CHAPTER 7

The MAGTF in the Offense

Contents

"Since I first joined the Marines, I have advocated aggressiveness in the field and constant offensive action. Hit quickly, hit hard and keep right on hitting. Give the enemy no rest, no opportunity to consolidate his forces and hit back at you. This is the shortest road to victory."

—General H.M. "Howling Mad" Smith, USMC

The commander conducts offensive operations within the context of the single battle. The offense is the decisive form of warfare. While defensive operations can do great damage to an enemy, offensive operations are the means to a decisive victory. Offensive operations are conducted to take the initiative from the enemy, gain freedom of action, and mass effects to achieve objectives. These operations impose the commander's will on the enemy. Offensive operations allow the commander to impose his will on the enemy by shattering the enemy's moral, mental, and physical cohesion. The enemy loses his ability to fight as an effective, coordinated force as Marine Corps forces generate an overwhelming tempo by conducting a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected offensive actions.

PURPOSE OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The offense is undertaken to gain, maintain, and exploit the initiative—thus causing the enemy to react to our actions. The focus of offensive operations is the enemy, not seizure of terrain. Even in the defense, a commander must take every opportunity to seize the initiative by offensive action. Offensive operations are conducted to—

- 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.
- Produce a reaction from the enemy.
- Disrupt enemy actions or preparations.

Successful offensive operations—

- Avoid the enemy's strength and attack his weakness by massing combat power or its effects against the enemy's critical vulnerabilities.
- Isolate the enemy from his sources of support—both moral and physical—to include logistics, fires, command and control, and reinforcements.
- Strike the enemy from an unexpected direction, disrupting his plan.
- Aggressively exploit every advantage.
- Overwhelm the enemy commander's ability to observe, orient, decide, and act.
- Employ accurate and timely assessment of effects against the enemy to exploit success.

The Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy is offensive in nature, focuses on the threat, uses speed to seize the initiative, and surprise to degrade the enemy's ability to resist. Offensive operations require the attacker to weight the main effort with superior combat power. The requirement to concentrate and the need to have sufficient forces available to exploit success imply accepting risk elsewhere. Local superiority must be created by maneuver, speed, surprise, and economy of force.

Before conducting offensive operations, the commander seeks to discover where the enemy is most vulnerable through reconnaissance and surveillance. Shaping actions set the conditions for decisive action by disrupting the enemy's command

and control, limiting his ability to apply combat power, and further exposing weaknesses in the defense. Shaping actions should place the enemy at the greatest disadvantage possible. The commander directs the battle from a position that allows him to develop a firsthand impression of the course of the battle. He provides personal leadership and inspires confidence at key points in the battle.

The fundamentals of offensive action are general rules evolved from logical and time-proven application of the principles of war to the offense. Many of the fundamentals are related and reinforce one another as follows:

- 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 or control key terrain.
- Gain and retain the initiative.
- Neutralize the enemy's ability to react.
- Advance by fire and maneuver.
- Maintain momentum.
- Act quickly.
- Exploit success.
- Be flexible.
- Be aggressive.
- Provide for the security of the force.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Organization of the Battlespace

Deep operations are conducted using maneuver forces, fires, and information operations. They seek to create windows of opportunity for decisive maneuver and are designed to restrict the enemy's freedom of action, disrupt the coherence and tempo of his operations, nullify his firepower, disrupt his command and control, interdict his supplies, isolate or destroy his main forces, and break his morale.

The enemy is most easily defeated by fighting him close and deep simultaneously while protecting the MAGTF rear area. Well-orchestrated deep operations, integrated with simultaneous close operations, may be executed with the goal of defeating the enemy outright or setting the conditions for successful future close operations. Deep operations enable friendly forces to choose the time, place, and method for close operations. Deep operations may include—

- Deception.
- Deep interdiction through deep fires, deep maneuver, and deep air support.
- Deep surveillance and target acquisition.
- Information operations.
- Offensive antiair warfare.

Close operations are required for decisive and lasting effects on the battlefield. The MAGTF commander shapes the course of the battle and takes decisive action, deciding when and where to commit the main effort to achieve mission success. The MAGTF commander picks a combination of the types of offensive operations and forms of maneuver to use at the critical time and place to defeat the enemy. Commanders weight their combination of options to mass effects. For example, commanders may fix a part of the enemy force with a frontal attack by a smaller combined arms force while maneuvering the rest of the force in an envelopment to defeat the enemy force. The reserve enters the action offensively at the proper place and moment to exploit success. The reserve provides the source of additional combat power to commit at the decisive moment.

Rear area operations protect assets in the rear area to support the force. Rear area operations encompass more than just rear area security. While rear area operations provide security for personnel, materiel, and facilities in the rear area, their sole purpose is to provide uninterrupted support to the force as a whole. Rear area operations enhance a force's freedom of action while it is involved in the close and deep fight and extend the force's operational reach. The primary focus of rear area operations during the offensive is to maintain momentum and prevent the force from reaching a culminating point.

Organization of the Force

The commander will normally organize his force differently depending on the type of offensive operation he is conducting. There are four basic types of forces: security forces, main body, reserve, and sustainment forces.

The commander may use security forces to—

- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Protect the main battle force's movement.
- Develop the situation before committing the main battle force.

Security forces are assigned cover, guard or screen missions. Operations of security forces must be an integral part of the overall offensive plan. The element of the MAGTF assigned as the security forces depends on the factors of METT-T. Security forces are discussed in detail in chapter 11.

The main body constitutes the bulk of the commander's combat power. It is prepared to respond to enemy contact with the security forces. Combat power that can be concentrated most quickly, such as fires, is brought to bear while maneuver units move into position. The main body maintains an offensive spirit throughout the battle, looking to exploit any advantageous situations. The main body engages the enemy as early as possible unless fires are withheld to prevent the loss of surprise. Commanders make maximum use of fires to destroy and disrupt enemy formations. As the forces close, the enemy is subjected to an ever-increasing volume of fires from the main body and all supporting arms.

The commander uses his reserve to restore momentum to a stalled attack, defeat enemy counterattacks, and exploit success. The reserve provides the commander the flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances. Once committed, the reserve's actions normally become the decisive operation, and every effort is made to reconstitute another reserve from units made available by the revised situation.

In the attack, the combat power allocated to the reserve depends primarily on the level of uncertainty about the enemy, especially the strength of any expected enemy counterattacks. The commander only needs to resource a small reserve to respond to unanticipated enemy reactions when he has detailed information about the enemy. When the situation is relatively clear and enemy capabilities are limited, the reserve may consist of a small fraction of the command. When the situation is vague, the reserve may initially contain the majority of the commander's combat power.

In an attack, the commander generally locates his reserve to the rear of the main effort. However, it must be able to move quickly to areas where it is needed in different contingencies. This is most likely to occur if the enemy has strong counterattack forces. For heavy reserve forces, the key factor is cross-country mobility or road networks. For light forces, the key factor is the road network, if

trucks are available, or the availability of landing zones for helicopterborne forces. The commander prioritizes the positioning of his reserve to counter the worst case enemy counterattack first, then to reinforce the success of the decisive operation.

The commander task-organizes his sustainment forces to the mission. He decentralizes the execution of sustainment support, but that support must be continuously available to the main body. This includes using preplanned logistics packages. Aerial resupply may also be necessary to support large-scale movements to contact or to maintain the main body's momentum. Combat trains containing fuel, ammunition, medical, and maintenance assets move with their parent unit. Fuel and ammunition stocks remain loaded on tactical vehicles in the combat trains so they can instantly move. Aviation assets may use forward operating bases (including forward arming and refueling points and rapid ground refueling sites) to reduce aircraft turnaround time. The commander will frequently find that his main supply routes become extended as the operation proceeds.

In an attack, the commander tries to position his sustainment forces well forward. From these forward locations they can sustain the attacking force, providing priority of support to the decisive operation. As the attacking force advances, sustainment forces displace forward as required to shorten the supply lines to ensure uninterrupted support to maneuver units. The size of the force a commander devotes to sustainment force security depends on the threat. A significant enemy threat requires the commander to provide a tactical combat force.

