

Chapter 3

Offensive Operations

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Section 1. General

Offensive operations require the attacker to weight the main effort with superior combat power. Superior combat power allows the attacker to retain the initiative, set the tempo of operations, and achieve decisive results on the battlefield. Tank units contribute greatly to the combat power of the GCE in the offense by their inherent speed, mobility, armor-protected firepower, and shock effect. Tank units also provide the GCE with another key advantage: flexibility. They allow a commander to rapidly shift his main effort. The inherent flexibility of tank units allows the commander to maintain the momentum of his attack by quickly focusing the combat power of his force at various locations on the battlefield. For example, a tank unit can initially be committed to decisive engagement at one location on the battlefield, quickly disengage, and then rapidly maneuver to exploit success at another location on the battlefield.

Types of Offensive Operations. There are four general types of offensive operations - movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

Section 2. Movement to Contact

3201. Movement to Contact

Movement to contact. A movement to contact is an offensive operation conducted to develop the situation and to establish or regain contact with the enemy. It is normally employed when the enemy situation is vague or not specific enough to conduct a deliberate attack. Most mechanized operations begin with the movement to contact, regardless of whether or not a deliberate attack is planned on the final objective. The movement to contact is characterized by decentralized control and rapid commitment of forces from the march. A movement to contact ends when the commander has to deploy the main body to conduct an attack or establish a defense.

A mechanized force assigned a movement to contact mission is normally given a zone of action or an axis of attack and an objective. Inherent to planning a movement to contact is the assumption that enemy contact will be made and actions on contact must be immediate and successful. A properly executed movement to contact allows the commander to make initial contact with minimum forces and to expedite the employment and concentration of the force.

Key considerations of a movement to contact include:

- Focus all efforts on finding and fixing the enemy.
- Initiate contact with the smallest element.
- Maintain freedom of action and execute actions on contact wherever the enemy is encountered.
- Concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power at the decisive point.

A mechanized force conducting a movement to contact normally organizes in an approach march formation with advance, flank, and rear security elements protecting the main body.

Advance Guard. The advance guard protects its main body against ground observation and surprise from the front. It prevents premature deployment of the main body and provides adequate time and space for the main body to deploy for combat. The advance guard destroys enemy security forces and combat forces and reports and breaches obstacles within its capability. It may be directed to report and bypass small enemy forces. When the advance guard comes in contact with a superior enemy force, it will normally attempt to seize key terrain and conduct a hasty defense to facilitate deployment of the main body. It operates within supporting range of the main body. The advance guard prevents unnecessary delay of the main body and defers the deployment of the main body as long as possible. Reconnaissance elements normally operate to the front and flanks of the advance guard.

Flank and Rear Security. When adjacent units do not protect the flanks of a command it is necessary to provide protection by using a portion of the force to conduct flank security. Flank security missions include both guard and screen missions. The purpose of flank security is to protect the main body from observation, direct fire, and surprise attack. The mission and available combat power of the flank security element is METT-T dependent. Flank security elements are subordinate to the main body. They travel on routes parallel to the main body, either by continuously marching or moving by alternating bounds.

The rear security element protects the rear of the main body from attack and/or observation. When properly resourced the rear security element can be given a screen, guard, or cover mission.

Main Body. Ideally, the main body is unhindered during the movement to contact and is well positioned to conduct an attack against main enemy forces and seize the final objective. Elements from the main body may be deployed to eliminate small pockets of resistance bypassed by the advance guard. However, the main body must not be dissipated by piecemeal commitment.

Actions with Contact Imminent. The enemy situation will become clearer as the advanced guard conducts actions on contact. Key actions include developing the situation and refocusing reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition assts. The mechanized force must remain flexible enough to rapidly exploit both intelligence and combat information. All RSTA assets are focused on determining the enemy's dispositions and ensuring the commitment of friendly forces under optimal conditions.

As contact becomes imminent, advance guards move forward on a progressively broader front. Based upon the situation, the advance guard is engaged in accordance with the plan of the commander or to seize terrain essential to the development of its main body. They should seize terrain affording essential observation.

Actions after Contact

Covering Force and Advance Guard. Once contact with strong enemy is made, measures are taken to develop the situation and protect the deployment of the mechanized force. There are five basic options available:

Hasty Attack. The hasty attack is characterized by rapid reconnaissance to determine the size and location of the enemy force to allow a rapid attack of the enemy by available forces.

