Chapter 4

The Conduct of War

"Now an army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strength and strikes weakness."[1]

—Sun Tzu

"Speed is the essence of war. Take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness; travel by unexpected routes and strike him where he has taken no precautions."[2]

—Sun Tzu

"Many years ago, as a cadet hoping some day to be an officer, I was poring over the 'Principles of War,' listed in the old Field Service Regulations, when the Sergeant-Major came up to me. He surveyed me with kindly amusement. 'Don't bother your head about all them things, me lad,' he said. 'There's only one principle of war and that's this. Hit the other fellow, as quick as you can, and as hard as you can, where it hurts him most, when he ain't lookin'!'"[3]

—Sir William Slim

The sole justification for the United States Marine Corps is to secure or protect national policy objectives by military force when peaceful means alone cannot. How the Marine Corps proposes to accomplish this mission is the product of our understanding of the nature and the theory of war and must be the guiding force behind our preparation for war.

THE CHALLENGE

The challenge is to develop a concept of warfighting consistent with our understanding of the nature and theory of war and the realities of the modern battlefield. What exactly does this require? It requires a concept of warfighting that will help us function effectively in an uncertain, chaotic, and fluid environment—in fact, one with which we can exploit these conditions to our advantage. It requires a concept with which we can sense and use the time-competitive rhythm of war to generate and exploit superior tempo. It requires a concept that is consistently effective across the full spectrum of conflict because we cannot attempt to change our basic doctrine from situation to situation and expect to be proficient. It requires a concept with which we can recognize and exploit the fleeting opportunities that naturally occur in war. It requires a concept that takes into account the moral and mental as well as the physical forces of war because we have already concluded that these form the greater part of war. It requires a concept with which we can succeed against a numerically superior foe because we cannot

presume a numerical advantage either locally or overall. Especially in expeditionary situations in which public support for military action may be tepid and short-lived, it requires a concept with which we can win quickly against a larger foe on his home soil with minimal casualties and limited external support.

MANEUVER WARFARE

The Marine Corps concept for winning under these conditions is a warfighting doctrine based on rapid, flexible, and opportunistic maneuver. In order to fully appreciate what we mean by *maneuver*, we need to clarify the term. The traditional understanding of maneuver is a spatial one; that is, we maneuver in space to gain a positional advantage.[4] However, in order to maximize the usefulness of maneuver, we must consider maneuver in other dimensions as well. The essence of maneuver is taking action to generate and exploit some kind of advantage over the enemy as a means of accomplishing our objectives as effectively as possible. That advantage may be psychological, technological, or temporal as well as spatial. Especially important is maneuver *in time*—we generate a faster operating tempo than the enemy to gain a temporal advantage. It is through maneuver in all dimensions that an inferior force can achieve decisive superiority at the necessary time and place.

Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope.

Rather than wearing down an enemy's defenses, maneuver warfare attempts to bypass these defenses in order to *penetrate* the enemy system and tear it apart. The aim is to render the enemy incapable of resisting effectively by shattering his moral, mental, and physical cohesion—his ability to fight as an effective, coordinated whole—rather than to destroy him physically through the incremental attrition of each of his components, which is generally more costly and time-con- suming. Ideally, the components of his physical strength that remain are irrelevant because we have disrupted his ability to use them effectively. Even if an outmaneuvered enemy continues to fight as individuals or small units, we can destroy the remnants with relative ease because we have eliminated his ability to fight effectively as a force.

This is not to imply that firepower is unimportant. On the contrary, firepower is central to maneuver warfare. Nor do we mean to imply that we will pass up the opportunity to physically destroy the enemy. We will concentrate fires and forces at decisive points to destroy enemy elements when the opportunity presents itself and when it fits our larger purposes. Engaged in combat, we can rarely go wrong if we aggressively

pursue the destruction of enemy forces. In fact, maneuver warfare often involves extremely high attrition of selected enemy forces where we have focused combat power against critical enemy weakness. Nonetheless, the aim of such attrition is not merely to reduce incrementally the enemy's physical strength. Rather, it is to contribute to the enemy's systemic disruption. The greatest effect of firepower is gen- erally not physical destruction—the cumulative effects of which are felt only slowly—but the disruption it causes.

