

CHAPTER 7

The MAGTF in the Offense

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"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.

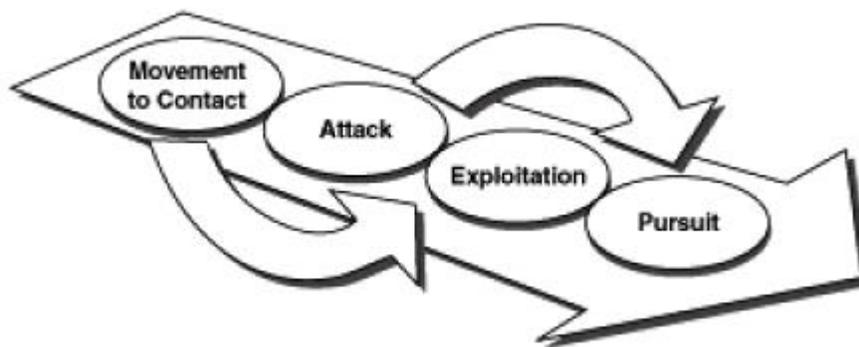


Figure 7-1. Types of Offensive Operations.

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

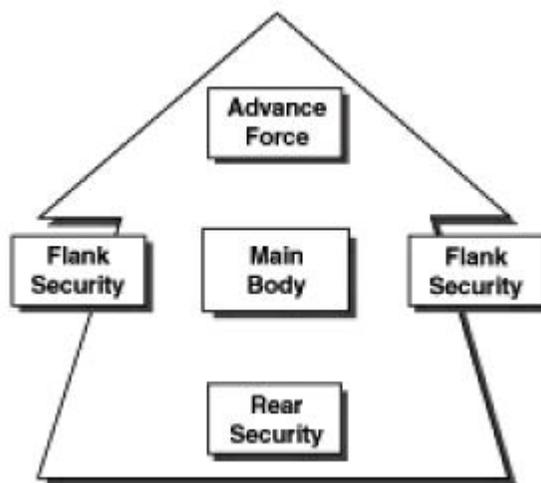


Figure 7-2. Movement to Contact.

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.

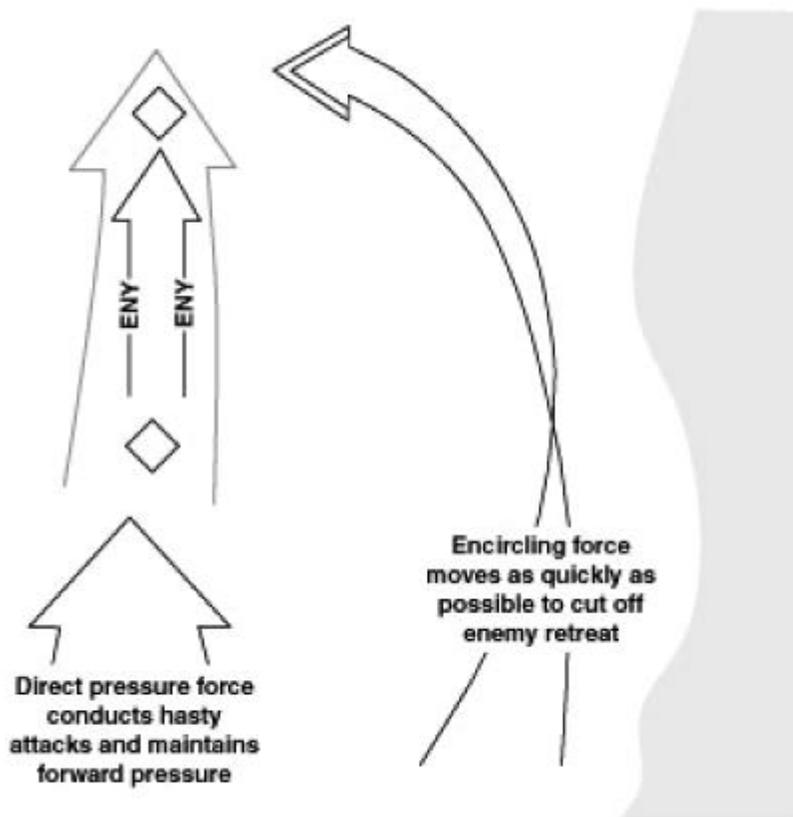


Figure 7-3. Pursuit.

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.

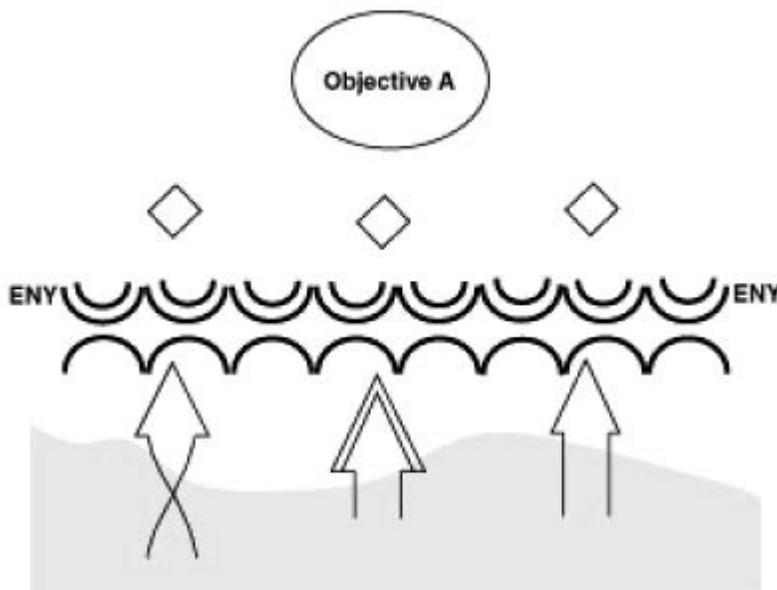


Figure 7-4. Frontal Attack.

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.

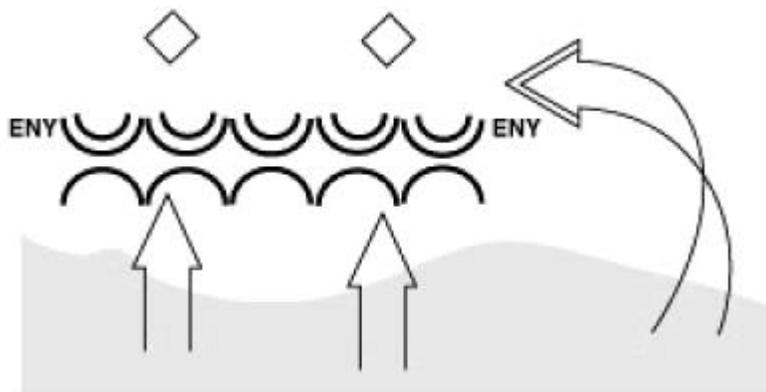


Figure 7-5. Flanking Attack.

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.

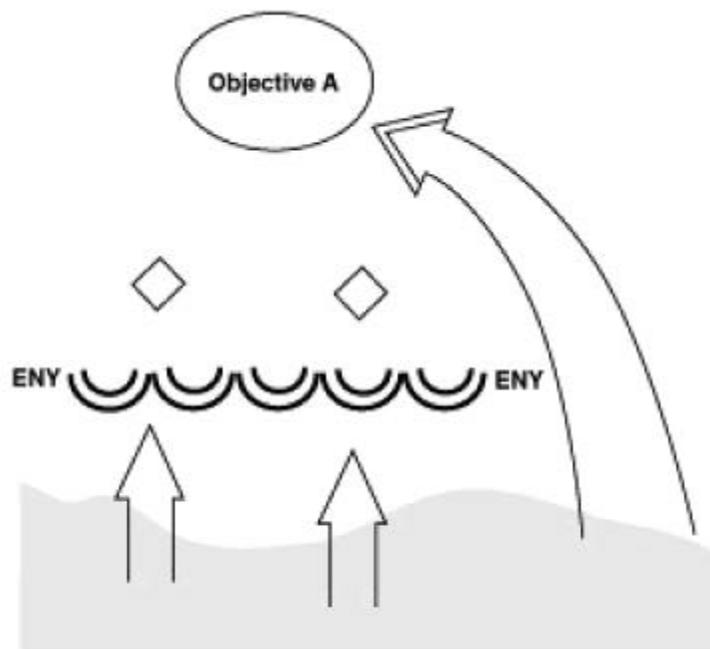


Figure 7-6. Single Envelopment.

