to the morale and well-being of the force.

As the situation stabilizes, the encircled unit must anticipate enemy attempts to reduce the pocket while locating enemy weaknesses that can be exploited either in a breakout or a linkup with friendly relief forces. This requires employing the encircled force's ISR assets. Reconnaissance assets are organic to every unit, and the commander employs these Marines to aggressively maintain contact with the enemy and seek to discover their intentions. Encircled units must reestablish communications with units outside the encirclement to gain access to other ISR assets and awareness of enemy actions.

The commander centralizes control of fire support systems, such as artillery, to rapidly shift and mass fires along threatened portions of the perimeter and conduct counterbattery fires. Friendly and enemy forces typically use massed and synchronized fires to reduce a trapped force. Commanders might choose to control the mortars of various units in the same manner, particularly if the encircled force lacks artillery and is beyond the support of other friendly units. Similarly, the ACE is a central component of the MAGTF's defense, and it is retained within the perimeter until either enemy artillery can range the airfields or enemy air and air defense action makes support and survivability from within the perimeter untenable.

The encircled force prioritizes countermobility, survivability, and mobility. Countermobility is essential to supporting the encircled force's perimeter defense and the force's survival. Survivability is a close second in prioritization because the enemy is likely to try and use massed and synchronized fires to reduce the friendly pocket, and it is difficult to disperse within a perimeter type defense. Attaining mobility is the logical result of succeeding in the first two priorities.

Because encircled units must monitor their logistic resources commanders conserve and centrally control available resources. This control applies to casualty and mortuary affairs as well. Commanders evacuate casualties whenever possible for humanitarian reasons and to reduce the logistical burden on the force. The commander might direct units on the perimeter to cease all vehicle movement to allocate remaining fuel assets to the reserve force. When possible, the commander positions CSS units and resources in protected and concealed locations. When CSS elements can no longer perform their functions—such as maintenance personnel with no parts or tools—the commander might choose to employ them as maneuver units.

BREAKOUT FROM AN ENCIRCLEMENT

An encircled force conducts a breakout to regain freedom of movement or contact with friendly units. It differs from other attacks because other areas of the perimeter must be maintained. A breakout contains elements of the offense and the defense.

An encircled force typically attempts to conduct breakout operations when one of the following four conditions exist:

- The breakout falls within the intent of a higher commander.
- The encircled force does not have sufficient combat power to defend itself.
- The encircled force does not have adequate terrain available to conduct their defense.
- The encircled force cannot sustain itself long enough to be relieved.

Organization of Forces for a Breakout

The commander organizes the force to conduct rupture, follow and assume, main body, and rear-guard tasks. The focus is on tasks because the encircled force may lack the strength to resource separate forces and, therefore, subordinate units are likely to receive multiple missions—such as the main body being prepared to conduct tasks associated with both follow-and-assume and the rear guard. If sufficient forces exist within the encirclement, the commander organizes a reserve and a diversionary force. Regardless, the priority of combat power is to the force with the rupture mission. The encircled force maintains the momentum of the breakout attack; otherwise, they are more vulnerable to destruction than before. Forces located outside the encirclement assist the breakout by conducting shaping actions.

The encircled force attacks using the rupture forces, which varies in size from one-third to two-thirds of the total force, to penetrate the enemy defensive positions in at least one location. The rupture force is the decisive action. The rupture force penetrates the enemy's encirclement, widens the gap, and holds the shoulders of the gap open until all other encircled forces can move through. The rupture force must have sufficient strength to accomplish these tasks; therefore, it receives most of the combat power. See Chapter 3 for discussion of the penetration form of maneuver.

The follow and assume forces follow the rupture force, seize objectives beyond the rupture, and maintain the momentum of the attack. They do so by opening and improving the passage from the rupture toward friendly forces. It is often the force that conducts the linkup with relief forces. In tasking and resourcing the follow-and-assume force, the commander must weigh the need to open up the passage to friendly forces over other tasks such as clearing and improving routes or fixing bypassed enemy forces. If these types of tasks are essential to the success of the breakout, the staff must resource the follow-and-assume force appropriately or create another task force for this purpose.

The main body consists of the main command post, most of the encircled logistic assets, the unit's casualties, and combat support assets. The main body contains only the combat forces necessary for immediate security—typically, a flank security force that deploys once the main body passes through the rupture. The rear guard consists of units, such as diversionary forces, and equipment on the perimeter, which provide protection for the rupture and any shaping actions. Forces left in contact must conduct a vigorous delay operation on the perimeter, so that no portion of the rear guard gets cut off. Under a single commander, the rear guard, which remains on the perimeter of the rupture, protects the main body from attack. In addition to providing security, the rear guard deceives the enemy about the intentions of the encircled force, simulating its activities until the main body clears the gap.

The reserve force's primary purpose is to retain flexibility through offensive action. The commander attempts to keep a small portion of the encircled force uncommitted, employing them at the decisive moment to ensure the breakout's success. The commander may be unable to establish a reserve force because of the need to resource either the rupture force, the follow and assume force, or the rear guard. In this event, the commander assigns and prioritizes various contingency missions to the follow and assume force.

Control Measures for a Breakout

A commander controls and synchronizes a breakout using, at a minimum, a line of departure or line of contact, time of the attack, phase lines, axis of advance or direction of attack, objectives, and a LOA assist in the linkup with friendly forces (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Planning a Breakout

Commanders conduct hasty planning to execute a breakout as quickly as possible after the encirclement while the enemy is still disorganized and friendly forces can exploit. It is unlikely that an encircled force has accurate information on enemy dispositions and capabilities, but it still seeks to capitalize on the fluid nature of the moment and the difficulty the enemy will have in executing a coordinated response to the breakout. Units patrol and employ ISR assets to discover exploitable gaps in the enemy force, using the reconnaissance pull method to guide planning and execution.

Conversely, commanders conduct deliberate planning to execute a breakout in conjunction with the actions of a strong relief force. In this case, both the encircled force and relief force combine ISR assets to provide the commander greater situational awareness of the enemy's tactical disposition, intentions, and capabilities.

Commanders seek to capitalize on routes and terrain the enemy is unlikely to defend or expect friendly forces to use. The commander must weigh the risks in choosing a slower but stealthier movement over a faster but more obvious movement, directing limited information collection capabilities to provide the information necessary to make a decision. The commander applies similar consideration in choosing whether to move during limited-visibility conditions.

Employing information assets in the breakout is as important, if not more important, then the employment of other fires. Military and tactical deception are instrumental in misleading the enemy about the intentions of the encircled force, the location of the breakout attempt, and in the actual conduct of the breakout attempt itself—such as assisting the rear guard in maintaining the appearance of normal operations along the perimeter. Other information capabilities can assist in introducing hesitation or delay into the enemy's decision-making cycle as they try to react to the breakout.

Information activities are coordinated and synchronized with maneuver and other fires. Shaping actions, such as diversionary attacks from either the encircled or relief forces, divert enemy attention and resources away from the rupture effort. Such diversions must be credible and present a threat to the enemy—such as directing them at places where the enemy might expect a breakout attempt to occur. Diversionary forces from the encircled force are as mobile as available vehicles, fuel stocks, and trafficability allow, repositioning to support the breakout or maneuver.

The success of a breakout attempt increases when synchronized with the actions of a relief force. If the situation or METT-T factors preclude an immediate breakout attempt, then the success of the breakout primarily relies on actions external to the encircled force. In this case, primary planning is done by the higher headquarters conducting command and control for both the encircled and relief forces. The relief force's actions support the larger plan.

The force organizes the breakout attempt around the available combat support and CSS assets. For example, fuel and parts scarcity might mean the force can only move a limited number of vehicles. Priority of vehicles in this case may be limited to the rupture force and the rear guard, with the remaining force keeping only sufficient transportation assets to move the wounded and critical assets and supplies. The breakout plan outlines the commander's destruction criteria for equipment or supplies left behind. All vehicles, critical munitions, supplies, and equipment (except medical supplies) that cannot be moved should be destroyed as soon as possible.

Executing a Breakout

The unit should deceive the enemy about the location of the decisive action. Destruction of equipment comes at the last possible moment or is done mechanically to avoid alerting the enemy. Preparing to evacuate casualties, critical assets, and similar items blends with the daily movement of the force to mask the preparations from the enemy. As much as possible, units remain on their portion of the perimeter, limiting the RIPs that will take place as the encircled force reorganizes for the breakout. The rear-guard conducts preparations. If the perimeter must be held or shortened to generate combat power for the rupture force, the rear guard uses DLICs to deceive the enemy (see Chapter 11). Simultaneously, the rupture force assembles and occupies their attack positions, minimizing movement and visibility.

The encircled force and any other friendly forces, such as a relief force, begin conducting shaping actions such as feints and demonstrations, mobility and countermobility operations, suppressing enemy positions, and isolating the battlespace. When the conditions are set, the encircled force generates overwhelming combat power at the point(s) of penetration in support of the rupture force. The rupture force attacks and conducts a penetration, rapidly overwhelming enemy positions and expanding the penetration (see Chapters 3 and 5). If not already in position, the follow-and-assume force moves from the perimeter, advancing through the point(s) of penetration. The commander may accept risk in preparedness in favor of deception by having elements of the encircled force remain on the perimeter until the last moment before leaving and committing directly to their assigned tasks. Elements of the main body destroy equipment as necessary, assemble in their order of march, and establish flank security. The rear guard continues to deceive the enemy as long as possible, and then begins conducting security operations in support of the breakout.

The rupture force holds the shoulders of the penetration open and the follow-and-assume force moves through the penetration to exploit the success. In cases when the rupture force encounters weak or little enemy resistance, the commander may order the rupture force to transition to a movement to contact and the follow-and-assume force remains in trace. Otherwise the follow-and-assume force rapidly moves to secure objectives beyond the penetration, using available engineer assets to conduct route improvement and establish countermobility obstacles to the flanks. In addition to providing CAS, the ACE screens the flanks of the follow-and-assume force.

As the rupture force completes their mission and the follow-and-assume force advances, the main body moves in trace. The rear guard and any diversionary forces disengage from the enemy and conduct security operations to the rear of the encircled force. If engineering assets are available, they assist the rear guard in establishing countermobility obstacles to delay and disrupt enemy pursuit. If the rear guard is destroyed, it is immediately reconstituted out of other forces. Artillery and mortars begin echeloning forward, providing continuous fire support to various elements. As the breakout progresses, the commander retains centralized control of fires, shifting priorities to various elements as needed. The ACE is employed in the same manner, aggressively attacking enemy threats.

The main body rapidly moves on multiple routes in an approach or road march formation immediately behind the follow and assume force, using available combat power to provide flank security. The follow-and-assume force advances until it either conducts a linkup with friendly forces or is in a position to pass the main body. As the linkup occurs, the breakout force begins withdrawing its defenses and security.

The main body passes through and into friendly forces, moving directly to assembly areas in the rear. The breakout force then conducts a series of battle handovers to allow friendly forces to follow in trace and reach friendly lines. The commander maintains centralized control of combat support assets (e.g., artillery, engineers) throughout the process—moving their priorities as needed. The rear guard evacuates the perimeter, handing off both the duties and additional combat power to the rupture force, still holding open the shoulders of the penetration. The original rear guard moves directly through the follow-and-assume force, reenters friendly lines, and moves in trace of the main body to designated assembly areas. The former rupture force now assumes the duties of rear guard, delaying the enemy as they retrograde while receiving priority of available support.

As they reach the follow-and-assume force, another battle handover occurs. The follow-and-assume force becomes the last elements of the breakout force, allowing the rupture force to pass through, reenter friendly lines, and then move to designated assembly areas. The follow-and-assume force assumes rear guard responsibilities, and conducts delaying and security operations until it hands the battle over to relief forces before rejoining the rest of the breakout force in designated assembly areas.

Usually, the rear guard initially conducts a withdrawal to break contact with the enemy forces around the perimeter. It contracts the perimeter as it delays behind the main body. If the enemy closely pursues the breakout force, the efforts of the rear guard may become the decisive action for the encircled force. The commander should position the reserve where they can also support the rear guard.

EXFILTRATION

If the success of a breakout attack appears questionable or if it fails, and a relief operation is not planned, one way to preserve a portion of the force is through organized exfiltration (see Appendix C).

ATTACKING DEEPER INTO ENEMY TERRITORY

Attacking deeper into enemy territory is a COA that the enemy is unlikely to expect, although friendly forces prepare for such an action when they encircle an enemy force. The encircled force may execute such a COA for several reasons:

- The encircled force occupies a strong point or combat outpost, or they are a stay-behind force executing an assigned mission.
- The encircled force can move to a more defensible location or to a place where they can be extracted by ground, naval, or air forces.
- The encircled force is executing an offensive action and deliberately continues forward to the objectives, or attacks in a new direction. Similarly, by attacking deeper into enemy territory the encircled force can create conditions favorable for a linkup with friendly forces by disrupting enemy plans through attacks against their rear areas and LOCs, or by attacking to support the offensive action of other friendly forces.

Attacking deeper into enemy territory is an offensive action (see Chapter 3). It is only feasible if a unit can sustain itself while isolated, although those logistics can come from aerial resupply and enemy supply stocks.

CORDON

A cordon is a tactical operation in which a unit prevents withdrawal from or reinforcement to a position (see Appendix C). Commanders employ cordons as shaping actions to enable other actions to occur, such as a search, meeting, detainee release, etc. Commanders also provide additional guidance on what should occur within the cordon or what effect they would like generated. A company might be tasked with conducting a cordon around a city block to isolate the area, receiving appropriate support to execute that isolation. Similarly, the same company might establish the cordon as part of an operation to fix an adversary or enemy in place so that host-nation forces can reduce adversary or enemy forces. The cordon force must establish security outward (to prevent reinforcement and support) and establish security inward (to prevent withdrawal).

The headquarters ordering the cordon establishes—

- The purpose and intent of the cordon.
- Command relationships with other elements participating in, supporting, or conducting actions within the cordon.
- Coordination of fires and information support.
- Coordinating instructions to include control measures and linkup procedures.
- Operations to conduct following the cordon.

Organization of Forces for a Cordon

The commander of the cordon force organizes forces into inner and outer cordon elements, and a reserve (though this may be provided by higher headquarters). Each is prioritized according to METT-T, though the inner cordon element typically receives greater priority as it most directly supports actions within the cordon. The inner cordon element prevents withdrawal of the enemy or adversary, or provides overwatch for ongoing activities such as food distribution, and receives tasks such as contain, fix, provide security, etc. The outer cordon element prevents external interference with actions within the cordon, such as reinforcement or relief, and receives tasks such as block, deny, or interdict.

Cordon Control Measures

The minimum control measures for a cordon are an assembly area, line of departure, and objective area. Commanders may also employ control measures such as routes, checkpoints, phase lines, rally points, and release points. The fundamental risk that a unit must mitigate is the battlespace geometry and coordination between the inner cordon element of the cordon force, and friendly forces conducting actions within the cordon. During small scale operations, such as the company and below, the inner cordon will physically tie-in with forces within the cordon, deconflicting positions and fires appropriately. During larger operations, units use NFAs and RFLs to allow the inner cordon element to prevent enemy withdrawal without endangering friendly forces operating within the cordon.

Cordon Planning Considerations

The cordon is an operation that frequently occurs throughout the competition continuum. The most significant planning factor for the cordon is the environment in which it will occur. Most often, the cordon force will serve as an element within a larger operation. There are four fundamental planning considerations for cordons:

- Purpose. What actions are occurring within the cordon and how is the cordon force supporting them?
- Threat. What is the nature of the threat and its capabilities? If the enemy can react with armor or mechanized vehicles, that changes the posture and tactics of the outer cordon. If actions within the cordon are likely to generate reactions from the civilian population, that complicates the mission of the inner cordon.
- Time. The cordon is a temporary operation. Depending on threat and purpose, how long the cordon force must provide security for actions in the objective area effects tactical dispositions and sustainment. Typically, cordons that exceed 24 hours in duration should be considered bypasses or encirclements.
- Movement. How will the cordon force move into the objective area, establish inner and outer cordons, and deconflict movement with other friendly forces.

The cordon force can enter and depart the objective area through single or multiple routes; however, the cordon force typically plans to depart on different routes than the routes used to deploy. The commander weighs speed, trafficability, the employment of surprise, and the likelihood of enemy contact when selecting routes. The commander determines if the cordon force should occupy the inner and outer cordons sequentially or simultaneously. The terrain is a primary factor in this decision—determining when, where, and how the cordon force can move. The

commander also considers the threat when comparing the surprise associated with simultaneously establishing inner and outer cordons, versus a more deliberate sequential occupation. If the cordon force faces or is likely to face significant resistance, it conducts an encirclement.

When the enemy threat is significant, the cordon force plans to execute accordingly, conducting the priority of work associated with the defense to include employing obstacles. The cordon force must receive the combat support and CSS resources required for this environment, to include planning for obstacle removal at the end of the operation. When the enemy threat is minimal, then the cordon force still establishes local security and prevents reinforcement of, or withdrawal from, the objective area. This may still require combat support and CSS resources necessary to set up TCPs and to control the movement of the population. Contingent on METT-T, commanders might employ any combination of observation posts, patrols, and static positions to conduct the cordon.

Cordon Execution

The cordon force occupies an assembly area and begins planning in conjunction with higher headquarters and elements associated with the operation. The cordon force departs the assembly area, crosses the line of departure (or passes through friendly lines), and follows the designated route. The cordon force is typically the lead element, and has most of the combat power, given their tactical requirements. As the lead element, they typically serve as the security element, conducting screen and guard missions to the front and flanks.

After reaching the objective area, the cordon force conducts either a simultaneous or sequential occupation of the inner and outer cordons. The cordon force executes priorities of work focused on establishing immediate control of likely avenues of approach and escape, improving positions, setting up observation posts and patrol routes, and establishing a reserve that can react to threats. Depending on the higher headquarters plan, actions might begin with the cordon or wait for the cordon force to establish the cordon.

While actions occur on the objective, the cordon force continues to maintain inner and outer security. Depending on the threat and the length of time the cordon is to exist, this may consist of completely blocking off traffic routes, or merely observing them while preserving the capability to react to threats. The inner cordon maintains constant coordination with friendly forces within the cordon. The cordon commander should either collocate with friendly forces within the cordon or allow the commander of the inner cordon element to do so.

When actions are complete within the cordon, the cordon force remains in place until friendly forces depart the objective area. Using either sequential or simultaneous methods, the cordon force terminates the cordon. When moving away from the objective area, the cordon force follows in trace of friendly forces, serving as a rear security element executing screen and guard missions, while also providing overwatch for stragglers and vehicle casualties. Because the cordon force typically has most of the combat power, it might be tasked with providing all-around security on ingress and egress from the objective area.

CHAPTER 20.
DECEPTION

The Marine Corps plans and conducts tactical deception and deception in support of operations security (DISO), which can directly lead to achieving surprise and enhancing security. Joint military deception (MILDEC) is a joint activity, conducted under combatant command authority, which Marine Corps component commands and Fleet Marine Forces contribute to.

Effective deception relies on two complementary functions: concealing facts (hiding the truth) and revealing fiction (portraying falsehoods). Friendly forces combine these functions to misdirect the enemy decision maker's understanding of the battlespace, causing the enemy to make decisions that are detrimental to achieving the objective. For more information on, refer to MCTP 3-32F, *Deception*.

DECEPTION GOAL

Friendly forces use deception is to gain or preserve an advantage. The deception goal is the "commander's statement of the purpose of military deception as it contributes to the successful accomplishment of the assigned mission" (*DoD Dictionary*). It is usually stated as a positive friendly advantage or condition such as "successful deception creates a decisive combat power advantage for the main effort attack along AXIS MONTEZUMA."

Deception is not an end to itself; the success is measured by its direct contribution to mission accomplishment. Deception often requires substantial investments in effort and resources that would otherwise be applied against the adversary in a more direct fashion. Consequently, the commander should first envision the deception goal in terms of its specific contribution to accomplishing the designated mission.

DECEPTION TARGET (ADVERSARY DECISION-MAKER)

The deception target is "the adversary decision maker with the authority to make the decision that will achieve the deception objective" (*DoD Dictionary*). To achieve friendly force objectives, the friendly force affects the target's mental state using desired perceptions. Friendly forces should select the target(s) after reviewing the deception goal and objective and analyzing the enemy's doctrine, current battlespace situation, and future actions.

In DISO, the deception target is a foreign intelligence entity (FIE), not the adversary decision maker. The intent of targeting FIE is obfuscate the true purpose, intention, or indications and warning of a friendly force. A thorough understanding of the intelligence collection streams available to an enemy is required to ensure that the maximum number of indicators are concealed through deception.

DECEPTION METHODOLOGY

Deception operations unfold as a "SEE-THINK-DO" methodology:

- Friendly forces present deceptive executions that are observable to enemy intelligence collection ("SEE").
- Enemy decision-makers form perceptions of the operational environment influenced by that collection ("THINK").
- Enemy decision makes make a decision to take an action or inaction detrimental to their own objective(s) ("DO").

