Chapter 5

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

FUNDAMENTALS OF CORPS OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The corps conducts offensive operations to either defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy. The preferred method of conducting offensive operations is to find and destroy the enemy at distance in order to set the conditions for decisive maneuver.

The corps commander must leverage every available technological advantage to gain intelligence and to employ lethal and nonlethal fires as a precursor to decisive maneuver. Maneuver forces can then precisely strike the final, decisive blow.

Corps commanders array their forces so subordinate commanders can employ friendly systems at maximum ranges while remaining outside the range of threat systems. This allows commanders to refine the concept of operations, conserve combat power, and minimize risk.

The corps can achieve decisive results by massing overwhelming combat power at the point of attack while avoiding the enemy's main strength. By attacking the enemy's flanks or selecting a location or time of attack when the enemy is most vulnerable, the corps can disrupt the cohesiveness of enemy defenses and force him off his plan, ideally causing him to abandon prepared positions.

Characteristics of the Offense

The central theme of offensive operations is the need to gain and maintain the initiative. Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity are the critical characteristics of offensive action.

Surprise

Surprise at the tactical level means that the corps attacks at a time, place, or in a manner the enemy least expects, even when the enemy is anticipating an attack. Achieving surprise requires the corps to develop detailed and timely intelligence concerning the enemy, weather, and terrain. Meanwhile, the corps denies similar information to the enemy by using deception and aggressive OPSEC measures. The corps can enhance the effects of surprise by initiating a sudden, aggressive attack throughout the depth of an enemy's defenses, thus paralyzing his ability to react.

Another way to achieve surprise is to desensitize an enemy's reaction to offensive indicators through a gradual buildup over time that does not cause alarm or frequent repetition of indicators. A sudden or unexpected change, which catches the enemy off guard, in the tempo of operations is another way the corps can achieve surprise.

Concentration

Concentration is the ability to mass the effects of combat power to achieve success without massing large formations. The corps must rapidly mass effects at the point of the attack and maintain sufficient concentration to sustain the momentum of the offensive.

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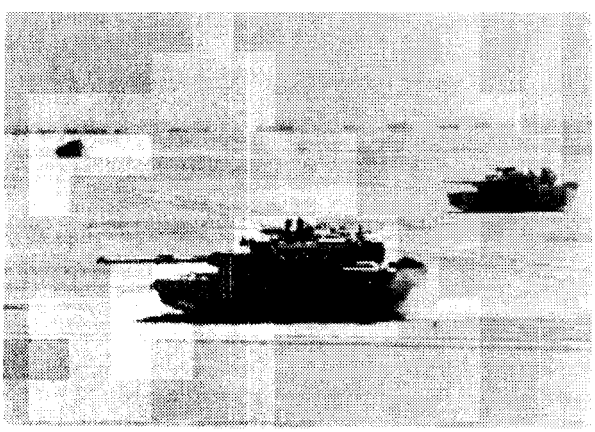
Concentration of forces can make the corps vulnerable to enemy action. Commanders must balance force-protection activities, such as dispersion, concealment, deception, and security, against the requirement to concentrate effects.

The key to concentrating corps combat power is to designate a point of main effort and direct resources to ensure success at that point. In its attempt to weight the main effort, the corps must also ensure it coordinates for joint systems, such as intelligence, close air support, and naval gun fire. Operations must be flexible enough to allow the main effort to shift without losing the effects of mass and momentum.

Tempo

The tempo of offensive operations is the effect the combination of speed of military action and combat power creates. The more rapidly a force can apply combat power throughout the depth of enemy defenses, the greater the tempo will appear.

By controlling and changing the tempo of the attack, the corps can keep the enemy in a reaction mode, off balance, yet still retain the initiative. By conducting relentless operations in depth against the enemy, the corps seeks to deny the enemy the opportunity to regroup while retaining the freedom of action to exploit opportunities as they present themselves. Changes in tempo can also effect surprise and deception.



Tempo is the effect the combination of speed of action and application of combat power creates.

Audacity

Audacity is an inherent component of offensive operations. A simple plan, executed boldly by commanders who understand the intent of commanders two levels above, is paramount if the corps is to take advantage of opportunities the shock effect of the attack will create.

Forms of Tactical Offense

Offensive operations take four general forms: movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Because of the fluid nature of offensive operations, corps units might simultaneously employ different forms of the offense throughout the depth of the battlefield.

Not all offensive operations will necessarily follow a particular sequence or include each type of offense. The corps must be flexible in applying the appropriate form of offensive action as the situation dictates.

Movement to Contact

The purpose of the movement to contact is to develop the situation and gain or maintain contact with the enemy. The characteristics of a movement to contact are centralized planning, decentralized control, rapid movement along multiple axes, and rapid transition of combined arms formations from the march to the attack. The corps focuses its efforts on two priorities: finding the enemy and rapidly developing the situation.

In many cases, a meeting engagement is the result of the movement to contact. The organization of a corps movement to contact normally includes a covering force, an advance guard, and a main body. When the situation dictates, the movement to contact also includes flank and rear security forces. Figure 5-1 depicts a typical movement to contact formation.

In most situations cavalry regiments are ideal for covering-force operations. However, METT-T functions may dictate the use of other corps units. When operating on a wide front, the corps commander may forego the use of a corps-controlled covering force and direct the lead divisions to establish their own covering forces.