If the aim of maneuver warfare is to shatter the cohesion of the enemy system, the immediate object toward that end is to create a situation in which the enemy cannot function. By our actions, we seek to pose menacing dilemmas in which events happen unexpectedly and more quickly than the enemy can keep up with them. The enemy must be made to see the situation not only as deteriorating, but deteriorating at an ever-increasing rate. The ultimate goal is panic and paralysis, an enemy who has lost the ability to resist.

Inherent in maneuver warfare is the need for *speed* to seize the initiative, dictate the terms of action, and keep the enemy off balance, thereby increasing his friction. We seek to establish a pace that the enemy cannot maintain so that with each action his reactions are increasingly late—until eventually he is overcome by events.

Also inherent is the need to *focus* our efforts in order to maximize effect. In combat this includes violence and shock effect, again not so much as a source of physical attrition, but as

a source of disruption. We concentrate strength against critical enemy vulnerabilities, striking quickly and boldly where, when, and in ways in which it will cause the greatest damage to our enemy's ability to fight. Once gained or found, any advantage must be pressed relentlessly and unhesitatingly. We must be ruthlessly opportunistic, actively seeking out signs of weakness against which we will direct all available combat power. When the *decisive* opportunity arrives, we must exploit it fully and aggressively, committing every ounce of combat power we can muster and pushing ourselves to the limits of exhaustion.

An important weapon in our arsenal is *surprise*, the combat value of which we have already recognized. By studying our enemy, we will attempt to appreciate his perceptions. Through deception we will try to shape the enemy's expectations. Then we will exploit those expectations by striking at an unexpected time and place. In order to appear unpredictable, we must avoid set rules and patterns, which inhibit imagination and initiative. In order to appear ambiguous and threatening, we should operate on axes that offer numerous courses of action, keeping the enemy unclear as to which we will choose.

Besides traits such as endurance and courage that all warfare demands, maneuver warfare puts a premium on certain particular human skills and traits. It requires the temperament to cope with uncertainty. It requires flexibility of mind to deal with fluid and disorderly situations. It requires a certain independence of mind, a willingness to act with initiative and boldness, an exploitive mindset that takes full advantage of every

opportunity, and the moral courage to accept responsibility for this type of behavior. It is important that this last set of traits be guided by self-discipline and loyalty to the objectives of seniors. Finally, maneuver warfare requires the ability to think above our own level and to act at our level in a way that is in consonance with the requirements of the larger situation.

ORIENTING ON THE ENEMY

Orienting on the enemy is fundamental to maneuver warfare. Maneuver warfare attacks the enemy "system." The enemy system is whatever constitutes the entity confronting us within our particular sphere. For a pilot, it might be the combination of air defense radars, surface-to-air missiles, and enemy aircraft that must be penetrated to reach the target. For a rifle company commander, it might be the mutually supporting defensive positions, protected by obstacles and supported by crew-served weapons, on the next terrain feature. For an electronic warfare specialist, it might be the enemy's command and control networks. For a Marine expeditionary force commander, it might be all the major combat formations within an area of operations as well as their supporting command and control, logistics, and intelligence organizations.

We should try to understand the unique characteristics that make the enemy system function so that we can penetrate the

system, tear it apart, and, if necessary, destroy the isolated components. We should seek to identify and attack critical vulnerabilities and those centers of gravity without which the enemy cannot function effectively. This means focusing outward on the particular characteristics of the enemy rather than inward on the mechanical execution of predetermined procedures.

If the enemy system, for example, is a fortified defensive works, penetrating the system may mean an infiltration or a violent attack on a narrow frontage at a weak spot to physically rupture the defense, after which we can envelop the enemy positions or roll them up laterally from within. In this way we defeat the logic of the system rather than frontally overwhelming each position.