During periods of rapid movement sustainment forces may be attached to the moving or attacking force. Alternatively, sustainment forces may follow the moving or attacking force in an echeloned manner along main supply routes. Transportation and supplies to sustain the moving or attacking force become increasingly important as the operation progresses. As supply lines lengthen, the condition of lines of communications and the conduct of route and convoy security can become problems. The largest possible stocks of fuel, spare parts, and ammunition should accompany the moving or attacking force so that it does not lose momentum because of a lack of support. The offensive operation may be limited more by vehicle mechanical failures and the need for fuel than by combat losses or a lack of ammunition. Therefore, direct support maintenance support teams accompany the moving or attacking force to repair disabled vehicles or evacuate them to maintenance collection points for repair by general support maintenance units. The commander may also use helicopters to move critical supplies forward.

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

There are four types of offensive operations—movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. These operations may occur in sequence, simultaneously or independently across the depth of the battlespace. For example, a movement to contact may be so successful that it immediately leads to an exploitation or an attack may lead directly to pursuit. See figure 7-1.

These types of offensive operations are rarely all performed in one campaign or in the sequence presented in this chapter. Nor are the dividing lines between the types of offensive operations as distinct in reality as they are in a doctrinal publication. The successful commander uses the appropriate type of offensive operation for his mission and situation, not hesitating to change to another type if the battle dictates. The goal is to move to exploitation and pursuit as rapidly as possible. The commander seeks to take advantage of enemy weaknesses and maneuver to a position of advantage, creating the conditions that lead to exploitation.

Movement to Contact

Movement to contact seeks to gain or regain contact with the enemy and develop the situation. Movement to contact helps the commander to understand the battlespace. It allows him to make initial contact with the enemy with minimum forces, thereby avoiding an extensive engagement or battle before he is prepared for decisive action. When successfully executed, it allows the commander to strike the enemy at the time and place of his choosing. A movement to contact ends when the commander has to deploy the main body—to conduct an attack or establish a defense.

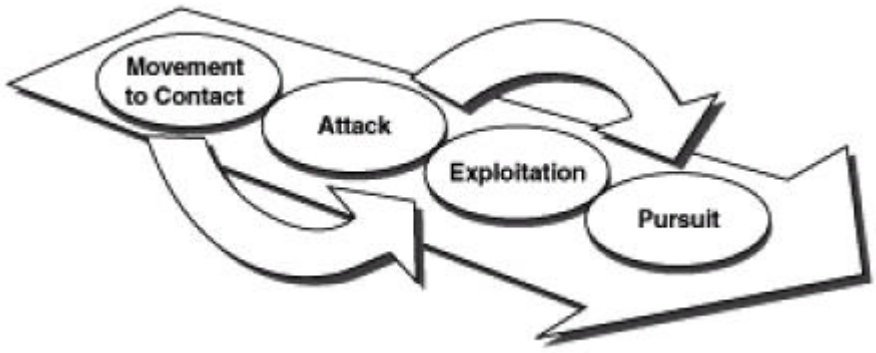

Figure 7-1. Types of Offensive Operations.

A force conducting movement to contact normally organizes in an approach march formation, with advance, flank, and rear security elements protecting the main body. See figure 7-2. The main body contains the bulk of the MAGTF's forces. The advance force, flank, and rear security formations may consist of aviation or ground combat units (one or both as individual elements or as task-organized combined arms teams) and appropriate combat service support organizations, based on the factors of METT-T.

As the purpose of movement to contact is to gain contact with the enemy, the MAGTF commander will normally designate the advance force as the main effort. As contact with the enemy is made and the situation develops, the MAGTF commander has two options. If he decides that this is not the time or place to offer battle, he bypasses the enemy and the advance force remains the main effort. When bypassing an enemy unit it may be necessary to task a subordinate unit to fix or block the bypassed enemy. As the second option, if the MAGTF commander determines that his shaping actions have set the conditions for decisive action, he will shift the main effort—probably to the main body or a unit in the main body. During movement to contact, the MAGTF commander may designate all or part of the main body as the MAGTF reserve.

The MAGTF commander may use the ACE to exploit the situation as it is developed by the advance force. Aviation forces can attack enemy forces involved in a meeting engagement or fix enemy forces while the advance force makes contact, allowing the main body to maneuver without becoming decisively

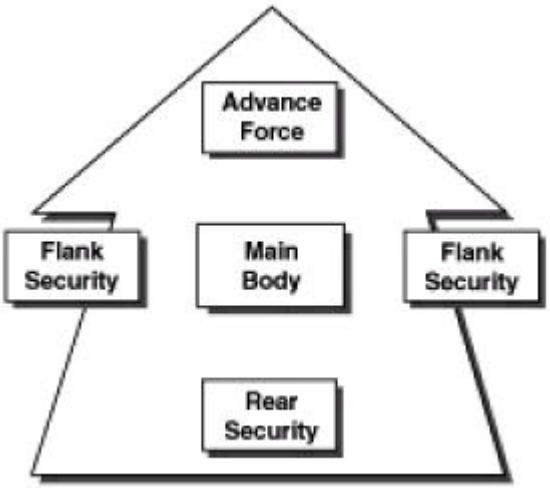

Figure 7-2. Movement to Contact.

engaged. Aviation forces can also attack second echelon forces, limiting the enemy's ability to reinforce his first echelon or fight in depth.

Even if the MAGTF commander properly develops the situation during a movement to contact, he may be faced with a meeting engagement. Meeting engagements are clashes that take place at unexpected places and times when forces are not fully prepared for battle. A meeting engagement may result in confusion, delay or even in the premature employment of the main body before the MAGTF commander has set the conditions for decisive action. The premature employment of the main body slows the MAGTF's tempo of operations and may cause it to lose the initiative.

When organizing his forces for movement to contact, the MAGTF commander considers span of control, communications, and the capabilities of the major subordinate commands. Both the GCE and the ACE can provide forces for all the formations. The GCE can gain and maintain physical contact with the enemy. The ACE can establish initial visual and electromagnetic contact with the enemy at extended ranges.

The MAGTF commander should give the major subordinate commanders the widest latitude to conduct movement to contact. This allows them the freedom to maneuver and exercise initiative in developing the situation once contact with the enemy is made. Unnecessary subdivision of the MAGTF's battlespace or constraints placed on the major subordinate commands for fire and maneuver within their respective AO may only slow the MAGTF's tempo. The MAGTF commander must consider airspace requirements and the capability of the Marine air command and control system during movement to contact.

The frontage assigned to the unit conducting a movement to contact must allow it sufficient room to deploy its main body, but not be so wide that large enemy forces might be inadvertently bypassed. The unit's frontage will be affected by the MAGTF commander's guidance on bypassing enemy forces or the requirement to clear his zone of all enemy forces. The MAGTF commander must ensure that the desired rate of advance is supportable by the CSSE to ensure that he does not reach a culminating point or an unplanned operational pause.

The MAGTF may encounter enemy forces too small to threaten the main body and that do not require its deployment with the resulting loss of momentum. While such enemy forces may pose little threat against the ground or ACE's combat power, they may pose a serious threat to the CSSE. The MAGTF commander must establish criteria on the size, nature or type of enemy activity that the main body may bypass and how assigned follow and support forces will deal with bypassed enemy forces.

The MAGTF commander identifies potential danger areas where his forces may make contact with the enemy, such as likely enemy defensive locations, engagement areas, observation posts, and natural and artificial obstacles. The MAGTF's reconnaissance and surveillance plan must provide for coverage of these danger areas. The MAGTF commander must recognize the enemy's most dangerous course of action and be prepared to focus his combat power at those times and places where the MAGTF is most vulnerable.

Because the MAGTF may be engaged by the enemy's air forces well before coming into contact with the enemy's ground forces, offensive air support (close air support and air interdiction specifically) and antiair warfare functions are essential to success of the movement to contact. The ACE must gain and maintain contact with the enemy. The MAGTF commander may also task the ACE to conduct deep reconnaissance to determine or confirm the location of enemy reserve, follow-on, and support forces. If he has enough intelligence to target these enemy forces, he may task the ACE to conduct an attack.

