Chapter 1

The Campaign

"Battles have been stated by some writers to be the chief and deciding features of war. This assertion is not strictly true, as armies have been destroyed by strategic operations without the occurrence of pitched battles, by a succession of inconsiderable affairs."[1]

—Henri Jomini

"For even if a decisive battle be the goal, the aim of strategy must be to bring about this battle under the most advantageous circumstances. And the more advantageous the circumstances, the less, proportionately, will be the fighting."[2]

—B. H. Liddell Hart

"It is essential to relate what is strategically desirable to what is tactically possible with the forces at your disposal. To this end it is necessary to decide the development of operations before the initial blow is delivered."[3]

—Bernard Montgomery

This book is about military campaigning. A *campaign* is a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space.[4] A *campaign plan* describes how time, space, and purpose connect these operations.[5] Usually, a campaign is aimed at achieving some particular strategic result within a specific geographic theater. A war or other sustained conflict sometimes consists of a single campaign, sometimes of several. If there is more than one campaign, these can run either in sequence or—if there is more than one theater of war—simultaneously. Campaigning reflects the operational level of war, where the results of individual tactical actions are combined to fulfill the needs of strategy.

Military campaigns are not conducted in a vacuum. Military power is employed in conjunction with other instruments of national power—diplomatic, economic, and informational—to achieve strategic objectives. Depending upon the nature of the operation, the military campaign may be the main effort, or it may be used to support diplomatic or economic efforts. The military campaign must be coordinated with the nonmilitary efforts to ensure that all actions work in harmony to achieve the ends of policy. Frequently, particularly in military operations other than war, the military campaign is so closely integrated with other government operations that these nonmilitary actions can be considered to be part of the campaign.

In this chapter, we will describe how events at different levels of war are interrelated, focusing on the operational level as the link between strategy and tactics. We will examine the campaign as the basic tool of commanders at the operational level and discuss its relevance to the Marine Corps.

STRATEGY

War grows out of political conflict. Political policy determines the aims of each combatant's strategy and directs each side's conduct. Thus, as Liddell Hart wrote, "any study of the problem ought to begin and end with the question of policy."[6] Strategy is the result of intellectual activity that strives to win the objectives of policy by action in peace as in war.

National strategy is the art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and informational powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives. National strategy connotes a global perspective, but it requires coordination of all the elements of national power at the regional or theater level as well. Because a campaign takes place within a designated geographic theater and may involve nonmilitary as well as military elements, campaign design is often equivalent to theater strategy.

Military strategy is the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force. It involves the establishment of military strategic objectives, the allocation of resources, the imposition of conditions on the use of force, and the development of war plans.[7]

Strategy is both a product and a process. That is, strategy involves both the creation of plans—specific strategies to deal with specific problems—and the process of implementing them in a dynamic, changing environment. Therefore, strategy requires both detailed planning and energetic adaptation to evolving events.

Strategic concepts describe the ways in which the elements of national power are to be used in the accomplishment of our strategic ends, i.e., our policy objectives.[8] U.S. military strategy is implemented by the combatant commanders and is always joint in nature. In practice, the execution of our military strategy in any particular region requires coordination—and often considerable compromise—with other governmental agencies, with allies, with members of coalitions formed to meet specific contingencies, and with nongovernmental organizations.

Military strategy must be subordinate to national strategy and must be coordinated with the use of the nonmilitary instruments of our national power. Historically, we have sometimes

found it difficult to maintain those relationships correctly, and we have sometimes fought in the absence of a clear national or military strategy.

TACTICS

Marines are generally most familiar—and therefore most comfortable—with the tactical domain, which is concerned with defeating an enemy force through fighting at a specific time and place.[9] The tactical level of war is the province of combat. The means of tactics are the various elements of combat power at our disposal. Its ways are the concepts by which we apply that combat power against our adversary. These concepts are sometimes themselves called tactics—in our case, tactics founded on maneuver. The goal of tactics is victory: defeating the enemy force opposing us. In this respect, we can view tactics as the discipline of winning battles and engagements.

The tactical level of war includes the maneuver of forces in contact with the enemy to gain a fighting advantage, the application and coordination of fires, the sustainment of forces throughout combat, the immediate exploitation of success to seal the victory, the combination of different arms and weapons, the gathering and dissemination of pertinent information, and the technical application of combat power within a tactical action—all to cause the enemy's defeat.