We should try to "get inside" the enemy's thought processes and see the enemy as he sees himself so that we can set him up for defeat. It is essential that we understand the enemy on his own terms. We should not assume that every enemy thinks as we do, fights as we do, or has the same values or objectives.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMMAND

It is essential that our philosophy of command support the way we fight. First and foremost, *in order to generate the tempo of operations we desire and to best cope with the uncertainty, disorder, and fluidity of combat, command and control must*

be decentralized. That is, subordinate commanders must make decisions on their own initiative, based on their understanding of their senior's intent, rather than passing information up the chain of command and waiting for the decision to be passed down. Further, a competent subordinate commander who is at the point of decision will naturally better appreciate the true situation than a senior commander some distance removed. Individual initiative and responsibility are of paramount importance. The principal means by which we implement decentralized command and control is through the use of mission tactics, which we will discuss in detail later.

Second, since we have concluded that war is a human enterprise and no amount of technology can reduce the human dimension, our philosophy of command must be based on human characteristics rather than on equipment or procedures. Communications equipment and command and staff procedures can enhance our ability to command, but they must not be used to lessen the human element of command. Our philosophy must not only accommodate but must exploit human traits such as boldness, initiative, personality, strength of will, and imagination.

Our philosophy of command must also exploit the human ability to communicate *implicitly*.[5] We believe that *implicit communication*—to communicate through *mutual understanding*, using a minimum of key, well-understood phrases or even *anticipating* each other's thoughts—is a faster, more effective way to communicate than through the use of detailed, explicit instructions. We develop this ability through familiar-

ity and trust, which are based on a shared philosophy and shared experience.

This concept has several practical implications. First, we should establish long-term working relationships to develop the necessary familiarity and trust. Second, key people—"actuals"—should talk directly to one another when possible, rather than through communicators or messengers. Third, we should communicate orally when possible, because we communicate also in *how* we talk—our inflections and tone of voice. Fourth, we should communicate in person when possible because we communicate also through our gestures and bearing.

Commanders should command from where they can best influence the action, normally well forward. This allows them to see and sense firsthand the ebb and flow of combat, to gain an intuitive appreciation for the situation that they cannot obtain from reports. It allows them to exert personal influence at decisive points during the action. It also allows them to locate themselves closer to the events that will influence the situation so that they can observe them directly and circumvent the delays and inaccuracies that result from passing information up and down the chain of command. Finally, we recognize the importance of personal leadership. Only by their physical presence—by demonstrating the willingness to share danger and privation—can commanders fully gain the trust and confidence of subordinates. *We must remember that command from the front should not equate to oversupervision of subordinates.* At the same time, it is important to balance the need for forward

command with the need for keeping apprised of the overall situation, which is often best done from a central location such as a combat operation center. Commanders cannot become so focused on one aspect of the situation that they lose overall situational awareness.

As part of our philosophy of command, we must recognize that war is inherently disorderly, uncertain, dynamic, and dominated by friction. Moreover, maneuver warfare, with its emphasis on speed and initiative, is by nature a particularly disorderly style of war. The conditions ripe for exploitation are normally also very disorderly. For commanders to try to gain certainty as a basis for actions, maintain positive control of events at all times, or dictate events to fit their plans is to deny the nature of war. We must therefore be prepared to cope—even better, to *thrive*—in an environment of chaos, uncertainty, constant change, and friction. If we can come to terms with those conditions and thereby limit their debili- tating effects, we can use them as a weapon against a foe who does not cope as well.

In practical terms, this means that we must not strive for certainty before we act, for in so doing we will surrender the initiative and pass up opportunities. We must not try to maintain excessive control over subordinates since this will necessarily slow our tempo and inhibit initiative. We must not attempt to impose precise order on the events of combat since this leads to a formularistic approach to war. We must be prepared to adapt to changing circumstances and exploit opportu-

nities as they arise, rather than adhering insistently to predetermined plans that have outlived their usefulness.