The CSSE must provide the full range of combat service support during movement to contact without slowing or jeopardizing the MAGTF's tempo. The support must be responsive and provide only what is needed—it should not encumber movement or maneuver. This requires a fine balance between push- and pull-logistics. The CSSE must take advantage of natural pauses during the course of the MAGTF's movement to replenish expended resources. Support for security forces is more difficult due to their separation from the main body and the need for self-contained maintenance and supply capabilities. This may also require a greater reliance on ACE assets to ensure prompt and effective support.

The MAGTF commander must ensure that once contact with the enemy has been gained, that it is maintained with whatever assets available. Aviation and ground combat assets may have to shift to maintain contact. The CSSE can also assist by ensuring that combat units do not reach a culminating point.

As the situation becomes clearer, the MAGTF commander is better able to determine how best to exploit the opportunity. Ideally, this means shifting to an attack, exploitation or pursuit. The major subordinate commanders must be ready to support a transition from one type of offensive operation to another.

Attack

An attack is an offensive operation characterized by coordinated movement, supported by fire, conducted to defeat, destroy, neutralize or capture the enemy. An attack may be conducted to seize or secure terrain. Focusing

combat power against the enemy with a tempo and intensity that the enemy cannot match, the commander attacks to shatter his opponent's will, disrupt his cohesion, and to gain the initiative. If an attack is successful, the enemy is no longer capable of—or willing to offer—meaningful resistance.

Attacks rarely develop exactly as planned. As long as the enemy has any freedom of action, unexpected difficulties will occur. As the attack progresses, control must become increasingly decentralized to subordinate commanders to permit them to meet the rapidly shifting situation. This is achieved through the use of the commander's intent and mission tactics. The commander sets conditions for a successful attack by attacking enemy fire support assets, command and control assets and support facilities, and front-line units. These fires protect the main effort and restrict the enemy's ability to counterattack. During the final stages of the attack, the main effort may rely primarily on organic fires to overcome remaining enemy resistance. The attack culminates in a powerful and violent assault. The commander immediately exploits his success by continuing the attack into the depth of the enemy defense to disrupt his cohesion.

Attacks can be hasty or deliberate based on the degree of preparation, planning, and coordination involved prior to execution. The distinction between hasty and deliberate attacks is a relative one.

A hasty attack is an attack when the commander decides to trade preparation time for speed to exploit an opportunity. A hasty attack takes advantage of audacity, surprise, and speed to achieve the commander's objectives before the enemy can effectively respond. The commander launches a hasty attack with the forces at hand or in immediate contact with the enemy and with little preparation before the enemy can concentrate forces or prepare an effective defense.

By necessity, hasty attacks do not employ complicated schemes of maneuver and require a minimum of coordination. Habitual support relationships, standing operating procedures, and battle drills contribute to increased tempo and the likelihood of success of the hasty attack. Unnecessary changing of the task organization of the force should be avoided to maintain momentum.

A deliberate attack is a type of offensive action characterized by pre-planned and coordinated employment of firepower and maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy. Deliberate attacks usually include the coordinated use of all available resources. Deliberate attacks are used when the enemy cannot be defeated with a hasty attack or there is no readily apparent advantage that must be rapidly exploited.

Main and supporting efforts and the forward positioning of resources are planned and coordinated throughout the battlespace to ensure the optimal application of the force's combat power. The commander must position follow-on forces and the reserve to best sustain the momentum of the attack. Deliberate attacks may include time for rehearsals and refinement of attack plans. The commander must weigh the advantages of a deliberate attack with respect to the enemy's ability to create or improve his defenses, develop his intelligence picture or take counteraction.

Commanders conduct various types of attack to achieve different effects. A single attack that results in the complete destruction or defeat of the enemy is rare. The commander must capitalize on the resulting disruption of the enemy's defenses through exploitation to reap the benefits of a successful attack.

Spoiling Attack

A spoiling attack is 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. See chapter 8.

Counterattack

A counterattack is a limited-objective attack conducted by part or all of a defending force to prevent the enemy from attaining the objectives of his attack. It may be conducted to regain lost ground, destroy enemy advance units, and wrest the initiative from the enemy. It may be the precursor to resuming offensive operations. See chapter 8.

Feint

A feint is a limited-objective attack made at a place other than that of the main effort with the aim of distracting the enemy's attention away from the main effort. A feint is a supporting attack that involves contact with the enemy. A feint must be sufficiently strong to confuse the enemy as to the location of the main attack. Ideally, a feint causes the enemy to commit forces to the diversion and away from the main effort. A unit conducting a feint usually attacks on a wider front than normal with a consequent reduction in mass and depth. A unit conducting a feint normally keeps only a minimal reserve to deal with unexpected developments.

Demonstration

A demonstration is an attack or a show of force on a front where a decision is not sought. Its aim is to deceive the enemy. A demonstration, like a feint, is a supporting attack. A demonstration, unlike a feint, does not make contact with

the enemy. The commander executes a demonstration by an actual or simulated massing of combat power, troop movements or some other activity designed to indicate the preparations for or beginning of an attack at a point other than the main effort. Demonstrations are used frequently in amphibious operations to draw enemy forces away from the actual landing beaches or to fix them in place. Demonstrations and feints increase the enemy's confusion while conserving combat power for the main and supporting efforts.

Reconnaissance in Force

A reconnaissance in force is a deliberate attack made to obtain information and to locate and test enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. It is used when knowledge of the enemy is vague and there is insufficient time or resources to develop the situation. While the primary purpose of a reconnaissance in force is to gain information, the commander must be prepared to exploit opportunity. Reconnaissance in force usually develops information more rapidly and in more detail than other reconnaissance methods. If the commander must develop the enemy situation along a broad front, reconnaissance in force may consist of strong probing actions to determine the enemy situation at selected points.

The commander may conduct reconnaissance in force as a means of keeping pressure on the defender by seizing key terrain and uncovering enemy weaknesses. The reconnoitering force must be of a size and strength to cause the enemy to react strongly enough to disclose his locations, dispositions, strength, planned fires, and planned use of the reserve. Since a reconnaissance in force is conducted when knowledge of the enemy is vague, a task-organized combined arms force normally is used. Deciding whether to reconnoiter in force, the commander considers—

- His present information on the enemy and the importance of additional information.
- Efficiency and speed of other intelligence collection assets.
- The extent his future plans may be divulged by the reconnaissance in force.
- The possibility that the reconnaissance in force may lead to a decisive engagement that the commander does not desire.

Raid

A raid is an attack, usually small scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain. It ends with the planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. The organization and composition of the raid force are tailored to the mission. Raids are

characterized by surprise and swift, precise, and bold action. Raids are typically conducted to—

- Destroy enemy installations and facilities.
- Disrupt enemy command and control or support activities.
- Divert enemy attention.
- Secure information.

Raids may be conducted in the defense as spoiling attacks to disrupt the enemy's preparations for attack; during delaying operations to further delay or disrupt the enemy or with other offensive operations to confuse the enemy, divert his attention or disrupt his operations. Raids require detailed planning, preparation, and special training.

Exploitation

Exploitation is an offensive operation that usually follows a successful attack and is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. The exploitation extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. The exploitation force expands enemy destruction through unrelenting pressure thus weakening his will to resist. The exploitation is characterized by initiative, boldness, and the unhesitating employment of uncommitted forces.

The commander must prepare to exploit the success of every attack without delay. In the hasty attack, the force in contact normally continues the attack, transitioning to exploitation. In the deliberate attack, the commander's principal tool for the exploitation is normally the reserve. At the MAGTF level, aviation forces may support the reserve or be additionally tasked as the exploitation force. The commander retains only those reserves necessary to ensure his flexibility of operation, continued momentum in the advance, and likely enemy responses to the exploitation. The reserve is generally positioned where it can exploit the success of the main effort or supporting efforts. Exploitation forces execute bold, aggressive, and rapid operations using the commander's intent and mission tactics.