In practice, the events of combat form a continuous fabric of activity. Nonetheless, each tactical action, large or small, can generally be seen as a distinct episode fought within a distinct space and over a particular span of time.

Tactical success does not of itself guarantee success in war. In modern times, victory in a single battle is seldom sufficient to achieve strategic victory as it sometimes was in Napoleon's time. In fact, a single battle can rarely determine the outcome of a campaign, much less that of an entire war. Even a succession of tactical victories does not necessarily ensure strategic victory, the obvious example being the American military experience in Vietnam. Accordingly, we must recognize that *defeating the enemy in combat cannot be viewed as an end in itself, but rather must be considered merely a means to a larger end*.

OPERATIONS

It follows from our discussions of the strategic and tactical levels of war that there is a level of the military art above and distinct from the realm of tactics and subordinate to the domain of strategy. This level is called the *operational level of war*. It is the link between strategy and tactics.[10] Action at the operational level aims to give meaning to tactical actions in the context of some larger design that is itself framed by strategy. Put

another way, *our aim at the operational level is to get strategically meaningful results from tactical efforts*.

Thus at the operational level of war we conceive, focus, and exploit a variety of tactical actions in order to attain a strategic goal. In its essence, the operational level involves deciding when, where, for what purposes, and under what conditions to give battle—or to refuse battle—in order to fulfill the strategic goal. Operations govern the deployment of forces, their commitment to or withdrawal from combat, and the sequencing of successive tactical actions to achieve strategic objectives.

The nature of these tasks requires that the operational commander retain a certain amount of latitude in the conception and execution of plans. "The basic concept of a campaign plan should be born in the mind of the man who has to direct that campaign."[11] If higher authority overly prescribes the concept of operations, then the commander becomes a mere executor of tactical tasks instead of the link between those tasks and the strategic objectives. Such was the case in many U.S. air operations over North Vietnam.

The term "operations" implies broader dimensions of time and space than does "tactics" because a strategic orientation forces the operational commander to consider a perspective broader than the limits of immediate combat.[12] While the tactician fights the battle, the operational commander must look beyond the battle—seeking to shape events in advance in order to create the most favorable conditions possible for future combat

actions. The operational commander likewise seeks to take maximum advantage of the outcome of any actual combat (win, lose, or draw), finding ways to exploit the resulting situation to the greatest strategic advantage.

Although the operational level of war is sometimes described as large-unit tactics, it is erroneous to define the operational level according to echelon of command. Military actions need not be of large scale or involve extensive combat to have an important political impact.[13] The distance between tactical actions and their strategic effects varies greatly from conflict to conflict. In World War II, for example, strategic effects could usually be obtained only from the operations of whole armies or fleets. In a future very large-scale conventional conflict, a corps commander may well be the lowest-level operational commander. In Somalia, on the other hand, strategic (i.e., political) effects could result from the actions of squads or even individuals. *Regardless of the size of a military force or the scope of a tactical action, if it is being used to directly achieve a strategic objective, then it is being employed at the operational level.*

STRATEGIC-OPERATIONAL CONNECTION

No level of war is self-contained. Strategic, operational, and tactical commanders, forces, and events are continually interacting with one another. Although we may view the chain of

command as a hierarchical pyramid in which directives and power flow from higher to lower, in fact the command structure is often more like a spider web: a tug at any point may have an impact throughout the structure. Information must therefore flow freely in all directions. To use a different metaphor, the fingers have to know what the brain is feeling for, and the brain has to know what the fingers are actually touching.

We must always remember that the political end state envisioned by policy makers determines the strategic goals of all military actions. We must also understand that the relationship between strategy and operations runs both ways. That is, just as strategy shapes the design of the campaign, so must strategy adapt to operational circumstances and events.

Strategy guides operations in three basic ways: it establishes aims, allocates resources, and imposes restraints and constraints on military action. Together with the nature and actions of the enemy and the characteristics of the area of operations, strategic guidance defines the parameters within which we can conduct operations.

First, strategy translates policy objectives into military terms by establishing the military strategic aim. What political effect must our military forces achieve? What enemy assets must our tactical forces seize, neutralize, threaten, or actually destroy in order to either bend the enemy to our will or break him completely? The operational commander's principal task is to

determine and pursue the sequence of actions that will most directly accomplish the military strategic mission. It is important to keep in mind that the military strategic aim is but one part of a broader national strategy.