There are several points worth remembering about our command philosophy. First, while it is based on our warfighting style, this does not mean it applies only during war. We must put it into practice during the preparation for war as well. We cannot rightly expect our subordinates to exercise boldness and initiative in the field when they are accustomed to being oversupervised in garrison. Whether the mission is training, procuring equipment, administration, or police call, this philosophy should apply.

Next, our philosophy requires competent leadership at all levels. A centralized system theoretically needs only one competent person, the senior commander, who is the sole authority. A decentralized system requires leaders at all levels to demonstrate sound and timely judgment. Initiative be- comes an essential condition of competence among commanders.

Our philosophy also requires familiarity among comrades because only through a shared understanding can we develop the implicit communication necessary for unity of effort. Perhaps most important, our philosophy demands confidence among seniors and subordinates.

SHAPING THE ACTION

Since our goal is not merely the cumulative attrition of enemy strength, we must have some larger scheme for how we expect to achieve victory. That is, before anything else, we must conceive how we intend to win.

The first requirement is to establish what we want to accomplish, why, and how. Without a clearly identified concept and intent, the necessary unity of effort is inconceivable. We must identify those *critical* enemy vulnerabilities that we believe will lead most directly to undermining the enemy's centers of gravity and the accomplishment of our mission. Having done this, we can then begin to act so as to shape the campaign, operation, battle, or engagement to our advantage in both time and space. Similarly, we must try to see ourselves through our enemy's eyes in order to identify our own vulnerabilities that he may attack and to anticipate what he will try to do so that we can counteract him. Ideally, when the moment of engagement arrives, the issue will have already been resolved: Through our influencing of the events leading up to the encounter, we have so shaped the conditions of war that the result is a matter of course. We have shaped the action decisively to our advantage.

To influence the action to our advantage, we must project our thoughts forward in time and space. We frequently do this through planning. This does not mean that we establish a de-

tailed timetable of events. We have already concluded that war is inherently disorderly, and we cannot expect to dictate its terms with any sort of precision. Rather, we attempt to shape the general conditions of war. This shaping consists of lethal and nonlethal actions that span the spectrum from direct attack to psychological operations, from electronic warfare to the stockpiling of critical supplies for future operations. Shaping activities may render the enemy vulnerable to attack, facilitate maneuver of friendly forces, and dictate the time and place for decisive battle. Examples include canalizing enemy movement in a desired direction, blocking or delaying enemy reinforcements so that we can fight a fragmented enemy force, or shaping enemy expectations through deception so that we can exploit those expectations. We can attack a specific enemy capability to allow us to maximize a capability of our own such as launching an operation to destroy the enemy's air defenses so that we can maximize the use of our own aviation.

Through shaping, commanders gain the initiative, preserve momentum, and control the tempo of operations. We should also try to shape events in a way that allows us several options so that by the time the moment for decisive operations arrives, we have not restricted ourselves to only one course of action.

The further ahead we think, the less our actual influence can be. Therefore, the further ahead we consider, the less precision we should attempt to impose. Looking ahead thus becomes less a matter of direct influence and more a matter of laying the groundwork for possible future actions. As events approach

and our ability to influence them grows, we have already developed an appreciation for the situation and how we want to shape it.[6]

The higher our echelon of command, the greater is our sphere of influence and the further ahead in time and space we must seek to shape the action. Senior commanders developing and pursuing military strategy look ahead weeks, months, or more, and their areas of influence and interest will encompass entire theaters. Junior commanders fighting the battles and engagements at hand are concerned with the coming hours, even minutes, and the immediate field of battle. Regardless of the sphere in which we operate, it is essential to have some vision of the result we want and how we intend to shape the action in time and space to achieve it.

DECISIONMAKING

Decisionmaking is essential to the conduct of war since all actions are the result of decisions or of nondecisions. If we fail to make a decision out of lack of will, we have willingly surrendered the initiative to our foe. If we consciously postpone taking action for some reason, that is a decision. Thus, as a basis for action, any decision is generally better than no decision.

