PART THREE

Conducting Decisive Full Spectrum Operations

Part Three discusses the four types of operations—offensive, defensive, stability, and support—that Army forces conduct. It illustrates how to apply the concepts described in Part Two within the operational environment described in Part One.

Chapter 7 discusses offensive operations. The offense is the decisive form of war. The will to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative defines the spirit and purpose of the offense. It is essential to success in all operations—defensive, stability, and support—as well as offensive. Combined with a demonstrated combat capability, it makes Army forces credible in any situation. Circumstances may require defending; however, victory requires shifting to the offense as soon as possible. The offense ends when the force accomplishes the mission, reaches a limit of advance, or approaches culmination. It then consolidates, resumes the attack, or prepares for another operation.

Chapter 8 discusses defensive operations. Commanders direct defensive operations to defeat enemy attacks, buy time, economize forces, or develop conditions favorable for the offense. Although the defense is the stronger form of war, it normally cannot achieve a decision. Thus, commanders simultaneously or sequentially combine defensive operations with offensive operations.

Chapter 9 discusses stability operations. Stability operations include a range of actions that Army forces conduct outside the US and US territories. Their purpose is to promote and sustain regional and global stability. Stability operations are diverse, continuous, and often long-term. However, the credibility and staying power of Army forces allow them to maintain stability until the situation is resolved. Army forces may execute stability operations as part of a theater engagement plan, smaller-scale contingency, or follow-on operation to a campaign or major operation. They are inherently complex and place great demands on leaders, units, and soldiers. Stability operations require the mental and physical agility to shift among situations of peace, conflict, and war and between combat and noncombat operations.

Chapter 10 discusses support operations. Army forces conduct support operations to relieve suffering and help civil authorities prepare for or respond to crises. Support operations are divided into two categories: Domestic support operations are conducted within the US and US territories. Foreign humanitarian assistance is conducted outside the US and US territories. Domestic support operations include civil support—operations to help civil authorities protect US territory, population, and infrastructure against attacks. Other government agencies have primary responsibility for these areas; however, Army forces have specialized capabilities and provide important support. Support operations usually aim to overcome manmade or natural disaster conditions for a limited time until civil authorities no longer need help.

In all environments, the initiative of Army leaders, agility of Army units, depth of Army resources, and versatility of Army soldiers combine to allow Army forces to conduct decisive full spectrum operations. Commanders synchronize offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations to defeat any enemy or dominate any situation—anywhere, anytime.

Chapter 7

Offensive Operations

In war the only sure defense is offense, and the efficiency of the offense depends on the war-like souls of those conducting it.

General George S. Patton Jr.
War as I Knew It

7-1. The offense is the decisive form of war. Offensive operations aim to destroy or defeat an enemy. Their purpose is to impose US will on the enemy and achieve decisive victory. While immediate considerations often require defending, decisive results require shifting to the offense as soon as possible.

PURPOSES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-2. Offensive operations seek to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to defeat the enemy decisively. Army forces attack simultaneously throughout the area of operations (AO) to throw enemies off balance, overwhelm their capabilities, disrupt their defenses, and ensure their defeat or destruction. The offense ends when the force achieves the purpose of the operation, reaches a limit of advance, or approaches culmination. Army forces conclude a phase of an offensive by consolidating gains, resuming the attack, or preparing for future operations. Additional tasks offensive operations accomplish include—

- Disrupting enemy coherence.
- Securing or seizing terrain.
- Denying the enemy resources.
- Fixing the enemy.
- Gaining information.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AT THE OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL LEVELS OF WAR

7-3. Army operational commanders conduct offensive campaigns and major operations to achieve theater-level effects based on tactical actions. They concentrate on designing offensive land operations. They determine what objectives will achieve decisive results; where forces will operate; the relationships among subordinate forces in time, space, and purpose; and where to apply the decisive effort. Operational commanders assign AOs to, and establish command and support relationships among, tactical commanders. Tactical

commanders direct offensive operations to achieve objectives—destroying enemy forces or seizing terrain—that produce the theater-level effects operational commanders require.

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OPERATIONAL OFFENSE

7-4. At the operational level, offensive operations directly or indirectly attack the enemy center of gravity. Commanders do this by attacking enemy decisive points, either simultaneously or sequentially. Massed effects of joint and multinational forces allow attackers to seize the initiative. They deny the enemy freedom of action, disrupt his sources of strength, and create the conditions for operational and tactical success.

7-5. To attain unity of effort, operational commanders clearly identify objectives and reinforce the relationships among subordinate forces. By minimizing interoperability challenges and harnessing system capabilities, commanders tailor their forces to achieve decisive effects. They allocate sufficient joint and multinational forces to achieve their objectives.

TACTICAL OFFENSE

7-6. Tactical commanders exploit the effects that joint and multinational forces contribute to the offense. They synchronize these forces in time, space, resources, purpose, and action to mass the effects of combat power at decisive points. Commanders direct battles as part of major operations. Battles are related in purpose to the operational commander's objectives.

7-7. Battles may be linear or nonlinear and conducted in contiguous or noncontiguous AOs. Tactical commanders receive their AO, mission, objectives,

boundaries, control measures, and intent from their higher commander. They determine the decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations within their AO. They direct fires and maneuver to attack and destroy the enemy and attain terrain objectives. Tactical commanders normally have clearly defined tasks—defeat the enemy and occupy the objective.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-8. Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity characterize the offense. Effective offensive operations capitalize on accurate intelligence and other relevant information regarding enemy forces, weather, and terrain. Commanders maneuver their forces to advantageous positions before contact. Force protection, including defensive information operations (IO), keeps or inhibits the enemy from acquiring accurate information about friendly forces. The enemy only sees what the friendly commander wants him to see. Contact with enemy forces before the decisive operation is deliberate, designed to shape the optimum situation for the decisive operation. The decisive operation is a sudden, shattering action that capitalizes on subordinate initiative and a common operational picture (COP) to expand throughout the AO. Commanders execute violently without hesitation to break the enemy's will or destroy him.

SURPRISE

7-9. In the offense, commanders achieve surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place he does not expect or in a manner for which he is unprepared. Estimating the enemy commander's intent and denying him the ability to gain thorough and timely situational understanding is necessary to achieve surprise. Unpredictability and boldness help gain surprise. The direction, timing, and force of the attack also help achieve surprise. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses his command and control (C2) systems, induces psychological shock in enemy soldiers and leaders, and reduces the coherence of the defense. By diminishing enemy combat power, surprise enables attackers to exploit enemy paralysis and hesitancy.

7-10. Operational and tactical surprise complement each other. Operational surprise creates the conditions for successful tactical operations. Tactical surprise can cause the enemy to hesitate or misjudge a situation. But tactical surprise is fleeting. Commanders must exploit it before the enemy realizes what is happening.

7-11. Outright surprise is difficult to achieve. Modern surveillance and warning systems, the availability of commercial imagery products, and global commercial news networks make surprise more difficult. Nonetheless, commanders achieve surprise by operating in a way the enemy does not expect. They deceive the enemy as to the nature, timing, objective, and force of an attack. They can use bad weather, seemingly impassable terrain, feints, demonstrations, and false communications to lead the enemy into inaccurate perceptions. Sudden, violent, and unanticipated attacks have a paralyzing effect. Airborne, air assault, and special operations forces (SOF) attacks—combined with strikes by Army and joint fires against objectives the enemy regards as secure—create disconcerting psychological effects on the enemy.

7-12. Surprise can come from an unexpected change in tempo. Tempo may be slow at first, creating the conditions for a later acceleration that catches the enemy off guard and throws him off balance. US forces demonstrated such a rapid change in tempo before Operation Just Cause in 1989. Accelerated tempo resulted in operational and tactical surprise despite increased publicity and heightened tensions beforehand.

7-13. Commanders conceal the concentration of their forces. Units mask activity that might reveal the direction or timing of an attack. Commanders direct action to deceive the enemy and deny his ability to collect information.

Surprise—Coup de Main in Panama

The activity of US forces throughout Panama during 1989 before Operation Just Cause provides an example of achieving strategic surprise. After assuming power in 1984, Manuel Noriega threatened Panamanian democracy and American legal guarantees under the Panama Canal treaties. In response, US forces developed military contingency plans known as Prayer Book and Blue Spoon. In May 1989, Noriega's Dignity Battalions and the Panama Defense Forces increased political pressure on the US to leave Panama by harassing American service members at gunpoint. President George Bush responded by deploying Army and Marine forces during Operation Nimrod Dancer as a show of force. Over the next six months, Army forces conducted Purple Storm and Sand Fleas exercises to reinforce American maneuver rights and gain moral ascendancy over Noriega's forces. Despite the increased US activity, Noriega discounted the possibility of an invasion. On 20 December 1989, SOF conducted the initial assault upon Panama Defense Forces garrisons, airports, media centers, and transportation facilities. Conventional forces soon followed, attacking decisive points throughout Panama. Noriega and his forces were completely surprised. He fled, losing control over his forces as US forces tracked him down.