A deception operation is planned, however, in a reverse sequence as a "DO-THINK-SEE:"

- What potential action or inaction take that would enhance the friendly force's ability to achieve their objective ("DO")?
- What enemy perceptions of the operational environment need to shift, change, be re-enforced, or created in order to come to that conclusion ("THINK")?
- What friendly force indicators will an enemy's intelligence collection apparatus need to observe to generate those perceptions ("SEE")?

Deception Objective ("Do")

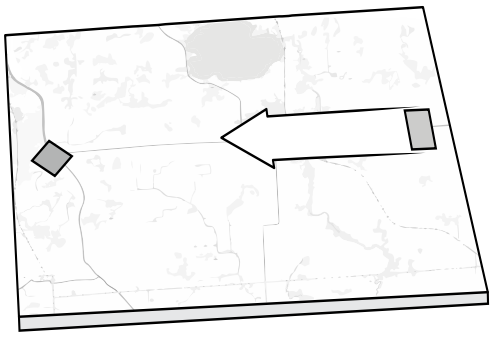
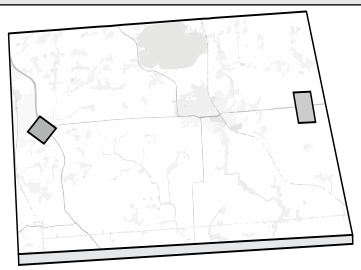
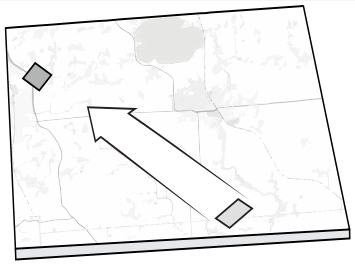
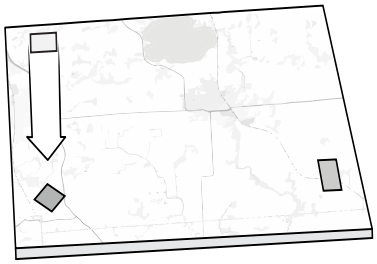
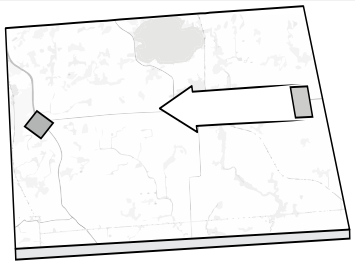
The deception objective is "the desired result of a deception operation expressed in terms of what the adversary is to do or not to do at the critical time and/or location" (*DoD Dictionary*). For example, a deception objective could be "the enemy commander does not commit the armored reserve along AXIS MONTEZUMA through D+36 hours."

Desired Perceptions and the Deception Story ("Think")

Desired perceptions lead the deception target to make decisions that achieve the deception objective. They can include personal conclusions, official estimates, or assumptions formed from both objective (observation and analysis) and subjective (intuition and experience) approaches. Perceptions are affected by biases, preconceptions, predispositions, and filters applied in the collection, analysis, delivery, and reception of information. This is why most successful deceptions reinforce existing perceptions; it is far more challenging to change or create a perception than reinforce one.

Marine commanders must understand the enemy's baseline perceptions (i.e., what would an enemy commander reasonably conclude based on recent actions and the overall intelligence collection and analysis capabilities). From this baseline, Marine commanders must determine the desired perceptions an enemy commander would need to take the action or inaction of the deception objective. The transition from baseline to desire perceptions can be completed by changing, shifting, or creating new perceptions that have no baseline or by re-enforcing current—but inaccurate—perceptions (see Table 20-1).

Table 20-1. Transitions from Baseline to Desired Perception.

Baseline Enemy Perception	Transition Method	Desired Perception
 Marines will attack from the east	Change	 The Marines will not attack.
	Shift	 The Marines will attack from the southeast or south.
	Create	 It is a different unit that will attack from the north.
	Re-enforce	 The Marines will definitely attack from the east and will initiate movement at 1300.

People use narratives to process information; therefore, deception is fundamentally a process of communication. A deception story, which is created using a narrative, is "a scenario that outlines the friendly actions that will be portrayed to cause the deception target to adopt the desired deception perception" (*DoD Dictionary)*. The deception story must be believable, verifiable, consistent, and executable. It is primarily communicated to the target through indirect means, which lets individuals see pieces of information and create their own narrative (e.g., the target "sees" indications that Marine rifle platoon is preparing to conduct movement and "thinks" the whole Marine rifle company is preparing to conduct movement for an attack).

Deception Executions and Observables ("See")

Deception executions create convincing observables for an adversary's intelligence collection apparatus that provide indicators, that in aggregate, form the basis of a believable deception story. They are conducted through three categories of means: physical, technical, and administrative. A single execution may have multiple means (e.g., a decoy system that produces a physical signature of the object to observation and a technical signature that corroborates its authenticity through adversary direction finding). See MCTP 3-32F for a full description.

Physical Means. Physical means include information or signatures conveyed through direct observation or sensors. For example, a decoy that imitates a real LAV is a physical means because its value is in observation by the enemy. Examples include movement of forces, real or decoy equipment, conducting rehearsals, etc.

Technical Means. Technical means include manipulated cyber, electromagnetic, or acoustic information. Forces can apply technical means alone, with corresponding physical means, or integrated with other technical aspects to replicate something physical that is absent from direct visual observation. For example, establishing communications networks and interactive transmissions that replicate a specific unit type, size, or activity.

Administrative Means. Administrative means include manipulated written, oral, pictorial, or signature information. They typically portray information and indicators associated with ongoing or planned military activity. For example, administratively clearing the airspace over a specific area when the enemy expects an attack would indicate pending indirect fires or deliberate OPSEC-violations that convey unclassified indicators to an enemy.

DECEPTION TACTICS

Marine Corps deception activities apply the three deception means to conduct four basic tactics categories (feints, demonstrations, display, ruse). Planners consider the time, place, and adversary when selecting which deception tactic to use. To conduct a deception, some materiel and manpower might not be available for other actions. For example, when conducting a display, the work party conducting the display needs available transportation, fuel, food, water, and other systems required to sustain themselves and re-join the main force.

Feint

A feint is designed to mislead the adversary regarding friendly dispositions and concentrations. A series of feints can condition the adversary to react ineffectively to a future main attack in the same area. Feints are characterized by direct fire contact (see Figure 20-1).

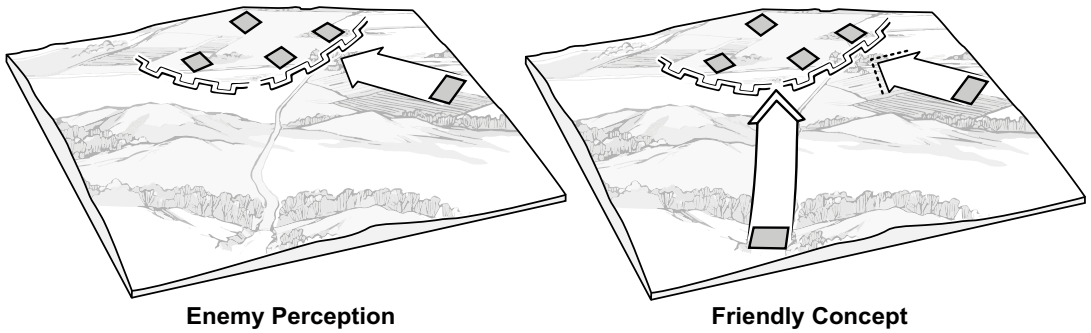


Figure 20-1. Feint.

Demonstration

A demonstration in military deception is, "a show of force similar to a feint without actual contact with the adversary, in an area where a decision is not sought that is made to deceive an adversary" (*DoD Dictionary*). A demonstration's intent is to cause the enemy to select a COA favorable to friendly goals (see Figure 20-2).

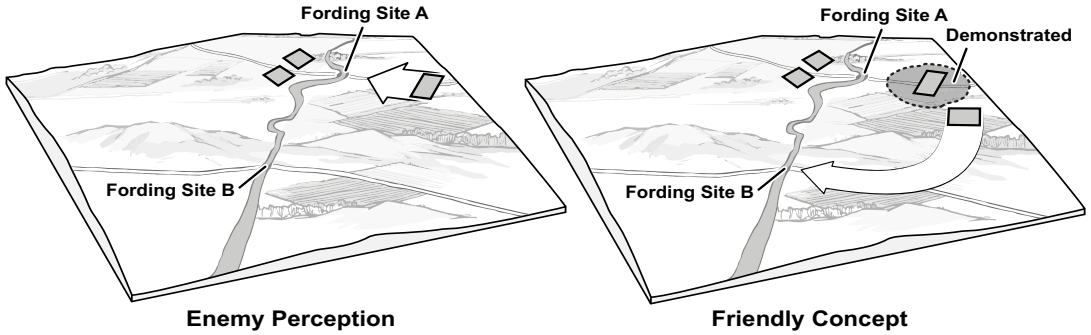


Figure 20-2. Demonstration.

Display

Displays (Figure 20-3) include the simulating, disguising, or portraying friendly objects, units, or capabilities. They are designed to mislead the enemy's assessment of friendly force capabilities (e.g., thinking there is less Marine combat power available for a given action than what exists).

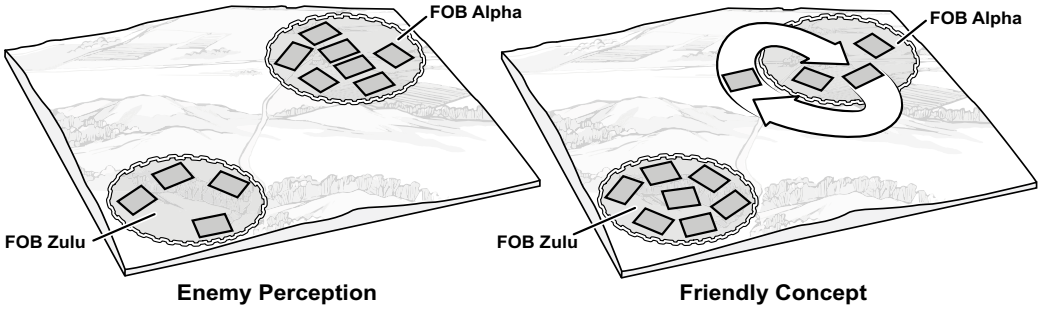


Figure 20-3. Display.

Ruse

A ruse in military deception is, "an action designed to deceive the adversary, usually involving the deliberate exposure of false information to the adversary's intelligence collection system" (*DoD Dictionary*). A ruse deceives the enemy to obtain a friendly advantage. A ruse in deception generally contributes to a larger deception plan.

DECEPTION IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS SECURITY

A DISO is used to obfuscate indicators of a friendly operation that remain visible to an enemy's intelligence collection assets despite an OPSEC plan. Unit commanders employ DISO to create multiple false indicators that confuse enemy forces operating in the unit's area of operations by targeting the enemy's intelligence apparatus, making unit intentions harder to interpret. A DISO uses controlled information about friendly force capabilities, activities, and intentions to shape

perceptions. The intent of targeting the enemy's intelligence apparatus is more general, focusing on interposing deceptive indicators between the intelligence collection method and the real friendly indicator (see Figure 20-4).

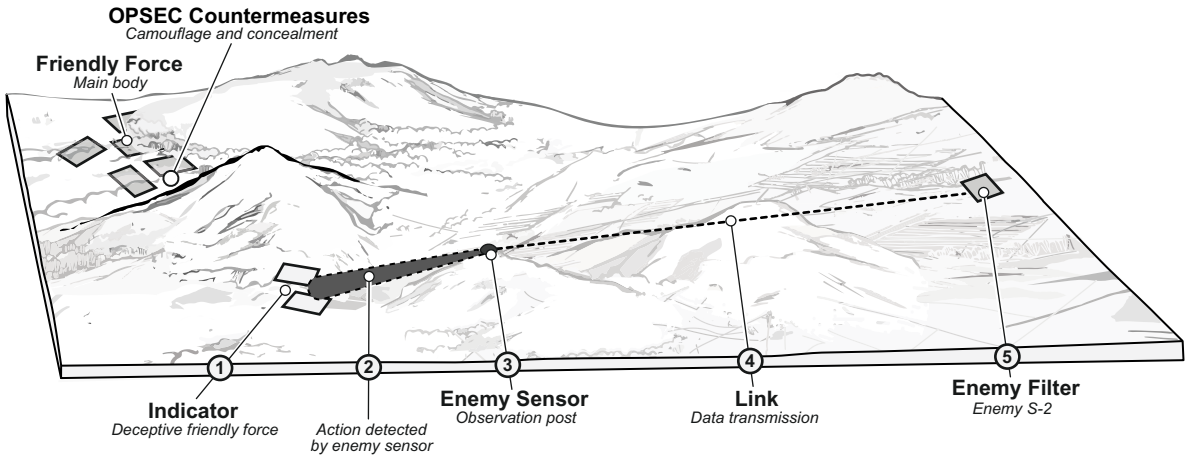


Figure 20-4. Example of Deceptive Execution Sequence.

INFORMATION PATHWAYS

Marine commanders need to analyze conduits to determine the information pathway to the enemy decision maker. Understanding the flow of information from the sensor collecting the information through the enemy's nodes and filters to their decision maker is paramount to determining which executions and OPSEC countermeasures are required to convey the deception story.

The deception planner chooses, and deconflicts access to, specific conduits to provide a synchronized portrayal of selected information and indicators. Typically, an individual conduit contains a sensor that registers a signature, a transmission means from the sensor to an intermediate node or nodes that might act or aggregate the information in various ways, and delivery to the deception target(s).

Conduits comprise systems, organizations, and individuals through which information reaches the target. Selecting appropriate conduits is a critical part of developing a successful deception plan. A filter is a node within a conduit that aggregates, synthesizes, or applies bias to the observable on its path to the deception target. To develop an effective deception story, planners must understand each conduit's construct, filtering, and estimated function time; the relationships and redundancy with other conduits; and their comparative value as perceived by the target.

CHAPTER 21.
COUNTERMOBILITY

Countermobility includes MDCA activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to prevent the enemy's freedom of movement and maneuver.

GENERAL COUNTERMOBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Units employ countermobility activities to shape enemy movement and maneuver and to prevent the enemy from gaining a position of advantage. Countermobility directly supports offensive and defensive operations and indirectly supports stabilization and defense support of civil authorities tasks. Offensive and defensive operations are always combined with stabilization tasks and activities; defense support of civil authorities tasks are typically only performed in support of homeland defense. Countermobility includes the following tasks:

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

Although other activities (e.g., antiterrorism, physical security, survivability, safety, transportation) employ obstacles like perimeter fencing, concrete walls, and vehicular barriers, only countermobility activities employ tactical obstacles to directly affect tactical mission tasks.

Countermobility enables MDCA units to shape enemy movement and maneuver and prevent the enemy from gaining a position of advantage. In the offense, units conduct countermobility to isolate objectives and prevent the enemy from repositioning, reinforcing, and counterattacking. It enables flank protection along an axis of advance or as an integrated economy-of-force effort to provide general flank security. In the defense, countermobility disrupts enemy attack formations and enables friendly forces to defeat the enemy in detail. Obstacles help channel the enemy into engagement areas and protect the flanks of friendly forces conducting a counterattack.

In support of offensive operations, units might conduct countermobility activities to defend a lodgment and protect selected sites and positions where they generate and sustain combat power. The unit's options for emplacing reinforcing obstacles in the offense are often limited because of challenges in gaining early access to the assigned area. Therefore, units use existing obstacles and the terrain's natural restrictiveness to their advantage. These challenges also increases the unit's reliance on rapid obstacle emplacement capabilities, particularly remotely-delivered obstacles to reinforce the terrain.

In support of defensive operations, countermobility activities use tactical obstacles to shape engagements and maximize the effects of fires. They use protective obstacles to provide close-in protection around defensive positions. Protective obstacles help warn, prevent, and mitigate intrusion into critical-fixed sites such as assembly areas and sustainment sites, or a final enemy assault onto a unit position. Erecting obstacles is a critical supportive task to conducting denial operations. In the defense, earlier access to more of the assigned areas typically provides units with the time and information to consider a range of options for reinforcing the terrain. In addition to the rapid obstacle emplacement capabilities often used in the offense, units can often use more time- and resource-intensive techniques to reinforce the terrain for longer periods. Such techniques include mostly constructed obstacles and some demolition obstacles. During a retrograde, including security force passage, the requirement for obstacle control typically increase.

Unit planners must weigh the risks of employing obstacles, particularly lethal obstacles, near civilians and consider enhancing marking and restrictions to mitigate that risk. Units rely on command-detonated, self-deactivating, or nonexplosive obstacles to deny the enemy freedom of movement and provide close-in protection. Denying enemy freedom of movement might involve disrupting the weapons and supplies transportation and the emplacing explosive obstacles along roads or routes. Integrating explosive and non-explosive obstacles with surveillance equipment and access control measures (e.g., check points) strengthens the defensive posture of base camps and contingency locations.

Conducting countermobility typically involves engineers and includes integrating obstacles with the maneuver plan, adhering to obstacle emplacement authority, and positive obstacle control. Multi-domain combined arms obstacle integration synchronizes countermobility into the concept of operations. Because most obstacles have the potential to deny freedom of movement and maneuver to friendly and enemy forces, it is critical that units weigh the risks and evaluate the trade-offs of employing various types of obstacles.

TERRAIN REINFORCEMENT

Units reinforce terrain by employing existing, reinforcing, tactical, and protective obstacles to prevent the enemy from gaining a position of advantage. They use the terrain's innate restrictiveness to minimize the time, effort, and materiel needed to achieve the desired effects and offset the limited, available quantities of scatterable mines as well as explosive and non-explosive obstacles.

Existing Obstacles

Existing obstacles are inherent aspects of the terrain that impede movement and maneuver. Existing obstacles may be natural (intractable soils, rivers, mountains, wooded areas) or man-made (enemy explosive and nonexplosive obstacles and structures, including bridges, canals, railroads, and embankments associated with them). Structures such as bridges and overpasses can impede mobility depending on weight and clearance restrictions. Existing obstacles are shown on the modified combined obstacle overlay (also known as a MCOO) developed as part of the IPB process.

Reinforcing Obstacles

Reinforcing obstacles are those man-made obstacles that strengthen terrain to achieve a desired effect. For Marine Corps units, reinforcing obstacles on land consist of land mines, anti-personnel munitions, military explosives, and constructed obstacles.

Land Mines. Units can place multiple land mines within a specific area to form a minefield, or use individually them to reinforce nonexplosive obstacles. Land mines fall into two general categories, nonpersistent and persistent.

Nonpersistent. Nonpersistent land mines can self-destruct or self-deactivate. Land mines can be further defined as antivehicle or antipersonnel. They can be air-, artillery-, or ground-delivered.

Persistent. Persistent land mines cannot self-destruct or self-deactivate. Examples of persistent mines include—

- Demolition obstacles, which are created using explosives. Examples include bridge or other structure demolition (rubble) and road craters. (See MCTP 3-34B for more information on demolition obstacles.)
- Constructed obstacles, which are created without the direct use of explosives. Examples include wire obstacles, antivehicle ditches, or similar construction that typically involves the use of heavy equipment. (See MCTP 3-34B for more information on constructed obstacles.)

> **NOTE:** As of 1 January 2011, US forces are no longer authorized to employ persistent or nondetectable land mines.

The use of some obstacles, specifically mines, is governed by US law, US policies, and international treaties or agreements. The United States regards mines as lawful weapons when employed according to legal standards. These laws and policies are complex and subject to change; therefore, it is essential that commanders coordinate with legal advisors when developing local rules of engagement (ROE) and ensure that legal advisors review law and policies. Ultimately, commanders can reduce the likelihood of civilian casualties by ensuring obstacle areas containing lethal munitions are properly marked and perimeter fences are installed. See JP 3-15, *Barriers, Obstacles, and Mines in Joint Operations*, for more information on the laws, agreements, and policies that are most significant to the employment of obstacles.

Tactical Obstacles

Tactical obstacles shape enemy maneuver and maximize the effects of fires. Tactical obstacles directly impede a force's ability to move, mass, and reinforce, thereby affecting the tempo of operations. Units integrate obstacles into the scheme of maneuver to enhance the effects of fires. Preexisting obstacles that a unit reinforces and integrates with observation and fires may become tactical obstacles. The types of tactical obstacles are distinguished by the differences in execution criteria. The three types are—

- Directed obstacles.
- Situational obstacles.
- Reserved obstacles.

Directed Obstacle. A directed obstacle is an obstacle directed by a higher commander as a specified task to a subordinate unit. The higher headquarters commander directs and resources these obstacles as specified tasks to a subordinate unit. Units plan, prepare, and execute directed obstacles when preparing the AO. Most tactical obstacles are directed obstacles.

Situational Obstacle. A situational obstacle is an obstacle that a unit plans and possibly prepares prior to starting an operation but does not execute unless specific criteria are met.Situational obstacles are preplanned obstacles as part of a TAI. They provide the commander with flexibility for emplacing tactical obstacles based on battlefield development.