Strategists must be prepared to modify aims in the light of actual developments, as they reevaluate costs, capabilities, and expectations. While required to pursue the established aim, the operational commander is obliged to communicate the associated risks to superiors. When aims are unclear, the commander must seek clarification and convey the impact— positive or negative—of continued ambiguity.

Second, strategy provides resources, both tangible resources such as material and personnel and intangible resources such as political and public support for military operations. When resources are insufficient despite all that skill, talent, dedication, and creativity can do, the operational commander must seek additional resources or request modification of the aims.

Third, strategy, because it is influenced by political and social concerns, places conditions on the conduct of military operations. These conditions take the form of restraints and constraints. Restraints prohibit or restrict certain military actions such as the prohibition imposed on MacArthur against bombing targets north of the Yalu River in Korea in 1950 or the United States' policy not to make first use of chemical weapons in World War II. Restraints may be constant, as the laws of warfare, or situational, as rules of engagement. Constraints, on the other hand, obligate the commander to certain

military courses of action such as President Jefferson Davis's decision that the policy of the Confederacy would be to hold as much territory as possible rather than employ a more flexible defense or resort to wide-scale guerrilla tactics, or the decision that the Arab members of the Coalition should be the liberators of Kuwait City during the Gulf War. Similarly, strategy may constrain the commander to operations which gain rapid victory such as Abraham Lincoln's perceived need to end the American Civil War quickly lest Northern popular resolve falter.

When conditions imposed by strategy are so severe as to prevent the attainment of the established aim, the commander must request relaxation of either the aims or the limitations. However, we should not be automatically critical of conditions imposed on operations by higher authority, since "policy is the guiding intelligence"[14] for the use of military force. Nonetheless, no senior commander can use the conditions imposed by higher authority as an excuse for military failure.

TACTICAL-OPERATIONAL CONNECTION

Just as strategy shapes the design of the campaign while simultaneously adapting to operational circumstances and events, so operations must interact with tactics. Operational plans and directives that are rooted in political and strategic aims establish

the necessary focus and goals for tactical actions. Operational planning provides the context for tactical decisionmaking. Without this operational coherence, warfare at the tactical level is reduced to a series of disconnected and unfocused tactical actions. Just as operations must serve strategy by combining tactical actions so as to most effectively and economically achieve the aim, they must also serve tactics by creating the most advantageous conditions for our tactical actions. In other words, we try to shape the situation so that the outcome is merely a matter of course. "Therefore," Sun Tzu said, "a skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it of his subordinates."[15] Just as we must continually interface with strategy to gain our direction, we must also maintain the flexibility to adapt to tactical circumstances as they develop, for tactical results will impact on the conduct of the campaign. As the campaign forms the framework for combat, so do tactical results shape the conduct of the campaign. In this regard, the task is to exploit tactical developments—victories, draws, even defeats—to strategic advantage.

INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE LEVELS OF WAR

The levels of war form a hierarchy. Tactical engagements are components of battle, and battles are elements of a campaign. The campaign, in turn, is itself but one phase of a strategic design for gaining the objectives of policy. While a clear

hierarchy exists, there are no sharp boundaries between the levels. Rather, they merge together and form a continuum.

Consequently, a particular echelon of command is not necessarily concerned with only one level of war. A theater commander's concerns are clearly both strategic and operational. A Marine air-ground task force commander's responsibilities will be operational in some situations and largely tactical in others and may actually span the transition from tactics to operations in still others. A commander's responsibilities within the hierarchy depend on the scale and nature of the conflict and may shift up and down as the war develops.

Actions at one level can often influence the situation at other levels.[16] Harmony among the various levels tends to reinforce success, while disharmony tends to negate success. Obviously, failure at one level tends naturally to lessen success at the other levels.

It is perhaps less obvious that the tactics employed to win in actual combat may prevent success at a higher level. Imagine a government whose strategy is to quell a growing insurgency by isolating the insurgents from the population but whose military tactics cause extensive collateral death and damage. The government's tactics alienate the population and make the enemy's cause more appealing, strengthening him politically and therefore strategically.

Brilliance at one level of war may to some extent overcome shortcomings at another, but rarely can it overcome outright incompetence. Operational competence is meaningless without the ability to achieve results at the tactical level. Strategic incompetence can squander what operational success has gained.