CONCENTRATION

7-14. Concentration is the massing of overwhelming effects of combat power to achieve a single purpose. Commanders balance the necessity for concentrating forces to mass effects with the need to disperse them to avoid creating lucrative targets. Advances in ground and air mobility, target acquisition, and long-range precision fires enable attackers to rapidly concentrate effects. C2 systems provide reliable relevant information that assists commanders in determining when to concentrate forces to mass effects.

7-15. Attacking commanders manipulate their own and the enemy's force concentration by combining dispersion, concentration, military deception, and attacks. By dispersing, attackers stretch enemy defenses and deny lucrative targets to enemy fires. By massing forces rapidly along converging axes, attackers overwhelm enemy forces at decisive points with concentrated combat power. After a successful attack, commanders keep their forces concentrated to take advantage of their momentum. Should enemy forces threaten them,

they may disperse again. Commanders adopt the posture that best suits the situation, protects the force, and sustains the attack's momentum.

7-16. Concentration requires coordination with other services and multinational partners. At every stage of an attack, commanders integrate joint intelligence assets with joint fires. They capitalize on air superiority to deny the enemy the ability to detect or strike friendly forces from the air. Commanders direct ground, air, and sea resources to delay, disrupt, or destroy enemy reconnaissance elements or capabilities. They also direct security, IO, and counterfire to protect friendly forces as they concentrate.

TEMPO

7-17. Controlling or altering tempo is necessary to retain the initiative. At the operational level, a faster tempo allows attackers to disrupt enemy defensive plans by achieving results quicker than the enemy can respond. At the tactical level, a faster tempo allows attackers to quickly penetrate barriers and defenses and destroy enemy forces in depth before they can react.

7-18. Commanders adjust tempo as tactical situations, combat service support (CSS) necessity, or operational opportunities allow to ensure synchronization and proper coordination, but not at the expense of losing opportunities to defeat the enemy. Rapid tempo demands quick decisions. It denies the enemy the chance to rest and continually creates opportunities.

7-19. By increasing tempo, commanders maintain momentum. They identify the best avenues for attack, plan the action in depth, provide for quick transitions to other operations, and concentrate and combine forces effectively. Commanders and staffs ensure that CSS operations prevent culmination. Once combat begins, attackers execute violently. They follow reconnaissance units or successful probes and quickly move through gaps before defenders recover. Attackers shift combat power quickly to widen penetrations, roll up exposed flanks, and reinforce successes. Friendly forces attack in depth with fires and maneuver to shatter the enemy's coherence and overwhelm his C2. While maintaining a tempo faster than the enemy's, attackers balance the tempo with the ability to exercise C2. Commanders never permit the enemy to recover from the shock of the initial assault. They prevent defenders from massing effects against the friendly decisive operation.

AUDACITY

7-20. Audacity is a simple plan of action, boldly executed. Commanders display audacity by developing bold, inventive plans that produce decisive results. Commanders demonstrate audacity by violently applying combat power. 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. Audacity inspires soldiers to overcome adversity and danger.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS WITHIN THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

7-21. Commanders conduct offensive operations within the operational framework (AO, battlespace, and battlefield organization). They synchronize

their forces in time, space, resources, purpose, and action to conduct simultaneous and sequential decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations in depth (see Figure 7-1). In certain situations, commanders designate deep, close, and rear areas.

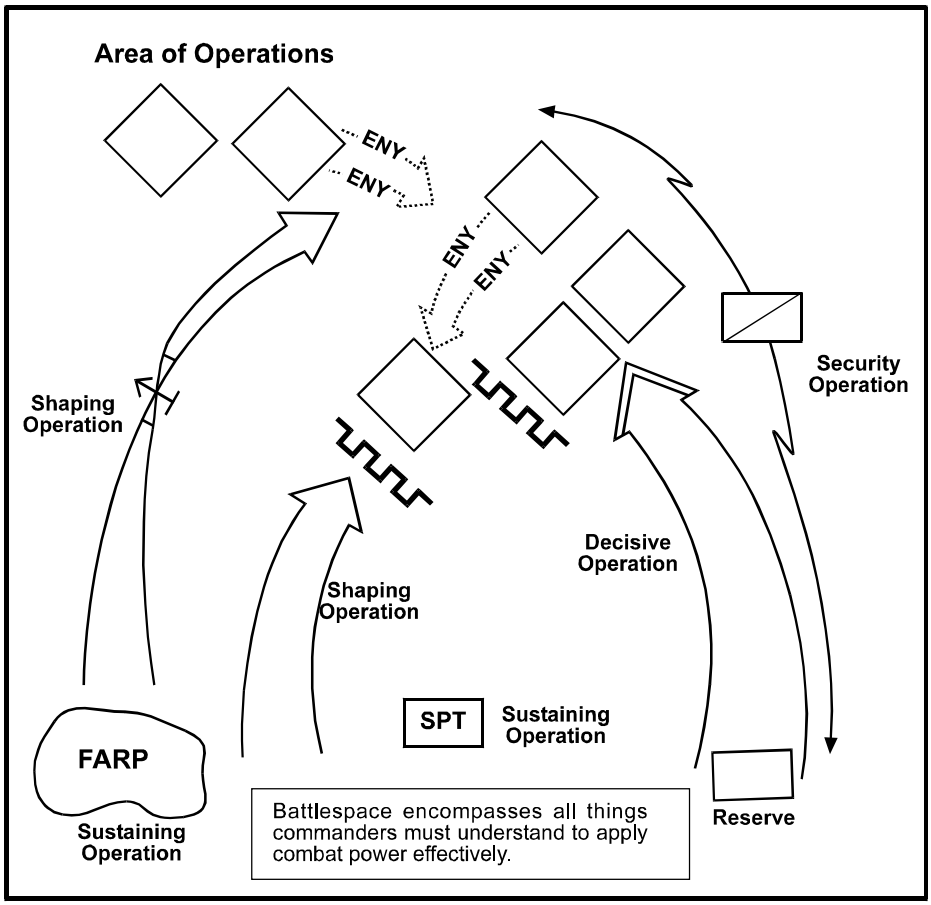


Figure 7-1. Operational Framework in the Offense

DECISIVE OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-22. Decisive offensive operations are attacks that conclusively determine the outcome of major operations, battles, and engagements. At the operational level, decisive operations achieve the goals of each phase of a campaign. Ground operations within campaigns may include several phases. Within each phase is a decisive operation. Its results substantially affect the course of the campaign. At the tactical level, decisive battles or engagements achieve the purpose of the higher headquarters mission. Commanders win decisive operations through close combat that physically destroys the enemy; overcomes his will to resist; or seizes, occupies, and retains terrain.

7-23. Commanders weight the decisive operation with additional resources and by skillful maneuver. For example, commanders may fix part of the enemy force with a frontal attack (a shaping operation), while the majority of the force envelops it to seize a decisive point. Commanders decide when,

where, and if to commit additional supporting fires and reserves. Commanders shift priority of fires as necessary. Maneuvering forces positions them to mass fires against the enemy.

7-24. Commanders designate a reserve to provide additional combat power at the decisive time and place. The more uncertain the situation is, the larger the reserve. Once the reserve is committed, the commander designates another. The initial strength and location of reserves vary with—

- Potential missions, branches, and sequels.
- Form of maneuver.
- Possible enemy actions.
- Degree of uncertainty.

Audacity—Turning Movement at Inchon

On 25 June 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. By August, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) occupied most of the peninsula, with US and Republic of Korea forces confined to a shrinking perimeter behind the Naktong and Nam Rivers. For over a month, both sides engaged in a series of bloody attacks and counterattacks. On 15 September, while United Nations (UN) and North Korean forces were decisively engaged far to the south, X Corps conducted a two-division amphibious landing at Inchon, on the west coast of Korea north of Seoul. This operational turning movement, code-named Operation Chromite, caught the NKPA completely by surprise. Simultaneously, UN aircraft bombarded North Korean forces along the Naktong River to support an Eighth Army counteroffensive. During the following days, American and South Korean Marines pressed toward Seoul. The remainder of X Corps captured the Seoul-Suwon area and severed NKPA supply lines. Army forces soon averaged 10 miles per day over rugged terrain, with the North Korean retreat soon turning into a general rout. By October 1950, the NKPA had dissolved into disorganized remnants fleeing into borderlands adjacent to Manchuria and the Soviet Union.