Reserved Obstacle. A reserved obstacle is an obstacle of any type, for which the commander restricts execution authority. The commander specifies a unit that is responsible for preparing, guarding, and executing reserved-obstacle emplacement. Units execute reserved obstacles only on command of the authorized commander or based on specific criteria identified by the commander. Units use reserved obstacle to retain control over the avenue of approach. Commanders use reserved obstacles when failure to maintain control over an avenue of approach will affect the current battle or future operations.

Protective Obstacles

Protective obstacles are employed to protect people, equipment, supplies, and facilities against threats. Protective obstacles have two primary roles: defense and security.

Defense. Protective obstacles provide friendly forces with local, close-in protection. They prevent the enemy from delivering a surprise assault from areas close to a position and are integrated with FPFs to defeat the final assault of the enemy. Protective obstacles are employed to defeat mounted and dismounted threats.

Security. Protective obstacles provide security to prevent or mitigate hostile actions against friendly forces and critical fixed sites (such as air facilities, bases or base camps, critical infrastructure, and sustainment sites). Protective obstacles used for security produce scalable effects that range from lethal to nonlethal are selected based on the situation and rules of engagement.

Protective obstacles are key enablers to survivability operations, physical security, and antiterrorism. Units on the move rely on rapidly emplaced protective obstacles that units can quickly recover, deactivate, or destroy. Stationary units continuously improve their security posture. See MCTP 3-34C for more information on using obstacles in supporting protection tasks that are not considered countermobility tasks.

OBSTACLE INTENT

Obstacle intent describes how obstacles support the commander's concept of operations. Obstacle intent consists of the—

- Target.
- Effect.
- Relative location (i.e., the location of an obstacle in relation to maneuver or fire control measures).

Target

The target is the enemy force that the friendly force commander wants to affect with tactical obstacles. The commander usually identifies the target in terms of the enemy size and type, the echelon, the avenue of approach, or a combination of these factors.

Effect

Tactical obstacles combined with direct and indirect fires manipulate the enemy in a way that supports the commander's intent and scheme of movement and maneuver (or SOM). Obstacle effect describes the effect that the commander wants the obstacles, combined with fires, to have on the enemy. The obstacle effect—

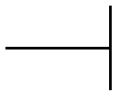
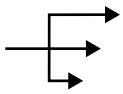
- Drives integration.
- Focuses subordinate fires.
- Focuses obstacle effort.
- Multiplies firepower effects.

Tactical obstacles produce one of the following effects:

- Block.
- Disrupt.
- Fix.
- Turn.

Each obstacle effect is graphically represented by an obstacle effect symbol, as shown in Table 21-1. Obstacle effect symbols are used as control measures for obstacle groups and as elements of the control measures for obstacle zones and belts. Obstacle effect symbols are also used in developing and showing the initial obstacle plan that supports each COA.

Table 21-1. Tactical Obstacle Effects.

Function	Template
Block An obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent the attacking force from passing through an engagement area.	
Disrupt An obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy to break up its formation and tempo, interrupt its timetable, commit breaching assets prematurely, and attack in a piecemeal effort.	
Fix An obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area.	
Turn An obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to divert an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area.	

Block Effect. Block is an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle efforts to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent the attacking force from passing through an engagement area. To accomplish the block effect, the obstacles and fires must—

- Prevent the enemy from bypassing or breaching the obstacles.
- Maximize available standoff.
- Stop enemy forward movement.

Units consider obstacle protection when planning fire control measures. The overwatching force's first mission is to use direct or indirect fires to stop any bypassing or breaching attempt. Block obstacles stop enemy maneuver and cause the enemy to commit breaching assets that can be destroyed by fire.

The engagement area must cover the width of the avenue of approach. The maximum effective range of the overwatching weapons excluding the standoff distance limits the depth of the engagement area. The commander positions forces so that they can mass interlocking fires across the entire avenue of approach. The defending force should concentrate all available fires within the obstacle group. Units array weapon systems in depth based on their maximum effective ranges.

The success of a block obstacle is measured by its effect on the enemy advance. The block effect is the most resource-intensive obstacle effect to achieve and is usually limited to critical points on the battlefield. Typically, the forces overwatching a block obstacle defeat lead enemy units and cause the enemy to reconsider deploying follow-on forces. Commanders allocate sufficient combat power to achieve all effects of the obstacle, which includes protecting the obstacle and defeating enemy forces encountering it.

Achieving the block effect requires units to integrate complex obstacles—those that require more than one reduction technique to create a lane—with massed fires to defeat the breaching effort of the attacking force. Units array obstacles successively in a concentrated area. When the attacking force reduces one obstacle integrated with massed fires, it encounters another obstacle integrated with massed fires. Obstacles must defeat the mounted and dismounted breaching efforts of the attacking force. They must span the entire width of the assembly area, allowing no bypass. Obstacles intended to prevent an attacking force from using a specific assembly area should be readily visible to discourage further progress forward. Obstacles used to prevent an attacking force from passing through an engagement area should be less visible to avoid discouraging the enemy from entering the engagement area. Units plan to employ fires on the locations where enemy forces will move to when they are blocked.

Disrupt Effect. Disrupt is an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy to disrupt its formation, tempo, or timetable; prematurely commit breaching assets; and attack in a piecemeal effort. The disrupt effect also helps to deceive the enemy concerning the location of friendly defensive positions, separate combat echelons, or separate combat forces from its logistics support. To accomplish the disrupt effect, the obstacles and fires must—

- Cause the enemy to deploy early.
- Slow and disrupt part of the enemy force.
- Allow part of the enemy force to advance unimpeded.

Obstacles must usually attack half of the targeted avenue of approach to achieve the disrupt effect. The obstacles should not require extensive resources for construction or emplacement. Units typically use the disrupt effect beyond engagement areas, while being careful not to inadvertently discourage the enemy from entering the engagement area.

Units use indirect fires and long-range direct fires to cause the enemy to change from a march formation to a prebattle or attack formation, resulting in reduced closure speed and increased time to engage the enemy in the engagement area. Generally, indirect fires alone will not force an enemy to deploy except when dismounted.

Units plan suppression and neutralization indirect fire targets or groups on the obstacles in a disrupt obstacle group. Indirect fires are used with the obstacles to slow the part of the enemy force that makes contact with the obstacles. Units also use every means available to disrupt enemy command and control throughout the enemy formation. Units use electromagnetic warfare, obscuration, and indirect fires to disrupt the enemy's decision-making process and increase the direct fire window on the unimpeded part of the enemy force.

Units use target reference points to mass direct fires against the part of the enemy formation that is not impeded by obstacles and indirect fires. Units do not execute those fires until the enemy force separates from its parent formation. They use direct fire weapons that can deliver a lethal initial volley of fire. A quick volley is critical if the enemy has good command and control and can react quickly to the disruption of its formation. Disengagement criteria are also a consideration in weapons selection. If units plan a short engagement, they choose a weapon system that can fire and maneuver without becoming decisively engaged. If they expect a long engagement, they select a weapon system that can sustain rapid fire with sufficient survivability to support the engagement.

Units plan fire control measures that allow for the shift of direct or indirect fires to the enemy that are slowed by the obstacle or to the enemy bypassing the obstacle. Key leaders are positioned where they can best assess the obstacle effect. If the enemy is rapidly breaching the obstacles, they may shift direct fires against the enemy breaching assets. If a large force bypasses, units may shift all fires against the unimpeded enemy to inflict maximum losses and then reposition friendly forces to subsequent positions.

Fix Effect. Fix is an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area. The fix effect allows time to acquire, target, and destroy the enemy with direct and indirect fires throughout the depth of an engagement area or avenue of approach. The fix effect helps fires to defeat the enemy in detail or to gain the necessary time for forces to reposition while inflicting maximum casualties. To accomplish the fix effect, the obstacles and fires must—

- Cause the enemy to deploy into attack formation early.
- Cause the enemy to advance slowly into the engagement area.
- Make the enemy fight in multiple directions within the engagement area.

Units specify the amount of time or effect that the combined effect of fires and obstacles must achieve. The fix effect may generate the time necessary for the defending force to break contact and disengage as the attacking force maneuvers into the area. To achieve the fix effect, units array

obstacles in depth to cause the attacking formation to repeatedly react and breach. The obstacles must influence the entire width of the avenue of approach but not make the terrain impenetrable. The individual obstacles must look as if they could be easily bypassed or reduced. Units combine obstacles that are clearly visible with others that are unseen (such as obstacles on the reverse slope help to confuse the attacking force once it encounters the obstacles).

Units plan artillery- and aviation-delivered fires forward of the obstacles to suppress or neutralize the enemy. They synchronize indirect fires with long-range direct fires that cause the enemy to deploy out of a march or a prebattle formation. If the enemy is in an attack formation, this allows obstacles and fires to attack the full frontage of the enemy.

Initially, units' orient fires on the enemy force as a whole; however, as the enemy continues to advance into the engagement area they aim to destroying enemy breaching assets. To maximize obstacle effect and inflict maximum losses on the enemy, the fire plan requires an increase in the intensity of fires as the enemy advances. Units plan successive TRPs, integrated with obstacles closer to the battle positions, which trigger engagement by additional weapons. They vary the intensity of fires through fire control to allow the enemy to continue a slowed advance. When the enemy fully commits, friendly forces complete its destruction.

Once the enemy commits in the engagement area, the fire plan causes the enemy to fight in as many directions as possible. This serves to further slow its advance, disrupt its command and control, and reduce its ability to mass, allowing friendly forces to provide interlocking fires with flank shots on individual targets. Combining fires from multiple directions with the random orientation of individual obstacles further confuses the attacker. For direct fires, units consider using TRPs and supplementary positions to reorient fires and protective obstacles to protect the force. The fire support officer and fire support teams plan targets to hold the enemy in the engagement area and aim FPFs on critical mobility corridors that may let the enemy threaten friendly positions.

Turn Effect. Turn is an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to divert an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area. To accomplish the turn effect, the obstacles and fires must—

- Prevent the enemy from bypassing or breaching the obstacle.
- Cause the enemy to bypass in the desired direction.
- Maintain pressure on the enemy throughout the turn and exploit its exposed flank.

Developing a turn obstacle requires mobility corridors and avenues of approach that are defined by restricted terrain. To achieve a turn effect, the obstacles must have a subtle orientation relative to the approach of the attacking force. The obstacles and fires allow bypasses in the direction that is desired by the friendly scheme of movement and maneuver (or SOM). Obstacles at the start of the turn are visible to the attacking force and look more complex than those in the direction of the turn.

The anchor point, the initial point of the turn, is where most turn obstacles fail. Therefore, it is critical that units reinforce the anchor point with concentrated direct and indirect fires to achieve the turn effect. Units usually anchor turn obstacle groups to restricted terrain or to a strong point.

They approve fire support coordination measures, focusing all available fires at the anchor point. When the enemy encounters the obstacle, the combination of fires, obstacles, and terrain must limit their ability to breach or bypass at the anchor point.

Units plan an indirect fire target or group to turn the enemy away from the anchor point. They focus direct fire assets to manage the size of the enemy force expected at that point; for example, if an enemy company is expected at the anchor point, then at least one friendly platoon should be allocated to mass fires at that point. If the enemy breaches the obstacle at the anchor point, the turning effect could be lost—compromising the friendly defensive plan.

To achieve the turn effect, units use obstacles and overwhelming fires to cause the enemy to move in the desired direction. As the engagement progresses, the friendly force prevents enemy attempts to breach the obstacle by designating enemy breaching assets as priority targets. Direct fire weapon systems are the primary means for destroying enemy breaching equipment. Artillery- and aviation-delivered fires can attack individual targets, but they may be less timely. Units should plan indirect fires—artillery and mortars—in front of, on top of, to the side of, and behind obstacles to maximize their effect as force multipliers. Developing fire control measures through the planning of NAIs, TAIs, triggers, and targets to support obstacles in the obstacle group will make indirect fires more responsive and effective.

Units develop a fire plan with fire control measures that allow them to shift fires as necessary to cover the turn effect. Direct and indirect fires shift in unison to attack and maintain pressure on the enemy force's flank. Fires covering the length of the turn effect are less focused than at the turn point. Company commanders facilitate the turn effect by assigning platoon sectors of fire between TRPs. Units usually execute indirect fires in groups rather than aiming at individual targets. Direct and indirect fires continue throughout the length and depth of the turn effect. These fires simultaneously exploit the vulnerability created by the turn effect and protect the integrity of the obstacles.

Relative Location

Relative location refers to the location of a tactical or protective obstacle in relation to maneuver or fire control measures such as avenues of approach, battle positions, or engagement areas. Relative location enables maneuver commanders to visualize linkages between obstacles, fires, and maneuver and ensures obstacle integration.

OBSTACLE EMPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES

The basic employment principles for obstacles are—

- Support the maneuver commander's plan.
- Integrate with observation and fires.
- Integrate with other obstacles.
- Employ in depth.
- Employ for surprise.

See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacle employment principles.

OBSTACLE EMPLOYMENT AUTHORITY

Obstacle emplacement authority is the authority to emplace reinforcing obstacles. Geographic combatant commanders have the authority to emplace obstacles in their areas of responsibility within the ROE. They may delegate emplacement authority to subordinate commanders while ensuring that the employment of reinforcing obstacles is consistent with the ROE and supportive of current and future operations. Commanders consider the particular obstacle characteristics, including hazards to friendly forces and civilians when determining the emplacement authority for scatterable mines. The duration of scatterable mines employment is a primary consideration in determining the extent to which emplacement authority should be delegated. When used as protective obstacles, higher-level commanders typically delegate emplacement authority to the subordiante commanders (platoon or company or team) and base camps. The commander's guidance on emplacement authority is stated in the unit's order.

Commanders use obstacle control measures and other specific guidance or orders to grant or withhold obstacle emplacement authority to subordinate commanders and provide obstacle control. For example, a commander may withhold authority by shaping obstacle control measures within the AO of a subordinate unit so that a specific area is not included, such as a counterattack axis, to ensure the freedom of movement and maneuver of other units in that area. Likewise, the commander may also state in an order that a specific area, such as a counterattack axis, is an obstacle-restricted area.

Subordinate commanders who desire to emplace an obstacle outside a zone, belt, or group must submit a report of intention for that obstacle. The report doubles as a request when units initiate it at levels below emplacement authority. Units do not submit the report if the higher headquarters grants emplacement authority. Commanders give the authorization to emplace obstacles when they establish obstacle control measures. As an exception, units do not submit reports of intention for directed obstacles that are part of an operation plan or operation order approved by the obstacle emplacement authority.

Commanders and staffs consider time, width, and depth when planning for obstacle control. For example, a commander may use an on-order obstacle zone to give a subordinate obstacle emplacement authority only after a certain time or event. Likewise, a commander may direct that only scatterable mines with a certain self-destruct time or networked munitions with on and off features can be emplaced in a specific area. Maneuver control measures can aid in focusing the width and depth of obstacle control measures.Typical graphics that may be used include—

- Unit boundaries and phase lines.
- BHLs and forward edges of the battle area.
- Lines of departure and lines of contact.
- Fire support coordination line, no-fire areas, and coordinated fire lines.
- Passage lanes and corridors.
- Counterattack axis and movement routes.
- Objectives, future battle positions, and avenues of approach.

Obstacle control planning is guided by—

- Supporting current operations.
- Maximizing subordinate flexibility.
- Facilitating future operations.

Commanders use obstacle control to focus obstacle effort where it supports their intent and concept of operations. They also use obstacle control to ensure that obstacles do not interfere with current operations or limit their ability to respond to unforeseen situations.

OBSTACLE CONTROL MEASURE

Forces emplace tactical and protective obstacles that reinforce terrain restrictions and existing obstacles and integrate them with fires to affect enemy movement or maneuver and shape engagements. Obstacle control measures are specific measures that grant obstacle-emplacing authority. They consist of (see Table 21-1)—

- Zones.
- Belts.
- Groups.
- Restrictions.

Commanders with an assigned area can only emplace protective obstacles unless authorized by a higher echelon commander.

An analysis of the higher echelon headquarters' mission and commander's intent identifies information that may impact the mission. The components of this analysis are intent, assigned areas, military deception, directed and implied tasks, limitations, available assets, risk, and emplacement timelines and risk. Among the directed obstacle tasks are the planning, preparation, and execution of reserve obstacles. Reserve obstacles allow the force to retain control over the mobility along a given avenue of approach. See Table 2-1 in Chapter 2 for the obstacle control measure symbols.

Obstacle Zones

An obstacle zone is "a division-level command and control measure to designate specific land areas where lower echelons are allowed to employ tactical obstacles" (*DoD Dictionary*). Marine expeditionary force and division commanders use them to grant obstacle emplacement authority to regiments (including other major subordinate units). Obstacle zones are permissive, allowing a brigade combat team to place reinforcing obstacles to support its scheme of maneuver without interfering with future operations.

If the obstacle zone encompasses the brigade combat team's assigned area, another graphic is unnecessary. Commanders may designate the entire assigned area as an obstacle zone with the unit boundaries defining the geographic limits of the zone. Obstacle zones do not cross brigade combat

team boundaries. Commanders assign obstacle zones to a single subordinate unit to ensure unity of effort, just as they would when assigning defensive assigned areas or battle positions. Typically, this does not create vulnerabilities on the boundary between units since the commander bases the assignment of both subordinate assigned areas and obstacle zones on defined avenues of approach.

A commander does not usually assign an obstacle effect (block, fix, turn, or disrupt) to an obstacle zone. This allows subordinate commander's flexibility in using obstacles. The commander should establish construction and resourcing priorities between different obstacle zones.

Obstacle Belts

An obstacle belt is "a brigade-level command and control measure, normally depicted graphically, to show where within an obstacle zone the ground tactical commander plans to limit friendly obstacle employment and focus the defense" (*DoD Dictionary*). It assigns an intent to the obstacle plan and provides the assigned obstacle zones to grant obstacle emplacement authority to their major subordinate units. Obstacle belts also focus obstacles to support the regimental scheme of maneuver and ensure that obstacles do not interfere with the maneuver of any higher headquarters.

Obstacle belts are restrictive. Commanders can direct a subordinate unit to construct one or more obstacles to create an effect in an area. They do not specify the type or number of obstacles. Obstacle belts do not cross unit boundaries for the same reasons discussed in obstacle zones. A single unit is responsible for a belt; however, a commander may assign more than one belt to a unit.

A regimental commander typically assigns an obstacle effect and priority to each obstacle belt. As with the obstacle zone, the target and relative location are apparent. Adding a specific obstacle effect gives purpose and direction to subordinate battalion obstacle planning. When regimental commanders assign an obstacle effect, they ensure that obstacles within the belt complement the regimental fire plan.

A MEF, division, or regimental commander may authorize emplacement certain types of protective obstacles outside obstacle zones or belts. Usually, the commander authorizes company team and base commanders to emplace protective obstacles within 500 meters (546 yards) of their positions, depending on the mission variables. The commander usually limits the types of obstacles a unit may use for protective obstacles that are outside obstacle control measures. For example, the commander may allow only wire- and command-detonated mines outside of control measures for protective obstacles. Furthermore, commanders may require that minefields be fenced on all sides, after obtaining legal guidance concerning current rules and policies on mine emplacement, to prevent friendly fire incidents.

Obstacle Groups

Obstacle groups are one or more individual obstacles that provide a specific obstacle effect. Battalions use obstacle groups to ensure that companies emplace individual obstacles supporting their maneuver schemes. In rare cases, regiments level or higher use obstacle groups for specific tactical obstacles. Units integrate obstacle groups with their direct and indirect fire plans. Regimental and maneuver battalion commanders plan their placement within designated obstacle zones or belts, respectively.

Unlike obstacle zones or belts, obstacle groups are not areas but relative locations for actual obstacles. Commanders typically show obstacle groups using the obstacle effect symbols. When detailed planning is possible (including detailed ground reconnaissance), commanders may show obstacle groups using individual obstacle symbols.

Company commanders and engineers can adjust obstacles in the group if the intent and link to the fire plan remain intact. They make minor changes to obstacles and fire control measures based on terrain realities. For example, a commander may move a fixing obstacle group and direct fire TRPs 100 meters to avoid having them masked by rolling terrain. However, a major change to the obstacle group location requires the approval of the commander who ordered the obstacle group emplacement.

Individual Obstacle

Each type of individual obstacle, such as abatis and antitank ditches, has its associated symbol. Once a unit constructs an individual obstacle, it records the obstacle's location and reports its emplacement through the chain of command. Commanders must report individual obstacles in sufficient detail so that any unit moving through the area can bypass or reduce the obstacle without excessive risk. Each headquarters is responsible to ensure the dissemination of exact obstacle locations throughout its organization. Commanders rarely depict individual obstacle symbols on maps above the battalion echelon.

Obstacle Restrictions

Commanders may use obstacle restrictions to provide additional obstacle control and to limit the specific types of obstacles used, such as restricting the use of cratering charges on a particular road. These restrictions ensure that subordinates do not use obstacles with characteristics that impair future operations. These restrictions also allow commanders to focus the use of limited resources for the main effort by restricting their use elsewhere.