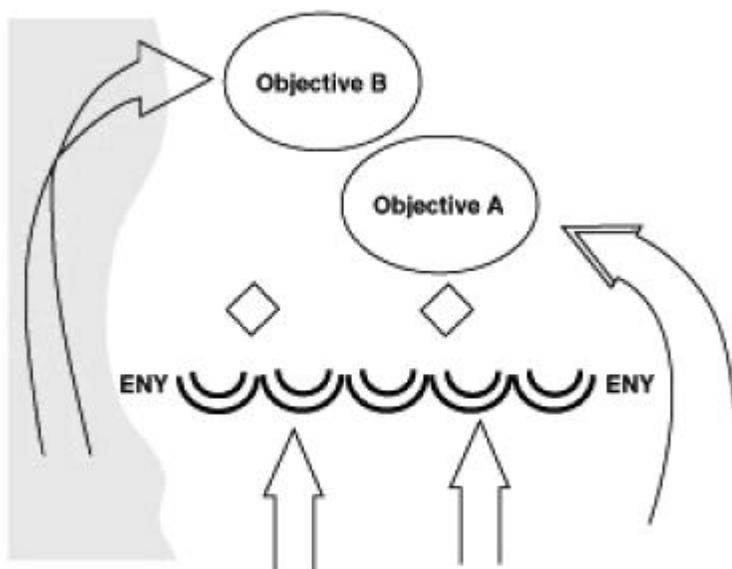


Figure 7-7. Double Envelopment.

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.

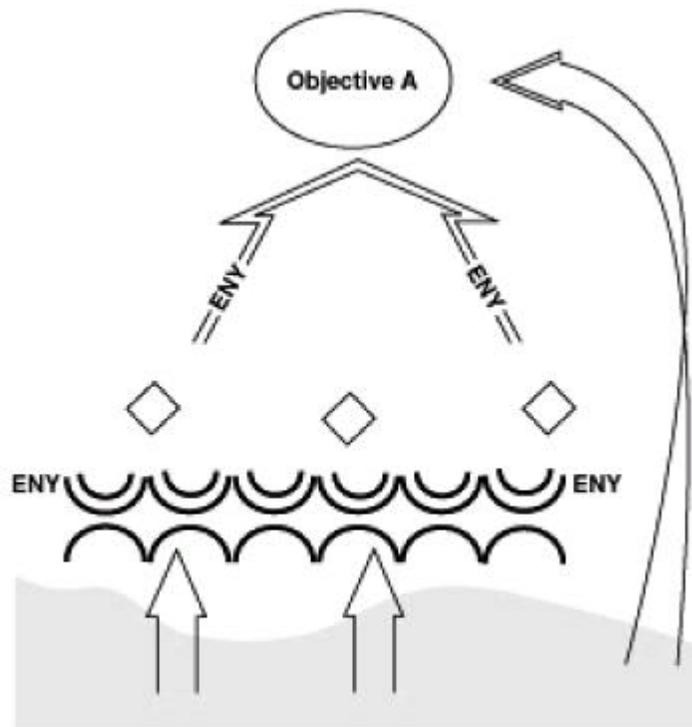


Figure 7-8. Turning Movement.

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.

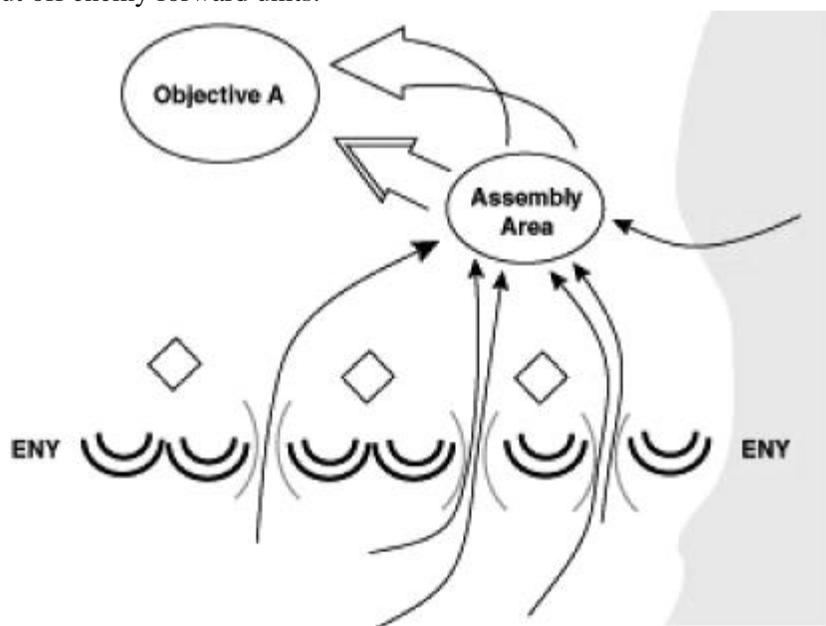


Figure 7-9. Infiltration.

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

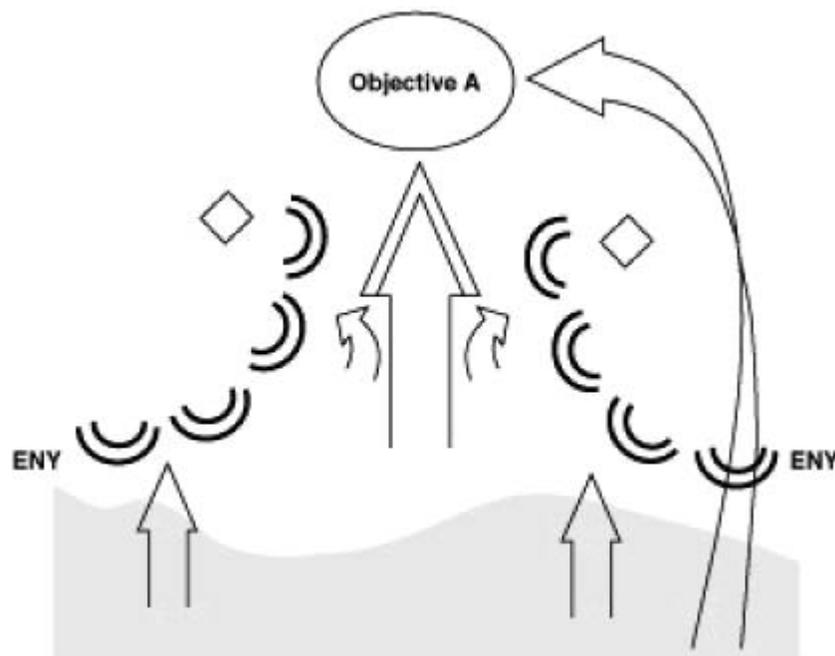


Figure 7-10. Penetration.

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.

CHAPTER 8

The MAGTF in the Defense

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“A swift and vigorous transition to attack—the flashing sword of vengeance—is the most brilliant point of the defensive.”

—Carl von Clausewitz

“Counterattack is the soul of defense . . . We wait for the moment when the enemy shall expose himself to a counterstroke, the success of which will so far cripple him as to render us relatively strong enough to pass to the offensive ourselves.”

—Julian Corbett

The commander conducts defensive operations within the context of the single battle. The MAGTF conducts defensive operations, in combination with offensive operations, to defeat an enemy attack. During the early days of the Korean War (1950-53) the 1st Marine Brigade (Provisional) conducted defensive operations along the Pusan Perimeter, buying time for the 1st Marine Division to embark and deploy to Korea where it conducted an amphibious assault at Inchon to kick off the United Nation’s long awaited offensive.