Reserves provide a hedge against uncertainty. Commanders assign them only those tasks necessary to prepare for their potential mission. Only the commander who designates the reserve can commit it, unless he specifically delegates that authority.

SHAPING OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-25. Shaping operations create conditions for the success of the decisive operation. They include attacks in depth to secure advantages for the decisive operation and to protect the force. Commanders conduct shaping operations by engaging enemy forces simultaneously throughout the AO. These attacks deny the enemy freedom of action and disrupt or destroy the coherence and tempo of his operations. Attacking enemy formations in depth destroys, delays, disrupts, or diverts enemy combat power. They may expose or create vulnerabilities for exploitation. Shaping operations in the offense include—

- Shaping attacks designed to achieve one or more of the following:

  - Deceive the enemy.
  - Destroy or fix enemy forces that could interfere with the decisive operation.
  - Control terrain whose occupation by the enemy would hinder the decisive operation.
  - Force the enemy to commit reserves prematurely or into an indecisive area.
- Reconnaissance and security operations.
- Passages of lines.
- Breaching operations.
- Unit movements that directly facilitate shaping and decisive operations.
- Operations by reserve forces before their commitment.
- Interdiction by ground and air movement and fires, singularly or in combination.
- Offensive IO.

Other shaping operations include activities in depth, such as counterfire and defensive IO. These shaping operations focus on effects that create the conditions for successful decisive operations.

Desert Storm—A Decisive Offensive Operation

On 24 February 1991, after a 38-day major shaping operation by the US Central Command air component with land component support, Army forces began one of the most decisive land combat operations of modern warfare. Army forces attacked Iraqi forces as part of a coalition offensive, XVIII Airborne Corps in the west with VII Corps on its right flank. First (Tiger) Brigade, 2d Armored Division, attacked as part of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in the east. Army forces quickly penetrated Iraqi defenses, rapidly seizing their objectives. Soldiers used advanced technology that allowed vehicle and air crews to acquire and engage targets from beyond the range of Iraqi weapons systems. The shock effect of armor and well-trained infantry—coupled with overwhelming fire support and responsive combat support and CSS—shattered the Iraqi army. XVIII Airborne Corps drove 100 miles north and 70 miles east into Iraq; VII Corps moved 100 miles north and 55 miles east. Coalition forces destroyed 3,800 of 4,200 tanks, over half the personnel carriers, and nearly all of the 3,000 artillery pieces belonging to the Iraqi Army. Coalition forces captured over 60,000 prisoners. After 100 hours of combat, only 7 of 43 Iraqi divisions remained combat effective. The coalition had crushed the fourth largest army in the world and liberated Kuwait.

7-26. The advance, flank, or rear security forces conduct security operations (see FM 3-90). These elements—

- Provide early warning.
- Find gaps in defenses.
- Provide time to react and space to maneuver.

- Develop the situation.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

In extended and noncontiguous AOs, commanders secure or conduct surveillance of the gaps between subordinate units. Commanders secure gaps by assigning a force to secure the area, dedicating surveillance efforts to monitor it, designating a force to respond to an approaching enemy, or by installing and overwatching obstacles.

SUSTAINING OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-27. Sustaining operations in the offense ensure freedom of action and maintain momentum. They occur throughout the AO. CSS unit locations need not be contiguous with those of their supported forces. An extended major operation may place tactical units far from the original support area. Commanders may separate attacking forces from the CSS base, thus extending their lines of communication (LOCs). Commanders provide security to CSS units when operating with extended LOCs.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NONLINEAR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-28. Nonlinear offensive operations can occur in both contiguous and noncontiguous AOs. The size of an AO is normally very large compared to the number of soldiers deployed. The AO may also encompass diverse terrain. Enemy forces will be widely dispersed and may be numerically superior. Attacking forces must focus offensive actions against decisive points, while allocating the minimum essential combat power to shaping operations. Reserves must have a high degree of tactical mobility. Forces conducting nonlinear operations require robust communications and sustainment capabilities. Commanders may dedicate forces for LOC security operations beyond that provided by available military police.

7-29. The higher headquarters conducts security operations in those portions of the AO not allocated to subordinates. Flank security importance increases as operations extend and attacking forces expose their flanks. Linkup operations often occur in this environment. Linkup operations, particularly those involving vertical envelopments, require extensive planning and rehearsal. The potential for fratricide increases due to the fluid nature of the nonlinear battlefield and the changing disposition of attacking and defending forces. The presence of noncombatants in the AO further complicates operations. In this setting, commanders exercise prudent judgment in clearing fires, both direct and indirect.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

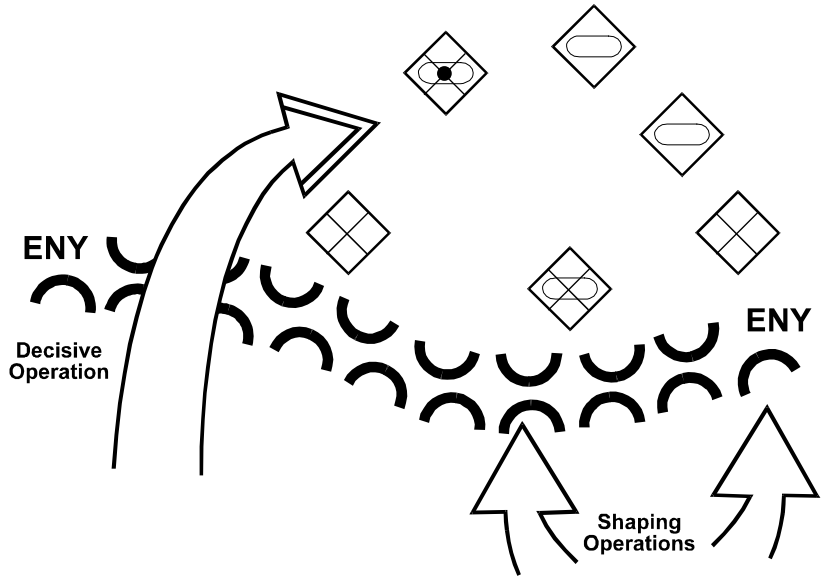
7-30. The five forms of maneuver are the envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, penetration, and frontal attack. While normally combined, each form of maneuver attacks the enemy differently. Each poses different challenges for attackers and different dangers for defenders. Commanders determine the form of maneuver to use by analyzing the factors of METT-TC.

ENVELOPMENT

7-31. **The *envelopment* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to avoid the principal enemy defenses by seizing objectives to the enemy rear to destroy the enemy in his current positions. At the tactical level, envelopments focus on seizing terrain, destroying specific enemy forces, and interdicting enemy withdrawal routes** (see Figure 7-2). Envelopments avoid the enemy front, where he is protected and can easily concentrate fires. Single envelopments maneuver against one enemy flank; double envelopments maneuver against both. Either variant can develop into an encirclement.

7-32. To envelop the enemy, commanders find or create an assailable flank. Sometimes the enemy exposes a flank by advancing, unaware of friendly locations. In other conditions, such as a fluid battle involving forces in noncontiguous AOs, a combination of air and indirect fires may create an assailable flank by isolating the enemy on unfavorable terrain.

7-33. Attackers may also create an assailable flank by arriving from an unexpected direction. A vertical envelopment (an air assault or airborne operation) is an example of such a shaping operation. Attackers may also fix defenders' attention forward through a combination of fires and shaping or diversionary attacks. Attackers maneuver against the enemy's flanks and rear and concentrate combat power on his vulnerabilities before he can reorient his defense.



An envelopment avoids enemy strength by maneuver around or over enemy defenses. The decisive operation is directed against the enemy flanks or rear.

Figure 7-2. Envelopment

7-34. An envelopment may result in an encirclement. ***Encirclements*** **are operations where one force loses its freedom of maneuver because an opposing force is able to isolate it by controlling all ground lines of**

communications. An offensive encirclement is typically an extension of either a pursuit or envelopment. A direct pressure force maintains contact with the enemy, preventing his disengagement and reconstitution. Meanwhile, an encircling force maneuvers to envelop the enemy, cutting his escape routes and setting inner and outer rings. The outer ring defeats enemy attempts to break through to his encircled force. The inner ring contains the encircled force. If necessary, the encircling force organizes a hasty defense along the enemy escape route, while synchronizing joint or multinational fires to complete his destruction. All available means, including obstacles, should be used to contain the enemy. Then friendly forces use all available fires to destroy him. Encirclements often occur in nonlinear offensive operations.