Since war is a conflict between opposing wills, we cannot make decisions in a vacuum. We must make our decisions in

light of the enemy's anticipated reactions and counteractions, recognizing that while we are trying to impose our will on the enemy, he is trying to do the same to us.

Time is a critical factor in effective decisionmaking—often the most important factor. A key part of effective decisionmaking is realizing how much decision time is available and making the most of that time. In general, whoever can make and implement decisions consistently faster gains a tremendous, often decisive advantage. Decisionmaking in execution thus becomes a time-competitive process, and timeliness of decisions becomes essential to generating tempo. Timely decisions demand rapid thinking with consideration limited to essential factors. In such situations, we should spare no effort to accelerate our decisionmaking ability. That said, we should also recognize those situations in which time is not a limiting factor—such as deliberate planning situations—and should not rush our decisions unnecessarily.

A military decision is not merely a mathematical computation. Decisionmaking requires both the situational awareness to recognize the essence of a given problem and the creative ability to devise a practical solution. These abilities are the products of experience, education, and intelligence.

Decisionmaking may be an intuitive process based on experience. This will likely be the case at lower levels and in fluid, uncertain situations. Alternatively, decisionmaking may be a more analytical process based on comparing several options.

This will more likely be the case at higher levels or in deliberate planning situations.

We should base our decisions on *awareness* rather than on mechanical *habit*. That is, we act on a keen appreciation for the essential factors that make each situation unique instead of from conditioned response. We must have the moral courage to make tough decisions in the face of uncertainty—and to accept full responsibility for those decisions—when the natural inclination would be to postpone the decision pending more complete information. To delay action in an emergency because of incomplete information shows a lack of moral courage. We do not want to make rash decisions, but we must not squander opportunities while trying to gain more information.

Finally, since all decisions must be made in the face of uncertainty and since every situation is unique, there is no perfect solution to any battlefield problem. Therefore, we should not agonize over one. The essence of the problem is to select a promising course of action with an acceptable degree of risk and to do it more quickly than our foe. In this respect, "a good plan violently executed *now* is better than a perfect plan executed next week."[7]

MISSION TACTICS

One key way we put maneuver warfare into practice is through the use of *mission tactics*. Mission tactics is just as the name implies: the tactics of assigning a subordinate mission without specifying how the mission must be accom- plished.[8] We leave the manner of accomplishing the mission to the subordinate, thereby allowing the freedom—and establishing the duty—for the subordinate to take whatever steps deemed necessary based on the situation. Mission tactics relies on a subordinate's exercise of initiative framed by proper guidance and understanding.

Mission tactics benefits the senior commander by freeing time to focus on higher-level concerns rather than the details of subordinate execution. The senior prescribes the method of execution only to the degree that is essential for coordination. The senior intervenes in a subordinate's execution only by exception. It is this freedom for initiative that permits the high tempo of operations that we desire. Uninhibited by excessive restrictions from above, subordinates can adapt their actions to the changing situation. They inform the commander of what they have done, but they do not wait for permission.

Mission tactics serves as a contract between senior and subordinate. The senior agrees to provide subordinates with the support necessary to help them accomplish their mis- sions but without unnecessarily prescribing their actions. The senior is obligated to provide the guidance that allows subor- dinates to

exercise proper judgment and initiative. The subor- dinate is obligated to act in conformity with the intent of the senior. The subordinate agrees to act responsibly and loyally and not to exceed the proper limits of authority. Mission tactics requires subordinates to act with "topsight"—a grasp of how their actions fit into the larger situation.[9] In other words, subordinates must always think above their own levels in order to contribute to the accomplishment of the higher mission.

It is obvious that we cannot allow decentralized initiative without some means of providing unity, or focus, to the various efforts. To do so would be to dissipate our strength. We seek unity not principally through imposed control, but through *harmonious* initiative and lateral coordination within the context provided by guidance from above.