The natural flow of influence in the hierarchy is greatest at the top. That is, it is much more likely that strategic incompetence will squander operational and tactical success than that tactical and operational brilliance will overcome strategic incompetence or disadvantage. The Germans are widely considered to have been tactically and operationally superior in the two World Wars. Their strategic incompetence, however, proved an insurmountable obstacle to victory. Conversely, outgunned and overmatched tactically, the Vietnamese Communists prevailed strategically.

The flow can work in reverse as well: brilliance at one level can overcome, at least in part, shortcomings at a higher level. In this way, during the American Civil War, the tacti- cal and operational abilities of Confederate military leaders in the eastern theater of war held off the strategic advantages of the North for a time until President Lincoln found a commander—General Grant—who would press those advantages. Similarly, in North Africa, early in World War II, the tactical and operational flair of German General Erwin Rommel's Africa Corps negated Britain's strategic advantage only for a time.

What matters finally is success at the strategic level. The concerns of policy are the motives for war in the first place, and it is the political impact of our operations that determines our success or failure in war. It is far less important to be able to discern at what level a certain activity takes place or where the transition between levels occurs than to ensure that from top to bottom and bottom to top all the components of our military effort are in harmony. We must never view the tactical domain in isolation because the results of combat become relevant only in the larger context of the campaign. The campaign, in turn, gains meaning only in the context of strategy.

CAMPAIGNS

The principal tool by which the operational commander pursues the conditions that will achieve the strategic goal is the *campaign*. Campaigns tend to take place over the course of weeks or months, but they may span years. They may vary drastically in scale from large campaigns conceived and controlled at the theater or even National Command Authorities level to smaller campaigns conducted by joint task forces within a combatant command. Separate campaigns may be waged sequentially within the same conflict, each pursuing intermediate objectives on the way to the final strategic goal. It is also possible to pursue several campaigns simultaneously if there are multiple theaters of war. In modern times, for each

U.S. conflict or military operation other than war there is normally only one campaign at a time within one geographic theater of war or theater of operations.[17] That campaign is always joint in character and falls under the command of either a regional commander in chief or a subordinate joint force commander. The joint force commander's campaign is made up of a series of related major operations, some of which may be conducted by a single Service.

In the past, however, the word "campaign" has been used very flexibly. Historians often refer to lesser campaigns within larger ones. For example, the Allied Pacific campaign in the Second World War comprised subordinate campaigns by General Douglas MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific, Admiral William Halsey in the South Pacific, and Admiral Chester Nimitz in the Central Pacific. Halsey's campaign in the South Pacific itself included a smaller campaign in the Solomon Islands that lasted 5 months and consisted of operations from Guadalcanal to Bougainville. Similarly, we often hear of "air operations" or "submarine operations" as if they constituted independent campaigns. Nonetheless, while the Desert Storm campaign had an initial phase dominated by aerial forces, we do not refer to this as an air campaign.

At times, the relationships of these operations may not be readily apparent. They may seem to be isolated tactical events such as Operation Eldorado Canyon, the punative U.S. airstrike against Libya in 1986. On the surface, this operation appeared to be a single military response to a specific Libyan act,

the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in Berlin in which two U.S. servicemen were killed and a number injured. In fact, this operation was part of much larger series of actions intended to attain the strategic objective of reducing or eliminating Libya's sponsorship of international terrorism. Nonmilitary actions included efforts to isolate Libya diplomatically coupled with economic sanctions and information to publicize Libya's support of terrorism. Military actions consisted of a series of freedom of navigation operations conducted in the Gulf of Sidra that showed U.S. military commitment and put more pressure on the Libyan government.[18]

BATTLES AND ENGAGEMENTS

A *battle* is a series of related tactical engagements. Battles last longer than engagements and involve larger forces. They occur when adversaries commit to fight to a decision at a particular time and place for a significant objective. Conse- quently, battles are usually operationally significant (though not necessarily operationally decisive).[19] This is not always so. The Battle of the Somme in 1916, which was actually a series of inconclusive battles over the span of 4½ months, merely moved the front some 8 miles while inflicting approximately 1 million casualties on the opposing armies.

An *engagement* is a small tactical conflict, usually between maneuver forces.[20] Several engagements may compose a battle.

Engagements may or may not be operationally significant, although our intent is to gain advantage from the results.