TURNING MOVEMENT

7-35. **A *turning movement* is a form of maneuver in which the attacking force seeks to avoid the enemy's principal defensive positions by seizing objectives to the enemy rear and causing the enemy to move out of his current positions or divert major forces to meet the threat** (see Figure 7-3). A major threat to his rear forces the enemy to attack or withdraw rearward, thus "turning" him out of his defensive positions. Turning movements typically require greater depth than other forms of maneuver. Deep fires take on added importance. They protect the enveloping force and attack the enemy. Operation Chromite, the amphibious assault at Inchon during the Korean War, was a classic turning movement that achieved both strategic and operational effects.

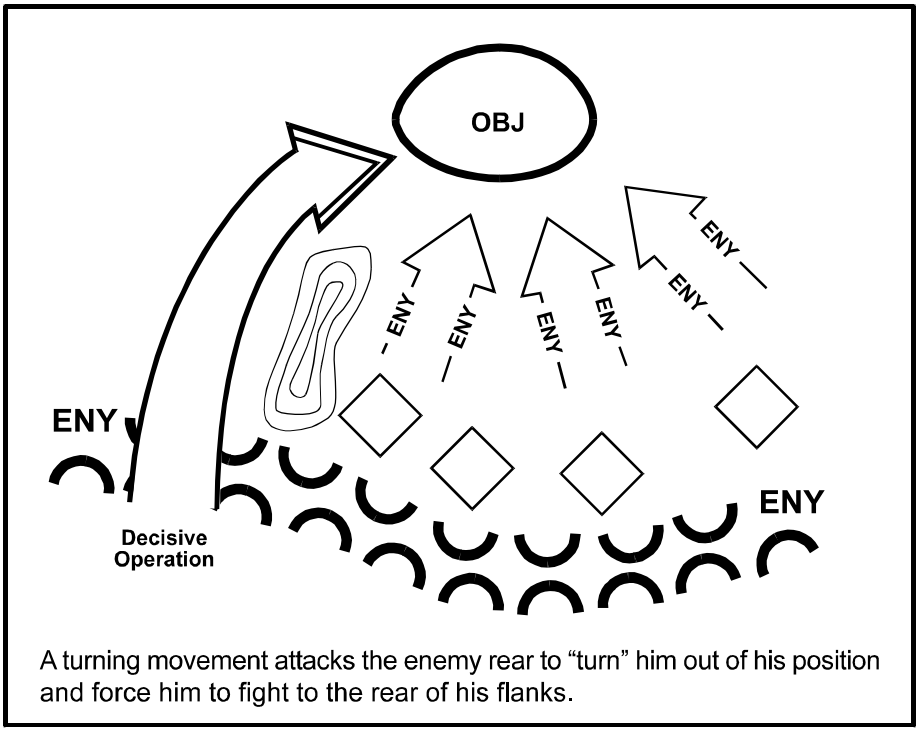


Figure 7-3. Turning Movement

INFILTRATION

7-36. **An *infiltration* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires** (see Figure 7-4). The need to avoid being detected and engaged may limit the size and strength of infiltrating forces. Infiltration rarely defeats a defense by itself. Commanders direct infiltrations to attack lightly defended positions or stronger positions from the flank and rear, to secure key terrain to support the decisive operation, or to disrupt enemy sustaining operations. Typically, forces infiltrate in small groups and reassemble to continue their mission.

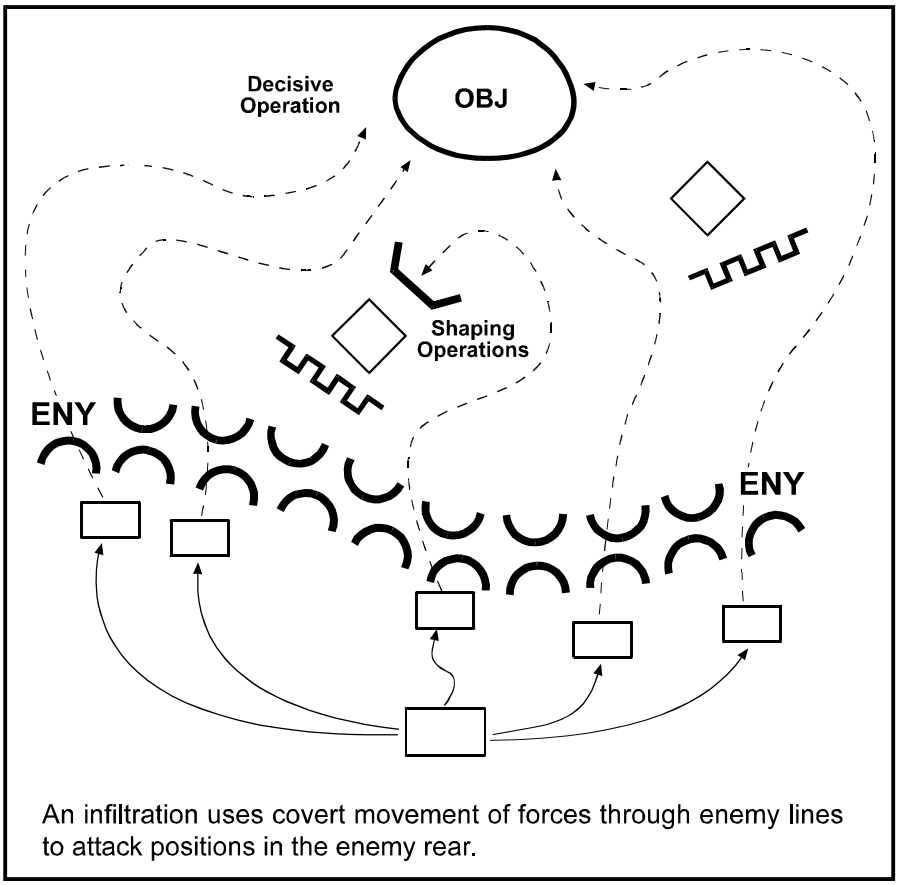
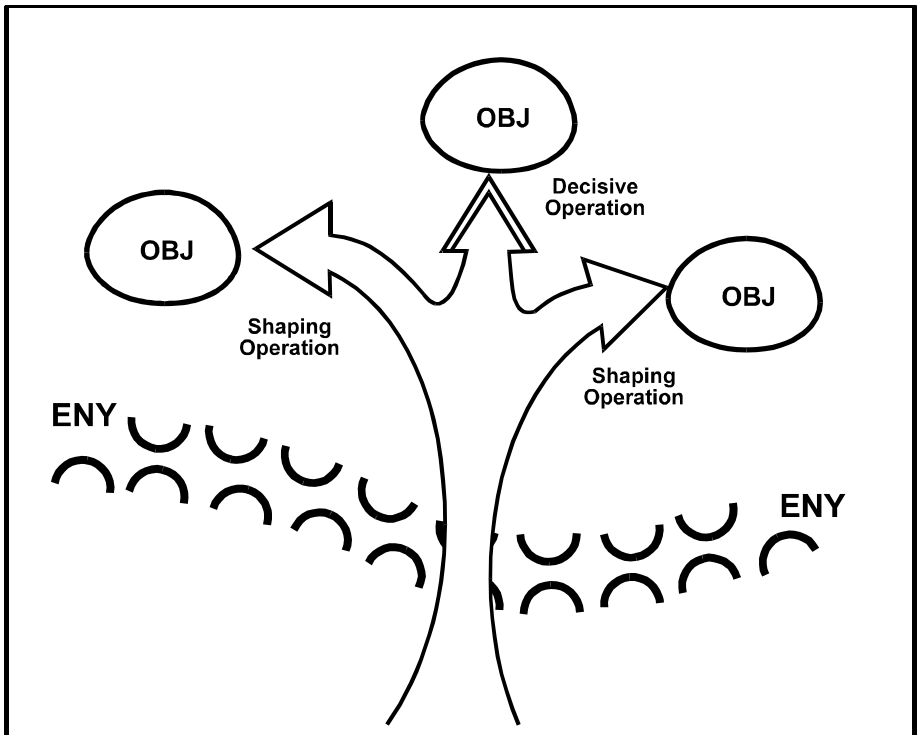


Figure 7-4. Infiltration

PENETRATION

7-37. **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** (see Figure 7-5, page 7-14). Commanders direct penetrations when enemy flanks are not assailable or time does not permit another form of maneuver. Successful penetrations create assailable flanks and provide access to enemy rear areas. Because penetrations frequently are directed into the front of the enemy defense, they risk significantly more friendly casualties than envelopments, turning movements, and infiltrations.