Defensive operations are conducted to—

- Counter surprise action by the enemy.
- Cause an enemy attack to fail.
- Gain time.
- Concentrate combat power elsewhere.
- Increase the enemy’s vulnerability by forcing him to concentrate his forces.
- Attrite or fix the enemy as a prelude to offensive operations.
- Retain decisive terrain or deny a vital area to the enemy.
- Prepare to resume the offensive.

Forward deployed or early arriving combat forces may conduct defensive operations in theater to protect the force during the build-up of combat power. During initial entry, the MAGTF may not be capable of conducting offensive operations to defeat an enemy rapidly. A classic example was the defensive operations conducted by the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal in 1942. These defensive operations allowed aircraft to operate from Henderson Field. It was not until 4 months after the initial landing that the 2d Marine Division and Army units could conduct offensive operations to secure the island.

Initial MAGTF forces may be assigned a mission to defend follow-on forces, air bases, and seaports in the lodgment area to provide time for the joint force commander to build sufficient combat power to support future operations. Under

this condition the MAGTF must ensure sufficient combat power is available to deter or defend successfully while the buildup continues.

As a supporting effort during offensive operations, the MAGTF may be assigned to conduct defensive operations such as economy-of-force missions. This could be accomplished using air assault or amphibious forces until a larger force could linkup.

In keeping with the single battle concept, the preferred method is to conduct operations simultaneously across the depth and space of the assigned battlespace; however, it is recognized this may dictate defensive operations in some areas. The MAGTF commander and his staff will continuously make recommendations to the Marine Corps component commander and joint force commander on the proper employment of Marine forces in any type of defensive operations.

PURPOSE OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The purpose of defensive operations is to defeat an enemy attack. The MAGTF defends in order to gain sufficient strength to attack. Although offensive action is generally the decisive form of combat, it may be necessary for the MAGTF to conduct defensive operations when there is a need to buy time, hold a piece of key terrain, facilitate other operations, preoccupy the enemy in one area so friendly forces can attack him in another, or erode enemy resources at a rapid rate while reinforcing friendly operations. Defensive operations require precise synchronization since the defender is constantly seeking to regain the initiative. An effective defense consists of the following:

- Combined use of fire and maneuver to blunt the enemy's momentum.
- Speed that facilitates transition of friendly forces to the offense.
- Reducing enemy options while simultaneously increasing friendly options, thereby seizing the initiative.
- Forcing unplanned enemy culmination, gaining the initiative for friendly forces, and creating opportunities to shift to the offensive.

While the defense can deny victory to the enemy, it rarely results in victory for the defender. In many cases, however, the defense can be stronger than the offense. For example, favorable and familiar terrain, friendly civilian populations, and interior lines may prompt a commander to assume the defense to counter the advantages held by a superior enemy force. The attacking enemy usually chooses the time and place he will strike the defender. The defender uses his advantages of prepared defensive positions, concentrated firepower,

obstacles, and barriers to slow the attacker's advance and disrupt the flow of his assault. Marines exploited these advantages in the defense of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Republic of South Vietnam, during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Using aggressive defensive tactics and well-placed obstacles that were supported by responsive and continuous fires, the 26th Marines (Reinforced) destroyed two North Vietnamese Army divisions.

While on the defense, the commander conducts shaping actions, such as attacking enemy forces echeloned in depth, essential enemy sustainment capabilities, or moves his own forces and builds up fuel and ammunition to support future offensive operations. These shaping actions help to set the conditions for decisive action in the defense such as the defeat of the enemy's main effort, destruction of a critical enemy command and control node, or a counterattack as the force transitions to offensive operations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MAGTF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The objective of the defense is to force the enemy to reach his culminating point without achieving his objectives, to rapidly gain and maintain the initiative for friendly forces, and to create opportunities to shift to the offense. The integrity of the defense depends on maneuver and counterattack, as well as on the successful defense of key positions. Early identification of the enemy's committed units and direction of attack allows the defense time to react. Security forces, intelligence units, special operations forces, and aviation elements conducting deep operations will be the MAGTF's first sources of this information.

Command and control in the defense differs from the offense. Defensive operations require closer coordination, thus commanders tend to monitor the battle in more detail. Situational awareness and assessment are difficult, making identification of conditions for the resumption of the offense equally difficult.

During the defense, commanders shift their main effort to contain the enemy's attack until they can take the initiative themselves. This requires the adjustment of sectors, shifting priority of fires, repeated commitment and reconstitution of reserves, and modification of the original plan. To deny the enemy passage through a vital area, commanders may order a force to occupy a defensive position on key terrain. They also might leave a unit in position behind the enemy or give it a mission that entails a high risk of entrapment. During operations in a noncontiguous AO, units will routinely be separated from adjacent units and may be encircled by the enemy. Defending units may be unintentionally cut off from friendly forces. Whenever an unintentional encirclement occurs, the encircled

commander who understands his mission and his higher commander's intent can continue contributing to his higher commander's mission.

An encircled force acts rapidly to preserve itself. The senior commander assumes control of all encircled elements and assesses the all-around defensive posture of the force. He decides whether the next higher commander wants the force to break out or to defend its position. He reorganizes and consolidates expeditiously. If the force is free to break out, it should do so before the enemy has time to block escape routes. Breaking out might mean movement of the entire encircled force, where one part is attacking and the other defending. The entire formation moves through planned escape routes created by the attacking force. If the force cannot break out, the senior commander continues to defend while planning for and assisting in a linkup with a relieving force.

Reserves preserve the commander's flexibility and provide the offensive capability of the defense. They provide the source of combat power that commanders can commit at the decisive moment. The reserve must have the mobility and striking power required to quickly isolate and defeat breakthroughs and flanking attempts. It must be able to seize and exploit fleeting opportunities in a powerful manner to throw the enemy's overall offensive off balance. The commander must organize his reserve so it can repeatedly attack, regroup, move, and attack again. Commanders may use reserves to counterattack the enemy's main effort to expedite his defeat, or they may elect to exploit enemy vulnerabilities, such as exposed flanks or support units and unprotected forces in depth. Reserves also provide a hedge against uncertainty. Reserves may reinforce forward defensive operations, block penetrating enemy forces, conduct counterattacks, or react to a rear area threat. Reserves must have multiple counterattack routes and plans that anticipate enemy's scheme of maneuver.

Helicopterborne forces can respond rapidly as reserves. On suitable terrain, they can reinforce positions to the front or on a flank. In a threatened sector, they are positioned in depth and can respond to tactical emergencies. These forces are also suitable for swift attack against enemy airborne units landing in the rear area; once committed, however, they have limited mobility.

Timing is critical to counterattacks. Commanders anticipate the circumstances that require committing the reserves. At that moment, they seek to wrest the initiative from the attacker. Commanders commit their reserves with an accurate understanding of movement and deployment times. Committed too soon, reserves may not have the desired effect or may not be available later for a more dangerous contingency. Committed too late, they may be ineffective. Once commanders

commit their reserves, they should immediately begin regenerating another reserve from uncommitted forces or from forces in less threatened sectors.

During battle, protection of rear areas is necessary to ensure the defender's freedom of maneuver and continuity of operations. Because fighting in the rear area can divert combat power from the main effort, commanders carefully weigh the need for such diversions against the possible consequences and prepare to take calculated risks in rear areas. To make such decisions wisely, commanders require accurate information to avoid late or inadequate responses and to guard against overreacting to exaggerated reports.

Threats to the rear area arise throughout the battle and require the repositioning of forces and facilities. When possible, defending commanders contain enemy forces in their rear areas, using a combination of passive and active defensive measures. While commanders can never lose focus on their primary objectives, they assess risks throughout their battlespace and commit combat power where necessary to preserve their ability to accomplish the mission.