Obstacle restricted areas are "a command and control measure used to limit the type or number of obstacles within an area" (*DoD Dictionary*). The commander with emplacement authority uses obstacle restricted areas to restrict obstacle placement. In general, obstacle restrictions consist of either obstacle-free zones in which obstacles are forbidden, or obstacle-restricted zones. These restrictions ensure that subordinates do not use obstacles with characteristics that impair future operations. Subordinate commanders may increase, but not decrease, the level of restrictions established by the higher commander. Some examples of establishing an obstacle restriction include—

- Placing an obstacle-restricted area within a zone or belt.
- Designating a counterattack axis, passage lane, or other maneuver control measure as an obstacle free area.
- Stating no obstacles can be placed within a certain distance of an MSR, movement corridor, passage lane, or a restricted target.
- Establishing obstacle-free areas or no-later-than self-destruct times for scatterable mines within a specific area, such as an objective, a planned battle position, or an area bounded by phase lines.

See MCTP 3-34B for more information on obstacle control measures.

CHAPTER 22.
MOBILITY

Freedom to move and maneuver in an operational area is essential to apply combat power and accomplish a mission. The operational environment presents numerous challenges to movement and maneuver. Combined arms mobility overcomes these challenges by integrating the framework of assured mobility in support of offensive, defensive, and other enabling operations.

Mobility is necessary for the conduct of successful offensive operations. Mobility includes both movement and maneuver, generally, applying to both collectively unless stated as movement or maneuver. It enables friendly forces to move and maneuver throughout the battlespace or an assigned area. Units require the capability to move, exploit, and pursue the enemy.

The attacking unit concentrates the effects of combat power at select locations. This might require the unit to improve or construct combat routes. The surprise achieved by attacking through an area believed to be impassable might justify the effort expended in constructing these trails. When possible, the force bypasses identified obstacles before starting the offense. However, this must be done with caution because it might give the enemy an advantage. Bypassed obstacles are reported to higher headquarters, and they are marked as the situation allows.

Maintaining the offensive operation's momentum requires the attacking force to quickly pass through obstacles. This involves a deliberate effort to capture enemy bridges and other enemy-reserved obstacles intact. In some cases, using air assault and airborne forces can accomplish this goal. Hasty breaching is the preferred method when time and resources are unavailable to conduct a deliberate breach.

Rivers and other gaps that cannot be navigated by mounted and dismounted forces remain major obstacles despite advances in high-mobility vehicles and increased aviation support. Wet-gap crossings are among the most critical, complex, and vulnerable combined arms missions. While units conduct hasty crossings, when possible, they continue the attack with speed. Operational risk is much higher with hasty crossings, and staff planning must incorporate the breaching tenets and gap crossing fundamentals. The gap's size and the enemy and friendly situation dictates the specific tactics, techniques, and procedures used in conducting the crossing. Gap crossing includes the deliberate, hasty, and covert capabilities. Units can further develop initial combat crossings in support of LOCs.

MOBILITY TASKS

Mobility tasks are combined arms activities that mitigates the effects of obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver. There are six primary mobility tasks:

- Conduct breaches.
- Conduct gap crossings.

- Clear areas and routes.
- Construct and maintain combat roads and trails.
- Construct and maintain forward airfields and landing zones.
- Conduct traffic management and control.

> **NOTE:** This chapter only discusses breaching, gap crossing, and clearing. For additional information on combat roads and trails, forward airfield and landing zones, and traffic management and enforcement, see MCTP 3-34A.

Mobility tasks are conducted to enable friendly forces to move and maneuver freely on the battlefield. Mobility tasks depend on information collection and intelligence. Breaching and gap crossing in support of maneuver are primarily conducted using combat engineer units that have, or are augmented by, gap-crossing equipment. The Marine Corps does not have equipment bridging capabilities. Engineer units can employ expedient methods, such as fascines, or can construct non-standard bridges to address gap crossing needs. See MCTP 3-34A for details related to Army bridges and engineer units that can employ them.

Breach

A successful obstacle breach is a synchronized and rehearsed MDCA activity, under the control of the maneuver unit. Breaching allows maneuver despite the presence of the enemy reinforcing obstacles with direct and indirect fire. For additional information, see Appendix C.

Breaching begins when friendly forces detect an obstacle or explosive hazard (e.g., minefield) and begin to apply the breaching fundamentals. Breaching ends when follow-on forces and the breaching unit conduct the battle handover. Generally, breaching requires significant combat engineer support.

Reduction is "the creation of lanes through a minefield or obstacle to enable passage of the attacking ground force" (*DoD Dictionary*). The route may be reduced and proofed as part of breaching, constructed as part of the obstacle, or marked as a bypass. The number and width of lanes vary depending on the enemy situation, size and composition of the assaulting force, and the scheme of movement and maneuver. Proof is "the verification that a lane is free of mines or explosive hazards and that the width and trafficability at the point of breach are suitable for the passing force" (*USMC Dictionary*). Proofing can be conducted visually, electronically, or mechanically. Some mines are resistant to reduction assets and may require a combination of breaching techniques. For example, magnetic and double impulse mines may resist a mine clearing line charge blast. Proofing is an important component of breaching considering the wide variety of explosive obstacle threats in use today.

Breach Control Measures. The breach area (Figure 22-1) is established and fully defined by the higher headquarters of the unit conducting the breach. Within the breach area is the point of breach (POB), the reduction area, the far side objective, and the point of penetration.

Point of Breach. The point of breach is the obstacle site where the lane is to be created. Initially, points of breach are planned locations only within the directed breach area; however, the breach force typically determines the actual point of breach during the action.

Reduction Area. The reduction area is "a number of adjacent points of breach that are under the control of the breaching commander" (*USMC Dictionary*). The staff of the unit conducting the attack determines the size and location of the reduction area that supports the seizure of a point of penetration.

Far-Side Objective. The far-side objective is "a defined location on the far side of an obstacle that an assaulting force seizes to eliminate enemy direct fires and observed indirect fires onto a reduction area or a crossing site to prevent the enemy from interfering with the reduction of the obstacle and allow follow-on forces to move securely through the created lanes. It can be oriented on the terrain or on an enemy force" (*USMC Dictionary*). A far-side objective can be oriented on the terrain or on an enemy force. The higher headquarters assigns the objective; however, the attacking unit typically subdivides the objective into smaller objectives to assign responsibilities and to control and focus the assault of subordinate forces. When breaching as part of a larger force, seizing the far-side objective provides the necessary maneuver space for the higher unit follow-on forces to move securely through the lanes, assemble or deploy, and continue the attack without enemy interference.

Point of Penetration. The point of penetration is "the location, identified on the ground, where the commander concentrates friendly force efforts at the enemy' weakest point to seize a foothold on the far side objective" (*USMC Dictionary*). This is achieved along a narrow front through maneuver and direct and indirect fires that are accurately placed against enemy forces. A unit conducting a breach establishes a point of penetration that supports planning locations for the reduction area and the seizure of the far side objective.

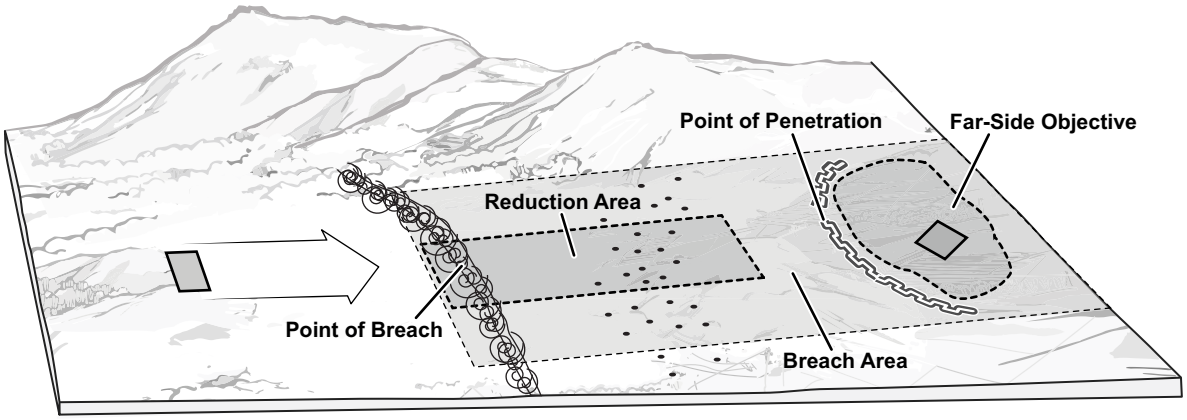


Figure 22-1. Breach Area Example.

Breach Types. Breaching activities must be adapted to best exploit the situation. The level and type of planning distinguish which of the three general types of breaching—

- Deliberate.
- Hasty.
- Covert.

Deliberate Breach. A deliberate breach is "the systematically planned and executed creation of a lane or clear route through a barrier, obstacle, or fortification" (*USMC Dictionary*). Typically, a unit uses a deliberate breach against a strong defense or complex obstacle system. It is characterized by the most planning, preparation, and buildup of combat power on the near side of obstacles. It is similar to a deliberate attack, requiring detailed knowledge of the defense and obstacle systems. Subordinate units are task-organized to accomplish the breach. The breach may require securing the far side of the obstacle with an assault force before or during reduction.

Hasty Breach. A hasty breach is "the creation of lanes through enemy minefields by expedient methods such as blasting with demolitions, pushing rollers or disabled vehicles through the minefields when the time factor does not permit detailed reconnaissance, deliberate breaching, or bypassing the obstacle" (*DoD Dictionary*). A hasty breach is an adaptation to the deliberate breach and is conducted when less time is available. It may be conducted during a deliberate or hasty attack due to lack of clarity on enemy obstacles or changing enemy situations.

An in-stride breach is a type of hasty breach used to describe the situation when a subordinate unit is expected to be able to organize for a conduct a hasty breach with its organic or task-organized assets, without affecting the higher unit scheme of movement and maneuver or commander's intent. In-stride breach is generally not used below the company level since a platoon is unable to form effective support, breach, and assault forces with its squads.

Covert Breach. A covert breach is the creation of lanes through minefields or other obstacles that is planned and intended to be executed without detection by an adversary. Its primary purpose is to reduce obstacles in an undetected fashion to facilitate the passage of maneuver forces. A covert breach is conducted when surprise is necessary or desirable and when limited visibility and terrain present the opportunity to reduce enemy obstacles without being seen. Through surprise, friendly units conceal their capabilities and intentions and create the opportunity to position support and assault forces to strike an unaware or unprepared enemy. The support force does not usually provide suppressive fire until the initiation of the assault or in the event that the breach force is detected. Covert breaches are usually conducted during limited visibility and uses elements of deliberate and hasty breaching, as required.

Breaching Tenets. Successful breaching missions are characterized by applying breaching tenets (see Table 22-1). These tenets are integrated into the planning process. The tenets are—

- Intelligence.
- Breaching fundamentals.
- Breaching organization.
- Mass.
- Synchronization.

Table 22-1. Breaching Tenets.

Breaching Tenets	Actions
Intelligence	• Template enemy obstacles on the SITEMP for each enemy COA during IPB based on— ◆ The enemy ability to emplace obstacles based on its capabilities (manpower, equipment,and materials) and time available. ◆ The effects of terrain and weather. ◆ The range of enemy weapon systems covering obstacles and emplacing scatterable mines. • Develop information requirements on enemy engineer units, equipment, activities, and obstacles (location, composition, and mine types). • Integrate information requirements and engineer reconnaissance capabilities into the information collection plan.
Breaching Fundamentals (SOSRA)	• Implement fire control measures to allow the support force to provide effective direct and indirect suppressive fires (**s**uppress). • Determine the placement (wind condition), density, and timing of placing obscurants on enemy positions and placing screening obscuration between the enemy and the reduction area (**o**bscure). • Resource the breach force based on the combat power of enemy forces overwatching the obstacle (**s**ecure). • Determine the number and width of lanes based on the scheme of movement and maneuver (one lane per company and two lanes per battalion), determine reduction methods (explosive, mechanical, or physical), and establish a lane marking system (**r**educe). • Complete the breach by destroying the enemy on the far side of the obstacle (**a**ssault).
Breaching Organization	• Suppress enemy direct fire and observed indirect fires on the reduction area (support force). • Control indirect fires and indirect fire obscuration within the breach area (support force). • Prevent the enemy from repositioning or counterattacking to place direct fires on breach force (support force). • Create and mark lanes for the breach element (breach force). • Secure the obstacle near side and far side for the security element (breach force). • Report lane status and location (breach force). • Assault through the obstacle and destroy the enemy on the far side (assault force).
Mass	• Mass effects to create enemy weakness at the POB. • Prevent enemy from massing effects at the POB.
Synchronization	• Conduct detailed reverse planning. • Communicate clear instructions to subordinate units. • Provide effective command and control. • Perform combined arms rehearsals.
LEGEND SITEMAP situation template SOSRA suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, and assault	

Breaching Fundamentals. Breaching fundamentals are integrated into the planning process and applied when a defended obstacle must be reduced. This includes breaching, gap crossing, and route clearance missions. The fundamentals are described by the memory aid SOSRA—

- Suppress.
- Obscure.
- Secure.
- Reduce.
- Assault.

Suppress. Suppressive fires in sufficient volume secure the reduction area. Electromagnetic attack can be used to suppress or disable the enemy's ability to communicate while friendly forces are conducting a breach. The purpose of suppression during breaching is to protect forces reducing obstacles and maneuvering through the reduction area. Successful suppression generally triggers the rest of the actions at the POB. Fire control measures ensure that all fires are synchronized with other actions at the POB. The mission of the support force is to suppress the enemy overwatching the obstacle. The breach force also provides additional suppressive fires as the situation dictates; however, its primary roles are to first secure the near side objective and then to reduce the obstacle.

In complex or restrictive terrain, effective suppression may have to be achieved through close-in fighting. Defenders will tend to be more fortified when defending in urban terrain and may be more difficult to suppress. Forces tasked with suppressing the enemy may find it necessary to seize terrain at or on the far side of the obstacle to achieve their mission. Fighting to achieve enemy suppression will likely be decentralized, and the ability to use indirect fires will be restricted due to the proximity of friendly and enemy forces and civilians. For more information on electromagnetic attack. see MCRP 3-32D.1, *Electronic Warfare*.

Obscure. Breach forces conduct breaching using available natural cover and concealment. They employ battlefield obscuration, which hampers enemy observation and target acquisition of the breach force as it reduces the obstacle and the assault force as it passes through the obstacle. Obscuration requires close coordination, control, and detailed planning to maximize the desired effects on the enemy while not degrading friendly capabilities. This is particularly important when conducting breaching in complex or restrictive terrain due to the close-in nature of the fighting. In urban areas, indirect delivered obscuration and suppressive fires will be more restricted. In some situations, using mortars (because of their ability to fire at a high-level trajectory), smoke pots, and smoke grenades rather than artillery-fired obscurants may be more effective. Planners consider the effects of wind and the time and assets required to build and maintain effective obscuration for the desired duration. Using indirect fire to provide obscuration often competes with other mission requirements and requires priorities to be established. Obscuration employed in multiple locations and at various times can confuse the enemy on the specific location and timing of breaching. Illumination rounds can be employed to ignite directly in front of enemy positions to degrade or disable the performance of night vision devices. This affects the enemy force's ability to overwatch obstacles, especially when friendly forces conduct a breach during the night. See MCTP 3-34A for more information on obscuration.

Secure. Forces conducting a breach secure the reduction area to prevent the enemy from interfering with obstacle reduction and the passage of the assault force through the created lanes. The reduction area must be secured before attempting to reduce the obstacle. The higher headquarters breaching unit is responsible for isolating the breach area by fixing enemy forces in their current positions, attacking enemy reserves in-depth, and providing counterfire.

Identifying the extent of the enemy defense is critical in selecting the appropriate technique to secure the point of breach. The point of breach is secured before reducing the obstacle.

The breach force is resourced with sufficient maneuver assets to provide local security against the enemy that the support force cannot adequately engage. Elements within the breach force that secure the reduction area may also be used to suppress the enemy once reduction is complete. Breaching elements prepare their breaching assets for employment throughout the secure phase.

Reduce. Typically, engineers and reduction assets (mobility capabilities) are used to reduce an obstacle. The number and width of lanes needed depend on the enemy situation, terrain, size and composition of the assault force, and scheme of maneuver. The lanes must allow the assault force to pass through the obstacle rapidly. In complex or restrictive terrain, the assault force may be constrained to a single lane and the assault force commander must ensure that the sequencing of forces through the lane is appropriate to achieve the mission. The breach force will reduce, proof, mark, and report lane locations and the lane marking method to higher headquarters. Follow-on units will further reduce or clear the obstacle, as required. Reduction begins when effective suppression and obscuration have been established, the obstacle has been confirmed, and the reduction area is secure.

Assault. A breach is complete when the attacking force has assaulted through the obstacle, seized the far side objective, eliminated enemy direct and observed indirect fires on the reduction area and, if planned, the battle handover with follow-on forces. Engineers support the flow of combat forces through the lanes or bridges to build combat power quickly on the far side. These forces may entail follow-on breakout forces if the initial assault forces culminate or establishes defensive areas to manage operational reach and sustainment for future operations.

Breach Organization. Units organize into the following three elements to conduct a breach—

- Support.
- Breach.
- Assault.

Establishing the breach organization facilitates the application of the breaching fundamentals. Table 22-2 shows the responsibilities of the support, breach, and assault elements.

Table 22-2. Support, Breach, and Assault Element Responsibilities.

Breach Organization	Responsibilities
Support Element	• Suppress an enemy capable of placing direct fires on the reduction area to protect the breach force as it reduces the obstacle and the assault element as it passes through the created lane. • Fix enemy forces to isolate the reduction area. • Control obscuration. • Control other suppressive effects such as electromagnetic warfare and air and missile defense.
Breach Element	• Reduce, proof, and mark the necessary number of lanes through the obstacle. • Report the status and location of created lanes. • Provide local security on the near side and far side of the obstacle. • Provide additional suppression of enemy overwatching the obstacle. • Provide additional obscuration in the reduction area. • Assist the passage of the assault element through created lanes.
Assault Element	• Seize the far side objective. • Reduce the enemy protective obstacles. • Provide clear routes from the reduction area to the battle handover line for follow-on forces. • Prevent the enemy from placing direct fires on follow-on forces as they pass through the created lanes. • Conduct battle handover with follow-on forces. • Provide reinforcing fires for the support element. • Destroy the enemy on the obstacle far side that is capable of placing direct fires on the reduction area.

Planning a Breach. Units use the reverse planning process when planning a breach. The reverse planning process begins with actions on the objective and moves backward to the line of departure, since seizing an objective is typically the decisive point at the tactical level and directly tied to mission accomplishment. Planners use reverse planning and force ratios to determine the size and composition of the maneuver forces that will perform the tasks that support the main and supporting effort for each COA. Actions on the objective drive the size and composition of the force that conducts the final assault onto the objective as part of an attack, which dictates lane requirements (the number and location of required lanes). Lane requirements and the composition of obstacles drive the amount and type of reduction assets needed by the breach force. The engineer staff officer and other planners use reverse planning to determine how best to allocate mobility assets within the arrayed forces to facilitate the scheme of movement and maneuver for each COA. The engineer staff officer focuses on the allocation of reduction assets. The situational template depicting enemy direct- and indirect fire coverage of template enemy obstacles determines the size and composition of the support force. Reverse planning for breaching is performed using the following steps—

1. Identify available reduction assets.
2. Template enemy obstacles.
3. Understand the scheme of movement and maneuver.
4. Identify the number of required breach lanes.
5. Identify the assets required to reduce, proof, and mark lanes.
6. Task-organize reduction assets within the maneuver force.

See MCTP 3-34A for more information on the reverse planning process for a breach.

During preparation, units continue to review IPB products against the current situation and redirect information collection assets to focus on the most important requirements remaining, while emphasizing the commander's critical information requirements. Plans are continuously refined based on IPB updates and reporting from information collection assets.

Key preparation activities for breaching include—

- Planning refinement based on IPB updates and reporting from information collection assets, to include adjustments to the breach organization (support, breach, and assault elements), the scheme of movement and maneuver, and the fire support plan.
- Implementing the task organization (breach organization), to include coordinating the linkup of breaching assets (units and equipment) with the supported unit to allow combined arms breaching rehearsals to be conducted.
- Performing pre-combat checks and inspections.
- Rehearsals with key breaching assets.
- Position and staging of breaching assets.

A breaching rehearsal site should reflect the obstacle system in as much detail as possible. At a minimum, rehearsals should include a leader and key personnel walkthrough and individual rehearsals by support, breach, and assault forces. As time permits, full-scale rehearsals should be conducted. When possible, friendly forces rehearse the mission under the same conditions (obscuration and darkness) expected during the actual mission. Rehearsals should also include contingencies such as enemy counterattacks and attacks by enemy indirect-fire systems, attack helicopters, other air assets, and enemy use of CBRN weapons. If updates become available

after the last possible rehearsal, the information should be immediately passed on to affected elements. A key output of rehearsals is that all participants understand unit-specific brevity codes, and signals associated with the breach.