7-38. Swift concentration and audacity are particularly important during a penetration. Commanders mass effects from all available fires at the point of penetration to make the initial breach. Then they widen the penetration by enveloping enemy units on its shoulders and pass forces through to secure objectives in the enemy rear or defeat the penetrated enemy forces in detail. Forces making the initial breach move rapidly to avoid enemy counterattacks to their flanks. Follow-on forces secure the shoulders and widen the breach. Throughout all phases, fires in depth target enemy indirect fire assets, units along the shoulders of the penetration, and counterattack forces. Other friendly forces fix enemy forces that can move against the penetration with attacks, fires, feints, and demonstrations.



A penetration has three stages: the initial rupture, rolling up the flanks, and continuing the attack to secure a deep objective.

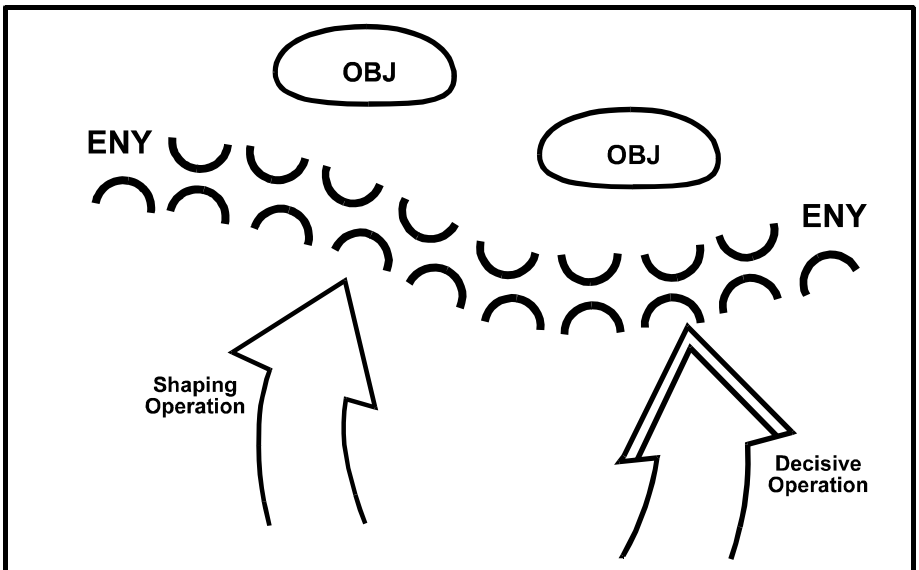
Figure 7-5. Penetration

7-39. If sufficient combat power is available, operational commanders may direct multiple penetrations. Commanders carefully weigh the advantage of such attacks. Multiple penetrations force the enemy to disperse his fires and consider multiple threats before committing his reserves. Commanders then decide how to sustain and exploit multiple penetrations and whether penetrating forces converge on one deep objective or attack multiple objectives. At the tactical level, there is normally insufficient combat power to conduct more than one penetration.

FRONTAL ATTACK

7-40. **A *frontal attack* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force in place over a broad front** (see Figure 7-6). At the tactical level, an attacking force can use a frontal attack to rapidly overrun a weaker enemy force. A frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide front and over the most direct approaches. Commanders normally use it when they possess overwhelming combat power and the enemy is at a clear disadvantage. Commanders mass the effects of direct and indirect fires, shifting indirect and aerial fires just before the assault. Success depends on achieving an advantage in combat power throughout the attack.

7-41. The frontal attack is frequently the most costly form of maneuver, since it exposes the majority of the attackers to the concentrated fires of the defenders. As the most direct form of maneuver, however, the frontal attack is useful for overwhelming light defenses, covering forces, or disorganized enemy resistance. It is often the best form of maneuver for hasty attacks and meeting engagements, where speed and simplicity are essential to maintain tempo and the initiative. Commanders may direct a frontal attack as a shaping operation and another form of maneuver as the decisive operation. Commanders may also use the frontal attack during an exploitation or pursuit. Commanders of large formations conducting envelopments or penetrations may direct subordinate elements to conduct frontal attacks as either shaping operations or the decisive operation.



A frontal attack is conducted across a wide front over the most direct approach.

Figure 7-6. Frontal Attack

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-42. The four types of offensive operations are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Commanders direct these offensive operations sequentially and in combination to generate maximum combat power and destroy the enemy. For instance, a successful attack may lead to an exploitation, which can lead to a pursuit. A deliberate attack to complete the enemy's destruction can follow a pursuit. In other cases, commanders may direct an attack against the enemy during a pursuit to slow his withdrawal.

7-43. Commanders combine and sequence movements to contact, attacks, exploitations, and pursuits to gain the greatest advantage. Attacks do not always lead to exploitations and pursuits. For example, spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations rarely develop into exploitations; however, circumstances may allow commanders to exploit an unexpected success with a full-scale attack.

7-44. Commanders recognize that the many types of offensive and defensive operations may run together with no discernible break. They employ spoiling attacks while defending to slow the enemy tempo until they are ready to attack. As they prepare to transition from one offensive operation to another, or from offense to defense, commanders can conduct a feint in one area to divert enemy attention from operations elsewhere.

7-45. A form of troop movement often precedes an offensive operation. The three forms of troop movement are administrative movement, tactical road march, and approach march.

- An *administrative movement* is a movement in which troops and vehicles are arranged to expedite their movement and conserve time and energy when no enemy interference, except by air, is anticipated. Administrative movements occur in areas where enemy forces do not pose an immediate threat to operations and heightened security is not necessary.
- **A *tactical road march* is a rapid movement used to relocate units within an area of operations to prepare for combat operations**. Although contact with enemy forces is not anticipated, security against air attack, enemy SOF, and sympathizers is maintained and the unit is prepared to take immediate action against an enemy threat. Tactical road marches occur when a force must maintain security or when movements occur within range of enemy influence. Commanders may still execute tactical road marches in low-threat environments to maintain C2 and meet specific movement schedules.
- **An *approach march* is the advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is intended**. Soldiers are fully or partially deployed. Commanders direct an approach march when they are relatively certain of the enemy location and are a considerable distance from it. They decide where their forces can deploy into attack formations that facilitate the initial contact and still provide freedom of action for the bulk of their forces. In contiguous AOs, a passage of lines often precedes or follows an approach march.

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

7-46. **The *movement to contact* is a type of offensive operation designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact**. Forces conducting a movement to contact seek to make contact with the smallest force feasible. On contact, the commander has five options: attack, defend, bypass, delay, or withdraw.

7-47. A successful movement to contact requires units with sufficient mobility, agility, and combat power to gain enemy contact and rapidly develop the situation. Six fundamentals apply:

- Focus all efforts on finding the enemy.
- Make initial contact with the smallest element possible, consistent with protecting the force.
- Make initial contact with small, mobile, self-contained forces to avoid decisive engagement of the main body on ground chosen by the enemy. Doing this allows the commander maximum flexibility to develop the situation.
- Task organize the force and use movement formations to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.
- Keep forces postured within supporting distances to facilitate a flexible response.
- Maintain contact once gained.

7-48. Commanders organize forces to provide all-around security. This normally requires advance, flank, and rear guards. They lead with a combined arms security force to locate and fix the enemy. Corps and divisions normally organize a powerful, self-contained covering force to do this. Smaller formations organize security forces within the limits of their resources. Commanders employ the security force far enough ahead of the main body to provide enough time and space to react to enemy contact. Guard formations remain within supporting range of the main body. Advance and flank guards perform continuous reconnaissance to the front and flanks of the main body. They destroy or suppress small enemy forces so they cannot threaten the main body. The advance guard moves as fast and as far ahead of the main body as possible without moving beyond supporting range. The main body provides the advance guard, normally organized as a separate element. Main body units normally provide and control flank and rear security forces.

> ***Supporting distance*** **is the distance between two units that can be traveled in time for one to come to the aid of the other. For small units, it is the distance between two units that can be covered effectively by their fires.**
>
> ***Supporting range*** **is the distance one unit may be geographically separated from a second unit, yet remain within the maximum range of the second unit's indirect fire weapons systems.**

7-49. Security forces remain oriented on the main body, taking into account enemy capabilities and the terrain. They bypass or breach obstacles in stride.

Commanders decentralize movement authority to leaders on the front and flanks. Normally, commanders should position themselves well forward during movements to contact.