The decision to commence the exploitation requires considerable judgment, intuition, and situational awareness by the commander. Committing the exploitation force prematurely or too late may fail to exploit the opportunity presented by a successful attack. Conditions favorable for an exploitation may include—

- Increased number of enemy prisoners of war.
- Absence of organized defenses.

- Absence of accurate enemy massed direct and indirect fires.
- Loss of enemy cohesion upon contact.
- Capture, desertion or absence of enemy commanders and senior staff officers.

Typical objectives for the exploitation force include command posts, reserves, seizure of key terrain, and the destruction of combat support and service support units deep in the enemy's rear. The destruction or defeat of these objectives further disrupt and disorganize the enemy, preventing reconstitution of the defense or the enemy's force. The commander must be prepared to assess the effects of his exploitation and determine when the time is at hand to commence the pursuit of the enemy.

Pursuit

A pursuit is an offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. Pursuits often develop from successful exploitation operations when the enemy defenses begin to disintegrate. A pursuit may also be initiated when the enemy has lost his ability to fight effectively and attempts to withdraw.

Since the conditions that allow for pursuit can seldom be predicted, a pursuit force is not normally established ahead of time. The commander must quickly designate appropriate forces to conduct and support pursuit operations or the exploitation force may continue as the pursuit force. A pursuit is normally made up of a direct pressure force and an encircling force. See figure 7-3 on page 7-16.

These forces are similar to a hammer and anvil. The direct pressure force is like the hammer. It is usually a powerful maneuver force that maintains continuous contact with the retreating enemy, driving the enemy before them. The encircling force serves as the anvil. The encircling force requires sufficient mobility and speed to get itself into position ahead of or on the flank of the fleeing enemy to halt and fix the enemy in place. Aviation forces are particularly well-suited to act as the encircling force. By using its superior tactical mobility and agility in concert with its potent firepower, aviation forces can destroy enemy forces, interdict lines of retreat, and add to the demoralization of the enemy force.

Pursuits are pushed to the utmost limits of endurance of troops, equipment, and supplies. If the pursuit force is required to pause for any reason, the enemy has an opportunity to break contact, reorganize, and establish organized defenses. Pursuit, like exploitation, must be conducted relentlessly. Highly mobile and versatile combat service support forces are particularly critical to sustaining a relentless pursuit and preventing the MAGTF from reaching its culminating point before the enemy is completely defeated.

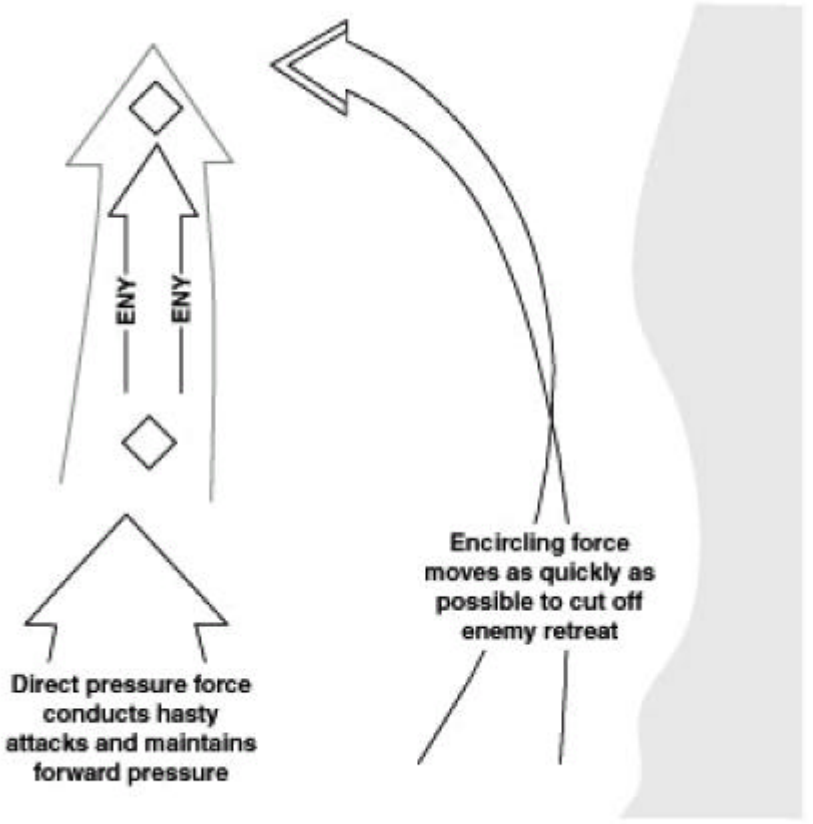

Figure 7-3. Pursuit.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

The forms of offensive maneuver are the basic techniques a force conducting offensive operations uses to gain advantage over the enemy. Each form of maneuver has a resultant effect on the enemy. The MAGTF commander chooses the form of maneuver that fully exploits all the dimensions of the battlespace and best accomplishes his mission. He generally chooses one of these as a foundation upon which to build a course of action.

The MAGTF commander organizes and employs the ACE, GCE or CSSE to best support the chosen form of maneuver. The GCE and ACE are the two combat arms of the MAGTF. They execute tactical actions to support or accomplish the MAGTF commander's mission. Either can be used as a

maneuver force or a source of fires as the MAGTF commander applies combined arms. The MAGTF commander may task-organize aviation and ground combat units, along with combat service support units, under a single commander to execute the form of offensive maneuver selected. Aviation forces may be comprised of fixed-wing aircraft, rotary-wing aircraft or a combination with GCE and CSSE units attached or in support.

Frontal Attack

A frontal attack is an offensive maneuver where the main action is directed against the front of the enemy forces. It is used to rapidly overrun or destroy a weak enemy force or fix a significant portion of a larger enemy force in place over a broad front to support a flanking attack or envelopment. It is generally the least preferred form of maneuver because it strikes the enemy where he is the strongest. See figure 7-4. It is normally used when commanders possess overwhelming combat power and the enemy is at a clear disadvantage.

For deliberate attacks, the frontal attack may be the most costly form of maneuver since it exposes the attacker to the concentrated fires of the defender while limiting the effectiveness of the attacker's own fires. As the most direct form of maneuver, however, the frontal attack is useful for overwhelming light defenses, covering forces or disorganized enemy forces.

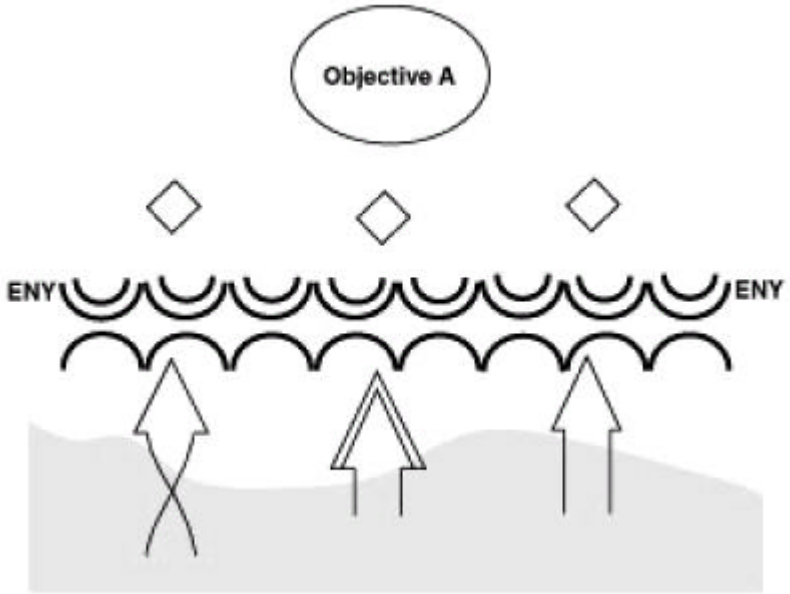

Figure 7-4. Frontal Attack.

Frontal attacks may be used by supporting efforts to fix the enemy in place and enable the main effort to maneuver to a position of advantage during an envelopment or a flanking attack. A frontal attack can create a gap through which the attacking force can conduct a penetration. Frontal attacks are often used with feints and demonstrations. Aviation forces and supporting arms are often used to create gaps with fires in the enemy's front or to prevent or delay enemy reinforcements reaching the front lines.