COMMANDER'S INTENT

We achieve this harmonious initiative in large part through the use of the commander's *intent*, a device designed to help subordinates understand the larger context of their actions. The purpose of providing intent is to allow subordinates to exercise judgment and initiative—to depart from the original plan when the unforeseen occurs—in a way that is consistent with higher commanders' aims.

There are two parts to any *mission*: the task to be accomplished and the reason or intent behind it.[10] The intent is thus a

part of every mission. The task describes the action to be taken while the intent describes the *purpose* of the action. The task denotes *what* is to be done, and sometimes *when* and *where*; the intent explains *why*. Of the two, the intent is predominant. While a situation may change, making the task obsolete, the intent is more lasting and continues to guide our actions. Understanding the intent of our commander allows us to exercise initiative in harmony with the commander's desires.

The intent for a unit is established by the commander assigning that unit's mission—usually the next higher commander, although not always. A commander normally provides intent as part of the mission statement assigned to a subordinate. A subordinate commander who is not given a clear purpose for the assigned mission should ask for one. Based on the mission, the commander then develops a concept of operations, which explains *how* the unit will accomplish the mission, and assigns missions to subordinates. Each subordinate mission statement includes an intent for that subordinate. The intent provided to each subordinate should contribute to the accomplishment of the intent a commander has received from above. This top-down flow of intent provides consistency and continuity to our actions and establishes the context that is essential for the proper bottom-up exercise of initiative.

It is often possible to capture intent in a simple ". . . in order to . . ." phrase following the assigned task. To maintain our focus on the enemy, we can often express intent in terms of the enemy. For example: "Control the bridge in order to prevent

the enemy from escaping across the river." Sometimes it may be necessary to provide amplifying guidance in addition to an ". . . in order to . . ." statement. In any event, a commander's statement of intent should be brief and compelling—the more concise, the better. A subordinate should be ever conscious of a senior's intent so that it guides every decision. An intent that is involved or complicated will fail to accomplish this purpose.

A clear expression and understanding of intent is essential to unity of effort. The burden of understanding falls on senior and subordinate alike. The seniors must make their purposes perfectly clear but in a way that does not inhibit initiative. Subordinates must have a clear understanding of what their commander expects. Further, they should understand the intent of the commander at least two levels up.

MAIN EFFORT

Another important tool for providing unity is the *main ef- fort*. Of all the actions going on within our command, we recognize one as the most critical to success at that moment. The *unit* assigned responsibility for accomplishing this key mission is designated as the main effort—the focal point upon which converges the combat power of the force. The main effort receives priority for support of any kind. It becomes clear to all other units in the command that they must support that unit in

the accomplishment of its mission. Like the commander's intent, the main effort becomes a harmonizing force for subordinate initiative. Faced with a decision, we ask ourselves: *How can I best support the main effort?*

We cannot take lightly the decision of which unit we designate as the main effort. In effect, we have decided: *This is how I will achieve a decision; everything else is secondary.* We carefully design the operation so that success by the main effort ensures the success of the entire mission. Since the main effort represents our primary bid for victory, we must direct it at that object which will have the most significant effect on the enemy and which holds the best opportunity of success. The main effort involves a physical and moral commitment, although not an irretrievable one. It forces us to concentrate decisive combat power just as it forces us to accept risk. Thus, we direct our main effort against a center of gravity through a critical enemy vulnerability, exercising strict economy elsewhere.

Each commander should establish a main effort for each operation. As the situation changes, the commander may shift the main effort, redirecting the weight of combat power in support of the unit that is now most critical to success. In general, when shifting the main effort, we seek to exploit success rather than reinforce failure.

SURFACES AND GAPS

Put simply, surfaces are hard spots—enemy strengths—and gaps are soft spots—enemy weaknesses. We avoid enemy strength and focus our efforts against enemy weakness with the object of penetrating the enemy system since pitting strength against weakness reduces casualties and is more likely to yield decisive results. Whenever possible, we exploit existing gaps. Failing that, we create gaps.