Executing task organization changes of critical reduction assets during mission execution may be required. This situation presents even more challenges, especially with regard to terrain management, because unit positions and fire control measures may have shifted. War gaming these actions during mission planning and rehearsals, implementing the necessary control measures, and coordinating instructions are critical to avoid friendly fire incidents.

Execution of a Breach. Execution involves monitoring the situation, assessing the mission, and adjusting the order as needed. When the situation deviates from the order, commanders direct adjustments to exploit opportunities and counter threats. Adjustments that may be necessary during breaching might include—

- Allocating additional assets to the support, breach, or assault force due to attrition.
- Changing the location of the POB or point of penetration.
- Modifying the scheme of movement and maneuver and changing the order of the units passing through the created lane.

For breaching, the staff focuses on monitoring, assessing, and adjusting the critical events of a breach that were rehearsed. The critical events that are generally associated with a breach are—

- Occupying support-by fire-positions.
- Suppressing the far side objective.
- Employing obscuration.
- Reducing the obstacle.
- Assaulting the far side objective.
- Consolidating on the far side objective.
- Passage of follow-on forces.

Gap Crossing

A gap is "ravine, mountain pass, river, or other terrain feature that presents an obstacle that must be bridged" (*USMC Dictionary*). Gap crossing in support of maneuver is similar to a breach in that the force is vulnerable while moving through a lane or across a gap. Maneuver units are forced to break movement formations, concentrate within lanes or at crossing points, and reform on the far side before continuing to maneuver. While much of the terminology and planning associated with gap crossing is the same as that used in a breach, gap crossing and breach differ in scope. The amount and type of assets involved also differ. Combined arms breaching can include gap crossings as a reduction method. Since the primary focus of planning and preparation is on the breach, they are typically discussed as a subordinate part of the breach rather than as a separate gap crossing.

Gaps will exist in the operational environment and present a significant challenge to movement and maneuver. A gap crossing is the projection of combat power across a linear obstacle such as a wet or dry gap. Marine Corps engineer units no longer have bridging equipment. Instead, expedient methods, such as fascines, can be used to span narrow gaps (e.g., antivehicle ditches). For more information about mobility, breaching, and gap crossing, refer to MCTP 3-34A.

CHAPTER 23.
LINKUP

A linkup is a type of enabling activity that involves the meeting of friendly ground forces in a hostile area. For example, when converging maneuver forces meet, when an advancing force reaches an objective area previously seized by an airborne or air assault force, when an encircled force breaks out to rejoin friendly forces, and when a force comes to the relief of an encircled force. During optimal linkup conditions, there is a stationary force and a linkup force. However, both forces may be moving toward each other. Whenever possible, the joining forces exchange as much information as possible prior to starting the linkup.

PLANNING A LINKUP

Linkup activities require detailed planning and coordination. Planning for a linkup is coordinated as far in advance as possible to allow coordination between the two or more friendly units. Commanders and staffs coordinate responsibilities to prevent friendly fire incidents and ensure mission success.

Command and Control

The headquarters directing the linkup operation must establish command relationships and responsibilities of the forces involved. Both elements of the linkup operation remain under control of the directing headquarters. The communications plan includes the channels for radio communication between the two forces. It must prescribe day and night identification procedures, including primary and alternate means. Units can use visual signals such as flares or panels during daylight and flashlights or infrared devices during darkness.

The headquarters ordering the linkup establishes—

- A common operational picture using available command and control systems, ideally both digitally and analog.
- Command relationship and responsibilities of each force before, during, and after linkup.
- Coordination of fire support before, during, and after linkup, including control measures.
- A linkup method.
- Recognition signals (near and far) and communication procedures—such as pyrotechnics, vehicle markings, gun tube orientation, panels, colored smoke, lights, and challenge and passwords—to prevent friendly fire incidents.
- Operations to conduct following linkup.

Intelligence

The linkup force begins the IPB process to prepare for offensive and defensive operations. The primary difference is that the commander and staff must consider the location and effect of other friendly forces on the enemy forces within the assigned area. As a result, the probable enemy COA, situation template, and event template must include the stationary and maneuvering forces perspective of the operation.

Maneuver

Units conduct linkup operations to—

- Complete the encirclement of an enemy force.
- Assist the breakout of an encircled friendly force.
- Join an attacking force with a force operating adjacent to it.
- Join an attacking force with airborne or air assault elements following a vertical envelopment.

The two forces define and coordinate their schemes of maneuver, graphic control measures, and the subsequent mission to be performed by each force. A linkup point is typically positioned behind or along one flank of the enemy's positions.

A linkup point is a designated place where two forces are scheduled to meet. This point should be large enough for all forces to assemble and it should provide cover and concealment. When planning a linkup point, the staff should look for an easily identifiable point on the ground. The staff should position linkup points on defensible terrain located away from normal enemy movement routes. Planned alternate linkup points provide needed flexibility. The commanders establish a liaison during planning and continues throughout the operation.

Units carefully coordinate linkup operations with forces of other nations, particularly if the two forces are not both members of an alliance with established internationally standardized procedures, or if the forces involved have not previously established the necessary procedures. In such situations, using liaisons is necessary to ensure understanding and synchronization of operations. Additional rehearsals might be necessary to ensure maneuver forces understand the operation or no hostile actions affect the stationary force. Aircraft can improve and expedite this coordination.

Engineers are task-organized to conduct mobility operations. The speed of the operation is essential, whether assisting in the movement towards the linkup point with an encircled force or to completing the encirclement of the enemy.

Fires

When a division or MEF directs a linkup operation, they typically establish fire support coordination measures for both forces. Fire support coordination measures are adjusted as one force moves toward the other. A restricted fire line is established between the forces when necessary, usually at the point where the two forces plan to establish contact. During linkup, particularly with airborne or air assault forces, indirect fire support becomes critical. The division artillery headquarters must ensure timely dissemination of information and coordination so that fires do not engage friendly aircraft supporting the airborne or air assault forces.

Logistics

Logistics support requirements might be greater during linkup activities than it is during other activities. Additional considerations for planning logistics support in linkup operations include—

- Distance to the objective area.
- Duration to hold the objective area.
- Planned operations or movement out of the objective area.
- Resupply of the stationary force.
- Movement of drop zones and landing zones for air assault forces involved in the linkup.
- LOCs secured by follow-on forces.

Supply requirements for a linkup operation might exceed the transportation capability of the unit conducting the linkup. The sustainment elements might have to request additional vehicles or resupply by air. In linkup operations with air assault forces, priority for supply by air is given to the forces assaulting the objective area. Supplies for the linkup forces normally move by land transportation. However, when the objective area is to be defended jointly by the linkup and airborne or air assault force, supplies for the linkup force maybe flown into the objective area and stockpiled.

Linkup forces plan to evacuate equipment and causalities. If ground supply routes are open, evacuation procedures apply. When ground routes are not secure, helicopters can be used to evacuate causalities while damaged equipment might be moved forward with the linkup forces until it can be evacuated.

PREPARING A LINKUP

Preparation that includes planning through integration of all seven warfighting functions through the single-battle construct relative to link up operations increases opportunities for success during linkup. Successful units also rehearse and refine the link up plan and conduct liaison activities prior to execution of a link up operation.

Command and Control

Staffs conduct linkup rehearsals with subordinate forces, ensuring the established control measures are effective. Specifically, they monitor the progress of the subordinate forces as they maneuver along the axis of advance. Simultaneously, they prepare to issue a fragmentary order for a hasty defense or attack

Information

The staffs and commander prepare for the linkup through the development of a deliberate plan that integrates strategic communications, public affairs, information operations, electromagnetic warfare, and cyber operations into the link up plan.

Intelligence
The intelligence staffs and commander prepare for the linkup conducting a war game. They ensure that the unit is prepared for likely enemy's actions. Additionally, they rehearse the linkup and subsequent operations within the context of the enemy situation.

Fires
The fire support coordination cell ensures that the counterpart force has the fire support plan and coordinates changes with them. Specifically, the cell ensures that both forces understand the fire control measures, coordinated fire lines and restricted fire lines. Units ensure that air defense assets are prepared to protect the forces at the linkup point.

Force Protection
The staffs and commander coordinate and synchronize all available capabilities to mitigate adversary effects and preserve time to react and maneuver to the link up plan. In addition, they take measures to ensure they deny surveillance by adversary systems and units through an aggressive counterreconaissance plan.

Maneuver
Typically, there is little time available to conduct a MDCA rehearsal for maneuver, particularly because MCDA operations are time sensitive. The rehearsal focuses on the linkup and the required coordination. Moreover, it ensures that each force is prepared to respond to a meeting engagement or enemy attack during the linkup.

Logistics
Logistics elements carry additional supplies and material if they are conducting the linkup with an encircled force. Generally, this includes Class I, III, V, and VIII items. The logistic staffs ensures that each force understands the distribution plan, including traffic control. During the operation, they move as much material forward as possible so the force can continue the mission (even if it is to remain in place and defend).

EXECUTING A LINKUP

The commander typically follows the lead force to observe the progress of the operation. If a flank that is exposed to an adversary is of concern during the operation or a supporting attack is required to penetrate the enemy's lines, then the unit will place a headquarters where it can observe the force's secondary action. The commander and operations officer remain in communication throughout the operation, using the main command post to relay messages. The staff maintains the tempo of the operation because a stalled force is difficult to get moving again. Forces maintain the ability to move forward, continuing the momentum. The staff monitors the actions of subordinate forces to ensure that the established control measures are still effective.

As the force maneuvers, the intelligence staffs monitor the enemy situation and the situation facing the linkup force. The staffs uses this information to communicate the enemy's disposition, which assists in determining the enemy's most probable course of action. The intelligence staffs identify as far in advance as possible the direction, strength, and time of the enemy counterattack. They also advise the commander of any identifiable weaknesses within the counterattack.

As the forces begin to maneuver, they establish and maintain contact with their corresponding friendly force. The linkup point can be moved closer to the linkup force if it is unable to travel at a speed proportionate with the plan. Similarly, the fire control measures will also adjust. As the two forces draw closer, higher headquarters controls the maneuvering forces. If possible, the forces establish contact on a predesignated frequency to control the linkup. At this point in time, the operation's momentum slows to prevent friendly fire. The tradeoff may be that some enemy forces may slip between the two closing forces. Coordination signals identify each force as it approaches the linkup point.

The fire control measures shift based on the progress of the forces and the enemy situation. Specifically, the coordinated fire lines changed by the commander and staff to protect the two forces as they begin to meet. Restricted fire lines prevent friendly fire between the linkup forces. Once the linkup has occurred, the stationery and linkup forces organize as per the higher headquarters' plan for future operations. The air defense elements in both linkup forces monitor the same early warning net. This is particularly important if the linkup is attempting to reach an encircled force. This air defense effort ensures the most appropriate use of weapon systems and reduce unnecessary redundancy.

Engineers provide mobility support to the higher headquarters, typically as attached elements of the lead forces. After the linkup, engineers assist in countermobility or survivability operations.

Logistics priorities focus on the forward movement of the force. Evacuation is forward of logistics resupply points, reducing the turnaround time for recovery assets. As the linkup forces begin to close, logistics assets must be as far forward as possible. Time is essential to the success of this operation, so assets mu prepared to keep pace with extremely fast operations. They must be prepared to address the immediate needs of the encircled force, to stockpile ammunition, or to move to other positions if the force should revert to a defensive posture.

LINKUP METHODS

There are two linkup methods—

- Linkup of a moving force with a stationary force.
- Linkup of two moving forces.

Linkup of a Moving Force with a Stationary Force

To ensure the forces join without engaging one another, linkup points are at locations where the axis of advance of the linkup force intersects the security elements of the stationary force. These points must be readily recognizable to both forces. Units plan alternate points should enemy activities impede the linkup at the planned point. The number of linkup points selected depends on the terrain and number of routes used by the linkup force. Personnel in the linkup force must be familiar with mutual identification procedures and plans for rapid passage of lines. Stationary forces assist in the linkup by opening lanes in minefields, breaching or removing selected obstacles, providing guides, and designating avenues of approach.

Linkup of Two Moving Forces

Linkup between two moving forces is difficult when completing the encirclement of an enemy force. Units plan primary and alternate linkup points for two moving forces on boundaries where the two forces are expected to converge. As linking forces move closer, positive control must be coordinated to avoid friendly fire incidents. This coordination also ensures the enemy cannot escape between the two forces. Leading elements of each force should monitor a common radio network.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING LINKUP

Linkup operations frequently will require a passage of lines. When the linkup is made, the linkup force may join the stationary force, or it may pass through or around to continue the attack. If the linkup force continues operations in conjunction with the stationary force, a single commander is designated. The linkup force might immediately pass through the perimeter of the stationary forces, be assigned objectives within the perimeter, or be assigned objectives outside the perimeter, depending on its mission.

APPENDIX A.
PRINCIPLES OF WAR

The Marine Corps warfighting philosophy of maneuver warfare is rooted in the long-standing principles of war. These original nine principles: mass, objective, offensive, security, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, surprise, and simplicity—known by the memory aid "MOOSEMUSS"—are also part of the twelve principles of joint operations, which includes three principles specifically related to irregular warfare (perseverance, legitimacy, and restraint). See JP 3-0 for more information on the twelve principles of joint operations and MCDP 3 for more information on the principles of war.

These principles of war, which are nested in the principles of joint operations, assist the commander and staff in organizing how to think about the mission, the enemy, the battlespace, and employment of forces. They are tools used to plan, execute, and assess operations. Applying these principles requires a commander's judgment, skill, and experience to adapt to constantly changing conditions and situations.

MASS

Mass refers to the concentration of friendly capabilities at the decisive place and time to achieve decisive results. Commanders mass capabilities to overwhelm the enemy and gain control of the situation. Mass applies to fires, combat support, CSS, and force size. Using the principle of mass with the other principles of war can achieve decisive local superiority by a numerically inferior force. The decision to concentrate requires strict economy and the acceptance of risk elsewhere, particularly because of modern weapons' lethality, which mandates the rapid assembly and speedy dispersal of forces.

OBJECTIVE

This principle advises the direction of every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective. The military objective of war is to defeat the enemy's forces or destroy the enemy's will to fight. The objective of each mission must contribute to the overarching objective or purpose of the operation. Selecting an objective is based on the purpose, forces available, the level of threat, and the AO. All commanders must understand the overall mission of the higher command, their own mission, and the tasks that must be performed. Commanders consider each action's contribution to the objective, and communicate the objective of the operation to their subordinates.

OFFENSIVE

This principle refers to seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative. Offensive action is the decisive form of combat. It is necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and to maintain freedom of action. It allows commanders to exploit enemy weaknesses, impose their will upon the enemy, and determine the course of the battle. A defensive posture should only be a temporary measure taken, until the means are available to resume the offensive. Even in the defense, the friendly force seeks every opportunity to seize the initiative by offensive action.

SECURITY

The goal of security is to prevent the enemy from acquiring an unexpected advantage. Security comprises those measures taken by a military unit, activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair effectiveness. Security measures are designed to prevent surprise, ensure freedom of action, and deny the enemy information about friendly forces, capabilities, and plans. Security is essential to preserving combat power in all military operations, even in benign environments. Although risk is an inherent condition of war, security does not necessitate being overly over cautiousness or avoiding calculated risk. Security can often be enhanced by bold maneuver and offensive action, which deny the enemy the chance to interfere. Adequate security requires an understanding of enemy capabilities, sufficient security measures, effective reconnaissance, and continuous readiness for action.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

The reciprocal of the principle of mass, economy of force allocates minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. This requires commanders to accept prudent risks in selected areas to achieve superiority at the decisive time and location with the main effort. Economy of force measures are achieved through limited attacks, defense, deceptions, or delaying actions.

MANEUVER

Maneuver is the "employment of forces in an operational area, through movement in combination with fires and information, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy" (*DoD Dictionary*). Maneuver allows for the distribution or concentration of capabilities in support of the commander's concept of operations. The Marine Corps maneuver warfare philosophy expands the concept of maneuver to include taking action in any dimension (i.e., temporal, psychological, or technological) to gain an advantage.

UNITY OF COMMAND

Unity of command requires that, for every objective, there is unity of effort ensured under the responsibility of one commander. Unity of command is based on the designation of a single commander with the authority to direct and coordinate the efforts of all assigned forces in pursuit of a common objective. The goal of unity of command is to attain unity of effort. In joint and multinational operations where the commander may not control all elements in the AO, the commander seeks cooperation and builds consensus to achieve unity of effort.

SURPRISE

The element of surprise is striking the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. It is not essential that the enemy be taken unaware; only that they become aware too late to react effectively. Factors contributing to surprise include speed, the use of unexpected forces, operating at night, effective and timely intelligence, deception, security, variation in tactics and techniques, and the use of unfavorable terrain. Surprise can decisively affect the outcome of a battle and can compensate for numerical inferiority.

SIMPLICITY

Simplicity entails preparing clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders to ensure understanding among all units . Direct, simple plans and clear, concise orders reduce the chance for misunderstanding and confusion and promote effective execution. In combat, even the simplest plan is usually difficult to execute, though usually the simplest plan is preferred. Multinational operations should emphasize simplicity, since language, doctrine, and cultural differences complicate military operations. Simple plans and orders minimize the confusion inherent in joint and multinational operations.

APPENDIX B.
WARFIGHTING FUNCTIONS

The warfighting functions encompass all military activities performed in the battlespace. Warfighting functions are a grouping of like activities into major functional areas that aid in planning and execution of operations. The seven functional areas are command and control, maneuver, fires, intelligence, information, logistics, and force protection. The primary advantage of using warfighting functions is they allow the commander and staff planners to look at all aspects of the battlespace and not leave anything to chance if it is within their capability to coordinate, control, influence, and synchronize. By integrating the warfighting functions, they can increase the force's combat power, mass capabilities on the enemy, and aid in the assessment of the operation's success. As discussed in MCDP 1-2, *Campaigning*, synchronizing the warfighting functions maximizes their effect on attaining the desired objective within the shortest time possible and with minimum casualties.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Planners consider and integrate the warfighting functions when analyzing how to accomplish the mission, because integrating the warfighting functions helps to achieve focus and unity of effort. Planners think in terms of how each function supports mission accomplishment; moreover, they consider the coordination of activities not only within each warfighting function, but also among all the warfighting functions. By using warfighting functions as the integration elements, planners ensure all functions are focused on a single purpose. The warfighting functions apply equally to traditional and irregular warfare.

Command and Control

Command and control is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces to accomplish a mission. Command and control involve arranging personnel, equipment, and facilities to allow a commander to extend influence over the force during the planning and conduct of military operations. Command and control are the overarching warfighting function that enables all of the other warfighting functions.

Command remains a very personal function—professional competence, personality, and the will of strong commanders represent a significant part of any unit's combat power. Commanders go where they can best influence the action; where their moral and physical presence can be felt; and where their will to achieve a decision can best be expressed, understood, and acted upon. The focus of command and control is on each of the commanders—their intent, guidance, decisions, and how they receive feedback on the results of their actions. Commanders command while staffs coordinate and make necessary adjustments consistent with the commander's intent.

Control allows commanders to adjust and modify command action as needed based on feedback. Feedback is the basic mechanism of control. It is the continuous flow of information about the unfolding situation returning to the commanders. This information indicates the difference between the goals and the situation as it exists. Feedback may come from any direction and in any form—intelligence about how the enemy is reacting, information about the status of subordinate or adjacent units, or revised guidance from above based on developments. Accordingly, feedback allows commanders to adapt to changing circumstances—to exploit fleeting opportunities, respond to developing problems, modify schemes, or redirect efforts. In this way, feedback "controls" subsequent command action. Control is not strictly something that seniors impose on subordinates; rather, the entire system comes "under control" based on feedback about the changing situation. Command and control is an interactive process involving all the parts of the system and working in all directions. The result is a mutually supporting system in which complementary commanding and controlling forces interact to ensure the force can adapt continuously to changing requirements.

Maneuver

Maneuver allows for the distribution or concentration of capabilities in support of a commander's concept of operations. The Marine Corps maneuver warfare philosophy expands the concept of maneuver to include taking action in any dimension, whether temporal, psychological, or technological, to gain an advantage.

Fires

Fires use weapons systems to create a specific lethal or nonlethal effect on a target. Fires harass, suppress, neutralize, or destroy in order to accomplish the targeting objective—whether to disrupt, delay, limit, persuade, or influence. Fires include the collective and coordinated use of target acquisition systems, direct and indirect fire weapons, armed aircraft of all types, and other lethal and nonlethal means. Fires are typically used with maneuver and help shape the battlespace, setting conditions for decisive action.

Intelligence

Intelligence provides the commander and intelligence staff with an understanding of the enemy and the battlespace and identifies the enemy's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. It assists commanders in understanding the situation, alerts them to new opportunities, and helps them assess the effects of actions upon the enemy. Intelligence drives operations, is focused on the enemy, and supports the formulation and subsequent modification of the commanders' estimate of the situation by providing as accurate an image of the battlespace and the enemy as possible. It is a dynamic process used to assess the current situation and confirm or deny the adoption of specific COAs by the enemy. It helps refine the commanders' understanding of the battlespace and reduces uncertainty and risk.