Search and Attack

7-50. ***Search and attack*** **is a technique for conducting a movement to contact that shares many of the characteristics of an area security mission**. Light and medium maneuver units, attack aviation, air cavalry, and air assault units normally conduct them. The purpose of a search and attack operation is to destroy enemy forces, protect the friendly force, deny an area to the enemy, or collect information. Commanders direct search and attack when the enemy disperses in close terrain unsuited for heavy forces, when they cannot find enemy weaknesses, or when they want to deny the enemy movement in an area. They also direct search and attack against enemy infiltrators or SOF operating in a given area. Search and attack is useful in area security missions, such as clearing AOs.

Meeting Engagement

7-51. A ***meeting engagement*** **is a combat action that occurs when a moving force engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place**. Such encounters normally occur by chance in small unit operations, typically when two moving forces collide. They may result in brigade or larger unit operations when intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations have been ineffective. Meeting engagements can also occur when opposing forces are aware of the general presence but not the exact location of each other and both decide to attack immediately. On contact, commanders quickly act to gain the advantage. Speed of action and movement, coupled with both direct and indirect fires, are essential. To maintain momentum, lead elements quickly bypass or fight through light resistance. Freedom to maneuver is always advantageous; however, commanders may choose to establish a hasty defense if the enemy force is larger or the terrain offers a significant benefit.

7-52. The initiative and audacity of small unit leaders are essential for the friendly force to act faster than the enemy. Commanders balance focusing combat power rapidly with keeping other options open and maintaining pressure on the enemy. In meeting engagements, the force that gains and retains the initiative wins. Commanders seize and maintain the initiative through battle command: rapidly visualizing the situation, deciding what to do, and directing forces to destroy enemy combat power. A successful meeting engagement fixes or reduces the enemy force with maneuver and massed, overwhelming fires—both direct and indirect—while the friendly force bypasses or attacks it.

ATTACK

7-53. **An *attack* is an offensive operation that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both**. Attacks incorporate coordinated movement supported by direct and indirect fires. They may be either decisive or shaping operations. Attacks may be hasty or deliberate, depending on the time available for assessing the situation, planning, and preparing. Commanders execute hasty attacks when the situation calls for

immediate action with available forces and minimal preparation. They conduct deliberate attacks when there is time to develop plans and coordinate preparations (see FM 3-90). The same fundamentals of the offense apply to each type of attack. Success depends on skillfully massing the effects of combat power.

Types of Attack

- Hasty
- Deliberate
- Special Purpose
  - Spoiling
  - Counterattack
  - Raid
  - Ambush
  - Feint
  - Demonstration

Hasty Attack

7-54. Commanders direct hasty attacks to seize opportunities to destroy the enemy or seize the initiative. These opportunities are fleeting. They usually occur during movements to contact and defensive operations. In a hasty attack, commanders intentionally trade the advantages of thorough preparation and full synchronization for those of immediate execution. In a movement to contact, commanders launch hasty attacks to destroy enemy forces before they concentrate or establish a defense. In the defense, commanders direct hasty attacks to destroy an exposed or overextended attacker. On-order and be-prepared missions allow units to respond quickly in uncertain situations.

7-55. Once they decide to attack, commanders execute as quickly as possible. While hasty attacks maximize the effects of agility and surprise, they incur the risk of losing some synchronization. To minimize this risk, commanders make maximum use of standing operating procedures (SOPs) that include standard formations and well-understood and rehearsed battle drills. Supporting arms and services organize and position themselves to react quickly, using prearranged procedures. Habitual relationships among supported and supporting units at all echelons facilitate these actions.

Deliberate Attack

7-56. In contrast to hasty attacks, deliberate attacks are highly synchronized operations characterized by detailed planning and preparation. Deliberate attacks use simultaneous operations throughout the AO, planned fires, shaping operations, and forward positioning of resources needed to sustain momentum. Commanders take the time necessary to position forces and develop sufficient intelligence to strike the enemy with bold maneuver and accurate, annihilating fires. Because of the time required to plan and prepare deliberate attacks, commanders often begin them from a defensive posture. However, an uncommitted force may conduct a deliberate attack as a sequel to an ongoing offensive operation.

7-57. Time spent preparing a deliberate attack may allow the enemy to improve defenses, retire, or launch a spoiling attack. Therefore, commanders direct deliberate attacks only when the enemy cannot be bypassed or overcome with a hasty attack. Commanders maintain pressure on the enemy while they plan and prepare. They aggressively disrupt enemy defensive preparations through aggressive patrolling, feints, limited-objective attacks, harassing indirect fires, air strikes, and offensive IO.

7-58. Deliberate attacks require extensive planning and coordination, to include positioning reserves and follow-on forces while preparing troops and

equipment. Commanders and staffs refine plans based on rehearsals and intelligence from reconnaissance and surveillance. Commanders conduct IO to deceive the enemy and prevent him from exercising effective C2. Effective IO mask attack preparations and conceal friendly intentions and capabilities. Commanders direct reconnaissance and surveillance missions to collect information about the enemy and AO. The intelligence system analyzes this information to find weaknesses in enemy capabilities, dispositions, or plans. Friendly forces exploit enemy weaknesses before and during the attack. Effective information management (IM) routes data collected by reconnaissance and surveillance assets to the right place for analysis. IM also facilitates rapid dissemination of intelligence products to forces that need them.

Special Purpose Attacks

7-59. Certain forms of attack employ distinctive methods and require special planning. Commanders direct these special purpose attacks to achieve objectives different from those of other attacks. Spoiling attacks and counterattacks are usually phases of a larger operation. Raids and ambushes are generally single-phased operations conducted by small units. Feints and demonstrations are military deception operations.

7-60. **Spoiling Attack. A *spoiling attack* is a form of attack that preempts or seriously impairs an enemy attack while the enemy is in the process of planning or preparing to attack**. Normally conducted from a defensive posture, spoiling attacks strike where and when the enemy is most vulnerable—during preparations for attack in assembly areas and attack positions or while he is moving toward his line of departure. Therefore, proper timing and coordinating with higher headquarters are critical requirements for them. Spoiling attacks are highly dependent on accurate information on enemy dispositions. Commanders are alert for opportunities to exploit advantages created by a spoiling attack.

7-61. **Counterattack. A *counterattack* is a form of attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force with the general objective of denying the enemy his goal in attacking**. Commanders normally conduct counterattacks from a defensive posture; they direct them to defeat or destroy enemy forces or to regain control of terrain and facilities after enemy successes. Commanders direct counterattacks with reserves, lightly committed forward elements, or specifically assigned forces. They counterattack after the enemy launches an attack, reveals his main effort, or offers an assailable flank.

7-62. Commanders conduct counterattacks much like other operations, synchronizing them within the overall effort. When possible, units rehearse and prepare the ground. Counterattacking forces may conduct local exploitations to take advantage of tactical opportunities, but then usually resume a defensive posture. Large-unit headquarters preplan counterattacks as major exploitations and pursuits. In those cases, a counterattack may be the first step in seizing the initiative and transitioning to offensive operations. A counterattack is the decisive operation in a mobile defense.

7-63. **Raid**. A raid is a form of attack, usually small scale, involving a swift entry into hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or

destroy installations. It usually ends with a planned withdrawal from the objective area upon mission completion. Raids have narrowly defined purposes. They require both detailed intelligence and deliberate planning. Raids may destroy key enemy installations and facilities, capture or free prisoners, or disrupt enemy C2 or other important systems.

7-64. **Ambush. An *ambush* is a form of attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy**. An ambush destroys enemy forces by maximizing the element of surprise. Ambushes can employ direct fire systems or other destructive means, such as command-detonated mines, nonlethal fires, and indirect fires. Ambushes can disrupt enemy cohesion, sense of security, and confidence. They are particularly effective against enemy sustaining operations.

7-65. **Feint. A *feint* is a form of attack used to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the actual decisive operation. Forces conducting a feint seek direct fire contact with the enemy but avoid decisive engagement**. Feints divert attention from the decisive operation and prevent the enemy from focusing combat power against it. They are usually shallow, limited-objective attacks conducted before or during the decisive operation. During Operation Desert Storm, units of the 1st Cavalry Division conducted feints in the Ruqi pocket before 24 February 1991. The purpose of these feints was to fix Iraqi frontline units and convince Iraqi commanders that the coalition decisive operation would occur along the Wadi al-Batin.

7-66. **Demonstration. A *demonstration* is a form of attack designed to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the decisive operation by a display of force. Forces conducting a demonstration do not seek contact with the enemy**. Demonstrations are also shaping operations. They seek to mislead the enemy concerning the attacker's true intentions. They facilitate decisive operations by fixing the enemy or diverting his attention from the decisive operation. Commanders allow the enemy to detect a demonstration. However, doing this without revealing the demonstration's true purpose requires skill. If a demonstration reveals an enemy weakness, commanders may follow it with another form of attack.