Battles and engagements are the armed collisions that mark potential turning points in a campaign. While such combat provides perceptible structure, it is the campaign design that gives combat meaning. In some campaigns, military forces play a supporting role and are not really the main effort, as in the campaign to isolate Iraq following the Gulf War. In that case, tactical actions are small, infrequent, and undertaken largely to enforce political and economic sanctions and to maintain blockades. Even in campaigns where military forces represent the main effort, sometimes small engagements are so continuous and large battles so rare that a campaign may seem to be one drawn-out combat action. For instance, we often refer to the Allies' World War II campaign against German submarines in the Atlantic as the "Battle of the Atlantic." Guerrilla wars and insurgencies often follow a similar pattern. The structure of campaigns in such cases is sometimes hard to perceive because the ebb and flow in the antagonists' fortunes happen bit by bit rather than in sudden, dramatic events.

Even when a campaign involves distinct battles, operational and strategic advantage can be gained despite tactical defeat. General Nathaniel Greene's campaign against the British in the Carolinas during the American Revolution provides an example. In the winter of 1781, Greene maneuvered his army for almost 2 months to avoid engagement with the British force commanded by Lord Cornwallis. In March of 1781, reinforced

by Continental soldiers, militia, and riflemen from Virginia and North Carolina, Greene decided to challenge the British in North Carolina at Guilford Courthouse. The Americans fought well, inflicting more casualties than they sustained, but were forced to withdraw from the field. This engagement, a defeat for Greene, proved to be a turning point in the campaign.[21] The British, exhausted from the previous pursuit and short on supplies, were unable to exploit their tactical victory and withdrew to the coast, leaving their scattered South Carolina garrisons vulnerable.[22]

The point is that victory in battle is only one possible means to a larger end. The object should be to accomplish the aim of strategy with as little combat as practicable, reducing "fighting to the slenderest possible proportions."[23]

However, none of this is to say that we can—or should try to—avoid fighting on general principle. How much fighting we do varies according to the strength, skill, intentions, and determination of the opposing sides. The ideal is to give battle only where we want and when we must—when we are at an advantage and have something important to gain that we cannot gain without fighting. However, since we are opposed by a hostile will with ideas of his own, we do not always have this option. Sometimes we must fight at a disadvantage when forced to by a skilled enemy or when political obligations constrain us (as would have been the case had the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's plan for the forward defense of Germany against the old Warsaw Pact been executed).

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY: GRANT VERSUS LEE

A comparative examination of the strategic, operational, and tactical approaches of Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee during the American Civil War offers an interesting illustration of the interaction of the levels. Popular history regards Grant as a butcher and Lee a military genius. A study of their understanding of the needs of policy and the consistency of their strategic, operational, and tactical methods casts the issue in a different light.[24]