Information

Managing, applying, and deliberately integrating the information warfighting function with other warfighting functions is essential to influence relevant actor perceptions, behavior, action or inaction, and support human and automated decision making. The information warfighting function helps commanders and staffs understand and leverage the pervasive nature of information, its military uses, and its application across all operational phases and the range of

military operations. This function provides the Marine Corps with the ability to generate and preserve friendly information while leveraging the inherent informational aspects of all military activities and Service-level operations to achieve Marine Corps objectives.

Logistics

Logistics encompasses all activities required to move and sustain military forces. At the tactical level, logistic functions are maintenance, transportation, supply, general engineering, services, and health service support to include their subfunctions. See MCTP 3-40B for more information on tactical-level logistics.

Force Protection

Force protection is the measures taken to preserve the force's potential so that it can be applied at the appropriate time and place. It includes those measures the force takes to remain viable by protecting itself from the effects of enemy and adversary activities and natural occurrences. Force protection safeguards friendly centers of gravity and protects, conceals, reduces, or eliminates friendly critical vulnerabilities.

APPENDIX C.
TACTICAL TASKS

Tactical tasks are "the defined actions, based on unit capabilities, that a commander may take to accomplish the mission. Tactical tasks may be specified, implied, or essential" (*USMC Dictionary*). These tasks may be expressed in terms of enemy-oriented, friendly-oriented, terrain-oriented, or population-oriented. The tactical tasks in this appendix describe the results or effects the commander wants to achieve—the what and why of a mission statement. The what is typically a measurable effect. The why of a mission statement provides the mission's purpose or reason. These tasks have specific military definitions that are different from those found in a dictionary. In special circumstances, tasks may be modified to meet METT-T requirements—the commander must clearly state that they are departing from the standard meaning of these tasks. The commander is not limited to the tactical tasks listed in this appendix when specifying desired subordinate actions. However, both the commander and the subordinate unit must have a common understanding of the what and why of an operation.

Commanders ensure that the tasks assigned to subordinate units are consistent with the SOM and the resources allocated to those subordinates. The GCE can execute all the MAGTF's tactical tasks. The LCE can execute those tactical tasks essential for providing sustainment to the MAGTF. The ACE can execute many of the tactical tasks, but it cannot secure, seize, retain, or occupy terrain without augmentation by the GCE.

Table C-1. Tactical Tasks.

Enemy-Oriented		Terrain-Oriented	Friendly-Oriented	Population-Oriented
• Ambush	• Fix	• Breach*	• Cover	• Advise
• Attack by Fire	• Influence*	• Clear	• Disengage	• Assess The Population
• Block	• Interdict	• Control*	• Displace	• Assist
• Breach*	• Isolate	• Cordon*	• Exfiltrate	• Build and Restore Infrastructure
• Bypass	• Neutralize	• Occupy*	• Follow and Assume	• Contain*
• Canalize	• Penetrate	• Reconnoiter*	• Follow and Support	• Control*
• Contain*	• Reconnoiter*	• Retain	• Guard	• Coordinate with Civil Authorities
• Corrupt	• Support by Fire	• Secure*	• Protect	• Enable Civil Authorities
• Deceive	• Suppress	• Seize	• Screen	• Exclude
• Defeat				• Influence*
• Degrade				• Occupy*
• Deny				• Reconnoiter*
• Destroy				• Secure*
• Disrupt				• Train
• Exploit				
• Feint				

NOTE
*Tactical tasks with multiple classification and applications.

ENEMY-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on generating effects against enemy forces. Most of these effects have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

NOTE: Reference MIL-STD-2525 for most current symbols.

Ambush

An ambush is "a surprise attack by fire from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*) (see Chapter 5). Figure C-1 depicts the symbol for an ambush. The arrow points at the targeted force or objective, and the commander places the base of the arrow in the general area from which the commander wants to deliver the ambush.

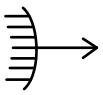


Figure C-1. Ambush Symbol.

Attack by Fire

Attack by fire is an enemy-oriented task that uses "fires (direct and indirect) in the physical domains and/or through the information environment to engage the enemy from a distance to destroy, fix, neutralize, or suppress" (*USCM Dictionary*). Commanders employ this task when the mission does not dictate or support close combat and the objective of the attack by fire does not require occupation by another friendly force. Units may use it in the offense, with an axis of advance or force-oriented objective, or in the defense in association with a battle position, sector of fire, of an engagement area. Figure C-2 depicts the symbol for attack by fire. The arrow points at the targeted force or objective, and the commander places the base of the arrow in the general area from which the commander wants to deliver the attack.

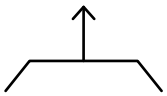


Figure C-2. Attack by Fire Symbol.

An attack by fire closely resembles the task of support by fire. The primary difference is that one unit conducts the support-by-fire task to support another unit so they can maneuver against the enemy. The attack-by-fire task includes—

- Assigning sectors of fire or engagement areas to each subordinate weapon system to include the enemy's defensive positions or avenues of approach.
- Designating control measures to allow massing, distributing, and shifting of direct and indirect fires.
- Designating battle positions, AOs, or an axis of advance to allow the friendly force to engage the enemy.

Block

A block can be employed as an enemy-oriented tactical task or as an obstacle. As a tactical task, it is "to deny the enemy access to an area or prevent enemy advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. It may be for a specified time" or as "an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent an attacker from passing through an engagement area" (*USMC Dictionary)*. A blocking task requires the friendly force to block the enemy force for a certain time or until a specific event is conducted. A blocking unit may have to hold terrain and become decisively engaged. A block differs from the tactical task fix because a blocked enemy force can still move in another direction, they just cannot advance while a fixed enemy force cannot move. A force may employ blocking obstacles to assist in executing a task, but obstacles alone cannot accomplish a task. Figure C-3 depicts the symbol for a blocking task. The top right symbol depicts block as a tactical task where the line perpendicular to the enemy's line of advance indicates the limit of enemy advance. Figure C-4 depicts the symbol for block as an obstacle effect graphic. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on blocking obstacles and their effects.

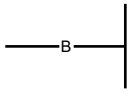


Figure C-3. Block as a Task.

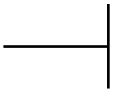


Figure C-4. Block as an Obstacle Effect.

Breach

A breach is a synchronized combined arms activity under the control of the maneuver commander conducted to allow maneuver through an obstacle. Breaching enemy defenses and obstacle systems is typically a commander's least preferred choice. It requires employing combined arms to be successful. (See Chapter 3 and MCTP 3-34A). Figure C-5 depicts the symbol for breach. The area located between the arms of the graphic shows the general location for the breach. The length of the arms extends to include the entire depth of the area that must be breached.

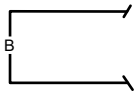


Figure C-5. Breach.

Bypass

Bypass is a tactical task "to maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain the momentum of the operation while deliberately avoiding combat with an enemy fore" (*USMC Dictionary*). A commander orders a bypass and directs combat power toward accomplishing the mission. A bypass can take place in offensive or defensive actions. Figure C-6 depicts the symbol for a bypass. The arms of the graphic go on both sides of the location or unit that will be bypassed.

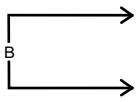


Figure C-6. Bypass.

The commander bases the bypass decision on—

- The requirement to maintain momentum and aggressive action.
- Knowledge of enemy strength, intent, or mission.
- The degree to which the bypassed enemy can interfere with the advance.
- The general state of the enemy force (weak versus strong).
- Any bypass criteria established by a higher headquarters.

The force conducting the bypass immediately reports any bypassed obstacles and enemy forces to higher headquarters. The force usually keeps the bypassed enemy under observation until relieved by another force unless they are part of a raid. A senior commander does not typically delegate authority to bypass below the battalion level. Commanders establish bypass criteria to limit the size of the enemy force that can be bypassed without the authority of the next higher commander. Before approving the bypass, the commander ensures that the bypassing force checks the bypass route for enemy presence and trafficability. At no time can the bypassing force allow the bypassed enemy force to interfere with the moving friendly force.

The two bypass techniques that the force can employ are—

- Avoiding the enemy totally.
- Fixing the enemy in place with fires and then conducting the bypass.

If the force cannot avoid the enemy, the bypassing force must fix the enemy with part of the maneuver elements and bypass with the balance of the force. Generally, units will not attempt to bypass an enemy force if more than a third of their combat power is required to fix the enemy. The commander assigns one subordinate unit the mission of fixing the enemy in this situation, reinforcing the fixing force as required by METT-T. The fixing force coordinates with the unit assigned to relieve them as soon as possible and provides the new commander with all available information about the enemy and terrain. The relieving unit is normally another unit assigned a follow and support task. Once relieved, the force fixing the enemy either rejoins the parent organization or becomes part of the following element and comes under its control.

Occasionally the commander may direct the fixing force to break contact with the enemy after the bypassing force completes the bypass. This takes place when the bypassing force has no requirement to maintain an uninterrupted LOC, such as in a raid. In this case, the fixing force fixes the enemy by employing defensive and limited offensive actions in synchronization with all available fire support until ordered to rejoin the bypassing force.

Canalize

Canalize is an enemy-oriented tactical task “to restrict enemy movement to a narrow zone by the use of existing or reinforcing obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver” (*USMC Dictionary*). Figure C-7 depicts the symbol for canalize.

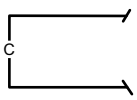


Figure C-7. Canalize.

Contain

Contain is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause the enemy to center activity on a given front and to prevent the withdrawal of any part of the enemy's forces for use elsewhere" (*USMC Dictionary*). Whereas the tactical task fix prevents enemy movement, the tactical task contain allows for some enemy movement within the designated area. It is a less resource intensive task than fix, since the friendly force does not have to prevent all enemy movement, just enemy movement from the assigned area. Commanders assign limits in terms of geography or time. Figure C-8 depicts the shows the symbol for contain. The contain graphic encompasses the entire area in which the commander desires to contain the enemy during the development of alternative COAs.

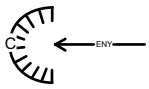


Figure C-8. Contain.

Corrupt

Corrupt is an enemy-oriented tactical task to change, debase, or otherwise alter information from its original form or version by intentionally introducing errors or alterations, thereby rendering it useless.

Deceive

Deceive is an enemy-oriented tactical task to manipulate an enemy into believing and acting upon something that is not true for a selected period or at a particular location to create a friendly advantage.

Defeat

Defeat is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to disrupt or nullify the enemy commander's plan and overcome the will to fight, thus making the enemy commander unwilling or unable to pursue the adopted course of action and yield to the friendly commander's will" (*USMC Dictionary*). A defeated enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight and the enemy commander is unwilling or unable to pursue their adopted COA. The defeated force can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use. A commander can generate different effects against an enemy to defeat that force:

- Physical. The enemy loses the physical means to continue fighting. The enemy force no longer has the personnel, weapon systems, equipment, or supplies to carry out their mission.
- Psychological. The enemy loses the will to fight. Enemy commanders and their forces become mentally exhausted, and their morale is so low that they can no longer accomplish their missions.

Defeat results a physical action, such as mass surrenders, abandonment of significant quantities of equipment and supplies, or retrograde operations.

Degrade

Degrade is an enemy-oriented tactical task to diminish the effectiveness or efficiency of an enemy's command and control systems, communications systems, or information collection efforts or means; lower the morale of an enemy unit; reduce a target's worth or value; or impair an enemy's decision-making capability.

Deny

Deny is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to hinder or prevent the enemy from using terrain, space, personnel, supplies, facilities, and/or specific capabilities" (*USMC Dictionary*).

Destroy

Destroy is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to physically render an enemy force combat ineffective unless it can be reconstituted" (*USMC Dictionary*). Figure C-9 depicts the symbol for destroy. Defeat and destroy are not the same. Destruction of the enemy force typically leads to their defeat, but defeat does not necessarily require destruction. Although generating the destruction effect is relative—the amount of damage needed to render a unit combat ineffective depends on its type, discipline, and morale—it is resource intensive. For example, even with precision weapons the destruction of armored or dug in targets requires considerable ammunition and time. Consequently, commanders balance the need to maintain operational tempo, use resources efficiently, and determine exactly what effects they need to generate on the enemy in choosing whether to assign a destroy task.

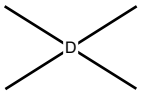


Figure C-9. Destroy.

Disrupt

Disrupt is an enemy-oriented tactical task or effect that enables units "to integrate fires and obstacles to break apart an enemy's formation and tempo, interrupt the enemy's timetable, or cause premature commitment or the piecemealing of enemy forces" (*USMC Dictionary*). Disruption deceives the enemy as to friendly locations, increases their vulnerability to friendly fires and counterattack, delays them, and generally degrades their organization, command and control, and ability to mass combat power. Disruption is typically a means to set the conditions for some other action.

Figure C-10 depicts the symbol for the tactical task disrupt. The center arrow points toward the targeted enemy unit. Figure C-11 depicts the symbol for the obstacle effect disrupt. The short arrow(s) in the obstacle effect graphic indicates where obstacles impact the enemy's ability to maneuver. The longer arrow(s) indicate where the commander allows the enemy to bypass the obstacle effect, so the defending force can attack the enemy with fires. The arrows indicate the direction of enemy attack. A defending commander typically uses the disrupt obstacle effect forward of engagement areas. Obstacles alone cannot disrupt an enemy unit. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on disrupting obstacles and their effects.

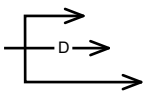


Figure C-10. Disrupt as a Task.

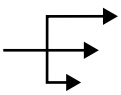


Figure C-11. Disrupt as an Obstacle Effect.

Exploit

Exploit is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to exploitation (see Chapter 6). Exploit takes full advantage of success in battle and follow-up initial gains to disorganize the enemy in depth. Also, exploit is to employ to the greatest possible advantage enemy information that has come into friendly hands. Exploitation follows a successful attack that is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. It extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense.

Feint

Feint is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to the method of attack, feint (see Chapter 5). Feints are used to cause the enemy to react in three predictable ways: to employ reserves improperly, to shift supporting fires, or to reveal defensive fires. A feint is graphically indicated by using a dashed "V" in association with the proper tactical graphic (Figure C-12). The feint, decoy or dummy indicator is a dashed inverted "V" that identifies offensive or defensive units, equipment and installations, signal intelligence, activities, and control measures.



Figure C-12. Feint.

Fix

Fix is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to prevent the enemy from moving any part of the enemy's forces, either from a specific location or for a specific period of time, by holding or surrounding them to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere," or as a tactical obstacle effect it is, "to integrate fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker within a specified area" (*USMC Dictionary*). This may take place by engaging the enemy force to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere, or by using deception, such as transmitting false orders. The friendly forces use fix in offensive and defensive actions; it is always a shaping action. Figure C-13 depicts the symbol for the tactical task fix. The commander points the arrow toward the desired enemy unit to fix. The broken part of the arrow indicates the desired location for that event.

Fixing an enemy force does not mean destroying them. However, the friendly force must prevent the enemy from moving in any direction, which can be resource intensive. This task usually has a geographic or time constraint. The tactical task of fix differs from that of block in that a fixed enemy force cannot move from a given location, but a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the one obstructed.

As an obstacle effect, fix is generated to give the friendly unit time to acquire, target, and destroy the attacking enemy with direct and indirect fires throughout the depth of an engagement area or avenue of approach. Figure C-14 depicts the symbol for the obstacle effect fix. The irregular part of the arrow which is in the obstacle intent graphic indicates the location where the enemy's rate of advance will be slowed by complex obstacles. The arrow indicates the direction of enemy advance. See MCTP 3-34B for more information on fixing obstacles and their effects.



Figure C-13. Fix as a Task.



Figure C-14. Fix as an Obstacle Effect.

Influence

Influence is to cause the enemy to behave in a manner favorable to friendly forces.

Interdict

Interdict is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces" (*USMC Dictionary*). Interdiction is an action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military surface capability before it can be used effectively against friendly forces, or to otherwise achieve objectives. Interdiction in support of law enforcement, are activities conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, intercept, board, detain, or destroy, under lawful authority, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, people, cargo, and money (JP 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*). Interdiction is a shaping action conducted to complement and reinforce other ongoing offensive or defensive operations. Figure C-15 depicts the symbol for interdict. The two arrows should cross on the unit or location targeted for interdiction. An interdict task must specify the length of time or an event that must take place before the interdiction is lifted or the exact effect desired from the interdiction.

The depth at which interdiction takes place determines the speed with which its effects are observed. Deeper interdiction attacks may not generate immediate effects on close combat but serve to overall degrade the enemy's ability to mass combat power. Conversely, interdiction attacks in the immediate area may have direct effect in the close fight but will not prevent the enemy from massing combat power across the battlespace. Commanders seek to blend both—the GCE may use artillery and CAS to interdict enemy reserves as part of isolating the battlespace, while the ACE interdicts targets deep in the enemy rear to prevent the enemy from massing against the MAGTF's operation.

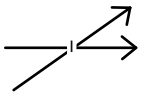


Figure C-15. Interdict.

Isolate

Isolate is an enemy-oriented tactical task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from sources of support, deny the enemy freedom of movement, and prevent the isolated enemy force from having contact with other enemy forces. The tactical task isolate is typically associated with an envelopment, but also applies to a cordon to conduct a search. A friendly force should not allow an isolated enemy force sanctuary within their present position but continues to conduct offensive actions against them. Figure C-16 depicts the symbol for isolate. The position or direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic surrounds the targeted enemy unit.

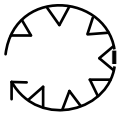


Figure C-16. Isolate.

Neutralize

Neutralize is an enemy-oriented tactical task that renders enemy's forces or resources ineffective or unusable. Neutralize is also an effect of fires delivered to render a target ineffective or unusable. The unit has degraded capability of accomplishing the mission. When assigning a task to neutralize, the commander specifies the enemy force or materiel to neutralize and the duration, which is time or event driven. The neutralized target may become effective again when casualties are replaced, damage is repaired, or effort resulting in the neutralization is lifted. The commander typically uses a combination of fires and information capabilities to neutralize enemy personnel or materiel. The assets required to neutralize a target vary according to the type and size of the target and the weapon and munitions combination used. Figure C-17 depicts the symbol for neutralize. The two lines cross over the symbol of the unit or facility targeted for neutralization.

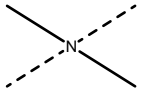


Figure C-17. Neutralize.

Penetrate

Penetrate is the enemy-oriented tactical task counterpart to the form of offensive maneuver, penetrate and pertains "to break through the enemy's defense and disrupt the enemy's defensive system" (*USMC Dictionary*) (see Chapter 3). Figure C-18 depicts the symbol for penetrate. The arrow points towards the enemy and the proposed point of penetration. The vertical line indicates the enemy position.

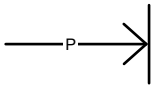


Figure C-18. Penetrate.

Reconnoiter

Reconnoiter is the enemy-oriented tactical task associated with conducting reconnaissance (see Chapter 12). It refers to obtaining, by visual observation or other methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, the nature of terrain, or civil considerations.

Support by Fire

Support by fire is an enemy-oriented tactical task "to engage the enemy by direct fire to support a maneuvering force using overwatch or by establishing a base of fire" (*USMC Dictionary*). The objective of the assigned force is to fix and suppress the enemy so that the enemy cannot effectively move against or fire upon friendly maneuvering units. The secondary objective is to destroy the enemy if the enemy tries to reposition. The commander specifies the desired effect on the enemy when assigning this task. Units assigned support-by-fire tasks do not maneuver against enemy forces or terrain but support the maneuver of other elements. When assigning a support-by-fire mission, the commander designates the enemy, when to attack, the general location from which to operate, the friendly force to support, and the purpose of the task, such

as fix or suppress. Figure C-19 depicts the symbol for support by fire. The ends of the arrows point in the general direction of the targeted unit or location. The base of the area indicates the general area from which to deliver fires.

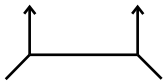


Figure C-19. Support by Fire.

Once the commander gives an element the task of support by fire, they should occupy support-by-fire positions that have cover and concealment, good observation, and clear fields of fire. Elements occupying support-by-fire positions should—

- Check the security of the position.
- Search for targets.
- Orient weapons on likely or suspected enemy positions.
- Assume fighting positions that provide some degree of protection.
- Assign observation sectors to each individual or weapon system in the support-by-fire element.

Support by fire closely resembles the task of attack by fire. The difference is that support by fire supports another force so that they can maneuver against the enemy, while an attack by fire does not support the maneuver of another friendly force.

Suppress

Suppress is an enemy-oriented tactical task that results in the "temporary or transient degradation of an opposing force or the performance of a weapons system below the level needed to fulfill mission objectives" (*DoD Dictionary*). It derives from the joint definition of suppression (see JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*). It takes place when a unit employs direct or indirect fires (such as artillery) and information capabilities (such as electromagnetic warfare), against enemy personnel, weapons, equipment, and networks to prevent or degrade enemy fires, sensors, command and control, and visual observation of friendly forces. Unlike the neutralization task, the original target regains effectiveness without needing to reconstitute once the effects of the systems involved in the suppression effort lift or shift to another target. Figure C-20 depicts the symbol for suppress.