Hasty Defense. The hasty defense is characterized by the seizure of key terrain to facilitate the deployment of the main body. The enemy reaction to such action frequently will indicate both the strength and disposition of the hostile force.

Report and Bypass. Bypass criteria are established by the commander dependent upon the factors of METT-T. Typically, commanders specify bypass criteria in terms of the size of the unit.

Delay. Units conduct delays when forces are insufficient to attack or defend or when the design of the operation dictates maneuvering the enemy into an area for subsequent attack.

Withdraw. This is normally the last option and only done when the enemy has an overwhelming superiority and the survival of the advance guard is at risk. The unit will normally withdraw only after receiving permission and then withdraw back toward the main body.

Knowledge of hostile dispositions, particularly enemy flank locations, is important to provide the essential information upon which the commander can base his plan of attack. When the security elements lack the strength to develop the situation fully, they may be reinforced by main body elements to obtain adequate knowledge of hostile dispositions before the coordinated attack is launched.

When strong resistance is met, reconnaissance units are quickly withdrawn and replaced or reinforced by the combat elements of the advance guard. Reconnaissance units then are employed on the flanks to screen the enemy's main force, conduct further reconnaissance, or to harass the hostile flanks and rear. Every effort is made to retain the initiative and to prevent the enemy from stabilizing the situation. Premature deployment of the main body is costly in terms of time, resources, and disclosure of the main effort.

While the main body is deploying for attack, the advance guard gains contact and continues to develop the enemy situation. Their mission is to determine the strength and dispositions of the enemy and the location of his flanks in order to provide the commander as complete a picture as possible before conducting an attack.

The Main Body. Maximum consideration is given to attacks upon the enemy flanks and rear before the enemy is prepared to counter these envelopments. Attacks by the main body may consist of a coordinated attack by the entire main body or an attack from march column conducted while the remainder of the main body deploys. Piecemeal commitment is to be avoided except when rapidity of action is essential due to fleeting windows of opportunity and when local combat superiority can be achieved at a decisive point. All available supporting arms are employed to suppress the enemy forces in contact, disrupt its attacking formations, and neutralize its indirect fire assets.

3202.Meeting Engagement.

A movement to contact often results in a meeting engagement. Meeting engagements are clashes that take place at unexpected places and times when forces are not fully prepared for battle. Such encounters often occur in small-unit operations and when reconnaissance has been ineffective. A meeting engagement may also occur when each opponent is aware of the other and both decide to attack without delay to obtain a tactical advantage. A meeting engagement may result in confusion, delay, or even in the premature employment of the main body before the commander has set conditions for decisive action. The premature employment of the main body slows the mechanized force's tempo of operations and may cause it to lose the initiative.

Section 3. Attack

The purpose of the attack is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy. An attack emphasizes maximum application of combat power, coupled with bold maneuver, shock effect in the assault, and prompt exploitation of success. Principal elements in an attack include: preventing effective enemy maneuver or counteraction, maneuvering to gain an advantage, delivering an overwhelming assault to destroy the enemy, and exploitation of advantages gained.

The commander will choose between conducting a hasty or deliberate attack based on time available.

Hasty Attack - A hasty attack is an attack in which preparation time is traded for speed to exploit opportunity. Typically, a hasty attack is the result of a meeting engagement. It is launched with the forces at hand and with minimum preparation. The goal is to destroy the enemy before he is able to concentrate or establish a defense. In order to maintain momentum or retain initiative, minimum time is devoted to preparation. Those forces readily available are committed immediately to the attack. A hasty attack seeks to take advantage of the enemy's lack of readiness and involves boldness, surprise, and speed to achieve success before the enemy has had time to improve his defensive posture. The speed, mobility and armor protected firepower offered by a tank unit is well suited for the hasty attack.

Deliberate Attack - A deliberate attack is characterized by preplanned coordinated employment of firepower and maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy. The

deliberate attack is a fully coordinated operation that is conducted during those situations where preparation time is available for lengthy reconnaissance, precise planning and rehearsals. Deliberate attacks normally include large volumes of supporting fires, main and supporting attacks, and deception measures.