EXPLOITATION

7-67. An exploitation is a type of offensive operation that usually follows a successful attack and is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. Exploitations seek to disintegrate enemy forces to the point where they have no alternative but surrender or flight. Commanders of exploiting forces receive the greatest possible latitude to accomplish their missions. They act with great aggressiveness, initiative, and boldness. Exploitations may be local or major. Local exploitations take advantage of tactical opportunities, foreseen or unforeseen. Division and higher headquarters normally plan major exploitations as branches or sequels.

7-68. Attacks that completely destroy a defender are rare. More often, the enemy attempts to disengage, withdraw, and reconstitute an effective defense as rapidly as possible. In large-scale operations, the enemy may attempt to mass combat power against an attack by moving forces from less active areas

or committing reserves. During exploitations, commanders execute simultaneous attacks throughout the AO to thwart these enemy actions.

7-69. During attacks, commanders remain alert to opportunities for exploitation. Indicators include—

- Large numbers of prisoners and the surrender of entire enemy units.
- Enemy units disintegrating after initial contact.
- A lack of an organized defense.
- The capture or absence of enemy leaders.

7-70. Commanders plan to exploit every attack unless restricted by higher headquarters or exceptional circumstances. Exploitation pressures the enemy, compounds his disorganization, and erodes his will to resist. Upon shattering enemy coherence, attacking forces strike targets that defeat enemy attempts to regroup. Attackers swiftly attack command posts, sever escape routes, and strike enemy reserves, field artillery, and critical combat support and CSS assets.

7-71. Opportunities for local exploitations may emerge when the main effort is elsewhere in the AO. Commanders vary tempos among subordinate commands to take advantage of these opportunities while continuing to press the main effort. Simultaneous local exploitations at lower echelons can lead to a major exploitation that becomes the decisive operation.

7-72. Exploiting success is especially important after a deliberate attack in which the commander accepted risk elsewhere to concentrate combat power for the decisive operation. Failure to exploit aggressively the success of the decisive operation may allow the enemy to detect and exploit a friendly weakness and regain the initiative.

7-73. When possible, lead forces transition directly into an exploitation. If that is not feasible, commanders pass fresh forces into the lead. Exploitations require the physical and mental aggressiveness to combat the friction of night, bad weather, possible fratricide, and extended operations.

7-74. Successful exploitations demoralize the enemy and disintegrate his formations. Commanders of exploiting units anticipate this situation and prepare to transition to a pursuit. They remain alert for opportunities that develop as enemy cohesion and resistance break down. Commanders posture CSS forces to support exploitation opportunities.

PURSUIT

7-75. A pursuit is a type of offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape with the aim of destroying it. Pursuits are decisive operations that follow successful attacks or exploitations. They occur when the enemy fails to organize a defense and attempts to disengage. If it becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing, a force can transition to a pursuit from any type of offensive operation. Pursuits encompass rapid movement and decentralized control. Unlike exploitations, commanders can rarely anticipate pursuits, so they normally do not hold forces in reserve for them.

7-76. For most pursuits, commanders designate a direct pressure force and an encircling or enveloping force. The direct pressure force maintains pressure against the enemy to keep him from establishing a coherent defense. The encircling force conducts an envelopment or a turning movement to block the enemy's escape and trap him between the two forces. The trapped enemy force is then destroyed. The encircling force must have greater mobility than the pursued enemy force. Joint air assets and long-range precision fires are essential for slowing enemy movement.

7-77. Exploitations and pursuits test the audacity and endurance of soldiers and leaders. After an attack, soldiers are tired and units have suffered personnel and materiel losses. As an exploitation or pursuit unfolds, LOCs extend and commanders risk culmination. Commanders and units must exert extraordinary physical and mental effort to sustain momentum, transition to other operations, and translate tactical success into operational or strategic victory.

CONDUCTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-78. Commanders direct the operations process. They strive for continuous attacks at tempos the enemy cannot match. Commanders visualize the situation, make effective decisions, and assess the planning, preparation for, and execution of offensive operations. Staffs help commanders anticipate the outcome of current and planned operations. Commanders apply judgment to develop the situational understanding upon which they base decisions that lead to mission success (see FM 6-0).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-79. Commanders plan to attack enemy forces and systems simultaneously throughout the AO to seize the initiative, exploit success, and maintain momentum. In the decisive operation, commanders focus combat power to defeat the enemy. They conceive simple plans by assessing and visualizing their battlespace and mission. Commanders select the best course of action and develop a concept of operations that ensures mission accomplishment.

7-80. Commanders tailor their concept of operations to the situation. Offensive plans—

- Allow rapid concentration and dispersal of units.
- Introduce fresh forces to exploit success while resting other forces.
- Protect the force.
- Facilitate transition to future operations.
- Sustain forces throughout the operation.

Offensive planning may occur while units defend. Plans anticipate shifting efforts and transitioning to other forms of attack to exploit opportunities. By planning to exploit success, commanders avoid losing momentum.

7-81. Staffs analyze the situation in terms of METT-TC to understand the mission and to prepare estimates. Staff sections maintain current estimates for their functional fields or battlefield operating system throughout an offensive operation. Commanders incorporate staff estimates into their visualization. As the operation unfolds and the situation changes, commanders

continuously assess threats and opportunities and decide whether to modify the concept of operations (see FM 5-0).

Mission

7-82. Commanders provide their subordinates with a clear statement of what to accomplish and why—the mission. They anticipate likely developments. To prepare subordinates for subsequent actions, commanders give them their superior's mission and intent, tell them what they envision for the future, and issue warning orders as appropriate. To maintain momentum, they assign subordinates tasks that encompass the full scope of the operation. Some offensive operations, such as deliberate attacks, require greater control and coordination. However, whenever possible, commanders assign force-oriented objectives and AOs and avoid restrictive control measures.

Enemy

7-83. In offensive operations, commanders look for gaps or weaknesses in enemy defenses. They study enemy defensive preparations and direct actions to obstruct and frustrate them. They set priorities for ISR operations. They plan to penetrate enemy security areas, overcome obstacles, avoid enemy strengths, and destroy the coherence of the defense. Success requires an active, responsive intelligence effort oriented on critical units and areas.

Terrain and Weather

7-84. Commanders select avenues of approach that orient on key terrain and provide maneuver opportunities for attackers. Good avenues of approach permit rapid advance, provide cover and concealment, allow good communications, and are hard to block with obstacles. Commanders exploit weather conditions that affect mobility, concealment, and air support. They need tactical weather forecasts that focus on how weather might affect the operation.

7-85. Terrain designated for the decisive operation should allow for rapid movement into the enemy rear. Commanders typically identify and avoid terrain that will hinder a rapid advance; however, an initial maneuver over difficult terrain may surprise defenders. Commanders personally reconnoiter the terrain whenever possible, particularly the terrain where they will conduct the decisive attack.

7-86. Attackers pay particular attention to obstacles. Commanders plan to negotiate or avoid urban areas, rivers, extreme slopes, thick forests, or soft ground. Such terrain, when it parallels axes of advance, can protect attackers' flanks. Light forces can use such areas as avenues of approach, or they can defend from them, freeing heavier forces for maneuver. To deny key terrain to the enemy, commanders seize it or control it by fire. Most offensive operations are force-oriented; however, attacks can focus on decisive terrain.

7-87. Weather and visibility conditions affect offensive operations. Concealment and protection from air attacks that weather or light conditions offer is important, especially for air assault and airborne operations. Ground conditions affect the number of avenues available and movement speed. Inclement weather also increases heavy force maintenance and CSS requirements.

Troops and Support Available

7-88. Commanders consider a unit's readiness and its leaders' experience when assigning missions. They take into account their force's mobility, protection, and firepower relative to enemy capabilities.

7-89. Commanders employ units according to their capabilities and limitations. The number of possible force combinations enhances agility. Dismounted infantry can attack through heavy cover or penetrate antiarmor defenses to open approaches for armored and mechanized forces. Air assault and airborne units can seize objectives in depth to block enemy reserves or secure choke points. Armor can move rapidly through gaps to disorganize the defense. Field and air defense artillery, engineer, and chemical units provide critical support. Aviation maneuvers to attack the enemy throughout the AO.

7-90. Attackers carefully integrate CSS operations into plans. Effective CSS is especially important during high-tempo operations. Habitually associating combat units with the CSS units that support them facilitates it. When plans call for attacking units to pass through defending units, defending units assist CSS operators in conducting sustaining operations.