Flanking Attack

A flanking attack is a form of offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy force. See figure 7-5. A flank is the right or left side of a military formation and is not oriented toward the enemy. It is usually not as strong in terms of forces or fires as is the front of a military formation. A flank may be created by the attacker through the use of fires or by a successful penetration. It is similar to an envelopment but generally conducted on a shallower axis. Such an attack is designed to defeat the enemy force while minimizing the effect of the enemy's frontally oriented combat power. Flanking attacks are normally conducted with the main effort directed at the flank of the enemy. Usually, there is a supporting effort that engages by fire and maneuver the enemy force's front while the main effort maneuvers to attack the enemy's flank. This supporting effort diverts the enemy's attention from the threatened flank. It is often used for a hasty attack or meeting engagement where speed and simplicity are paramount to maintaining battle tempo and, ultimately, the initiative.

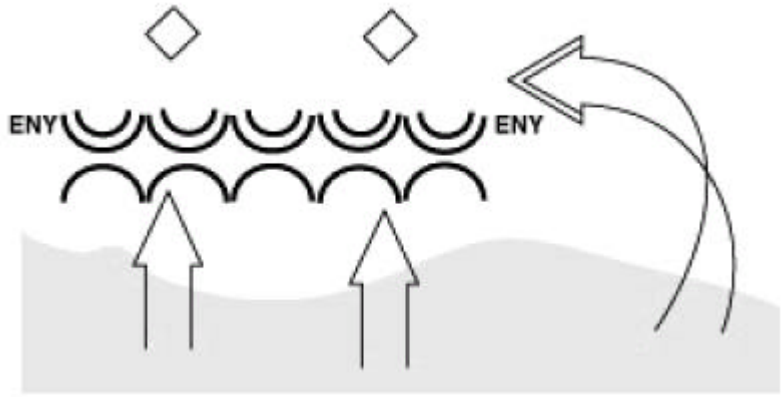

Figure 7-5. Flanking Attack.

Envelopment

An envelopment is a form of offensive maneuver by which the attacker bypasses the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear. See figure 7-6 and figure 7-7 on page 7-20. The enemy's defensive positions may be bypassed using ground, waterborne or vertical envelopment. An envelopment compels the defender to fight on the ground of the attacker's choosing. It requires surprise and superior mobility relative to the enemy. The operational reach and speed of aviation forces, coupled with their ability to rapidly mass effects on the enemy, make them an ideal force to conduct an envelopment. An envelopment is designed to—

- Strike the enemy where he is weakest (critical vulnerabilities).
- Strike the enemy at an unexpected place.
- Attack the enemy rear.
- Avoid the enemy's strengths.
- Disrupt the enemy's command and control.
- Disrupt the enemy's logistics effort.
- Destroy or disrupt the enemy's fire support assets.
- Sever the enemy's lines of communications.
- Minimize friendly casualties.

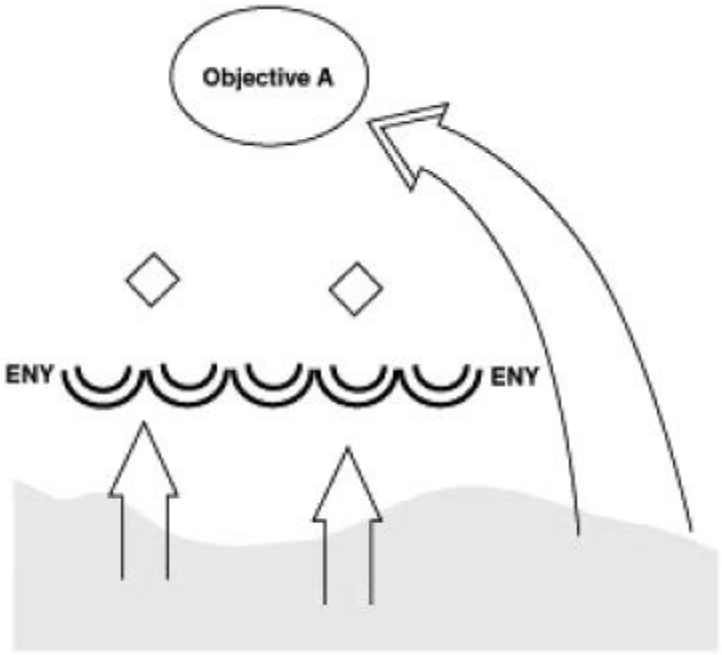

Figure 7-6. Single Envelopment.

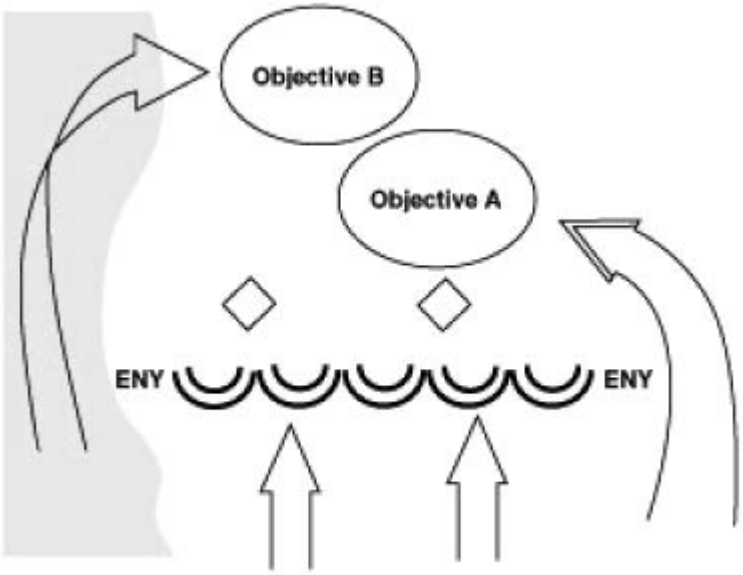

Figure 7-7. Double Envelopment.

When enveloping, the commander applies strength against weakness by maneuvering the main effort around or over an enemy's main defenses. Envelopments normally require a supporting effort to fix the enemy, prevent his escape, and reduce his ability to react against the main effort. They fix the enemy by forcing him to fight in multiple directions simultaneously or by deceiving him regarding the location, timing or existence of the main effort. Supporting efforts must be of sufficient strength to ensure these tasks are successful, as the success of the attack often depends on the effects achieved by the supporting effort.

An envelopment is conducted at sufficient depth so that the enemy does not have time to reorient his defenses before the commander concentrates his force for the attack on the objective. Because of their ability to rapidly mass, aviation forces are particularly well-suited to function as the enveloping force or to enable the success of the enveloping force.

The commander may choose to conduct a double envelopment. Double envelopments are designed to force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging axis of the attack. It may lead to the encirclement of the enemy force so the commander must be prepared to contain and defeat any breakout attempts. The commander selects multiple objectives to the rear of the enemy's defense and the enveloping forces use different routes to attack, seize or secure those objectives.

Turning Movement

A turning movement is a form of offensive maneuver where the attacker passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear. See figure 7-8. Normally, the main effort executes the turning movement as the supporting effort fixes the enemy in position. A turning movement differs from an envelopment in that the turning force usually operates at such distances from the fixing force that mutual support is unlikely. The turning force must be able to operate independently.

The goal of a turning movement is to force the enemy to abandon his position or reposition major forces to meet the threat. Once "turned" the enemy loses his advantage of fighting from prepared positions on ground of his choosing. Typical objectives of the main effort in a turning movement may include—

- Critical logistic sites.
- Command and control nodes.
- Lines of communications.