Commanders conduct various types of attacks to achieve different effects:

- *Spoiling Attack.* A tactical maneuver employed to seriously impair a hostile attack while the enemy is in the process of forming or assembling for an attack. It is a preemptive, limited objective attack aimed at preventing, disrupting, or delaying the enemy's ability to launch an attack. It may be conducted like a raid with a planned withdrawal. Like the counterattack, the circumstances in which it is conducted normally preclude full exploitation. Like the counterattack, all or part of the reserve will normally conduct a spoiling attack. This may require another reserve force to be temporarily formed.
- *Counterattack.* Counterattacks are limited-objective attacks conducted by part or all of a defensive 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 also be a precursor to resuming offensive operations. Normally the commander will attempt to retain his reserve to conduct a decisive counterattack once the enemy has committed his main force to the attack. Tank units counterattack by two methods: counterattack by fire and movement or counterattack by fire. The intent of the counterattack by fire and movement method is to close with and destroy the enemy. The intent of the counterattack by fire method is to use weapon standoff and/or cover to full advantage and destroy the enemy by direct fires.
- *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. It involves physical contact with the enemy. A feint must be sufficiently strong to confuse the enemy as to the location of the main effort. Ideally, a feint causes the enemy to shift forces to the diversion and away from the main effort. Feints are usually shallow, limited-objective attacks conducted before or during the attack of the main effort. The employment of a tank unit in this role must be heavily weighed against the loss of combat power that is then made unavailable to the main effort.
- *Demonstration.* Demonstrations are operations designed to divert enemy attention to allow decisive action elsewhere. A demonstration is a show of force that threatens an attack at another location but 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 attack at a point other than the main effort. The employment of a tank unit in this role must be weighed with the potential loss of combat power that could be applied to the main effort.

- *Reconnaissance in Force.* The reconnaissance in force is a deliberate attack by major forces to obtain information and to locate and test enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. While the primary purpose of a reconnaissance in force is to gain information, the commander must be prepared to exploit opportunity. The protection inherent with the tank battalion can be used to protect the force, however if the situation warrants, it can also exploit any success. A reconnaissance in force usually develops information more rapidly and in more detail than other reconnaissance methods. 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, combined arms forces containing tanks are often employed. Such a force is capable of disengagement if superior enemy forces are encountered.
- *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 a 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. Tanks can be employed on mechanized raids to destroy enemy installations and facilities, disrupt enemy command and control or support activities, divert enemy attention, and secure information.

Section 4. Exploitation

Exploitation is an offensive operation that usually follows a successful attack and is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. Exploitation extends the initial success of the attack by preventing the enemy from disengaging, withdrawing, and reestablishing an effective defense. A mechanized force is ideally suited for exploitation operations because of its inherent speed, mobility and shock action. The tank battalion should be held in reserve, when working with non-mechanized forces, and committed to an exploitation operation after a deliberate attack. The objective of the exploitation is the destruction of enemy forces to the point where he has no alternative but surrender or flight.

The commander must be prepared to exploit 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 exploitation is normally the reserve. The reserve is generally positioned where it can exploit the success of the main effort or supporting efforts. Typical missions for the exploitation force include cutting lines of communication, isolating and destroying enemy units, and disrupting enemy command and control. The psychological effect of exploitation creates confusion and apprehension throughout the enemy force, reduces the enemy capability to react, and may be decisive. Enemy forces, which cannot jeopardize the mission, are suppressed, bypassed, and reported to higher headquarters for clearing by follow on forces.

Commanders of committed forces act quickly to capitalize on local successes. When possible, the force leading the attack continues directly into exploitation. If that is not feasible, the commander passes fresh forces (follow and assume) into the lead. Follow and support forces are assigned missions to assist exploiting forces by relieving them of tasks that would slow their advance.

The commander exploits opportunities afforded by the situation. Opportunities for exploitation are indicated when:

- The enemy is having difficulty maintaining his position.
- There is a significant increase in the number of prisoners captured.
- Enemy units disintegrate after initial contact.
- Enemy lacks an organized defense.
- There are confirmed reports of the capture of or absence of enemy leaders.
- There is an increase in abandoned material.
- Equipment from various units is intermixed in formations or columns.
- Enemy fire decreases in intensity and effectiveness.
- Enemy artillery, C² facilities, and supply dumps are overrun.

Once the exploitation is begun, it is carried out to the final objective. Exploitation continues day and night. The enemy is given no relief from offensive pressure. The exploiting force retains terrain only as necessary to accomplish its mission. The exploiting force commander must be careful not to dissipate combat power in achieving minor tactical successes or in reducing small enemy forces.