Commanders use force protection measures to preserve the health, readiness, and combat capabilities of their force. They achieve the effects of protection through skillful combinations of offense and defense, maneuver and firepower, and active and passive measures. As they conduct operations, they receive protective benefits from deep and close operations as they disrupt the attacker's tempo and blind the enemy reconnaissance efforts. Defenders also employ passive measures such as camouflage, terrain masking, and operations security to frustrate the enemy's ability to find them. Commanders should remain aware that their forces are at risk. They should adjust their activities to maintain the ability to protect their forces from attack at vulnerable points.

Weapons of mass destruction present defenders with great risks. These weapons can create gaps, destroy or disable units, and obstruct the defender's maneuver. Commanders anticipate the effects of such weapons in their defensive plans. They provide for dispersed positions for forces in depth, coordinating the last-minute concentration of units on positions with multiple routes of approach and withdrawal. They also direct appropriate training and implement protective measures.

The general characteristics of MAGTF defensive operations are *preparation, security, disruption, mass and concentration, flexibility, maneuver, and operations in depth.*

Preparation

The MAGTF commander organizes his defenses on terrain of his choosing. He capitalizes on the advantage of fighting from prepared positions by organizing his forces for movement and mutual support. He also conducts rehearsals to include use of the reserve and counterattack forces.

The MAGTF commander organizes his defenses in depth. Depth allows the MAGTF to push reconnaissance and surveillance forward of defended positions to detect enemy movements and to deny enemy reconnaissance. Depth allows the defense to—

- Absorb enemy attacks without suffering a breakthrough.
- Provide mutually supporting defensive positions.
- Canalize enemy forces into preset engagement areas.

Security

Security preserves the combat power of the force, allowing future employment at a time and choosing of the MAGTF. MAGTF security is achieved through the judicious use of deception that denies the enemy knowledge of friendly strengths and weaknesses.

The MAGTF plans passive measures such as dispersion, camouflage, hardening of defensive sites and facilities, barrier and obstacle plans, creation of dummy installations, and the establishment of mutually supporting positions. The MAGTF plans active measures such as conducting antiarmor and air defense operations and coordinating plans for the emplacement and security of patrols, observation posts, and reaction forces. The MAGTF may also use physical means such as a covering force in the security area to delay and disrupt enemy attacks early before they can be fully coordinated.

Disruption

The MAGTF seeks to disrupt the attacker's tempo and synchronization by countering his initiative and preventing him from massing overwhelming combat power. Disruption also affects the enemy's will to continue the attack by—

- Defeating or deceiving enemy reconnaissance and surveillance.
- Separating the enemy's forces, isolating his units, and breaking up his formations so that they cannot fight as part of an integrated whole.
- Interrupting the enemy's fire support, logistics support, and command and control.

Mass and Concentration

The MAGTF masses the effects of overwhelming combat power at the point and time of choice. Mass and concentration, while facilitating local superiority at a decisive point, may mean accepting risk in other areas.

The MAGTF must consider the collective employment of fires, maneuver, security forces, and reserve forces to mitigate this risk and, if necessary, trade terrain for time in order to concentrate forces. The MAGTF must ensure fire support assets and fire support coordination are synchronized within the overall concept of defense. This includes assignment of priority of fires, coordination of the targeting process, use of target acquisition assets, and allocation of munitions.

Flexibility

Defensive operations epitomize flexible planning and agile execution. While the attacker initially decides where and when combat will take place, agility and maneuver allow the defender to strike back effectively. Flexibility enables the MAGTF to rapidly shift the main effort, thereby constantly presenting the attacker with a coordinated, well-synchronized defense. Flexibility is enhanced by coordinating and ensuring continued sustainment to the MAGTF. Sustainment not only promotes flexibility but aids in the ability of the MAGTF to maneuver, mass fires, and concentrate forces when required. The MAGTF coordinates sustainment issues such as availability of forces, AO, infrastructure, host-nation support, sustainment bases, and basing agreements with the Marine Corps component.

Maneuver

Maneuver allows the MAGTF to take full advantage of the battlespace and to mass and concentrate when desirable. Maneuver, through movement in combination with fire, allows the MAGTF to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy to accomplish the mission. It also encompasses defensive actions such as security and rear area operations.

Operations in Depth

Simultaneous application of combat power throughout the battlespace improves the chances for success while minimizing friendly casualties. Quick, violent, and simultaneous action throughout the depth of the defender's battlespace can hurt, confuse, and even paralyze an enemy just as he is most exposed and vulnerable. Such actions weaken the enemy's will and do not allow his early successes to build confidence. Operations in depth prevent the enemy from gaining momentum in the attack. Synchronization of close, rear, and deep operations facilitates MAGTF mission success.

The ability of the MAGTF to control and influence operations throughout the depth of the battlespace prevents enemy freedom of movement. Regardless of the proximity or separation of various elements, MAGTF defense is seen as a continuous whole. The MAGTF fights deep, close, and rear operations as one battle, synchronizing simultaneous operations to a single purpose—the defeat of the enemy’s attack and early transition to the offense.

Deep Operations

The MAGTF designs deep operations to achieve depth and simultaneity in the defense and to secure advantages for future operations. Deep operations disrupt the enemy’s movement in depth, destroy high-payoff targets vital to the attacker, and interrupt or deny vital enemy operating systems such as command, logistics or air defense at critical times. As deep operations succeed, they upset the attacker’s tempo and synchronization of effects as the defender selectively suppresses or neutralizes some of the enemy’s operating systems to exploit the exposed vulnerability. Individual targets in depth are only useful as they relate to achieving the commander’s desired effects, which could include destruction of a critical enemy operating system such as air defense or combat service support. As the defender denies freedom of maneuver to the attacker with deep operations, he also seeks to set the terms for the friendly force’s transition to offense.

Deep operations provide protection for the force as they disrupt, delay or destroy the enemy’s ability to bring combat power to bear on friendly close combat forces. As with deep operations in the offense, activities in depth such as counterbattery fire focus on effects to protect the close combat operations directly. To synchronize the activities that encompass both deep and close objectives, commanders integrate and prioritize reconnaissance, intelligence, and target acquisition efforts to focus fires and maneuver at the right place and time on the battlefield.

Close Operations

Close operations are the activities of the main and supporting efforts in the defensive area to slow, canalize, and defeat the enemy’s major units. The MAGTF may do this in several ways. Often, the MAGTF will fight a series of engagements to halt or defeat enemy forces. This requires designation of a main effort, synchronization to support it, and finally a shift to concentrate forces and mass effects against another threat. This may be done repeatedly. Maneuver units defend, delay, attack, and screen as part of the defensive battle. Security operations warn of the enemy’s approach and attempt to harass and slow him. A covering force meets the enemy’s leading forces, strips away enemy reconnaissance and security elements, reports the attacker’s strength and locations, and gives the MAGTF time and space in which to react to the enemy.

Reserves conduct operations throughout the defense and may require continual regeneration. They give the MAGTF the means to seize the initiative and to preserve their flexibility; they seek to strike a decisive blow against the attacker but prepare to conduct other missions as well. They provide a hedge against uncertainty. Reserves operate best when employed to reinforce and expedite victory rather than prevent defeat.

Rear Operations

Rear operations protect the force and sustain combat operations. Successful rear operations allow the MAGTF freedom of action by preventing disruption of command and control, fire support, logistical support, and movement of reserves. Destroying or neutralizing enemy deep battle forces achieves this goal.

Enemy forces may threaten the rear during establishment of the initial lodgment and throughout operations in theater. Initially, close and rear operations overlap due to the necessity to protect the buildup of combat power. Later, deep, close, and rear operations may not be contiguous. When this situation occurs, rear operations must retain the initiative and deny freedom of action to the enemy, even if combat forces are not available. A combination of passive and active defensive measures can best accomplish this. The MAGTF assesses threat capabilities, decides where risk will be accepted, and then assigns the units necessary to protect and sustain the force. Unity of command facilitates this process.

