



## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction to FOOT MARCHES

*Foot marches are the movement of troops and equipment mainly by foot with limited support by vehicles. They are characterized by combat readiness, ease of control, adaptability to terrain, slow rate of movement, and increased personnel fatigue. Foot marches do not depend on the existence of roads.*

### 1-1. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Many examples of successful marches exist throughout the history of warfare.

a. A good example of a successful march occurred during World War II. It was the grueling foot march during the Sicilian campaign from 20 to 21 July 1943. The 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division performed this march. The battalion was directed to move on foot across mountains from Aragona to San Stefano to enter into a coordinated attack on enemy forces in San Stefano. The battalion made this record-breaking, 54-mile, cross-country march in only 33 hours due to continuous marching. Two hours after arrival, the battalion was committed in the attack on San Stefano, which resulted in its capture.

b. A second example was the movement of large elements of the 3d US Army during the battle of Ardennes in 1944 to stop.

the enemy counteroffensive. On 16 December 1944, while the 3d US Army was preparing to attack the Siegfried line in Germany, the Battle of the Bulge commenced. By 19 December, the German attack had reached such large proportions that the 3d US Army was directed to cease its attack to the east and to turn north. The 3d US Army shifted its troops from the Saarlautern-Saarbrücken area to the Luxemburg-Belgium area, a distance of 100-road miles. The III Corps launched the new attack at 0600 on 22 December 1944.

(1) The size of this operation is indicated by the statistics. Eight divisions were moved from the eastern to the northern sectors, and two divisions were brought in from the rear areas. This shifted about 250,000 men and 25,000 vehicles. Units moved distances varying from 50 to 150 miles. From 18 to 31 December 1944, the trucks of the 3d US Army traveled a total of 1,254,042 miles. From 17 to 23 December 1944, nearly 42,000 tons of supplies were moved north. In the same week, seven traffic control stations in the area checked through 133,178 vehicles. The weather was damp and cold, and the ground was covered with snow and ice. However, foot soldiers marched to entrucking and from the detrucking locations to their new battle areas.

(2) This decisive movement of an entire army was possible since smaller units could move themselves. The units of the 3d US Army were well trained in movement. Their SOP and experience tables had been tested and proved. When the job was placed upon them, they succeeded, knowing the importance of combat readiness.

## **1-2. FUNDAMENTALS**

Troop movement is the transporting of troops from one place to another by any available means. This is inherent in all military operations. A successful move places troops and equipment at their destination at the proper time ready for combat. Troop movement is conducted by foot or motor marches, by rail, by air, or by water, or by various combinations of these methods.

a. Detailed plans are required for effective troop movement. However, units must be notified early of an impending move to allow for effective planning.

b. A successful troop movement also depends on effective control of units during movement. Such control is accomplished through the chain of command, and by proper supervision and organization of the force.

### **1-3. MARCH MISSION**

A successful foot march is when troops arrive at their destination at the prescribed time. They are also physically able to execute their tactical mission.

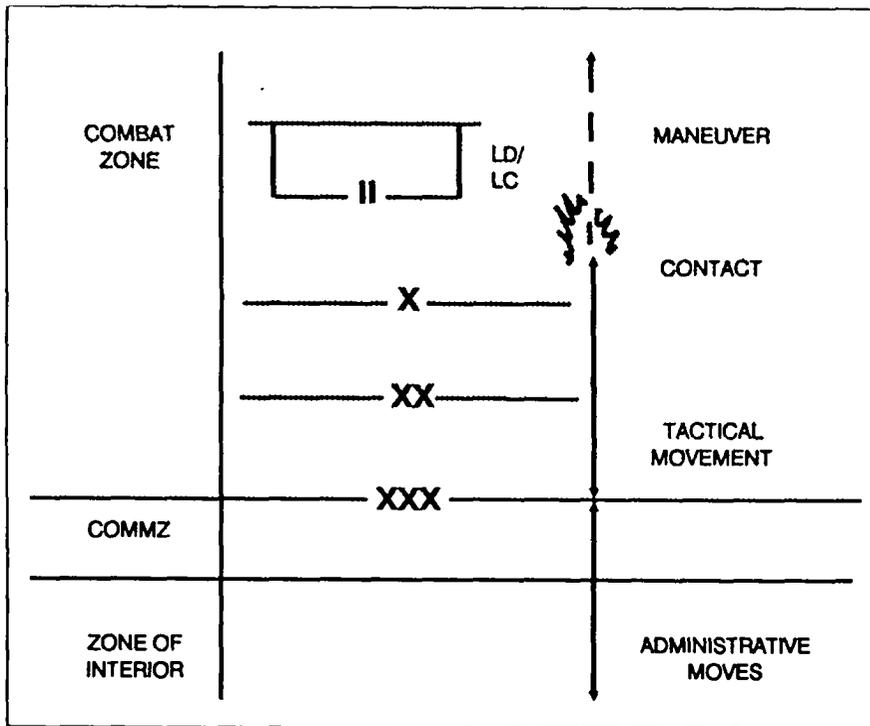
a. Troops must execute the mission immediately upon completing the march. Normally, this is done through conditioning and acclimatization of troops to the area of operations. This includes physiological and psychological adjustment by the individual soldier.