Exploitation should be decentralized. The commander maintains sufficient control to alter the direction of the command or to prevent its overextension. He relies on his subordinates to find the fastest way to their objectives, to deploy as necessary to fight, and to seize all opportunities to destroy the enemy and accelerate the tempo of operations. The commander uses minimum control measures, but issues clear instructions concerning seizure of key terrain and the size of enemy forces, which may be bypassed. The exploitation force and the follow and support force must maintain direct communications.

The commander must exercise aggressive and demanding leadership to keep units advancing. When fatigue, disorganization, or attrition has weakened the force, or when it must hold ground or resupply, the commander should exploit with a fresh force. Overextension is a risk inherent to exploitation. While commanders must be concerned about overextension, they must also guard against being overcautious. Exploitation ends when the enemy loses his ability and will to fight; enemy resistance increases requiring deliberate attack; or the force conducting the exploitation can no longer be supported or sustained.

Section 5. 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. The pursuit often develops after a successful exploitation operation. The difference between exploitation and a pursuit is the condition of the enemy. The purpose of the pursuit is annihilation of the enemy; therefore forces are orientated on the enemy rather than the seizure of terrain. Like exploitation, pursuit requires broad decentralized control and rapid movement.

The decision to conduct a pursuit operation is made when the enemy has lost the ability to defend or delay and begins withdrawing in a disorganized manner or begins an organized withdrawal under pressure. This decision and its execution must be done quickly, before the enemy can regain control or organize a defense, or the opportunity will be lost.

Unlike the exploitation, in which the attacking force may or may not focus on the enemy force, the attacker in a pursuit focuses on catching and destroying the fleeing enemy force. A pursuit follows a successful attack or exploitation and is ordered when the enemy cannot conduct an organized defense and attempts to disengage. Direct pressure against the retreating forces must be combined with an enveloping or encircling maneuver to place troops across the enemy's lines of retreat. It becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield, any type of offensive operation can transition to a pursuit.

During the pursuit, commanders conduct air and ground operations to intercept, capture, or destroy the enemy. The air combat element can also interdict fleeing enemy forces. Unlike exploitation, commanders can rarely anticipate pursuit, so they do not normally hold forces in reserve solely to accomplish this mission. Therefore, commanders must be agile enough to react when the situation presents itself. During a pursuit the commander task organizes the force into a direct pressure force and an encircling force:

Direct Pressure Force. The mission of the direct pressure force is to prevent the enemy disengagement and subsequent reconstitution of the defense. Leading elements of the direct pressure force move rapidly, on all available routes, containing or bypassing small enemy forces that are reduced by follow and support forces. The direct pressure force must have sufficient combat power to maintain pressure on the enemy; it attacks on a broad front and provides relentless pressure on the enemy.

Encircling Force. The mission of the encircling force is to get behind the enemy and block his escape so that he can be destroyed between the direct pressure force and the encircling force. If the encircling force cannot outrun the fleeing enemy force, it attacks the flank. The encircling force must have continuous fire support and greater mobility than the enemy, which lends it to being a mechanized force. The encircling force may seize deep blocking positions to prevent the enemy escaping. This may require accepting the risk of moving without flank security.

Like exploitation, pursuit tests the audacity and endurance of Marines and leaders alike. Both operations risk disorganizing the attacker as well as the defender. Extraordinary

physical and mental effort is necessary to sustain pursuit momentum, transition to other operations, and translate tactical success into operational or strategic victory. Fatigue, dwindling supplies, diversion of friendly units to other tasks, and approaching darkness (under certain conditions) may all be reasons to discontinue the attack. The commander must insist on continuous pursuit as long as the enemy is disorganized and friendly forces can continue.

Section 6. Combat Formations

Tank units use formations to facilitate positive command and control and to avoid confusion. Formations also enhance speed and security and improve the ability to react to anticipated situations. Like movement techniques, the formation that is selected is determined utilizing a METT-T analysis. Again, the commander must continuously analyze his situation and be flexible enough to change formations as the situation changes. *Formations are not rigid.* Subordinate commanders down to individual tanks must have the freedom to adjust to the terrain and/or the enemy situation. The battalion uses formations for several purposes:

- Establish the relationship of one unit to another on the ground.
- Allow the company to position firepower where it is needed in support of the direct fire plan.
- Establish responsibilities for sector security among platoons.
- Facilitate the execution of battle drills and directed COAs.