Regardless of the proximity or separation of elements, defense of the rear is integrated with the deep and close fight. Simultaneous operations defeat the attacking enemy throughout the battlefield and allow an early transition to the offense.

To minimize the vulnerability of rear operations, command and control and support facilities in the rear area must be redundant and dispersed. Air defense elements provide defense in depth by taking positions to cover air avenues of approach and vital assets. When rear battle response forces are insufficient, tactical combat forces prepare to respond rapidly against rear area threats and prepare to move to their objectives by multiple routes.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BATTLESPACE

During defensive operations, the commander organizes his battlespace into three areas—security, main battle, and rear—in which the defending force performs specific functions. See figure 8-1. These areas can be further divided into sectors. A defensive sector is a section assigned to a subordinate commander in which he

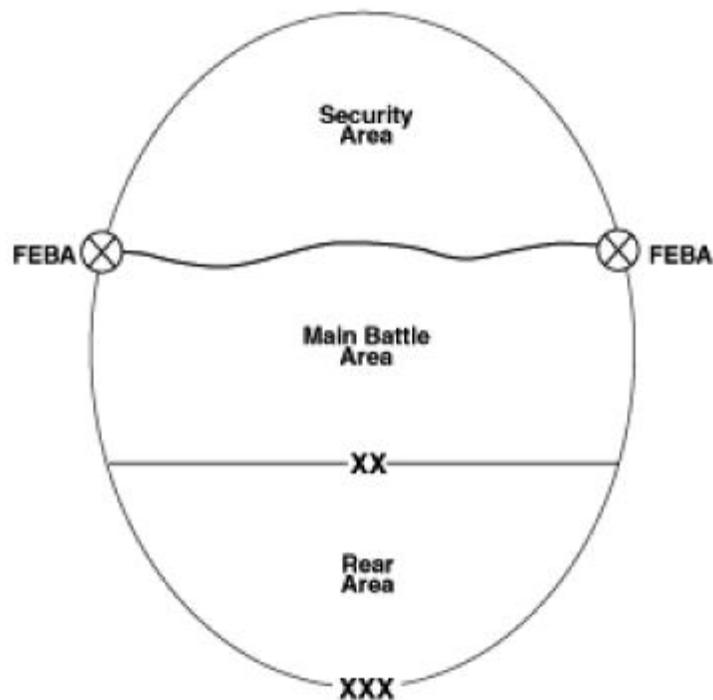


Figure 8-1. Organization of the Battlespace.

is provided the maximum latitude to accomplish assigned tasks in order to conduct defensive operations. The size and nature of a sector depends on the situation and the factors of METT-T. Commanders of defensive sectors can assign subordinates their own sector.

Security Area

The security area begins at the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) and extends as far to the front and flanks as security forces are deployed, normally to the forward boundary of the AO. Forces in the security area conduct reconnaissance to furnish information on the enemy and delay, deceive, and disrupt the enemy. The commander adds depth to the defense by extending the security area as far forward as is tactically feasible. For more information on security operations see chapter 11.

Actions in the security area are designed to disrupt the enemy's plan of attack and cause him to prematurely deploy into attack formations. Slowing the enemy's attack enables our forces, particularly Marine aviation, to strike the enemy's critical vulnerabilities (i.e., movement, resupply, fire support, and command and control).

Main Battle Area

The main battle area is that portion of the battlespace in which the commander conducts close operations to defeat the enemy. Normally, the main battle area extends rearward from the FEBA to the rear boundary of the command's subordinate units. The commander positions forces throughout the main battle area to defeat, destroy or contain enemy assaults. Reserves may be employed in the main battle area to destroy enemy forces, reduce penetrations or regain terrain. The greater the depth of the main battle area, the greater the maneuver space for fighting the main defensive battle.

Rear Area

The rear area is that area extending forward from a command's rear boundary to the rear of the area assigned to the command's subordinate units. This area is provided primarily for the performance of combat service support functions. Rear area operations include those functions of security and sustainment required to maintain continuity of operations by the whole force. Rear area operations protect the sustainment effort as well as deny use of the rear area to the enemy. The rear area may not always be contiguous with the main battle area.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORCE

During defensive operations, the commander organizes his force into security, main battle, and rear area forces. See figure 8-2.

Security Forces

The commander uses security forces forward of the main battle area to delay, disrupt, and provide early warning of the enemy's advance and deceive him as to the true location of the main battle area. These forces are assigned cover, guard or screen missions. Operations of security forces must be an integral part of the overall defensive plan. To ensure optimal unity of effort during security operations, a single commander is normally assigned responsibility for the conduct of operations in the security area. The composition of the security force is dependent on the factors of METT-T. A task force may be formed from the various elements of the MAGTF to conduct security operations.

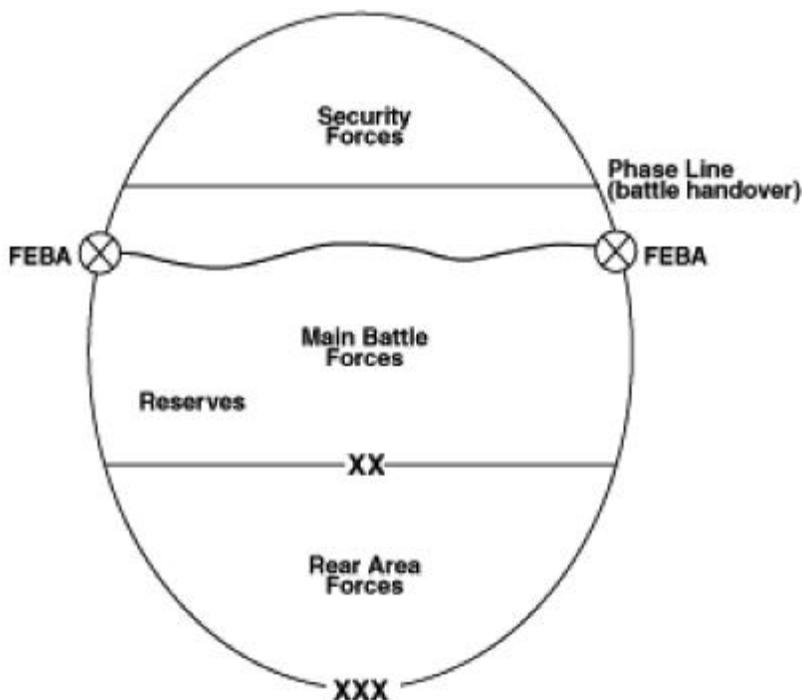


Figure 8-2. Organization of the Force.

The commander seeks to engage the enemy as far out as possible. Suppression and obscuration fires are employed to facilitate maneuver of the security force. Maximum use may be made of all fire support assets to disrupt and destroy enemy formations as they move through the security area approaching the main battle area. Obstacles and barriers are positioned to delay or canalize the enemy. They are kept under observation and covered by fires to attack him while he is halted or in the process of breaching.

Main Battle Forces

Main battle forces engage the enemy to slow, canalize, disorganize or defeat his attack. The commander positions these forces to counter the enemy's attack along the most likely or most dangerous avenue of approach. As in offensive operations, the commander weights his main effort with enough combat power and the necessary support to ensure success. When the enemy attack has been broken, the commander executes his plan to exploit any opportunity to resume the offensive.

Main battle forces engage 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 they approach the main battle area. As the enemy closes, he is subjected to an ever-increasing volume of fires from the main battle area forces and all supporting arms. Again, obstacles and barriers are used to delay or canalize the enemy so that he is continually subjected to fires.

Combat power that can be concentrated most quickly, such as fires, is brought to bear while maneuver units move into position. The defender reacts to the enemy's main effort by reinforcing the threatened sector or allowing the enemy's main effort to penetrate into engagement areas within the main battle area to cut him off and destroy him by counterattack. Main battle forces maintain an offensive spirit throughout the battle, looking to exploit any advantageous situations.