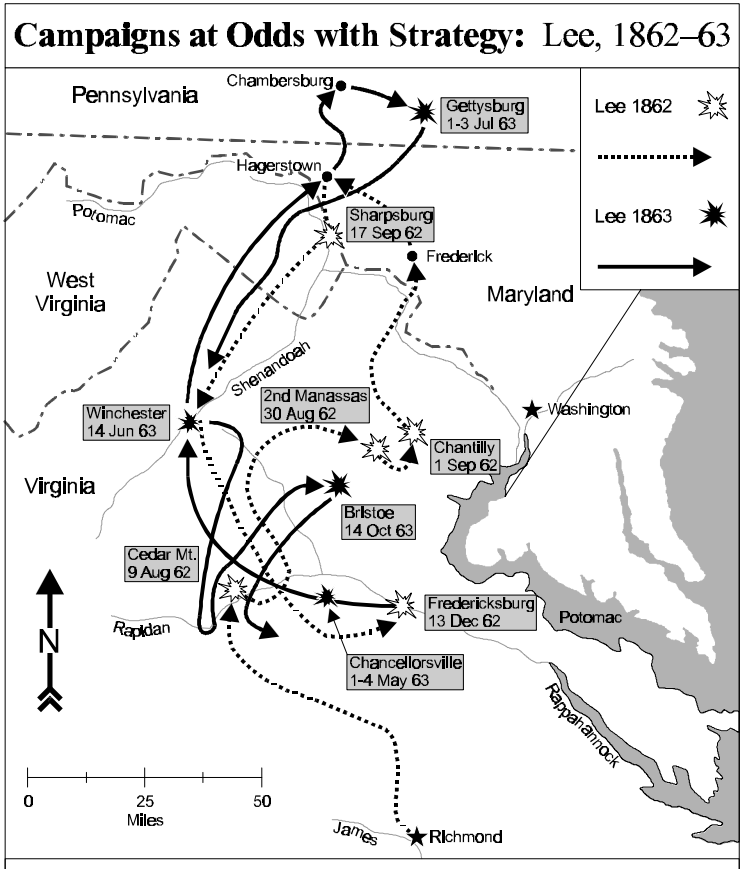
Policy

The North faced a demanding and complex political problem, namely "to reassert its authority over a vast territorial empire, far too extensive to be completely occupied or thoroughly controlled."[25] Furthermore, President Lincoln recognized that Northern popular resolve might be limited and established rapid victory as a condition as well. Lincoln's original policy of conciliation having failed, the President opted for the unconditional surrender of the South as the only acceptable aim. His search for a general who would devise a strategy to attain his aim ended with Grant in March 1864. By comparison, the South's policy aim was to preserve its newly declared independence. The South's strategic aim was simply to prevent the North from succeeding, to make the endeavor more costly than the North was willing to bear.

Military Strategy

The South's policy objectives would seem to dictate a military strategy of erosion aimed at prolonging the war as a means to breaking Northern resolve. In fact, this was the strategy preferred by Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Such a strategy would require close coordination of the Southern armies and a careful husbanding of the Confederacy's inferior resources. In practice, however, no Southern general in chief was appointed until Lee's appointment in early 1865. No doubt it was in part because of the Confederacy's basic political philosophy of states' rights that the military resources of the various Southern states were poorly distributed. Campaigns in the various theaters of war were conducted almost independently.

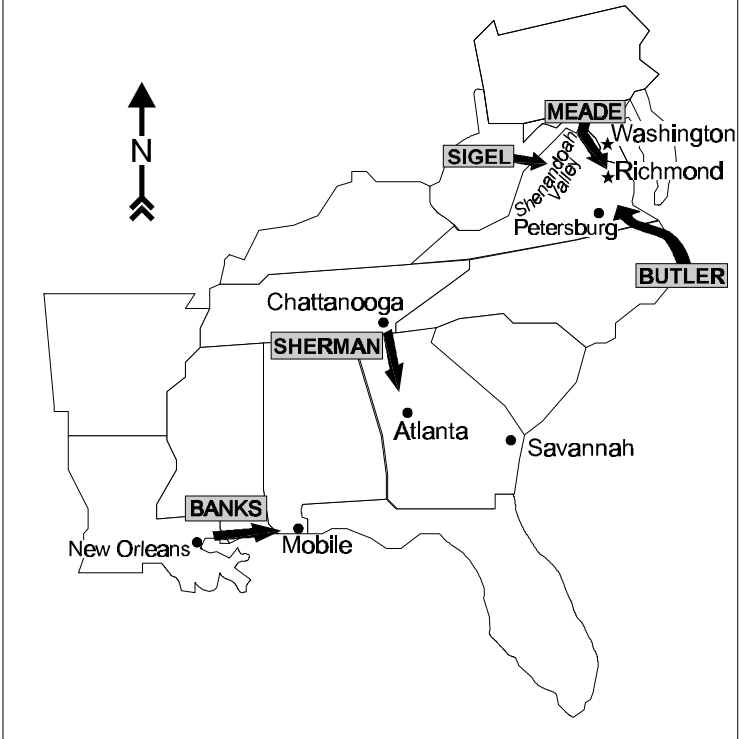
Lee's decision to concentrate his army in northern Virginia reflected a perspective much narrower than Grant's and the fact that he was politically constrained to defend Richmond. However, this decision was due also to Lee's insistence on an offensive strategy—not merely an offensive defense as in the early stages of the war but eventually an ambitious offensive strategy in 1862 and '63 aimed at invading the North as a means to breaking Northern will. (See figure.) Given the South's relative weakness, Lee's strategy was questionable at best[26]—both as a viable means of attaining the South's policy aims and also in regard to operational practicability, particularly the South's logistical ability to sustain offensive campaigns.


Campaigns at Odds with Strategy: Lee, 1862–63
Pennsylvania
Chambersburg
Gettysburg
1-3 Jul 63
Hagerstown
Potomac
Sharpsburg
17 Sep 62
Frederick
West
Virginia
Maryland
Shenandoah
Winchester
14 Jun 63
2nd Manassas
30 Aug 62
Washington
Chantilly
1 Sep 62
Virginia
Bristoe
14 Oct 63
Cedar Mt.
9 Aug 62
Fredericksburg
13 Dec 62
Potomac
Rapidan
N
Chancellorsville
1-4 May 63
Rappahannock
0
25
50
Miles
James
Richmond
Lee 1862
Lee 1863
In spite of the Confederacy's simple goal of survival, Lee adopts an ambitious offensive strategy comprising two campaigns of invasion which fail in their strategic purpose.