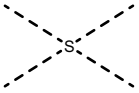


Figure C-20. Suppress.

TERRAIN-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on achieving some sort of condition as it relates to terrain. Tactical mission graphics associated with most of these tasks are included as they are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

Breach

Breach as a terrain-oriented tactical task is to break through or secure a passage through an obstacle. See Figure C-5 for the symbol for breach.

Clear

Clear is a terrain-oriented tactical task "to remove enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned zone, area, or location by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces that could interfere with the unit's ability to accomplish the mission" (*USMC Dictionary*). This task can require significant time and resources to clear an area of an enemy. In assigning this task, commanders may modify the objective by applying it to enemy forces larger than a stated size, or by stating a condition, such as enemy forces unable to delay friendly movement. When the enemy force does not meet the criteria, the clearing force must keep enemy forces under observation. Figure C-21 depicts the symbol for clear. The bar connecting the arrows designates the desired LOA for the clearing force. The bar also establishes the width of the area to clear.

Additionally, clear is "in mobility operations, the total elimination or neutralization of an obstacle that is usually performed by follow-on engineers and is not done under fire" (*USMC Dictionary*). See MCTP 3-34B for more information on clearing operations.

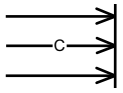


Figure C-21. Clear.

Control

Control as a terrain-oriented tactical task is "to maintain physical influence by occupation or range of weapon systems over the activities or access in a defined area" (*USMC Dictionary*). Influence can result from friendly forces occupying the specified area or by dominating that area with their weapon systems. Control prevents the movement of enemy ground forces through an area but does not require the complete clearance of enemy forces or the prevention of enemy fires into the specified area. In this way, control differs from the tactical task secure, which stipulates that no enemy fires may impact the designated area.

> **NOTE:** See the *DoD Dictionary* for the core definition and MCDP 6, *Command and Control*, for discussion of the term in the context of command and control.

Cordon

Cordon is a terrain-oriented tactical task given "to a unit to prevent withdrawal from or reinforcement to a position" (*USMC Dictionary*). It implies occupying or controlling terrain particularly mounted and dismounted avenues of approach. Although related to encirclements and often associated with the tactical task isolate as part of a cordon and search operation, any activity can be conducted within the cordon. The cordon is a temporary task limited by time or event. It requires physical presence and the employment of security outward, to prevent external reinforcement or support, and security inward, to prevent the withdrawal of enemy forces within the cordon. Cordons may be terrain- or force-oriented (see Chapter 19).

Occupy

Occupy is "to move onto an objective, key terrain, or other man-made or natural terrain area without opposition and control the entire area" (*USMC Dictionary*). The task occupy requires physical presence to achieve control and is done without opposition. Units occupy assembly areas, battle positions, and objectives in advance of enemy action. Figure C-22 depicts the symbol for occupy. The X on the tactical mission graphic has no significance, but the graphic should encompass the entire area that the commander desires occupied.

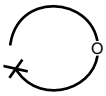


Figure C-22. Occupy.

Reconnoiter

Reconnoiter is the tactical task associated with the conduct of reconnaissance. In addition to being enemy-oriented (see previous discussion), reconnoiter is also a terrain-oriented tactical task to secure data about the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. Refer to Chapter 13 for more information on reconnaissance.

Retain

Retain is a terrain-oriented tactical task "to occupy and hold a terrain feature to ensure it is free of enemy occupation or use" (*USMC Dictionary*). The commander assigning this task specifies the area to retain and the duration of the retention, which is time or event driven. When a unit receives this task, they expect the enemy to attack and prepare to become decisively engaged. Commanders may modify this task to allow units to achieve retention via control—retaining a specific piece of terrain without occupying it. This is an exception to the task and requires approval. Figure C-23 depicts the symbol for retain. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to retain.

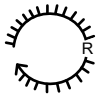


Figure C-23. Retain.

Secure

Secure is a terrain-oriented tactical task "to gain possession of a position, terrain feature, piece of infrastructure, or civil asset, with or without force, to prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action" (*USMC Dictionary*). The attacking force may or may not have to physically occupy the

area. This task typically refers to securing a unit, facility, or geographical location, such as a route, intersection, or base. As a task, it requires preventing enemy capture and occupation of the secured location, but also preventing the impact of enemy direct fires and observed indirect fires. Consequently, forces executing this task may or may not occupy the secured location—the focus of their efforts being on the surrounding battlespace. The commander states the mission duration in terms of time or event. Figure C-24 depicts the symbol for secure. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to secure.

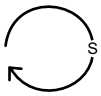


Figure C-24. Secure.

Seize

Seize is a terrain-oriented tactical task "to clear, occupy, and control of a designated area" (*USMC Dictionary*). When a force seizes a physical area, they clear the terrain within that objective by killing, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of all enemy forces. Seize differs from the tactical task secure by requiring offensive action to obtain control and requires physical occupation. When seizing an objective, the friendly force is required only to prevent direct fires from impacting it. The tactical task seize differs from occupy in that seizure takes place in the face of enemy opposition. A force sent to seize an objective may find the enemy gone and can merely occupy it. Conversely, a unit sent to occupy a position might find the enemy present and will need to decide whether the commander's purpose and intent requires seizure. As with all planning, the tactical task the commander chooses is based on the SOM and METT-T. Figure C-25 depicts the symbol for seize. The arrow points to the location or objective to seize.

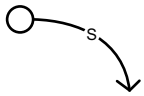


Figure C-25. Seize.

FRIENDLY-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on supporting the actions of other friendly forces. Tactical mission graphics associated with most of these task are included as they are used in COA development and sketches as part of the MCPP.

Cover

Cover is a friendly-oriented tactical task to conduct "offensive and defensive actions to protect the force" (*USMC Dictionary*). It can be done independently of the main body and is used to develop the situation. It is the tactical task associated with the security activity, cover (see Chapter 14). Figure C-26 depicts the symbol for cover.



Figure C-26. Cover.

Disengage

Disengage is a friendly-oriented tactical task "to break contact with the enemy and move to a point where the enemy cannot observe or engage the unit by direct fire" (*USMC Dictionary*). Disengagement requires the unit to move—by any form or method—to a position offering cover and concealment and in such a way as to break contact. In other words, mere displacement to another position, such as a supplementary or alternate position, or to a position of survivability, is not disengagement if it does not involve breaking contact with enemy forces. The tactical task disengagement is often associated with retrograde operations. A disengagement plan includes—

- Synchronized direct and indirect fires and information capabilities to set the conditions for elements to break contact and disengage—conditions include suppression, obscuration, and the enemy unable to exploit the disengagement.
- A movement plan, to include appropriate tactical and traffic control measures, for tactical units after the disengagement is complete.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement as part of a deception operation or to cover passage points.
- Signal to start, based on either time or event.

The senior headquarters conducts operations to support the disengaging forces and relieve pressure on units in contact with the enemy. For example, if a MEB is conducting a delay, the friendly force uses the ACE to help the GCE disengage from the close fight. Simultaneously, the MEB employs naval gunfire, long range artillery, rocket, and information capabilities to destroy or disrupt enemy follow on echelons to prevent the enemy from interfering with the disengagement. The intent is to create conditions that allow the unit to disengage while avoiding decisive combat. For more information on disengagement, see Chapter 11.

Displace

Displace is a friendly-oriented tactical task "to leave one position to take another while remaining in contact with the enemy" (*USMC Dictionary*). While units disengage to break contact with the enemy, units displace to continue the mission or execute alternate missions. Units displace between the various types of positions, for example supplementary and alternate (see Chapters 2 and 8). Units may displace in the offense or defense, and may displace forward, rearward, or laterally. Contact with the enemy is defined as close combat, direct fires, or observed indirect and aerial delivered fires. An artillery unit may displace to continue the mission while increasing survivability in the same way a maintenance contact team may displace after having been targeted.

Exfiltrate

Exfiltrate is a friendly-oriented tactical task "to remove personnel or units from areas under enemy control by stealth" (*USMC Dictionary*). Friendly forces exfiltrate when they have been encircled by enemy forces and cannot conduct a breakout or be relieved by other friendly forces (see Chapter 19). Forces returning from a raid, an infiltration, or a patrol behind enemy lines can also conduct an exfiltration. The exfiltration uses the same methods of movement and control measures as an infiltration (see Chapter 3). Exfiltration is dependent on METT-T and can consist of vehicles or personnel, and any size unit—though, just like infiltration, small elements are generally used for exfiltration.

Follow and Assume

Follow and assume is "a tactical task in which a second committed force follows a force conducting an offensive operation and is prepared to continue the mission if the lead force is fixed, attrited, or unable to continue" (*USMC Dictionary*). The follow and assume force is prepared to execute all missions of the followed unit. See Chapter 5 for more discussion of follow and assume. Figure C-27 depicts the symbol for follow and assume.

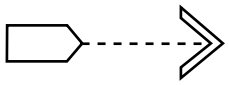


Figure C-27. Follow and Assume.

Follow and Support

Follow and support is "a tactical task in which a committed force follows and supports a lead force conducting an offensive operation" (*USMC Dictionary*). The follow-and-assume force is different from the follow-and-support force in that it is prepared to take over the lead element's mission, to avoid a culminating point for example. The follow-and-support force acts to create the conditions to allow the lead element to continue their success, such as destroying bypassed elements, blocking enemy movement of reinforcements, clearing obstacles, controlling dislocated civilians, etc. See Chapter 5 for more information on follow and support. Figure C-28 depicts the symbol for follow and support.

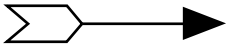


Figure C-28. Follow and Support.

Guard

Guard is a friendly-oriented tactical task "to protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information" (*USMC Dictionary*). It is the tactical task associated with the security activity, guard. See Chapter 14 for more information. Figure C-29 depicts the symbol for guard.



Figure C-29. Guard.

Protect

Protect is a friendly-oriented tactical task "to prevent observation, engagement, or interference with a force or location" (*USMC Dictionary*).

Screen

Screen is a friendly-oriented tactical task to observe, identify, and report information, and only fight in self-protection. It is the tactical task associated with the security activity, screen. See Chapter 14 for more information. Figure C-30 depicts the symbol for screen.



Figure C-30. Screen.

POPULATION-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

The following population-oriented tactical tasks focus friendly efforts on achieving a condition as it relates to the population within the AO and are also considered supporting stabilization tasks. More information on stability-related tasks can be found in MCWP 3-03, *Stabilization Activities*, and JP 3-07, *Joint Stabilization Activities*.

Advise

Advise is a population-oriented tactical task to improve the individual and unit capabilities and capacities of host-nation security forces through the development of personal and professional relationships between US and host-nation forces.

Assess the Population

Assess the population is a population-oriented tactical task to evaluate the nature, situation, and attitudes of a designated population or elements of a population inhabiting the AO.

Assist

Assist is a population-oriented tactical task to provide designated support or sustainment capabilities to host-nation security forces to enable them to accomplish their objectives.

Build and Restore Infrastructure

Build and restore infrastructure is a population-oriented tactical task to construct, rebuild, or repair local infrastructure to support the host nation and gain or maintain the cooperation of the local population.

Contain

Contain is a population-oriented tactical task to prevent or halt elements of a population or designated party from departing or projecting physical influence beyond a defined area. See Figure C-8 for the symbol for contain.

Control

Control is a population-oriented tactical task to use physical control measures and information capabilities to influence elements of a population or designated actors to respond as desired.

Coordinate with Civil Authorities

Coordinate with civil authorities is a population-oriented tactical task to interact with, maintain communication, and harmonize friendly military activities with those of other interorganizational agencies and coalition partners to achieve unity of effort.

Cordon

Cordon is a population-oriented tactical task to temporarily prevent movement to or from a prescribed area such as a neighborhood, city block, series of buildings, or another feature.

Enable Civil Authorities

Enable civil authorities is a population-oriented tactical task to support or assist the host nation government and designated interorganizational agencies in providing effective governance.

Exclude
Exclude is a population-oriented tactical task to prevent or halt elements of a population or designated party from entering or projecting physical influence into a defined area.

Influence
Influence is a population-oriented tactical task to persuade the local population, including potential and known adversaries, within the operational area to support, cooperate with, or at least accept the friendly force presence, and to dissuade the local population from interfering with operations.

Occupy
Occupy is a population-oriented tactical task to move onto an objective, key terrain, or other man made or natural area without opposition and control the entire area. See Figure C-22 for the symbol for occupy.

Reconnoiter
Reconnoiter is a population-oriented tactical task to obtain, by visual observation or other methods, information about civil considerations.

Secure
Secure is a population-oriented tactical task to gain control of a position, terrain feature, piece of infrastructure, or civil asset, with or without force, and prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action. See Figure C-24 for the symbol for secure.

Train
Train is a population-oriented tactical task to teach designated skills or behaviors to improve the individual and unit capabilities and capacities of host nation security forces.

Transition to Civil Control
Transition to civil control is a population-oriented tactical task to handover civil government and security responsibilities from friendly force military authorities to legitimate civil authorities.

GLOSSARY

Section I: Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	aviation combat element
ACM	airspace coordinating measure
AO	area of operations
ATP	Army techniques publication
BCL	battlefield coordination line
BHL	battle handover line
C2	command and control
CAS	close air support
CASEVAC	casualty evacuation
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
CFL	coordinated fire line
CFZ	critical friendly zone
COA	course of action
CSS	combat service support
DISO	deception in support of operations security
DLIC	detachment left in contact
DoD	Department of Defense
DZ	drop zone
EPW	enemy prisoner of war
FCL	final coordination line
FEBA	forward edge of the battle area
FIE	foreign intelligence entity
FLOT	forward line of own troops
FM	field manual (Army)
FPF	final protective fire
FRAGORD	fragmentary order
FSCL	fire support coordination line
FSCM	fire support coordination measure

G-2	assistant chief of staff, intelligence/intelligence staff section
G-3	assistant chief of staff, operations and training/operations and training staff section
GCE	ground combat element
IPB	intelligence preparation of the battlespace
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JP	joint publication
LAR	light armored reconnaissance
LCE	logistics combat element
LOA	limit of advance
LOC	line of communications
LZ	landing zone
MAATF	Marine air assault task force
MAGTF	Marine air-ground task force
MBA	main battle area
MCDP	Marine Corps doctrinal publication
MCPP	Marine Corps Planning Process
MCRP	Marine Corps reference publication
MCTP	Marine Corps tactical publication
MCWP	Marine Corps warfighting publication
MDCA	multi-domain combined arms
MEB	Marine expeditionary brigade
MEF	Marine expeditionary force
METT-T	mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available—time available
MILDEC	military deception
MIL-STD	military standard
MISO	military information support operations
MSR	main supply route
NAI	named area of interest
NFA	no-fire area
OPSEC	operations security
ORP	objective rally point
PAA	position area for artillery
PIR	priority intelligence requirement

PLD	probable line of deployment
POB	point of breach
POL	petroleum, oils, and lubricants
PZ	pickup zone
RFA	restrictive fire area
RFL	restrictive fire line
RIP	relief in place
RLT	regimental landing team
ROE	rules of engagement
S-2	intelligence officer/office
S-3	operations and training officer/office
SOM	scheme of maneuver
SOP	standing operating procedure
SUAS	small unmanned aircraft system
TAC-D	tactical deception
TAI	target area of interest
TCP	traffic control point
TRP	target reference point
TTP	tactics, techniques, and procedures
UAS	unmanned aircraft system
US	United States

Section II: Terms and Definitions

activity
1. A unit, organization, or installation performing a function or mission. 2. A function, mission, action, or collection of actions. (DoD Dictionary)

advance guard
Detachment sent ahead of the main force to ensure its uninterrupted advance; to protect the main body against surprise; to facilitate the advance by removing obstacles and repairing roads and bridges; and to cover the deployment of the main body if it is committed to action. (This term and definition are approved for use and will be included in the next edition of the USMC Dictionary)

advance party
1. A task organization of designated personnel who form the nucleus of the arrival and assembly organizations whose primary tasks are to arrange for the reception of the main body and provide force protection. 2. During tactical missions, a team that reconnoiters, secures, and organizes an area prior to the main body's arrival and occupation. (USMC Dictionary)

air assault
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Operations in which air assault forces (combat, combat support, and combat service support), using the firepower, mobility, and total integration of assault support assets in their ground or air roles, maneuver on the battlefield under the control of the mission commander to provide mobility and firepower of the assigned mission. (USMC Dictionary)

airborne operation
An operation involving the air movement into an objective area of combat forces and their logistic support for execution of a tactical, operational, or strategic mission. (DoD Dictionary)

air movement
Air transport of units, personnel, supplies, and equipment, including airdrops and air landings. (DoD Dictionary)

alternate position
A position to be occupied when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuitable for carrying out the assigned task. The alternate position is so located that the original task can be accomplished. See also position; primary position; supplementary position. (USMC Dictionary)

area defense
A defensive activity in which the bulk of the defending force is deployed on selected terrain. Principal reliance is placed on the ability of the defending forces to maintain their positions and to control the terrain between them. The reserve is used to add depth, to block, or restore the battle position by counterattack. (USMC Dictionary)

area of influence
An area inclusive of and extending beyond an operational area wherein a commander is capable of direct influence by maneuver, fire support, and information normally under the commander's command or control. (DoD Dictionary)

area of operation
An operational area defined by a commander for the land or maritime forces commander to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. (DoD Dictionary)

assault support
The use of aircraft to provide tactical mobility and logistic support for the Marine air-ground task force, the movement of high priority cargo and personnel within the immediate area of operations, in-flight refueling, and the evacuation of personnel and cargo. Assault support is one of the six Marine aviation functions. (USMC Dictionary)

assembly area
1. An area in which a command is assembled preparatory to further action. Also called AA. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and definition will be included in the USMC Dictionary.)

attack
An offensive activity characterized by coordinated movement, supported by fire, conducted to defeat, destroy, or capture the enemy and/or secure key terrain. (USMC Dictionary)

battlefield coordination line
A fire support coordination measure, similar to a fire support coordination line, that facilitates the expeditious attack of targets with surface indirect fires and aviation fires between this measure and the fire support coordination line. To facilitate air delivered fires and deconflict air and surface fires, an airspace coordination area will always overlie the area between the battlefield coordination line and the fire support coordination line. The battlefield coordination line location is graphically portrayed on fire support maps, charts, and overlays by a solid black lie with the letters “BCL” followed by the establishing headquarters in parentheses above the line and effective date-time group below the line. Also called **BCL**. (USMC Dictionary).