The MAGTF commander must determine the mission, composition, and size of the reserve and counterattack forces. Reserves by definition are uncommitted forces; however, reserve forces are not uncommitted if the concept of defense depends upon their employment as a counterattack force. Counterattacking, blocking, reinforcing defending units, or reacting to rear area threats are all actions a reserve may be required to perform. The primary mission of the reserve derives directly from the concept of the defense and, therefore, the commander who established the requirement to have a reserve must approve its commitment.

A counterattack is an attack by part or all of a defending force against an attacking enemy force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost or cutting off and destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of his purpose in attacking. In many cases, the counterattack is decisive action in defensive operations. It is the commander's primary means of breaking the enemy's attack or of regaining the initiative. Once commenced, the counterattack is the main effort. Its success depends largely on surprise, speed, and boldness in execution. A separate counterattack force may be established by the commander to conduct planned counterattacks and can be made up of uncommitted or lightly engaged forces and the reserve.

The reserve is the commander's tool to influence the course of the battle at the critical time and place to exploit opportunities. The commander uses his reserve at the decisive moment in the defense and refuses to dissipate it on local emergencies. The reserve is usually located in assembly areas or forward operating bases in the main battle area. Once the reserve is committed, the commander establishes or reconstitutes a new reserve.

Reserves are organized based on the factors of METT-T. The tactical mobility of mechanized and helicopterborne forces make them well suited for use as the

reserve in the defense. Mechanized reserve forces are best employed offensively. In suitable terrain, a helicopterborne reserve can react quickly to reinforce the main battle area positions or block penetrations. However, helicopterborne forces often lack the shock effect desired for counterattacks. The inherent surge capability of aviation combat forces provides the commander flexibility for reserve tasking without designating the ACE as the reserve.

Timing is critical to the employment of the reserve. As the area of probable employment of the reserve becomes apparent, the commander alerts his reserve to have it more readily available for action. When he commits his reserve, the commander must make his decision promptly and with an accurate understanding of movement factors and deployment times. If committed too soon or too late, the reserve may not have a decisive effect. The commander may choose to use security forces as part or all of his reserve after completion of their security mission. He must weigh this decision against the possibility that the security forces may suffer a loss of combat power during its security mission.

Rear Area Forces

Rear area forces protect and sustain the force's combat power. They provide for freedom of action and the continuity of logistic and command and control support. Rear area forces facilitate future operations as forces are positioned and support is marshaled to enable the transition to offensive operations. These forces should have the requisite command and control capabilities and intelligence assets to effectively employ the maneuver, fires, and combat service support forces necessary to defeat the rear area threat. Aviation forces are well suited to perform screening missions across long distances in the rear area.

The security of the rear area is provided by three levels of forces corresponding to the rear area threat level. Local security forces are employed in the rear area to repel or destroy Level I threats such as terrorists or saboteurs. These forces are normally organic to the unit, base or base cluster where they are employed. Response forces are mobile forces, with appropriate fire support designated by the area commander, employed to counter Level II threats such as enemy guerrillas or small tactical units operating in the rear area. The tactical combat force is a combat unit, with appropriate combat support and combat service support assets, that is assigned the mission of defeating Level III threats such as a large, combined arms-capable enemy force. The tactical combat force is usually located within or near the rear area where it can rapidly respond to the enemy threat.

TYPES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

There are two fundamental types of defense: the *mobile defense* and the *position defense*. In practice, Marine commanders tend to use both types simultaneously and rarely will one type or the other be used exclusively. Mobile defense orients on the destruction of the attacking force by permitting the enemy to advance into a position that exposes him to counterattack by a mobile reserve. Position defense orients on retention of terrain by absorbing the enemy in an interlocking series of positions and destroying him largely by fires. The combination of these two types of defense can be very effective as the commander capitalizes on the advantages of each type and the strengths and capabilities of his subordinate units.

Although these descriptions convey the general pattern of each type of defense, both forms of defense employ static and dynamic elements. In mobile defenses, static defensive positions help control the depth and breadth of enemy penetration and ensure retention of ground from which to launch counterattacks. In position defenses, commanders closely integrate patrols, intelligence units, and reserve forces to cover the gaps among defensive positions, reinforcing those positions as necessary and counterattacking defensive positions as directed. Defending commanders combine both patterns, using static elements to delay, canalize, and ultimately halt the attacker, and dynamic elements (spoiling attacks and counterattacks) to strike and destroy enemy forces. The balance among these elements depends on the enemy, mission, force composition, mobility, relative combat power, and the nature of the battlefield.

The specific design and sequencing of defensive operations is an operational art largely conditioned by a thorough METT-T analysis. Doctrine allows great freedom in formulating and conducting the defense. The MAGTF commander may elect to defend well forward with strong covering forces by striking the enemy as he approaches, or he may opt to fight the decisive battle well forward within the main battle area. If the MAGTF does not have to hold a specified area or position, it may draw the enemy deep into its defenses and then strike his flanks and rear. The MAGTF commander may even choose to preempt the enemy with spoiling attacks if conditions favor such tactics.

A key characteristic of a sound defense is the ability of the commander to aggressively seek opportunities to take offensive action and wrest the initiative from the enemy. With this in mind, the decision to conduct a hasty or deliberate defense is based on the time available or the requirement to quickly resume the offense. The enemy and the mission will determine the time available.

A hasty defense is normally organized while in contact with the enemy or when contact is imminent and time available for the organization is limited. It is

characterized by the improvement of natural defensive strength of the terrain by utilization of foxholes, emplacements, and obstacles. The capability to establish a robust reconnaissance effort may be limited because the defense is assumed directly from current positions. The hasty defense normally allows for only a brief leaders' reconnaissance and may entail the immediate engagement by security forces to buy time for the establishment of the defense.

Depending on the situation, it may be necessary for a commander to initially attack to seize suitable terrain on which to organize his defense. In other situations, the commander may employ a security force while withdrawing the bulk of his force some distance rearward to prepare a defense on more suitable terrain. A hasty defense is improved continuously as the situation permits, and may eventually become a deliberate defense.

A deliberate defense is normally organized when not in contact with the enemy or when contact is not imminent and time for organization is available. A deliberate defense normally includes fortifications, strong points, extensive use of barriers, and fully integrated fires. The commander normally is free to make a detailed reconnaissance of his sector, select the terrain on which to defend, and decide the best distribution of forces.

The advantage of a deliberate defense is that it allows time to plan and prepare the defense while not in contact with the enemy. A deliberate defense is characterized by a complete reconnaissance of the area to be defended by the commander and his subordinate leaders, use of key terrain, and the establishment of mutually supporting positions. The force normally has the time to create field fortifications, barriers, and emplace obstacles.

Mobile defenses sometimes rely on reserves to strike the decisive blow. They require a large, mobile, combined arms reserve. Position defenses are more likely to use reserves to block and reinforce at lower tactical levels, leaving major counterattacks to divisions and higher echelons. Regiment and battalion-level area defenses may benefit from the use of mobile reserves when such a force is available and the enemy uncovers his flanks. The actual size and composition of the reserve depend on the concept of operations.

Mobile Defense

A mobile defense is the defense of an area or position in which maneuver is used together with fire and terrain to seize the initiative from the enemy. The mobile defense destroys the attacking enemy through offensive action. The commander allocates the bulk of his combat power to mobile forces that strike the enemy where he is most vulnerable and when he least expects attack. Minimum force is

placed forward to canalize, delay, disrupt, and deceive the enemy as to the actual location of our defenses. Retaining his mobile forces until the critical time and place are identified, the commander then focuses combat power in a single or series of violent and rapid counterattacks throughout the depth of the battlespace. See figure 8-3.

A mobile defense requires mobility greater than that of the attacker. Marines generate the mobility advantage necessary in the mobile defense with organic mechanized and armor forces, helicopterborne forces, and Marine aviation. The commander must have sufficient depth within the AO to allow the enemy to move into the commander's mobile defensive area. Terrain and space are traded to draw the enemy ever deeper into the defensive area, causing him to overextend his force and expose his flanks and lines of communications to attack. The success of the mobile defense often presents the opportunity to resume the offense and must be planned.