Grant's strategy of 1864 was directly supportive of the established policy objectives. He recognized immediately that his military strategic aim must be the destruction of Lee's army, and he devised a strategy of annihilation focused resolutely on that aim. Consistent with the policy objective of ending the war as rapidly as possible, Grant initiated offensive action simultaneously on all fronts to close the ring quickly around his opponent. (See figure.)

- General George Meade's Army of the Potomac was to lock horns with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, pursuing it relentlessly. "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever he goes, there you will go also."[27] Grant's headquarters accompanied Meade.
- In the Shenandoah Valley, General Franz Sigel was to fix a large part of Lee's forces in place. "In other words," Grant said, "if Sigel can't skin himself he can hold a leg while some one else skins."[28]
- On the Peninsula, south of Richmond, General Butler was reinforced by troops taken from occupation duties along the Southern coast. He was to move up and threaten Richmond from a different direction than Meade.
- General William T. Sherman was to sweep out of the west into Georgia, then up along the coast. "You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their

Campaigns Supporting Strategy: Grant, 1864–65



Consistent with the policy objective of ending the war as rapidly as possible, Grant initiated offensive action simultaneously on all fronts to close the ring around his opponent.

war resources."[29] After eliminating Confederate forces in Georgia and the Carolinas, Sherman's army would move north in a strategic envelopment of Lee.

- Union land and sea forces in the vicinity of New Orleans were to concentrate and take Mobile, Alabama, thus cutting off one of the last functioning Confederate seaports.

Satisfied that he had finally found a commander who could translate policy into a successful military strategy, Lincoln wrote Grant in August 1864: " 'The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. . . . I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you.' "[30]

Operations in 1864

Consistent with his strategy of grinding Lee down as quickly as possible and recognizing his ability to pay the numerical cost, Grant aggressively sought to force Lee frequently into pitched battle. He accomplished this by moving against Richmond in such a way as to compel Lee to block him. Grant never fell back to lick his wounds but rather continued relentlessly to press his fundamental advantages no matter what the outcome of a particular engagement. Even so, it is unfair to discount Grant, as some have done, as an unskilled butcher:

> He showed himself free from the common fixation of his contemporaries upon the Napoleonic battle as the hinge upon which warfare must turn. Instead, he developed a highly uncommon ability to rise above the fortunes of a single battle and to master the flow of a long series of events, almost to the

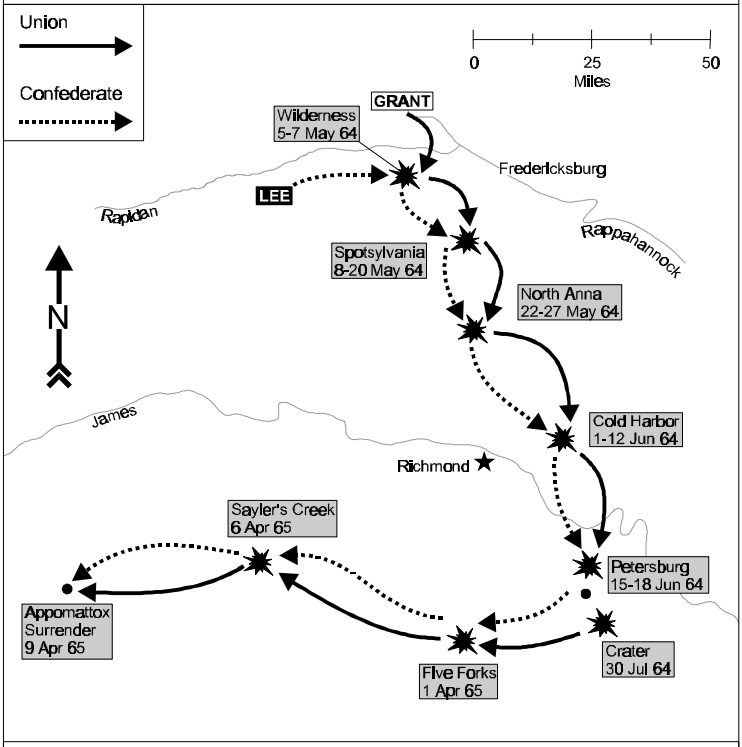
> point of making any outcome of a single battle, victory, draw, or even defeat, serve his eventual purpose equally well.[31]