Time Available

7-91. Commanders consider the risk involved when deciding how much time to allocate to planning and preparing an offensive operation. The more time attackers take to plan and prepare, the more time defenders have to improve their defenses. Attackers reduce the time available to the enemy by operating at a high tempo, achieving surprise, and avoiding detection. Defenders gain time by delaying and disrupting attacks. In all cases, commanders give as much time as possible to their subordinates for planning.

7-92. Modern telecommunications capabilities and activities in the information environment may reduce the time available to plan and prepare. Modern information systems reduce the time required to collect and process information. This reduction may provide advantages for either attackers or defenders. Commanders who act quickly and make good decisions retain the initiative in fast-moving situations. Activities in the information environment, such as live news broadcasts of pending or ongoing attacks, may reduce the time available to accomplish a mission.

Civil Considerations

7-93. Civil considerations are present throughout offensive operations. Commanders focus their staffs on considerations that may affect mission accomplishment. These factors include care and support for civilians within the AO and the possible effect of refugees on operations and movements. Other considerations include enemy locations with respect to civil populations, political and cultural boundaries, and language requirements. Civil considerations may preclude the attack of some targets, such as infrastructure and historically significant areas. They may also limit the use of land mines.

7-94. Enemy propaganda may affect the attitude of civilians in the AO. It may also affect domestic and foreign support for the operation. Operational commanders pay particular attention to the effects of actions in the information environment. Tactical commanders may have limited awareness of

media reporting and its effect on public opinion. Operational commanders gauge the effect of public opinion and keep their subordinates informed.

PREPARING FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-95. Preparation postures the force to begin offensive operations. It includes assembling and positioning necessary resources. At the operational level, commanders arrange forces and resources to allow dispersion, responsiveness, protection, and sustainment, while retaining the ability to mass effects quickly. Commanders assign units a position and time to begin or support the attack. Selected friendly forces start conducting shaping and sustaining operations to develop opportunities for the entire force. To preserve surprise, attacking forces avoid and mask actions that could alert the enemy.

7-96. Preparation includes reconnaissance operations conducted concurrently with planning (see FM 5-0). Reconnaissance collects information that is processed into intelligence and incorporated into plans. Intelligence tasks for offensive operations include identifying and locating enemy reserves, locating and tracking enemy fire support systems, and gathering information about enemy intelligence, air, and air defense capabilities. Conducting aggressive reconnaissance and surveillance, integrating joint collection assets, and exploiting the capabilities of information systems allow commanders to assess enemy capabilities and anticipate his reactions. Rehearsals help subordinates fully understand the commander's intent and how their actions relate to those of other friendly forces and contribute to the overall operation.

7-97. Sustaining operations create conditions for executing an attack suddenly, violently, and efficiently. More important, they help preserve freedom of action as one operation or phase ends and another begins. At the operational level, sustainment is a key consideration in linking battles within major operations. CSS forces prepare by positioning supplies and units to support the operation. Movement control, terrain management, and engineer-conducted mobility operations contribute to efficient movements. Engineers also conduct countermobility operations to protect flanks. As in all operations, air defense forces protect the force from air and missile attack.

EXECUTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-98. Offensive operations require rapid shifts in the focus of combat power to take advantage of opportunities. Sustaining a tempo the enemy cannot match is vital to success. Commanders vary the tempo and methods of attack, while maintaining momentum. Units press the fight. A commander's ability to continually anticipate and visualize both enemy and friendly situations is essential. Making timely decisions is likewise important.

7-99. Commanders increase the tempo of an operation through reconnaissance and by providing the proper field artillery and other combat support, including air support. They maintain a high tempo by passing forces forward and minimizing the time friendly forces spend under fire. Attacks succeed only if they achieve their objective before the enemy recovers his balance, identifies the threat, and masses combat power against it. Attackers must keep the enemy off balance as long as possible and maintain the momentum

of the attack. Successful attacks maintain a tempo and degree of lethality that the enemy cannot match.

7-100. ISR and IM provide commanders with enough relevant information to direct their attack. Commanders attack once they have sufficient information, even if it is not comprehensive. They can seize the initiative by attacking, even without a detailed operational picture or COP.

7-101. The violence and intensity of the assault unhinges the coherence of the enemy's defense. Precision fires and IO allow attackers to strip away enemy security forces, cripple enemy C2 and CSS, and mislead defenders as to the true objective of the attack. The combined effects of these and other actions hinder the enemy's ability to make decisions. As attacking forces assault the objective, fires shift, fixing the enemy in depth and denying him the use of reserves. Whether seeking to destroy an enemy force or to seize terrain, the attacking force does not slow until it achieves success. A high tempo contributes to protection and enhances security.

7-102. Commanders integrate fires with maneuver throughout offensive operations. Accomplishing this requires detailed planning and coordination between assaulting and supporting forces, precise execution, and careful control of fire support. Dismounted assault forces move as closely behind their fires as possible. Armored forces attack under overhead field artillery fire. Air assault and airborne forces land directly on or as near to objectives as possible, once defenders and supporting field and air defense artillery have been suppressed or destroyed. As attackers near the enemy force, they overcome resistance with violent, massed firepower and rapid movement. Speed during this phase is essential to reduce casualties and avoid becoming stalled. Air defense and joint air assets destroy enemy air threats. Attack aviation strikes against uncommitted forces and reserves to isolate current engagements, shape future battles, and deny the enemy options.

7-103. Attackers quickly move through the objective, destroying remaining enemy resistance. They anticipate a counterattack by maneuver forces, indirect fires, or aircraft. Security is paramount, as the attacker now occupies a position known to the enemy. Attackers consolidate on the objective, reorganize to meet a counterattack, prepare for the next mission, or continue the attack. If the situation allows, commanders immediately begin an exploitation, either with the same force or by passing follow-on forces through the objective area. Reconstitution may be necessary to return units to the fight. Initial attacking forces may reconstitute as follow-on forces pass forward.

7-104. To maintain offensive momentum, commanders direct the introduction of fresh troops into the attack. Passing follow-on forces allows commanders to rest soldiers, resupply units, and move them to new areas and missions. The introduction of fresh troops is most common when forces enter an exploitation or pursuit, but may be necessary during the attack itself if committed forces cannot reach their objectives. Commanders usually commit fresh troops through a forward passage of lines to maintain the tempo and avoid a significant pause. A forward passage may occur before or after the attack starts. For it to be successful, a forward passage must be concealed from the enemy.

7-105. Forward passages of lines and offensive reliefs require detailed planning and preparation. Planning a passage includes determining the battle

handover criteria that designate when the passing force assumes the fight from the stationary force. The common higher headquarters of the two forces designates control measures for the passage. Subordinate commanders coordinate the details. During a passage, the stationary force provides all possible support to the passing force. The stationary force integrates its direct and indirect fires into the fire support plan of the passing force.

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

7-106. Technology is changing the ways that modernized Army forces attack. Information technology allows commanders and subordinates to share a COP tailored to each echelon. Commanders throughout the attacking force use it to achieve greater situational understanding. They conduct operations based on more accurate and current information than ever before. Commanders may now lead from the front while remaining fully connected to the C2 system and the information it provides. Situational understanding, supported by the COP, allows commanders to synchronize their forces effectively and make rapid adjustments as the situation changes. Subordinates can view the overall situation and exercise initiative to achieve the commander's intent without waiting for higher headquarters to provide direction.

7-107. Situational understanding based on an accurate COP changes the nature of maneuver before and during attacks. With it, Army forces depend less on movements to contact and meeting engagements to create the conditions to attack. Modernized Army forces may avoid movements to contact altogether, developing the situation largely out of contact. Advanced surveillance and reconnaissance assets refine the picture of the enemy, while precision fires and IO destroy enemy cohesion. Reconnaissance and security elements maintain contact only as required to collect information that unmanned sensors cannot. Commanders maneuver forces into position to begin the attack before major forces make contact. Attacks unfold as simultaneous sets of blows that bewilder and shock enemy forces. Attacks become opportunistic and fluid as commanders mass the effects of combat power swiftly and decisively and exploit the results ruthlessly.

7-108. Fusing information from C2, ISR, indirect fire, and CSS systems increases tempo and the number of offensive options. Greater awareness of enemy and friendly forces means attacks need not originate from one place. Better situational understanding allows commanders to shift forces and efforts from one area to another to exploit opportunities. Nonlinear operations in noncontiguous AOs occur more frequently. Commanders project attacking forces on multiple axes throughout the AO. Lines of operations in the offense are related less by space than they are by purpose; thus, commanders bypass some enemy forces while focusing combat power at the decisive point. Exploiting opportunities that result from efficiently fusing information and determining its significance secures the initiative with attackers.