Formations (like movement techniques) are planned based on where enemy contact is expected and how the commander expects to react to the contact. The commander of the mechanized force must evaluate the situation and determine which formation best suits the mission and the situation.

It is not necessary for the all of the company formations to be the same within the battalion formation. It is critical, however, for the company commanders to coordinate their formation with those of other elements of the mechanized force. A parallel consideration is that while the battalion formation establishes the relationship between the battalion's companies, the actual positioning of platoons within each company is dictated by the company formation. In some cases, the company may use the same formation as the battalion (for example, the companies may use the column formation within a battalion column). In other situations, however, battalion and company formations may be different as a result of METT-T factors (such as the companies moving in wedge formations within a battalion vee.)

An important consideration in movement planning and execution is that formations are not rigid. Spacing requirements, as well as other METT-T considerations, will require the battalion commander and subordinate leaders to adapt the basic formations as necessary. They must be ready to adjust the distance between companies and individual platoons based on terrain, visibility, and mission requirements.

NOTE: The formations shown in illustrations in this chapter are examples only; they generally are depicted without consideration of terrain and other METT-T factors, which are always the most crucial element in the selection and execution of a formation. Commanders must be prepared to adapt their choice of formation to the specific situation.

COLUMN - THE column is used when speed is critical, when the battalion is moving through restricted terrain on a specific route, and/or when enemy contact is not likely. Each company normally follows directly behind the company in front of it. If the situation dictates, however, platoons can disperse laterally to enhance security; Figure 3-1 illustrates this type of column movement. The column formation has the following characteristics, advantages, and limitations:

- Provides excellent control and fires to the flanks.
- Permits only limited fires to the front and rear.
- Is easy to control.
- Provides extremely limited overall security.
- Is normally used for traveling only.

Figure 3-1. Tank Unit in column formation with dispersal for added security.

WEDGE - The wedge formation, illustrated in Figure 3-2, is often used when the enemy situation is unclear or contact is possible. In the battalion wedge, the lead company is in the center of the formation, with the remaining companies located to the rear of and outside the lead company. The wedge has the following characteristics, advantages, and limitations:

- Permits excellent fires to the front and good fires to the flanks.
- Is easy to control.
- Provides good security to the flanks.
- Can be used with the traveling and traveling overwatch techniques.
- Allows rapid transition to bounding overwatch.

Figure 3-2. Tank Unit in wedge formation.

VEE - The vee formation, illustrated in Figure 3-3, is used when enemy contact is possible. In the battalion vee, the center company is located in the rear of the formation, while the remaining companies are to the front of and outside the center company. The vee has the following characteristics, advantages, and limitations:

- Permits more firepower to the front than the wedge and affords good fires to the flanks.

- Is more difficult to control than the wedge and makes it more difficult for vehicles to maintain proper orientation.
- Allows one unit in the formation to maintain freedom of maneuver when contact occurs.
- It facilitates rapid deployment into any other formation.
- Can be used with the traveling and traveling overwatch techniques.
- Allows rapid transition to bounding overwatch.

Figure 3-3. Tank Unit in vee formation.

LINE - The line formation, illustrated in Figure 3-4, is primarily used when a unit or element is crossing a danger area or needs to maximize firepower to the front. In the battalion line, companies move abreast of one another and are dispersed laterally. The line formation has the following characteristics, advantages, and limitations:

- Permits maximum fires to the front or rear, but minimum fires to the flanks.
- Is difficult to control.
- Is less secure than other formations because of the lack of depth.
- Is the most difficult formation from which to make the transition to other formations.
- May be used in the assault to maximize the firepower and/or shock effect of the heavy company. This is normally done when there is no more intervening terrain between the unit and the enemy, when antitank systems are suppressed, and/or when the unit is exposed to artillery fire and must move rapidly.

Figure 3-4. Tank Unit in line formation.

ECHELON - The echelon formation, illustrated in Figure 3-5, is used when the battalion wants to maintain security and/or observation of one flank and enemy contact is not likely. The battalion echelon formation (either echelon left or echelon right) has the lead company positioned farthest from the echeloned flank, with each subsequent company located to the rear of and outside the company in front of it. The echelon formation has the following characteristics, advantages, and limitations:

- Is difficult to control.
- Affords excellent security for the higher formation in the direction of the echelon.
- Facilitates deployment to the echeloned flank.