b. Commanders must ensure that the amount and type of equipment carried, the rate of march, and the length and number of rests equates with the physical endurance of the men. Good planning and command leadership are required to move troops to the right place at the right time. The commander also ensures troops arrive in good condition to accomplish their mission.

### **1-4. CLASSIFICATION OF MOVEMENTS**

Troop movements can be tactical or administrative. Both classifications apply in most movements but one is normally dominant.

a. **Tactical.** Tactical movements are conducted in the combat zone to emphasize tactical considerations such as security and the use of combat-ready formations. They reemphasize efficiency and ease of movement, and they anticipate ground contact with the enemy en route or after arriving at the destination. Movements may be conducted over unsecure routes if there are no friendly forces between the foremost elements of the moving force and the enemy (Figure 1-1).



**Figure 1-1. Movement.**

(1) When relocating in the combat zone, the unit conducts tactical foot and motor marches in the division and corps rears. This occurs before hostilities begin or when a forward defense has been established. Speed is vital, and security requirements are minimal.

(2) Units move by tactical foot or motor marches to an assembly area where they prepare to conduct combat operations. During tactical movements, the commander must be prepared to maneuver against an enemy force.

(3) Once a unit is deployed in its assigned zone or sector, it normally moves using the proper techniques for the assigned mission. When contact is made, tactical movement becomes maneuver.

b. **Administrative.** Administrative movements are conducted in the COMMZ and zone of the interior. They emphasize the best method of movement and reemphasize tactical considerations. Administrative movements are based on likely ground contact with the enemy being remote, both en route and soon after arrival at the destination. They are normally conducted over secure routes if friendly forces are between the foremost elements of the moving force and the enemy. When conducting administrative movements, units should maintain integrity and practice security techniques that pertain to tactical road marches.

### 1-5. TYPES OF MARCHES

Each type of march has its own purpose and application. Those discussed herein are common to both administrative and tactical marches.

a. **Day Marches.** In the absence of enemy threats, day marches are preferred. They permit faster movement and are less tiring for troops. They are characterized by dispersed formations, ease of control and reconnaissance, and increased vulnerability to enemy observation and air attack.

b. **Limited Visibility Marches.** Limited visibility marches are characterized by closed formations, difficult command and control and reconnaissance, slow rate of march, and good concealment from hostile observation and air attack. Night marches also exploit darkness to gain surprise and help units avoid extreme heat common to day marches. Control of the march requires detailed planning, stringent control measures, thorough training, and march, light, and communication disciplines.

(1) If concealment is required, movement before dark is restricted to small detachments. Also, the march should be completed by daybreak with troops in concealed positions. When movement is near the enemy, noise suppression must be considered. To conceal operations from the enemy and to

prevent him from gaining information about the march, measures to maintain security must be enforced. The use of navigational aids, such as ground surveillance radar, thermal sights, and night vision devices, can prevent many command and control problems encountered during night movements.

(2) Limited visibility marches must be carefully planned. This includes reconnoitering of routes and assembly areas. Special precautions ensure direction and contact within the column. Therefore, guides and file formations are needed.

c. **Forced Marches.** Forced marches require speed, exertion, and more hours marched. They are normally accomplished by increasing the marching hours for each day rather than the rate of march. Forced marches are employed only when needed since they decrease the effect of units. Troops should be told the reason for a forced march to ensure maximum effort.

d. **Shuttle Marches.** Shuttle marches alternate riding and marching in a troop movement. This is normally due to lack of enough vehicles to carry the entire unit. Shuttling requires transporting troops, equipment, and supplies by a series of round-trips with the same vehicles. It can be performed by hauling a load an entire distance and then returning for another. It may also be performed by carrying successive parts of a load for short distances while the remaining parts continue on foot.