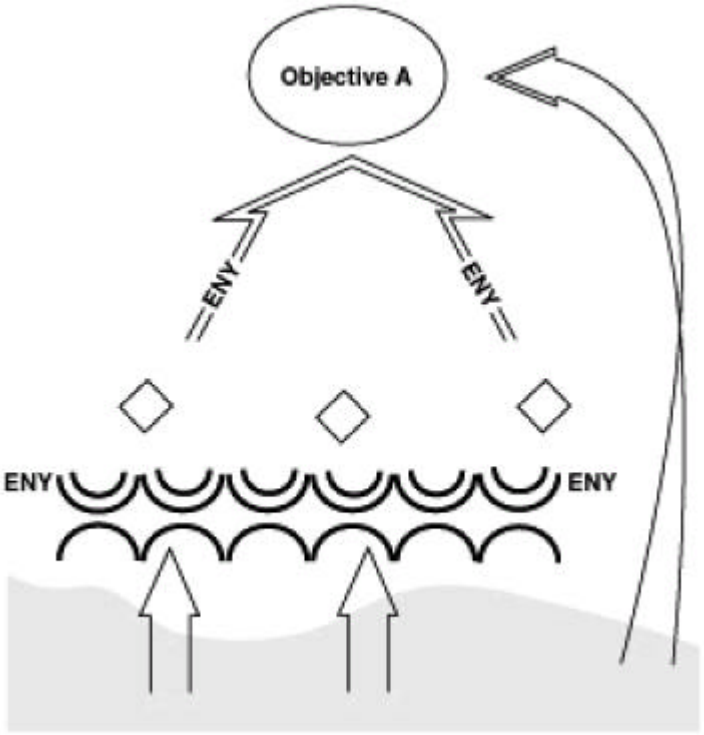

Figure 7-8. Turning Movement.

Using operational maneuver from the sea, the MAGTF is particularly well-suited to conduct a turning movement for the joint force commander. The ACE's speed and agility allow it to mass at the necessary operational depth to support the MAGTF commander's plan.

Infiltration

Infiltration is a form of maneuver where forces move covertly through or into an enemy area to attack positions in the enemy's rear. This movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. Forces move over, through or around enemy positions without detection to assume a position of advantage over the enemy. See figure 7-9. Infiltration is normally conducted with other forms of maneuver. The commander orders an infiltration to move all or part of his force through gaps in the enemy's defense to—

- Achieve surprise.
- Attack enemy positions from the flank or rear.
- Occupy a position from which to support the main attack by fire.
- Secure key terrain.
- Conduct ambushes and raids in the enemy's rear area to harass and disrupt his command and control and support activities.
- Cut off enemy forward units.

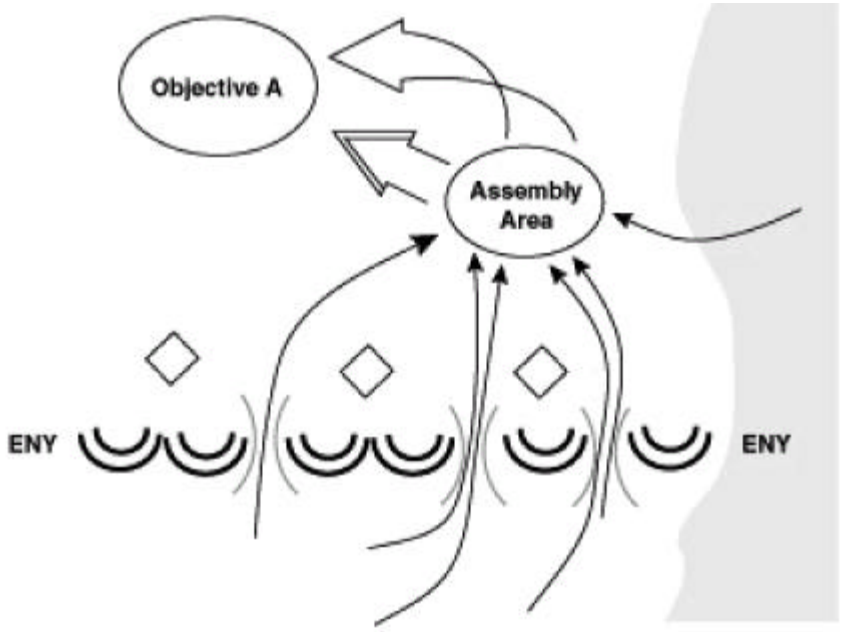

Figure 7-9. Infiltration.

Infiltrations normally take advantage of limited visibility, rough terrain or unoccupied or unobserved areas. These conditions often allow undetected movement of small elements when the movement of the entire force would present greater risks. The commander may elect to conduct a demonstration, feint or some other form of deception to divert the enemy's attention from the area to be infiltrated.

To increase control, speed, and the ability to mass combat power, a force infiltrates by the largest possible units compatible with the need for stealth, enemy capabilities and speed. Infiltrating forces may depend heavily on aviation forces for aerial resupply and close air support.

The infiltrating force may be required to conduct a linkup or series of linkups after infiltrating to assemble for its subsequent mission. Infiltration requires extremely detailed and accurate information about terrain and enemy dispositions and activities. The plan for infiltration must be simple, clear, and carefully coordinated.

Penetration

A penetration is a form of offensive maneuver where an attacking force seeks to rupture the enemy's defense on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system. Penetrations are used when enemy flanks are not assailable or time, terrain or the enemy's disposition does not permit the employment of another form of maneuver. Successful penetrations create assailable flanks and provide access to the enemy's rear. A penetration generally occurs in three stages:

- Rupturing the position.
- Widening the gap.
- Seizing the objective.

A penetration is accomplished by concentrating overwhelmingly superior combat power on a narrow front and in depth. As the attacking force ruptures the enemy's defenses, units must be tasked to secure the shoulders of the breach and ultimately widening the gap for follow-on units. Rupturing the enemy position and widening the gap are not in themselves decisive. The attacker must exploit the rupture by attacking into the enemy's rear or attacking laterally to roll up the enemy's positions. See figure 7-10 on page 7-24. The shock action and mobility of a mechanized force and aviation forces are useful in rupturing the enemy's position and exploiting that rupture.

The commander may conduct multiple penetrations. Exploitation forces may converge on a single, deep objective or seize independent objectives. When it is

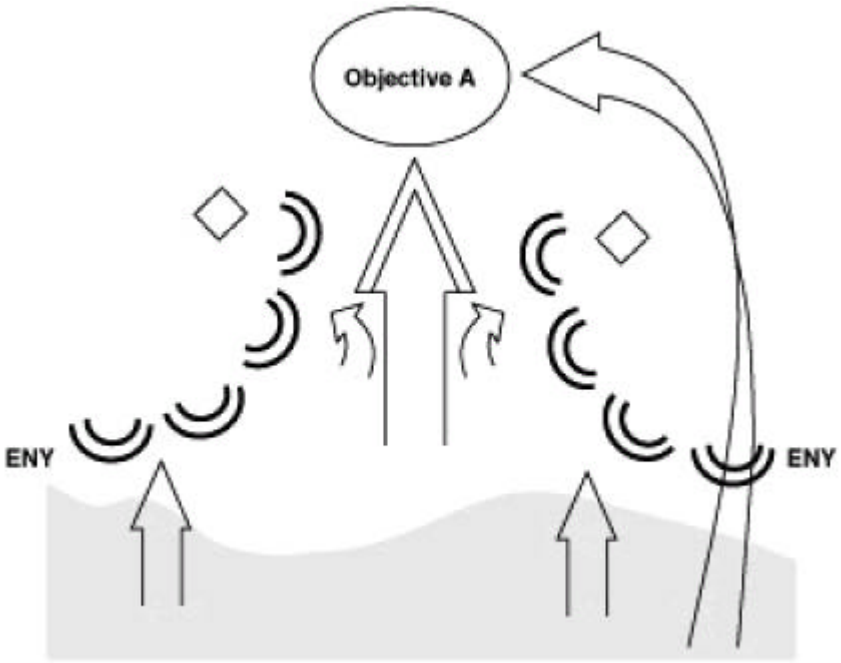

Figure 7-10. Penetration.

impracticable to sustain more than one penetration, the commander generally exploits the one enjoying the greatest success. Due to their inherent flexibility and ability to rapidly mass effects, aviation forces are well-suited to the role of an exploitation force or to enable the success of the exploitation force. Because the force conducting the penetration is vulnerable to flanking attack, it must move rapidly. Follow-on forces must be close behind to secure and widen the shoulders of the breach.