Lee, on the other hand, had stated that having the weaker force, his desire was to avoid a general engagement.[32] In practice, however, he seemed unable to resist the temptation of a climactic Napoleonic battle whenever the enemy was within reach. Despite a number of tactical successes, Lee was eventually pinned to the fortifications at Petersburg, where he was besieged by Grant from mid-June 1864 to early April 1865. Lee's eventual attempt to escape from Petersburg led to his army's capture at Appomattox on 9 April 1865. (See figure on page 28.)

The most important subordinate campaign, other than that of the Army of the Potomac itself, was Sherman's. His initial opponent, General Joseph Johnston, in contrast to Lee, seemed to appreciate the Confederacy's need to protract the conflict. Johnston—

> fought a war of defensive maneuver, seeking opportunities to fall upon enemy detachments which might expose themselves and inviting the enemy to provide him with such openings, meanwhile moving from one strong defensive position to another in order to invite the enemy to squander his resources in frontal attacks, but never remaining stationary long enough to risk being outflanked or entrapped.[33]

The Wilderness to Appomattox: Grant, 1864–65



Grant clearly defines his aim: the destruction of Lee's army. He attacks relentlessly, maneuvering against Richmond to compel Lee to fight him. Grant's instructions to Meade: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever he goes, there you will go also."

Between Chattanooga and Atlanta, while suffering minimal casualties, Johnston held Sherman to an average advance of a mile a day. Of Johnston's campaign, Grant himself wrote—

> For my own part, I think that Johnston's tactics were right. Anything that could have prolonged the war a year beyond the time that it did finally close, would probably have exhausted the North to such an extent that they might have abandoned the contest and agreed to a separation.[34]

Tactics

Lee's dramatic tactical successes in battles such as Second Manassas and Chancellorsville speak for themselves. Nevertheless, neither Lee nor Grant can be described as particularly innovative tactically. In fact, both were largely ignorant of the technical impact of the rifled bore on the close-order tactics of the day, and both suffered high casualties as a result.[35] However, due to the relative strategic situations, Grant could better absorb the losses that resulted from this tactical ignorance than could Lee, whose army was being bled to death. In this way, Grant's strategic advantage carried down to the tactical level.

Grant's activities at all levels seem to have been mutually supporting and focused on the objectives of policy. Lee's strategy and operations appear to have been, at least in part, incompatible with each other, with the requirements of policy, and with the realities of combat. In the final analysis, Lee's tactical

flair could not overcome operational and strategic shortcomings of the Confederacy.

THE MARINE CORPS AND CAMPAIGNING

Having described how goals at the different levels of war interact and introduced the campaign, we must now ask ourselves what is the relevance of this subject to the Marine Corps. We can answer this question from several perspectives. Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) will participate in campaigns, and Marines will serve on joint staffs and participate in the design of campaigns. MAGTF commanders and their staffs may find themselves designing major operations in support of a campaign.

Organizationally, the MAGTF is uniquely equipped to perform a variety of tactical actions—amphibious, air, and land—and to sequence or combine those actions in a coherent scheme. The MAGTF's organic aviation allows the commander to project power in depth and to shape events in time and space. The command structure with separate headquarters for the tactical control of ground, air, and logistics actions frees the MAGTF command element to focus on the operational conduct of war.

A MAGTF is often the first American force to arrive in an undeveloped theater of operations. In that case, the MAGTF commander will often have operational-level responsibilities regardless of the size of the MAGTF. In some cases, the MAGTF may provide the nucleus of a joint task force headquarters. Even in a developed theater, a MAGTF may be required to conduct major operations as part of a larger campaign in pursuit of a strategic objective. The commander of a MAGTF must be prepared to describe its most effective operational employment in a joint or multinational campaign.

The news media, because of its global reach and ability to influence popular opinion, can have operational effects—that is, it can often elevate even minor tactical acts to political importance. Consequently, Marines must understand how tactical action impacts on politics; this is the essence of understanding war at the operational level.

Finally, regardless of the echelon of command or scale of activity, even if an action rests firmly in the tactical realm, the methodology described here—devising and executing a progressive series of actions in pursuit of a goal and deciding when and where to fight for that goal—applies.