Figure 3-5. Tank Unit in echelon right formation.

COIL AND HERRINGBONE - The coil and herringbone are battalion or below-level formations, employed when elements of the battalion are stationary and must maintain 360-degree security.

Section 7. Forms of Maneuver

3701.General

Maneuver is the employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fire (or fire potential) to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission. Forms of maneuver are the general orientations that a commander gives to his forces approaching an enemy in offensive operations. The basic forms of maneuver are: frontal attack, envelopment, flanking attack, penetration, turning movement and infiltration

Frontal Attack

A frontal attack is an offensive maneuver in which the main action is directed against the front of the enemy force. This is the least desirable form of maneuver for a mechanized force because it attacks into the enemy's strength and does not take full advantage of tank's ability to maneuver.

The advantages of a mechanized force conducting a frontal attack are:

- Greater combat power than pure infantry forces.
- Inherent speed reduces exposure time to enemy fire.
- Vehicle armor reduces effects of enemy indirect fire.

3702.Penetration

A penetration is a form of the offensive, which seeks to break through the enemy's defense and disrupt the defensive system. The purpose of a penetration is to break through the enemy's main defenses, in effect creating an assailable flank where none existed before.

A penetration generally occurs in three stages:

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

The main effort of a penetration is made by concentrating overwhelmingly superior combat power on a narrow front and in depth. A penetration is appropriate when the enemy is overextended, when his flanks are secure, or when there is no assailable flank.

3704. Envelopment

An offensive maneuver in which the main attacking force passes around or over the enemy's principle defensive positions to secure objectives to the enemy's rear. This is the most desirable form of maneuver for a mechanized force because it utilizes maneuver and speed to avoid enemy strengths and in doing so destroys the enemy's cohesion.

The advantages of a mechanized force conducting an envelopment are:

- Greater speed required to surprise the enemy from an unexpected direction.
- Has required ground mobility to rapidly seize deep objectives while providing a greater threat when conducting a turning movement.

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. 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. In mechanized tactics, an envelopment normally requires a base of fire element and a bounding element. The bounding element avoids the enemy's strength enroute to this objective. The base of fire element fixes the enemy's attention to his front, forcing the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging efforts of the attacks.

3705. Flanking Attack

A flanking attack is an offensive maneuver directed at the flank of the enemy. It attempts to strike the enemy's main position from an unexpected direction. Envelopment aims at passing around or over the enemy's main position toward an objective in the rear. A flanking attack is similar to an envelopment but is conducted on a shallower axis and is usually less decisive and less risky than a deeper attack. The flanking attack, like the envelopment, normally requires a main and supporting attack.

A flanking attack seeks to strike the enemy's main force while avoiding the frontal orientation of the main weapon systems. This is a more desirable technique than the frontal attack because it takes advantage of the mechanized force's mobility. The advantages of a mechanized force conducting a flanking attack are:

- Greater speed enables the force to maneuver to the enemy's flank before he can react.
- Greater firepower enables the force to overcome weaker enemy defenses on their flanks.

3706. Turning Movement.

A turning movement is a form of offensive maneuver in which the attacker passes around or over the enemy's principal defensive positions to secure objectives deep in the enemy's rear. Normally, the main effort executes the turning movement as the supporting effort fixes the enemy in position. The main effort seizes objectives so deep that the enemy is forced to abandon his position and divert major forces to meet the threat. Unlike an envelopment, the main effort usually operates at such a distance from the supporting effort force that mutual support is unlikely. Therefore, the main effort must be self-sufficient and reach the objective before becoming decisively engaged. Seldom would a turning movement be executed by a MAGTF less than MEF sized. Typical objectives of the main effort in a turning movement that are ideally suited for mechanized forces:

- Critical logistics sites
- Command and Control Nodes
- Lines of Communication

3707. Infiltration

Infiltration is a form of maneuver in which forces move covertly through or into an enemy area to attack positions in the enemy's rear. Forces move over, through, or around enemy positions without detection to assume a position of advantage over the enemy. 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 are to harass and disrupt his command and control and support activities.
- Cut off enemy forward units.

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. Infiltrating forces may depend heavily on aviation forces for aerial resupply and close air support.