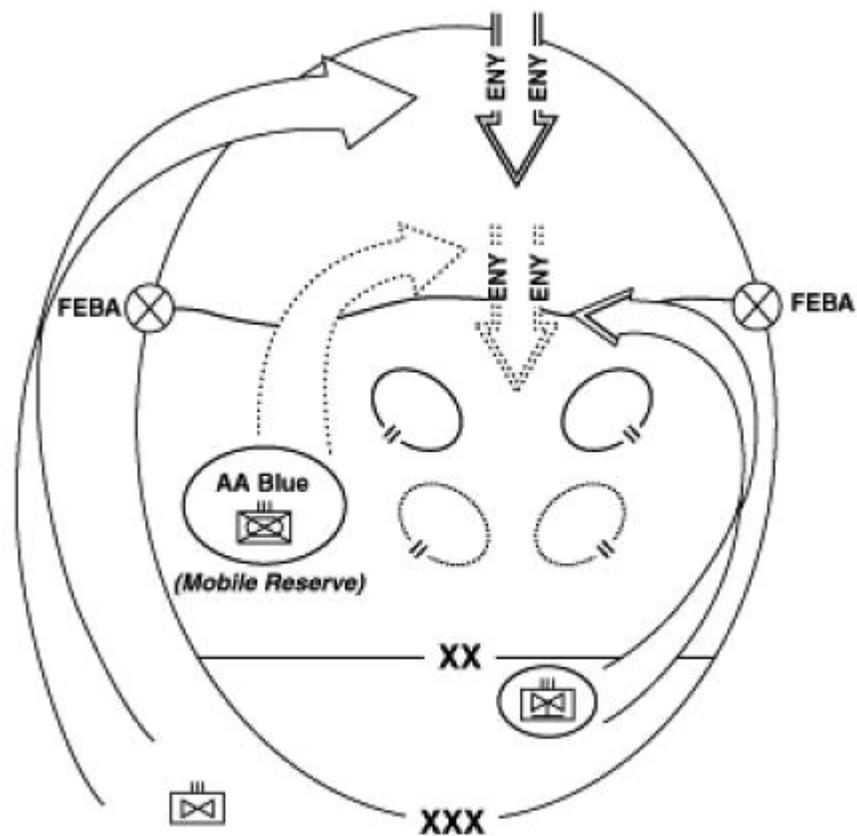


Figure 8-3. Mobile Defense.

Mobile defense orients on the destruction of the enemy force by employing a combination of fires, maneuver, offense, defense, and delay to defeat the enemy attack. Open terrain or a wide sector favors a mobile defense that orients on the enemy. The primary function of committed units in a mobile defense is to control the enemy penetration pending a counterattack by a large reserve. In mobile defense, the MAGTF commander—

- Commits minimum forces to pure defense.
- Positions maximum combat power to catch the enemy as he attempts to overcome that part of the force dedicated to the defense.
- Takes advantage of terrain in depth, obstacles, and mines, while employing firepower and maneuver to wrest the initiative from the attacker.
- Employs a strong counterattack force to strike the enemy at his most vulnerable time and place.
- Uses reconnaissance and surveillance assets to track the enemy, identifying critical enemy nodes, such as command and control, radars, logistics trains, and indirect fire support elements. These assets blind or deceive enemy critical reconnaissance and sensors, allowing less critical reconnaissance elements to draw attention to the friendly forces' secondary efforts. At the decisive moment, defenders strike simultaneously throughout the depth of the attacker's forces, assaulting him from an open flank and defeating him in detail.
- May trade terrain to divert the attention of the enemy from the main force, overextend the attacker's resources, expose his flanks, and lead him into a posture and terrain that diminishes his ability to defend against counterattack.
- Sets up large-scale counterattacks that offer opportunity to gain and retain the initiative and transition to offensive operations such as exploitation and pursuit.

Depth is required in a mobile defense to draw the enemy in and expose an exploitable weakness to counterattack. The following circumstances favor the conduct of a mobile defense:

- The defender possesses equal or greater mobility than the enemy.
- The frontage assigned exceeds the defender's capability to establish an effective position defense.
- The available battlespace allows the enemy to be drawn into an unfavorable position and exposed to attack.
- Time for preparing defensive positions is limited.
- Sufficient mechanized and aviation forces are available to allow rapid concentration of combat power.

- The enemy may employ weapons of mass destruction.
- The mission does not require denying the enemy specific terrain.

Using mobile defenses, commanders anticipate enemy penetration into the defended area and use obstacles and defended positions to shape and control such penetrations. They also use local counterattacks either to influence the enemy into entering the planned penetration area or to deceive him as to the nature of the defense. As in area defenses, static elements of a mobile defense contain the enemy in a designated area. In a mobile defense, the counterattack is strong, well-timed, and well-supported. Preferably, counterattacking forces strike against the enemy's flanks and rear rather than the front of his forces.

Position Defense

The position defense is a type of defense in which the bulk of the defending force is disposed in selected tactical positions where the decisive battle is to be fought. It denies the enemy critical terrain or facilities for a specified time. A position defense focuses on the retention of terrain by absorbing the enemy into a series of interlocked positions from which he can be destroyed, largely by fires, together with friendly maneuver. Principal reliance is placed on the ability of the forces in the defended positions to maintain their positions and to control the terrain between them. The position defense is sometimes referred to as an area defense. See figure 8-4. This defense uses battle positions, strong points, obstacles, and barriers to slow, canalize, and defeat the enemy attack. The assignment of forces within these areas and positions allows for depth and mutual support of the force.

Battle Position

A battle position is a defensive location oriented on the most likely enemy avenue of approach from which a unit may defend or attack. It can be used to deny or delay the enemy the use of certain terrain or an avenue of approach. The size of a battle position can vary with the size of the unit assigned. For ground combat units, battle positions are usually hastily occupied but should be continuously improved.

Strong Point

A strong point is a fortified defensive position designed to deny the enemy certain terrain as well as the use of an avenue of approach. It differs from a battle position in that it is designed to be occupied for an extended period of time. It is established on critical terrain and must be held for the defense to succeed. A strong point is organized for all-around defense and should have sufficient supplies and ammunition to continue to fight even if surrounded or cut off from resupply. Strong points require considerable time and engineer resources.

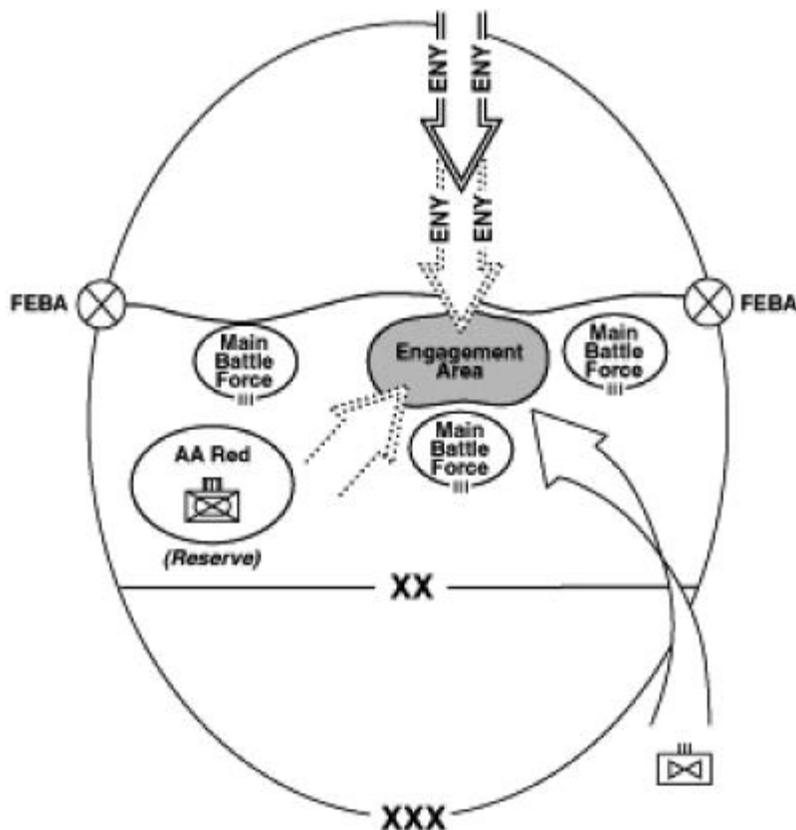


Figure 8-4. Position Defense.