battle position
1. In ground operations, a defensive location oriented on an enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend. 2. In air operations, an airspace coordination area containing firing points for attack helicopters. Also called **BP**. (USMC Dictionary)

battlespace geometry
A dynamic, multifaceted and multidimensional environment in which military operations occur. It is determined by such factors as intelligence preparation of the battlespace, time, sustainment, command relationships, boundaries, fire support coordination measures, rules of engagement, and political considerations that could affect operations. Also called **BSG**. (USMC Dictionary)

breaching operation
an operation conducted to allow maneuver despite the presence of obstacles. It is a synchronized combined arms operation under the control of the maneuver commander. Breaching operations begin when friendly forces detect an obstacle and begin to apply breaching fundamentals, and they end when battle handover has occurred between follow-on forces and a unit conducting the breaching operation. (USMC Dictionary)

breakout
An operation conducted by an encircled force to regain freedom of movement or contact with friendly units. It differs from other attacks only in that a simultaneous defense in other areas of the perimeter must be maintained. (USMC Dictionary)

bridgehead
An area of ground held or to be gained on the enemy’s side of an obstacle. (USMC Dictionary)

casualty evacuation
(See the DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The movement of the sick, wounded, or injured that begins at the point of injury or the onset of disease and includes movement both to and between medical treatment facilities. (Note: All units have an evacuation capability. Any vehicle may be used to evacuate casualties. If a medical vehicle is not used it should be replaced with one at the first opportunity. Similarly, aeromedical evacuation should replace surface evacuation at the first opportunity.) Also called **CASEVAC**. (USMC Dictionary)

checkpoint
A predetermined point on the ground used to control movement, tactical maneuver, and orientation. (USMC Dictionary)

close air support
Air action by aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called **CAS**. (DoD Dictionary)

close operations
Military actions conducted to project power decisively against enemy forces that pose an immediate or near-term threat to the success of current battles or engagements. These military actions are conducted by committed forces and their readily available tactical reserves, using maneuver and combined arms. See also deep operations; rear operations. (USMC Dictionary)

combat outpost
1. A security force established at the regimental level during defensive or stationary operations. 2. A reinforced observation post that can conduct limited combat, stabilization activities, or other operations. Also called **COP**. (USMC Dictionary)

combat service support
The essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain operating forces in theater at all levels of warfare. Also called **CSS**. See also combat support. (DoD Dictionary)

combined arms
1. The full integration of combat arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. 2. The tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by a force to integrate firepower and mobility to create a desired effect upon the enemy. (This term and modified definition are approved for use and will be included in the next edition of the USMC Dictionary)

combined arms team
The full integration and application of two or more arms or elements of one Service into an operation. (DoD Dictionary)

command and control
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The means by which a commander recognizes what needs to be done and sees to it that appropriate actions are taken. Command and control is one of the seven warfighting functions. Also called **C2**. See also warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

concept of operations
A verbal or graphic statement that clearly and concisely expresses what the commander intends to accomplish and how it will be done using available resources. Also called **CONOPS**. (DoD Dictionary)

contiguous area of operations
An area of operations in which all of a commander's subordinate forces' areas of operations share one or more common boundary. (USMC Dictionary)

control point
1. A position along a route of march at which personnel are stationed to give information and instructions for the regulation of supply or traffic. (DoD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

coordinated fire line
A line beyond which conventional surface-to-surface direct fire and indirect fire support means may fire at any time within the boundaries of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination but does not eliminate the responsibility to coordinate the airspace required to conduct the mission. Also called **CFL**. (DoD Dictionary)

counterattack
Attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost or cutting off or destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of the enemy's purpose in attacking. In sustained

defensive operations, it is undertaken to restore the battle position and is directed at limited objectives. (USMC Dictionary)

countermobility operations
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to deny enemy freedom of movement and maneuver. (USMC Dictionary)

counterreconnaissance
All measures taken to prevent or deceive enemy and adversarial forces and individuals from obtaining information or data concerning a friendly force, and area, or a place. (USMC Dictionary)

covering force
1. A force operating apart from the main force for the purpose of intercepting, engaging, delaying, disorganizing, and deceiving the enemy before the enemy can attack the force covered. 2. Any body or detachment of troops that provides security for a larger force by observation, reconnaissance, attack, or defense, or by any combination of these methods 3. A self-contained maneuver force that operates beyond the range of friendly artillery positioned with the main force. (Note: To operate independently, a covering force may task-organize to include aviation, artillery, reconnaissance, and combat service support.) (USMC Dictionary)

decisive action
Any action the commander deems fundamental to achieving mission success. See also shaping actions; sustaining actions. (Note: Decisive actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.) (USMC Dictionary)

deep operations
Military actions conducted against enemy capabilities that pose a potential threat to friendly forces. These military actions are designed to isolate, shape, and dominate the battlespace and influence future operations. See also close operations; rear operations. (USMC Dictionary)

defeat in detail
Concentrating overwhelming combat power against separate parts of a force rather than defeating the entire force at once. (USMC Dictionary)

defensive operations
Activities conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable to offensive operations and stabilization activities (USMC Dictionary)

delay
A form of retrograde in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. (USMC Dictionary)

delay line
A specified line forward of which a force must slow the enemy, to include becoming decisively engaged, for a specified time or until a specified event. (USMC Dictionary)

deliberate attack
A fully coordinated operation that is conducted when preparation time is available for lengthy reconnaissance, precise planning, and rehearsals. Deliberate attacks normally include large volumes of supporting fires, main and supporting attacks, and deception measures. (USMC Dictionary)

deliberate breach
1. The systematically planned and executed creation of a lane or clear route through a barrier, obstacle or fortification. 2. Used against a strong defense or complex obstacle system. (USMC Dictionary)

demonstration
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Operation designed to divert enemy attention, allowing the forces of a Marine air-ground task force to execute decisive action elsewhere. (Note: A demonstration is a show of force that threatens an attack at another location but does not make contact with the enemy.) (USMC Dictionary)

double envelopment
An offensive maneuver designed to force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging axis of the attack. (USMC Dictionary)

economy of force
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The allocation of minimum essential combat capability to supporting efforts, with attendant degree of risk, so that combat power may be concentrated on the main effort. (Note: Economy of force is used to describe a principle of war and a condition of tactical operations; it is not used to describe a mission.) (USMC Dictionary)

enabling activities
1. Preparatory actions taken by the expeditionary force to facilitate the eventual accomplishment of the mission. 2. In logistics operations, preparatory actions taken by the expeditionary force after entry and establishment on a foreign soil to facilitate the eventual accomplishment of the mission. (USMC Dictionary)

engagement
2. A tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelon maneuver forces. (DoD Dictionary, part 2 of a 2-part definition.)

engagement area
An area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the effects of massed weapons and supporting systems. Also called **EA**. (USMC Dictionary)

envelopment
1. An offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear. (Part 1 of a 2-part definition.) (USMC Dictionary)

exploitation
(See DoD Dictionary, part 3 for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) An offensive activity following a successful attack that is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth and extend the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. (USMC Dictionary)

final coordination line
A line used to coordinate the ceasing and shifting of supporting fires and the final deployment of the assault echelon in preparation for launching an assault against an enemy position. Also called **FCL**. (USMC Dictionary)

final protective fire
An immediately available prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas. Also called **FPF**. (DoD Dictionary)

fire and maneuver
The process of one or more elements establishing a base of fire to engage the enemy, while the other element(s) maneuver to an advantageous position from which to close with and destroy or capture the enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

fire and movement
A technique primarily used in the assault wherein a unit, or element advances by bounds or rushes, with supplements alternately moving and providing covering fire for other moving subelements. (Note: Usually, fire and movement is used only when under effective fire from the enemy because it is relatively slow and difficult to control.) (USMC Dictionary)

fires
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Those means used to delay, disrupt, degrade, or destroy enemy capabilities, forces, or facilities as well as affect the enemy's will to fight. Fires is one of the seven warfighting functions. See also warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

fire support
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Assistance to elements of the Marine air-ground task force engaged with the enemy that is rendered by other firing units, including (but not limited to) artillery, mortars, naval surface fire support, and offensive air support. (USMC Dictionary)

flank guard
A security element operating to the flank of a moving or stationary force to protect that force from enemy ground observation, direct fire, and surprise attack. (USMC Dictionary)

flanking attack
An offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

follow-on forces
All enemy ground forces not committed during their offensive operations to the contact battle, the command and control installations, and the logistic and other support provided for sustained operations. (USMC Dictionary)

force protection
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Actions or efforts used to safeguard own centers of gravity while protecting, concealing, reducing, or eliminating friendly critical vulnerabilities. Force protection is one of the seven warfighting functions. See also warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

force sustainment
Capabilities, equipment, and operations that ensure continuity, freedom of action, logistic support, and command and control. (USMC Dictionary)

forward edge of the battle area
The foremost limits of a series of areas in which ground combat units are deployed to coordinate fire support, the positioning of forces, or the maneuver of units, excluding areas in which covering or screening forces are operating. Also called **FEBA**. (DoD Dictionary)

forward line of own troops
A line that indicates the most forward positions of friendly forces in any kind of military operation at a specific time. Also called **FLOT**. (USMC Dictionary)

free-fire area
A specific region into which any weapon system may fire without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters. Also called **FFA**. (DoD Dictionary)

frontal attack
An offensive maneuver in which the main action is directed against the front of the enemy forces. (USMC Dictionary)

gap

1. Any break or breach in the continuity of tactical dispositions or formations beyond effective small arms coverage. Gaps (soft spots, weaknesses) may in fact be physical gaps in the enemy's disposition, but they also may be any weakness in time, space, or capability; a moment in time when the enemy is overexposed and vulnerable, a seam in an air defense umbrella, an infantry unit caught unprepared in open terrain, or a boundary between two units. 2. A ravine, mountain pass, or other terrain feature river that presents an obstacle that must be bridged. 3. An area within a minefield or obstacle belt, free of live mines or obstacles, whose width and direction will allow a friendly force to pass through in tactical formation. (USMC Dictionary)

guarding force

A security element whose primary task is to protect the main force from attack, direct fire, and ground observation by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information. (USMC Dictionary)

handover line

1. A control measure, preferably following easily defined terrain features, at which responsibility for the conduct of combat operations is passed from one force to another. 2. A predetermined location, normally a phase line designated as a handover line, where control of the battle is transferred to the main battle force. (USMC Dictionary)

hasty attack

Offensive action conducted when preparation time must be traded for speed. Forces readily available are committed immediately to the attack. (USMC Dictionary)

hasty breach

(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) The rapid creation of a route through a minefield, barrier, or fortification by any expedient method. (USMC Dictionary)

infiltration

1. The movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it implies that contact is avoided. (USMC Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

Information

The actions taken to generate, preserve, deny, or project informational power to increase and protect competitive advantage or combat power potential within all domains of the operational environment. Information is one of the seven warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

intelligence

(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Knowledge about the enemy or the surrounding environment needed to support decision-making. Intelligence is one of the seven warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

interdiction

1. An action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military surface capability before it can be used effectively against friendly forces or otherwise be used to achieve enemy objectives. 2. In support of law enforcement, activities conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, intercept, board, detain, or destroy, under lawful authority, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, people, cargo, and money. (DoD Dictionary)

key terrain

Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. (DoD Dictionary)

kill box

A three-dimensional permissive fire support coordination measure with an associated airspace coordinating measure used to facilitate the integration of fires (DoD Dictionary)

lane
2. In mobility operations, a route through, over, or around an enemy or friendly obstacle that provides safe passage of a passing force. The route may be reduced and proofed as part of a breaching operation, constructed as part of the obstacle, or marked as a bypass. (USMC Dictionary, part 2 of a 2-part definition.)

limit of advance
An easily recognized terrain feature beyond which attacking elements will not advance. Also called **LOA**. (USMC Dictionary)

line of communications
A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called **LOC**. (USMC Dictionary)

line of contact
A general trace delineating the location where two opposing forces are engaged. Also called **LC**. (USMC Dictionary)

line of departure
1. In land warfare, a line designated to coordinate the departure of attack elements. Also called **LD**. (DoD Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition)

linkup
An operation wherein two friendly ground forces join together in a hostile area. (USMC Dictionary)

local security
Those security elements established in the proximity of a unit to prevent surprise by the enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

logistics
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) 1. The science of planning and executing the movement and support of forces. 2. All activities required to move and sustain military forces. Logistics is one of the seven warfighting functions. See also warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

main battle area
1. The portion of the battlespace that extends rearward from the forward edge of the battle area to the rear boundary of the command's subordinate unit where the commander conducts close operations to defeat the enemy. 2. That portion of the battlefield in which the decisive battle is fought to defeat the enemy. Also called **MBA**. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and definition will be included in the USMC Dictionary.)

main body
The principal part of a tactical command or formation. (Note: It does not include detached elements of the command such as advance guards, flank guards, and covering forces.) (USMC Dictionary)

main effort
The designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. (Note: The main effort is usually weighted with the preponderance of combat power and is directed against a center of gravity through a critical vulnerability.) (USMC Dictionary)

maneuver
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows). The movement of forces for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy. Maneuver is one of the seven warfighting functions. See also warfighting functions. (USMC Dictionary)

meeting engagement
A combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. (USMC Dictionary)

mobile defense
Defense of an area or position in which maneuver is used with organization of fire and utilization of terrain to seize the initiative from the enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

mobility operations
Those combined arms activities that mitigate the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver. (USMC Dictionary)

movement control
The planning, routing, scheduling, and control of personnel and cargo movements over lines of communications; includes maintaining in-transit visibility of forces and material through the deployment and/or redeployment process. See also line of communications. (USMC Dictionary)

movement to contact
A offensive activity that is employed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact with the enemy. (USMC Dictionary.)

multi-domain combined arms
Multi-domain combined arms integrate lethal and non-lethal fires in conjunction with maneuver, to create effects that exploit windows of relative advantage by synchronizing capabilities across domains. Integrating capabilities in this way mitigates enemy advantages while creating the necessary conditions to defeat enemy forces, achieve objectives, and consolidate gains during competition, crisis, and armed conflict. Also called MDCA. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and definition will be included in the USMC Dictionary.)

named area of interest
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) A point or area along a particular avenue of approach through which enemy activity is expected to occur. Activity or lack of activity within a named area of interest will help to confirm or deny a particular enemy course of action. Also called **NAI**. (USMC Dictionary)

neutralize
1. As it pertains to military operations, to render ineffective or unusable. 2. As a tactical task, to render the enemy or enemy resources ineffective or unusable. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and definition will be included in the USMC Dictionary.)

noncontiguous area of operations
An area of operations in which one or more of the commander's subordinate forces' area of operations do not share a common boundary. (USMC Dictionary)

obstacle belt
A brigade-level command and control measure, normally depicted graphically, to show where within an obstacle zone the ground tactical commander plans to limit friendly obstacle employment and focus the defense. See also obstacle. (DoD Dictionary)

obstacle zone
A division-level command and control measure to designate specific land areas where lower echelons are allowed to employ tactical obstacles. See also obstacle. (DoD Dictionary)

offensive operations
Activities conducted to take the initiative from the enemy, gain freedom of action, and generate effects to achieve objectives. (USMC Dictionary.)

operation
1. A sequence of tactical actions with a common purpose of unifying theme. (DoD Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

passage of lines
An operation in which a force moves forward or rearward through another force's combat positions with the intention of moving into or out of contact with the enemy. (DoD Dictionary)

passive air defense
Measures taken to reduce the probability of and to minimize the effects of damage caused by hostile action without the intention of taking the initiative. (DoD Dictionary)

penetration
A form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system. (USMC Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

personnel recovery
The sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel. Also called **PR**. (DoD Dictionary)

phase line
An easily identified feature in the operational area utilized for control and coordination of military operations. Also called **PL**. (DoD Dictionary)

point of departure
1. A specific place where a unit will cross the line of departure. 2. The designated location (typically an airport) outside of the disaster-affected area from which response personnel and resources will deploy to the disaster area. (USMC Dictionary)

position
1. A location or area occupied by a military unit. 2. The location of a weapon, unit, or individual from which fire is delivered upon a target. See also alternate position; primary position; supplementary position. (USMC Dictionary)

primary position
A position that provides the best means to accomplish the assigned mission. See also position; alternate position; supplementary position. (USMC Dictionary)

probable line of deployment
An easily recognized line selected on the ground where attacking units deploy in assault formation prior to beginning an attack. Also called **PLD**. (USMC Dictionary)

procedures
1. Standard, detailed steps that prescribe how to perform specific tasks. 2. The particular courses or modes of action for performing certain functions. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and definition will be included in the USMC Dictionary.)

pursuit
An offensive activity designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. (USMC Dictionary)

raid
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) 1. An attack, usually small scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain and ending with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. 2. In amphibious operations, conducted as an independent operation or in support of other operations, such as another landing, land operations, or air or naval operation. When required, they are conducted by stealth or appropriately supported so that they resemble the early stages of an amphibious assault, except they include a provision for withdrawal. (USMC Dictionary, parts 1 and 2 of a 3-part definition.)

rally point
1. An easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble and reorganize if they become dispersed. 2. A planned or hasty location where a separated flight joins up. Also called **RP**. (USMC Dictionary)

rear area
That area extending forward from a command's rear boundary to the rear of the area assigned to the command's subordinate units. Note: This area is provided primarily for the performance of combat service support functions.) (USMC Dictionary)

rear area security
The measures taken before, during, and/or after an enemy airborne attack, sabotage action, infiltration, guerrilla action, and/or initiation of psychological or propaganda warfare to minimize the effects thereof. Also called **RAS**. (USMC Dictionary)

rear guard
1. The rearmost elements of an advancing or a withdrawing force that are employed to protect the rear of a column from hostile forces; during the withdrawal, to delay the enemy; and during the advance, to keep supply routes open. 2. A security detachment that a moving ground force details to the rear to keep it informed and covered. (USMC Dictionary)

rear operations
Military actions conducted to support and permit force sustainment and to provide security for such actions. See also close operations; deep operations. (USMC Dictionary)

reconnaissance
A mission undertaken to obtain information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area, by visual observation or other detection methods. (DoD Dictionary)

reconnaissance in force
1. A deliberate attack made to obtain information and to locate and test enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. (Note: It is used when knowledge of the enemy is vague and there is insufficient time or resources to develop the situation.) 2. An offensive operation designed to discover and/or test the enemy's strength or to obtain other information. (USMC Dictionary)

reconstitution
1. Those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization. 2. In maritime prepositioning force operations, the methodical approach to restore the maritime prepositioned equipment and supplies aboard the maritime prepositioning ships squadron to full mission capable status. (USMC Dictionary)

reduce
A mobility task to create and mark lanes through, over, or around an obstacle to allow the attacking force to accomplish its mission. (USMC Dictionary)

regimental landing team
A task organization for landing composed of an infantry regiment reinforced by those elements that are required for the initiation of its combat function ashore. Also called **RLT**. (DoD Dictionary)

reorganization
Action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness. (USMC Dictionary, part 1 of a 2-part definition.)

reserve
Portion of a body of troops that is kept to the rear or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement to be available for a decisive movement. (DoD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

restrictive fire line
A specific boundary established between converging, friendly surface forces that prohibits fires or their effects from crossing. Also called **RFL**. (DoD Dictionary)

retirement
An operation in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

retrograde
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) Any movement or maneuver of a command to the rear, or away from the enemy. (USMC Dictionary)

route reconnaissance
A directed effort to obtain detailed information of a specified route and all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along that route. (USMC Dictionary)

rules of engagement
Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. Also called **ROE**. (DoD Dictionary)

sector of fire
A defined area that is required to be covered by the fire of individual or crew-served weapons or the weapons of a unit. (USMC Dictionary)

security
Measures taken by a military unit, activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair its effectiveness. (DoD Dictionary, part 1 of a 3-part definition.)

security area
The area that begins at the forward edge of the battle area and extends as far to the front and flanks as security forces are deployed, normally to the forward boundary of the area of operations. (Note: Forces in the security area conduct reconnaissance to furnish information on the enemy and to delay, deceive, and disrupt the enemy.) (USMC Dictionary)

shaping
The use of lethal and nonlethal activities to influence events in a manner that changes the general condition of war to an advantage. (USMC Dictionary)

shaping actions
The lethal and nonlethal activities conducted throughout the battlespace to attack an enemy capability or force or to influence the enemy commander's decision-making. See also decisive actions; sustaining actions. (Note: Shaping actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.) (USMC Dictionary)

spoiling attack
A tactical maneuver employed to seriously impair a hostile attack while the enemy is in the process of forming or assembling for an attack. A spoiling attack is usually an offensive action conducted in the defense. (USMC Dictionary)

stabilization activities
Various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. (DoD Dictionary)

strong point
A key point in a defensive position, usually strongly fortified and heavily armed with automatic weapons, around which other positions are grouped for its protection. (USMC Dictionary)

supplementary position
A position that provides the best means to accomplish a task that cannot be accomplished from the primary or alternate position. See also position; alternate position; primary position. (USMC Dictionary)

survivability
All aspects of protecting personnel, weapons, and supplies while simultaneously deceiving the enemy. (DoD Dictionary)

sustaining actions
Activities conducted to prepare and support friendly forces (e.g., planning, logistics, force protection) that promote unity of effort and extend operational reach. See also decisive action; shaping actions. (Note: Sustaining actions are part of a purpose-based battlespace framework.) (USMC Dictionary)

tactical level of warfare
The level of warfare at which forces plan and execute battles and engagements to achieve military objectives. (DoD Dictionary)

tactical road march
A movement used to relocate units within an area of operation in order to prepare for combat operations. (USMC Dictionary)

tactics
The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. See also procedures; techniques. (USMC Dictionary)

target
An entity or object that performs a function for the threat considered for possible engagement or other action. (DoD Dictionary)

target area of interest
The geographical area where high-value targets can be acquired and engaged by friendly forces. Also called **TA**I. (DoD Dictionary)

target reference point
(See DoD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) An easily recognizable point on the ground (either natural or man-made) used to initiate, distribute, and control fires. Also called **TRP**. (USMC Dictionary)

techniques
1. Non-prescriptive ways or methods used to perform missions, functions, or tasks. See also procedures; tactics. (DoD Dictionary) 2. The general and detailed methods used by troops and/or commanders to perform assigned missions and functions; specifically, the methods of using equipment and personnel. (USMC Dictionary)

time of attack
The hour at which the attack is to be launched. If a line of departure is prescribed, it is the hour at which the line is to be crossed by the leading elements of the attack. (USMC Dictionary)

traveling overwatch
A movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is possible. The trailing element, separated by a short distance, keys its movement to the lead element and terrain and pauses for short periods to overwatch the lead element. The overwatch distance is such that, should the enemy engage the lead element, it will not prevent the trailing element from firing or moving to support the lead element. (USMC Dictionary)

turn
A obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to drive an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area. (USMC Dictionary)

turning movement

(See DOD Dictionary for core definition. Marine Corps amplification follows.) A form of offensive maneuver in which the attacking forces passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear. (USMC Dictionary)

vertical envelopment

A tactical maneuver in which troops that are air-dropped, air-landed, or inserted via air assault, attack the rear and flanks of a force, in effect cutting off or encircling the force. (USMC Dictionary)

warfighting function

The seven mutually supporting military activities integrated in the conduct of all military operations. The seven warfighting functions are command and control, fires, force protection, information, intelligence, logistics, and maneuver. See also command and control; fires; force protection; information; intelligence; logistics; maneuver. (USMC Dictionary)

zone reconnaissance

A directed effort to obtain detailed information concerning all routes, obstacles (to include chemical or radiological contamination), terrain, and enemy forces within a zone defined by boundaries. (Note: A zone reconnaissance normally is assigned when the enemy situation is vague or when information concerning cross-country trafficability is desired.) (USMC Dictionary)

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