FUTURE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Expeditionary maneuver warfare and emerging technologies will have a major impact on how the Marine Corps will conduct offensive operations in the future. New information technologies will allow the commander to share his operational design and situational awareness with his subordinates much faster and clearer than in the past. All commanders will share a common operational picture, specifically tailored for their echelon of command. This situational awareness, coupled with a common operating picture will allow commanders to synchronize the actions of their forces, assess the effects of their operations, and make rapid adjustments to the plan. Subordinate commanders will have the same situational

awareness as their commander allowing them to exercise their initiative to meet the commander's intent without waiting for direction from their higher headquarters. This increased ability to fuse information, determine its significance, and exploit the resulting opportunities will help maintain the initiative and generate tempo.

New doctrine, organizations, and training based on evolving tactics and equipment will allow commanders to mass the effects of long range fires and agile maneuver, rather than massing forces to deliver the decisive stroke. New intelligence collection and surveillance technologies will allow the commander to accurately and rapidly locate the enemy and will reduce the need to conduct costly and time-consuming movements to contact or meeting engagements. New target acquisition equipment and fire support command and control systems will increase responsiveness and enable emerging "sensor to shooter" technologies.

Expeditionary maneuver warfare and emerging technologies will enable the MAGTF commander to conduct simultaneous operations across the battlespace to defeat specific enemy capabilities. The effects of these operations will present the enemy with multiple, simultaneous dilemmas for the MAGTF commander to exploit.

not preclude the commander from having to establish adequate security during the movement. A retirement is largely an administrative movement. Speed, control, and security are the most important considerations. Commanders retire units to—

- Position forces for other missions.
- Adjust the defensive scheme.
- Prepare to assist the delays and withdrawals of other units.
- Deceive the enemy.

PASSAGE OF LINES

A passage of lines is an operation where 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. It is always conducted with another mission, such as to begin an attack, conduct an exploitation or a security force mission. A passage of lines, forward or rearward, is a complex and often dangerous operation, requiring thorough coordination. Inherent in the conduct of security operations, especially in the defense, is the requirement to execute a passage of lines. In an advance, security forces may be required to fix enemy forces in place and allow the main force to pass through in the attack. Faced with a superior enemy force or in the conduct of security operations in the defense, security forces must fall back and execute a rearward passage of lines, conducting battle handover with forces in the main battle area.

The conduct of a passage of lines involves the stationary force and the moving force. In the offense, the moving force is normally the attacking force and is organized to assume its assigned mission after the passage. The stationary force facilitates the passage and provides maximum support to the moving force. Normally, the plans and requirements of the moving force have priority. The time or circumstances when responsibility for the zone of action transfers from the stationary force to the moving force must be agreed upon by the two commanders or specified by higher authority. Normally, the attacking commander assumes responsibility at or before the time of attack. Responsibility may be transferred before the time of attack to allow the attacking commander to control any preparation fires. In this latter case, stationary force elements that are in contact at the time of the transfer must be placed under the operational control of the attacking commander. Liaison between the forces involved should be established as early as possible.

In the defense, a rearward passage of lines is normally executed when withdrawing a security force. The withdrawing force is the moving force and may pass through the stationary force en route to performing another mission or it may be integrated into the stationary unit. The common commander must specify any special command relationships and retains control of the passage. The actual transfer of responsibility for the sector normally is agreed upon by the executing commanders. This is carried out more effectively if the commanders are collocated. The withdrawing commander is responsible for identifying the last element of his command as it passes through the stationary unit. A detailed plan for mutual recognition must be prepared and carefully disseminated throughout both forces. The stationary commander reports to his senior commander when he has assumed responsibility for the sector. The withdrawing commander reports to the senior commander when his unit has completed the passage.

Due to the risks associated with a passage of lines, they are, if possible, conducted at night or during periods of reduced visibility. Risks include fratricide, exposure to enemy counteractions, and loss of control as responsibility for the sector is handed over from one force to another, and the potential of unintegrated movement of forces. Stationary and moving force commanders normally collocate their command posts to facilitate command and control of this demanding tactical operation.

LINKUP

A linkup is an operation where two friendly forces join together in a hostile area. The purpose of the linkup is to establish contact between two forces. A linkup may occur between a helicopterborne force and a force on the ground, between two converging forces or in the relief of an encircled force. The commander directing the linkup establishes the command relationships and responsibilities of the two units, during and after the linkup, to include responsibility for fire support coordination.

A linkup involves a stationary force and a moving force. If both units are moving, one is designated the stationary force and should occupy the linkup point at least temporarily to effect linkup. The commanders involved must coordinate their schemes of maneuver. They agree on primary and alternate linkup points where physical contact between the advance elements of the two units will occur. Linkup points must be easily recognizable to both units and are located where the routes of the moving force intersect the security elements of the stationary force. Commanders must carefully coordinate fire support for the safety of both units.

RELIEF IN PLACE

A relief in place 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. Responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. The incoming unit continues the operation as ordered. The relief must be executed in an expeditious and orderly manner. Every effort must be made to effect the relief without weakening the tactical integrity and security of the assigned area.

The outgoing commander is responsible for the defense of his sector until command is passed. The moment when command is to pass is determined by mutual agreement between the commanders involved, within the direction of higher headquarters. Both commanders should be collocated throughout the operation to facilitate the transfer of command and control. Following this transfer, the incoming commander will assume OPCON of all elements of the outgoing force that have not yet been relieved. The incoming commander will report to higher headquarters when he has assumed command.

The relief can take place simultaneously over the entire width of the sector or it can be staggered over time. If forces are relieved simultaneously across the sector, less time is required but greater congestion may be created. The readiness of the defense is reduced, and the enemy is more likely to detect the greater level of movement. By contrast, a relief staggered over time takes longer, but a larger portion of the force is prepared to conduct operations.

OBSTACLE CROSSING

An obstacle is a natural or manmade impediment to movement that usually requires specific techniques and equipment to overcome. A series of such obstacles is called a barrier. Crossing obstacles is most often required as part of the offense, although it may take place during the defense. Any obstacle can be crossed given sufficient time and resources. Crossings covered by the enemy, however, require extensive control and preparation to minimize losses from enemy action. A critical requirement in any obstacle crossing is the reduction or elimination of the effects of enemy fire covering the obstacle through the employment of maneuver and neutralizing, suppressing or obscuration fires. The goal is to cross the obstacle with minimum delay, loss of momentum, and disruption to concept of operations and casualties.

Upon encountering an obstacle, the commander can bypass the obstacle or execute a breach. Detailed intelligence is required to reveal the enemy's capability to oppose the crossing, the characteristics of the obstacle and crossing

points, and the terrain on the far side. When possible, the attacker bypasses the enemy obstacles, saving time, labor, and risk to personnel and equipment. However, the commander must exercise caution since obstacles are often employed to canalize forces. A bypass route that at first appears desirable may lead into a killing zone.

Planning an obstacle crossing should include provisions for a hasty, and, failing or precluding that, a deliberate attempt. The commander's options may be limited because of restrictions on maneuver, the ability to deliver supporting fires, and the time required to move forces across or around the obstacle. The commander may conduct demonstrations and feints at locations away from the main crossing or breaching point to draw the enemy's defenses from that point.

The attacker advances to the obstacle quickly and on a broad front to increase the possibility of effecting a hasty crossing. The inherent capabilities of the ACE provide the MAGTF commander multiple options for moving on a broad front and rapidly crossing obstacles to establish security on the enemy side. The ACE can either provide combat assault transport for MAGTF units attacking directly across the obstacle or carry MAGTF units far beyond the obstacle to bypass the enemy or conduct a turning movement.

Once forces and equipment are committed to crossing, withdrawal or deviation from the initial plan is extremely difficult. During a crossing, a force is most vulnerable while astride the obstacle. After establishing units on the far side of the obstacle, the commander pushes his combat power across or through as quickly as possible.