Preparation of a position defense is a continuing process that ends only when the defender is ordered to give up the terrain. METT-T drives the tasks to be done and their priority, making maximum use of obstacle and barrier plans, engagement areas, and fires. Mobile defenses require considerable depth, but position defenses vary in depth according to the situation. For example, a significant obstacle to the front—such as a river, built-up area, swamp, or escarpment—favors a position defense. Such an obstacle adds to the relative combat power of the defender. Obstacles support static elements of the defense and slow or canalize the enemy in vital areas.

The commander positions the bulk of his combat power in static defensive positions and small mobile reserves. He depends on his static forces to defend their positions. His reserves are used to blunt and contain penetrations, to counterattack, and to exploit opportunities presented by the enemy. The commander also employs security

forces in the position defense. The commander conducts a position defense under the following circumstances:

- The force must defend specific terrain that is militarily and politically essential.
- The defender possesses less mobility than the enemy.
- Maneuver space is limited or the terrain restricts the movement of the defending force.
- The terrain enables mutual support to the defending force.
- The depth of the battlespace is limited.
- The terrain restricts the movement of the defender.
- There is sufficient time to prepare positions.
- The employment of weapons of mass destruction by the enemy is unlikely.

In a position defense, committed forces counterattack whenever conditions are favorable. Commanders use their reserves in cooperation with static elements of their defense's battle positions and strongpoints to break the enemy's momentum and reduce his numerical advantage. As the attack develops and the enemy reveals his dispositions, reserves and fires strike at objectives in depth to break up the coordination of the attack.

FUTURE DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Expeditionary maneuver warfare and changes in organization, doctrine, and training will alter how the MAGTF conducts defensive operations in the future. Enhancements to information technology will provide commanders with increased flexibility in the defense.

Increasingly, the MAGTF commander will receive real-time, fused information to make better informed and more timely decisions. Highly capable precision munitions, improved unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and new "sensor to shooter" technologies will increase the MAGTF commander's ability to engage an attacking force, shape the battlespace, and set conditions for decisive actions. Increased ranges of fire support systems and improved mobility of ground forces, using advanced amphibious assault vehicles and innovative aircraft, will allow the commander to mass effects on the enemy instead of massing forces that become more susceptible to enemy counteractions. The importance of the MAGTF's access to, and use of information and information systems will not go unnoticed by future adversaries. To reduce its susceptibility, the MAGTF will require defensive activities to protect and defend the information and information systems that are critical to operational success. Ultimately, these innovations will allow the MAGTF to rapidly transition from the defense to the offensive—moving directly to exploitation and pursuit.

APPENDIX C

Tactical Tasks

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The following commonly assigned MAGTF tactical tasks may be specified, implied or essential. They define actions the commander may take to accomplish his mission. In special circumstances, tasks may be modified to meet METT-T requirements. The commander must clearly state that he is departing from the standard meaning of these tasks. One way this can be done is by prefacing the modified task with the statement “What I mean by [modified task] is”

Tactical tasks are assigned based on capabilities. The GCE can execute all of the MAGTF’s tactical tasks. The CSSE can execute those tactical tasks essential for it to provide sustainment to the MAGTF. The ACE can execute many of the MAGTF’s tactical tasks but it cannot secure, seize, retain or occupy terrain without augmentation by the GCE. Weather and task duration may significantly affect the ACE’s ability to execute assigned tactical tasks.

For additional information on tactical tasks, see JP 1-02; MCRP 5-12A; and MCRP 5-12C, *Marine Corps Supplement to the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

ENEMY-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS

Ambush

A surprise attack by fire from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy.

Attack by Fire

Fires (direct and indirect) to destroy the enemy from a distance, normally used when the mission does not require or support occupation of the objective. This task is usually given to the supporting effort during offensive operations and as a counterattack option for the reserve during defensive operations. The assigning commander must specify the intent of fire—either to destroy, fix, neutralize or suppress.

Block

To deny the enemy access to a given area or to prevent enemy advance in a given direction or on an avenue of approach. It may be for a specified time. Units assigned this task may have to retain terrain.

Breach

To break through or secure a passage through a natural or enemy obstacle.

Bypass

To maneuver around an obstacle, position or enemy force to maintain the momentum of advance. Previously unreported obstacles and bypassed enemy forces are reported to higher headquarters.

Canalize

The use of existing or reinforcing obstacles or fires to restrict enemy operations to a narrow zone.

Contain

To stop, hold or surround enemy forces or to keep the enemy in a given area and prevent his withdrawing any part of his forces for use elsewhere.

Defeat

To disrupt or nullify the enemy commander's plan and overcome his will to fight, thus making him unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action and yield to the friendly commander's will.

Destroy

Physically rendering an enemy force combat-ineffective unless it is reconstituted.

Disrupt

To integrate fires and obstacles to break apart an enemy's formation and tempo, interrupt his timetable or cause premature commitment or the piecemealing of his forces.

Exploit

Take full advantage of success in battle and follow up initial gains; offensive actions that usually follow a successful attack and are designed to disorganize the enemy in-depth.

Feint

An offensive action involving contact with the enemy to deceive him about the location or time of the actual main offensive action.

Fix

To prevent the enemy from moving any part of his forces, either from a specific location or for a specific period of time, by holding or surrounding them to prevent their withdrawal for use elsewhere.

Interdict

An action to divert, disrupt, delay or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces.

Neutralize

To render the enemy or his resources ineffective or unusable.

Penetrate

To break through the enemy's defense and disrupt his defensive system.

Reconnoiter

To obtainable visual observation or other methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy.

Rupture

To create a gap in enemy defensive positions quickly.

Support by Fire

Where a force engages the enemy by direct fire to support a maneuvering force using overwatch or by establishing a base of fire. The supporting force does not capture enemy forces or terrain.

TERRAIN-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS**Clear**

The removal of enemy forces and elimination of organized resistance in an assigned zone, area or location by destroying, capturing or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces that could interfere with the unit's ability to accomplish its mission.

Control

To maintain physical influence by occupation or range of weapon systems over the activities or access in a defined area.

Occupy

To move onto an objective, key terrain or other man-made or natural terrain area without opposition, and control the entire area.

Reconnoiter

To secure data about the meteorological, hydrographic or geographic characteristics of a particular area.

Retain

To occupy and hold a terrain feature to ensure it is free of enemy occupation or use.

Secure

To gain possession of a position or terrain feature, with or without force, and to prevent its destruction or loss by enemy action. The attacking force may or may not have to physically occupy the area.

Seize

To clear a designated area and gain control of it.

FRIENDLY FORCE-ORIENTED TACTICAL TASKS**Breach**

To break through or secure a passage through a natural or friendly obstacle.

Cover

Offensive or defensive actions to protect the force.

Disengage

To break contact with the enemy and move to a point where the enemy cannot observe nor engage the unit by direct fire.

Displace

To leave one position and take another. Forces may be displaced laterally to concentrate combat power in threatened areas.

Exfiltrate

The removal of personnel or units from areas under enemy control.

Follow

The order of movement of combat, combat support, and combat service support forces in a given combat operation.

Guard

To protect the main force by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information.

Protect

To prevent observation, engagement or interference with a force or location.

Screen

To observe, identify and report information and only fight in self-protection.