Gaps may in fact be physical gaps in the enemy's dispositions, but they may also be any weakness in time, space, or capability: a moment in time when the enemy is overexposed and vulnerable, a seam in an air defense umbrella, an infantry unit caught unprepared in open terrain, or a boundary between two units.

Similarly, a surface may be an actual strongpoint, or it may be any enemy strength: a moment when the enemy has just replenished and consolidated a position or a technological superiority of a particular weapons system or capability.

An appreciation for surfaces and gaps requires a certain amount of judgment. What is a surface in one case may be a gap in another. For example, a forest which is a surface to an armored unit because it restricts vehicle movement can be a gap to an infantry unit which can infiltrate through it. Further-

more, we can expect the enemy to disguise his dispositions in order to lure us against a surface that appears to be a gap.

Due to the fluid nature of war, gaps will rarely be permanent and will usually be fleeting. To exploit them demands flexibility and speed. We must actively seek out gaps by continuous and aggressive reconnaissance. Once we locate them, we must exploit them by funneling our forces through rapidly. For example, if our main effort has struck a surface but another unit has located a gap, we designate the second unit as the main effort and redirect our combat power in support of it. In this manner, we "pull" combat power through gaps from the front rather than "pushing" it through from the rear.[11] Commanders must rely on the initiative of subordinates to locate gaps and must have the flexibility to respond quick- ly to opportunities rather than blindly follow predetermined schemes.

COMBINED ARMS

In order to maximize combat power, we must use all the available resources to best advantage. To do so, we must follow a doctrine of combined arms. Combined arms is the full integration of arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. We pose the enemy not just with a problem, but with a dilemma—a no-win situation.

We accomplish combined arms through the tactics and techniques we use at the lower levels and through task organization at higher levels. In so doing, we take advantage of the complementary characteristics of different types of units and enhance our mobility and firepower. We use each arm for missions that no other arm can perform as well; for example, we assign aviation a task that cannot be performed equally well by artillery. An example of the concept of combined arms at the very lowest level is the complementary use of the automatic weapon and grenade launcher within a fire team. We pin an enemy down with the high-volume, direct fire of the automatic weapon, making him a vulnerable target for the grenade launcher. If he moves to escape the impact of the grenades, we engage him with the automatic weapon.

We can expand the example to the MAGTF level: We use assault support aircraft to quickly concentrate superior ground forces for a breakthrough. We use artillery and close air support to support the infantry penetration, and we use deep air support to interdict enemy reinforcements that move to contain the penetration. Targets which cannot be effectively suppressed by artillery are engaged by close air support. In order to defend against the infantry attack, the enemy must make himself vulnerable to the supporting arms. If he seeks cover from the supporting arms, our infantry can maneuver against him. In order to block our penetration, the enemy must reinforce quickly with his reserve. However, in order to avoid our deep air support, he must stay off the roads, which means he can only move slowly.

If he moves slowly, he cannot reinforce in time to prevent our breakthrough. We have put him in a dilemma.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed the aim and characteristics of maneuver warfare. We have discussed the philosophy of command necessary to support this style of warfare. We have discussed some of the tactics of maneuver warfare. By this time, it should be clear that maneuver warfare exists not so much in the specific methods used—we do not believe in a formularistic approach to war—but in the mind of the Marine. In this regard, maneuver warfare, like combined arms, applies equally to the Marine expeditionary force commander and the fire team leader. It applies regardless of the nature of the con- flict, whether amphibious operations or sustained operations ashore, of low or high intensity, against guerrilla or mechanized foe, in desert or jungle.

Maneuver warfare is a way of thinking in and about war that should shape our every action. It is a state of mind born of a bold will, intellect, initiative, and ruthless opportunism. It is a state of mind bent on shattering the enemy morally and physically by paralyzing and confounding him, by avoiding his strength, by quickly and aggressively exploiting his vulnerabilities, and by striking him in the way that will hurt him most. In

short, maneuver warfare is a philosophy for generating the greatest decisive effect against the enemy at the least possible cost to ourselves—a philosophy for "fighting smart."