Breach

When he cannot bypass an obstacle, the attacker attempts to breach. Breaching, the most common means of crossing an obstacle, is the employment of any available means to break through or secure a passage through an enemy defense, obstacle, minefield or fortification. The plan for breaching is based on the concept of operation on the far side. There are two types of breaching that generally correspond to hasty and deliberate attacks, with many of the same considerations, advantages, and disadvantages.

A hasty breach is the rapid creation of a route through a minefield, barrier or fortification by any expedient method. It is conducted as a continuation of the operation underway with a minimum loss of momentum. A hasty breach is characterized by speed and surprise, minimal concentration of forces, and decentralization of control and execution. Leading elements try to cross or breach

using their own resources. Minimal engineer support, if any, is involved. Breaching equipment should be readily available to avoid the loss of momentum.

A deliberate breach is the creation of a lane through a minefield or a clear route through a barrier or fortification, which is systematically planned and carried out. It requires a concentration of the force to overcome the obstacle and enemy defenses on the far side. This requires extensive planning, detailed preparation, sustained supporting arms and engineer support. Control is centralized throughout. When forced to conduct a deliberate breach, the attacker may lose momentum and the initiative. A deliberate breach should only be implemented if the tactical situation does not permit a hasty breach.

River Crossing

Wide, unfordable rivers exercise considerable influence on military operations because they impose restrictions on movement and maneuver. They constitute obstacles to attack and form natural lines of resistance for defense. The strength of a river as an obstacle increases with width, depth, and velocity of the current. A river crossing is an operation required before ground combat power can be projected and sustained across a water obstacle. Like an amphibious operation, it is a centrally planned offensive operation that requires the thoughtful allocation of resources and control measures. The primary concern is the rapid buildup of combat power on the far side to continue offensive operations.

A hasty crossing is crossing an inland water obstacle using crossing means at hand or those readily available and made without pausing for elaborate preparations. Preferably, a hasty crossing is conducted by seizing an intact crossing site.

A deliberate crossing is crossing an inland water obstacle that requires extensive planning and detailed preparations.

BREAKOUT FROM ENCIRCLEMENT

A breakout is both an offensive and a defensive operation. An encircled force normally attempts a breakout when the—

- Breakout is ordered or is within a senior commander's intent.
- Encircled force does not have sufficient relative combat power to defend itself against the enemy.
- Encircled force does not have adequate terrain to conduct its defense.
- Encircled force cannot sustain itself for any length of time or until relieved by friendly forces.

The commander must execute the breakout as soon as possible. The sooner the breakout is executed, the less time the enemy has to strengthen his position and the more organic resources and support the encircled force has available. The encircled force may receive fire support and diversions from forces outside the encirclement. Most importantly, the encircled force must maintain the momentum of the attack. If the breakout fails, the force will be more vulnerable to defeat or destruction than it was before the breakout attempt.

The encircled force normally conducts a breakout by task-organizing with a force that conducts the rupture, a main body, and a rear guard. If the commander has enough forces, he may organize separate reserve, diversionary, and supporting elements. Any of these forces may consist of aviation or ground combat units (one or both as individual elements or as task-organized combined arms teams) and appropriate combat service support organizations, based on the factors of METT-T.

The force conducting the rupture, which may consist of two-thirds of the total encircled force, is assigned the mission to penetrate the enemy's encircling position, widen the gap, and hold the shoulders of the gap until all other encircled forces have moved through. The main body follows the force conducting the rupture to maintain the momentum of the attack and secure objectives past the rupture. The main body includes the main command post and the bulk of the combat service support. The rear guard provides protection for the force conducting the rupture and the main body as they pass beyond the rupture.

APPENDIX B

Principles of War

Contents

The Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy of maneuver warfare is rooted in the principles of war. These nine principles apply across the range of military operations and at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. They are listed under the age-old acronym, "MOOSEMUSS."

The principles of war are useful aids to a commander as he considers how to accomplish his mission. They assist the commander in organizing his thinking about his mission, the enemy, the battlespace, and his forces. They should not be considered as prescriptive steps or actions that must be accomplished, but as tools to plan, execute, and assess operations. Successful application of the principles requires a commander's judgment, skill, and experience to adapt to constantly changing conditions and situations.

MASS

Concentrate the effects of combat power at the decisive place and time to achieve decisive results.

Commanders mass the effects of combat power to overwhelm the enemy and gain control of the situation. Mass applies to fires, combat support, and combat service support as well as numbers of forces. Proper use of the principle of mass,

together with the other principles of war, may achieve decisive local superiority by a numerically inferior force. The decision to concentrate requires strict economy and the acceptance of risk elsewhere, particularly in view of the lethality of modern weapons that mandate rapid assembly and speedy dispersal of forces.

OBJECTIVE

Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.

The ultimate military objective of war is to defeat the enemy's forces or destroy his will to fight. The objective of each operation must contribute to this ultimate objective. Intermediate objectives must contribute quickly and economically to the purpose of the operation. The selection of an objective is based on consideration of the ultimate goal, forces available, the threat, and the AO. Every commander must clearly understand the overall mission of the higher command, his own mission, the tasks he must perform, and the reasons therefore. He considers every contemplated action in light of its direct contribution to the objective. He must clearly communicate the overall objective of the operation to his subordinates.

OFFENSIVE

Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.

Offensive action is the decisive form of combat. Offensive action is necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and to maintain freedom of action. It allows the commander to exploit enemy weaknesses, impose his will upon the enemy, and determine the course of the battle. A defensive posture should only be a temporary expedient until the means are available to resume the offensive. Even in the conduct of a defense, the commander seeks every opportunity to seize the initiative by offensive action.

SECURITY

Never permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage.

Security is those measures taken to prevent surprise, ensure freedom of action, and deny the enemy information about friendly forces, capabilities, and plans. Security is essential to the preservation of combat power across the range of military operations, even in benign environments. However, since risk is an

inherent condition of war, security does not imply overcautiousness or the avoidance of calculated risk. In fact, security can often be enhanced by bold maneuver and offensive action, which deny the enemy the chance to interfere. Adequate security requires an accurate appreciation of enemy capabilities, sufficient security measures, effective reconnaissance, and continuous readiness for action.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

Allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts.

Economy of force is the reciprocal of the principle of mass. The commander allocates the minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. This requires the acceptance of prudent risks in selected areas to achieve superiority at the decisive time and location with the main effort. To devote means to unnecessary efforts or excessive means to necessary secondary efforts violates the principles of mass and objective. Economy of force measures are achieved through limited attacks, defense, deceptions or delaying actions.

MANEUVER

Place the enemy in a disadvantageous position through the flexible application of combat power.

Maneuver is the employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fires, or fire potential, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy to accomplish the mission. That advantage may be psychological, technological or temporal as well as spatial. Maneuver alone cannot usually produce decisive results; however, maneuver provides favorable conditions for closing with the enemy in decisive battle. Maneuver contributes significantly to sustaining the initiative, exploiting success, preserving freedom of action, and reducing vulnerability. Effective maneuver—in combination with mass, surprise, and economy of force—allows an inferior force to achieve decisive superiority at the necessary time and place. At all echelons, successful application of this principle requires not only fires and movement, but also flexibility of thought, plans, organization, and command and control.

UNITY OF COMMAND

For every objective, ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander.

Unity of command is based on the designation of a single commander with the authority to direct and coordinate the efforts of all assigned forces in pursuit of a common objective. The goal of unity of command is unity of effort. In joint, multinational, and interagency operations where the commander may not control all elements in his AO, he seeks cooperation and builds consensus to achieve unity of effort.

SURPRISE

Strike the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which he is unprepared.

The commander seeks every possible means to achieve surprise by 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, but only that he 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 may compensate for numerical inferiority.

SIMPLICITY

Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders to ensure thorough understanding.

Plans should be as simple and direct as the situation and mission dictate. Direct, simple plans, and clear, concise orders reduce the chance for misunderstanding and confusion, and promote effective execution. In combat, even the simplest plan is usually difficult to execute. Other factors being equal, the simplest plan is preferred.

Multinational operations place a premium on simplicity. Language, doctrine, and cultural differences complicate military operations. Simple plans and orders minimize the confusion inherent in joint, multinational, and interagency operations.