The covering force normally finds the enemy force and develops the situation before the main

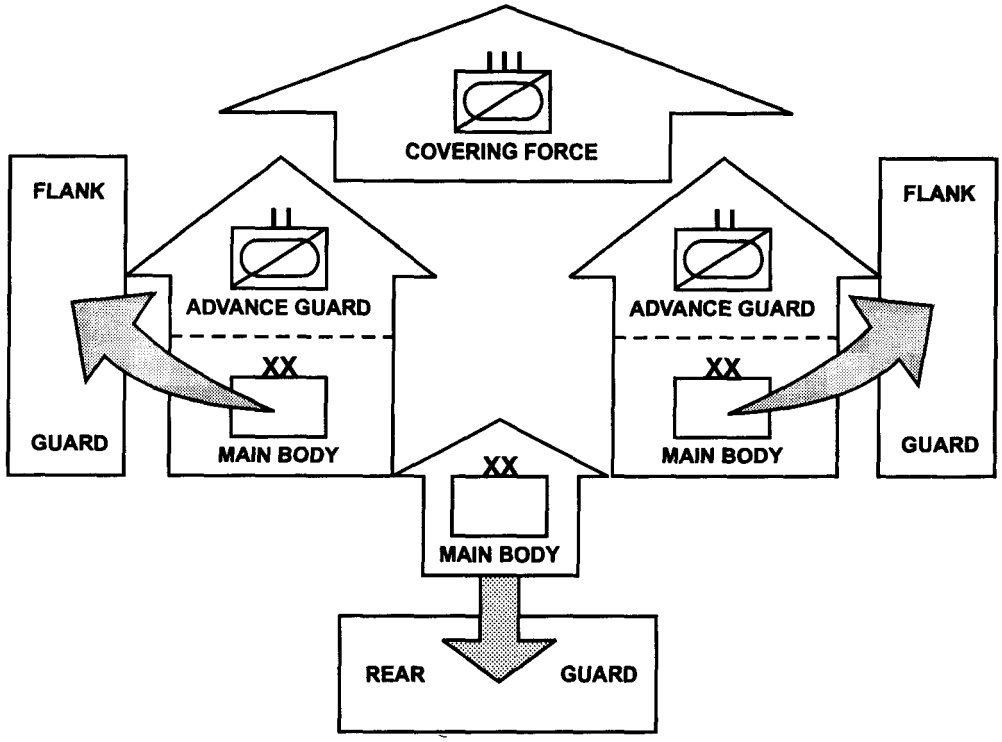


Figure 5–1. Movement to contact

body initiates contact. The covering-force mission statement includes what size force it is to defeat and what size force it is to bypass. If the corps attacks a defending enemy, the covering force usually—

- Sufficiently penetrates the enemy's security forces and main defensive positions to facilitate the main body's attack on the enemy's main defenses.
- Identities the location and deployment of enemy forces in main defensive positions.
- Limits the ability of the enemy's security forces to collect intelligence.
- Disrupts the enemy's deployment and commitment of forces.

Because the covering force operates at extended distances from the main body, it must be self-contained and task-organized with the necessary CS and CSS to allow it to fight independently. The corps normally provides CAS sorties and additional FA, AD, NBC, reconnaissance, aviation, and engineer assets to the covering force.

The main body contains the bulk of the corps' combat power. Commanders must task-organize units and organize march columns to facilitate an immediate attack or, possibly, a hasty defense from the march. When possible, commanders assign multiple routes to subordinate units. Commanders may commit elements of the main body to reduce pockets of resistance that the covering force contained or bypassed.

The main body's leading maneuver elements normally furnish and control the advance guard. The close proximity of the leading maneuver elements during the march, and the possibility that these elements may have to respond to a threat beyond the capability of the advance guard, make this type of C^2 arrangement preferable.

The advance guard must maintain contact with the corps covering force. Either the advance guard or its higher headquarters normally furnishes liaison elements to the covering force. The corps may employ an advance guard in lieu of a covering force.

When the corps controls the advance guard, the corps commander gives specific guidance to the advance guard concerning the size of the enemy force it is to defeat or destroy. Main body forces normally furnish and control flank security for the

same reasons. However, if flank security units are operating under corps control, the commander needs to consider the specific security mission (normally guard or screen) assigned to these units.

Given the probable extensive distances moving corps might cover, a flank screen mission is the norm. Also, extensive distances, especially on the flanks, normally necessitate allocation of aviation and direct support FA assets for these units.

Rear security forces normally operate under corps control. The usually extensive distances, created by corps-controlled CS and CSS COSCOM units operating to the rear of the subordinate divisions in the main body, favor a separate corps-controlled unit.

Normally, the corps TAC CP moves with the leading division. The corps' main CP remains relatively stationary if the corps maintains communications between it and the leading elements. The corps' TAC and main CPs alternate control of the corps' movement to contact as they leapfrog forward. The main CP's initial location and subsequent movement rests on—

- How it can best control the corps' initial movement.
- Its subsequent attack from the march.
- The corps' deep and rear operations.

The TAC CP normally moves with, or immediately to the rear of, one of the leading divisions. The primary consideration in determining the TAC CP's movement and positioning is how it can best control corps close operations from the march and still assume the functions of the main CP when required.

During the movement to contact, units should anticipate a disruption of resupply. They should carry water and Class I and Class III package products on their tactical and combat vehicles. They should also carry enough additional supplies to maintain them through the movement to contact and the ensuing battle.

Depending on the distance, the corps may plan and coordinate a refuel on the move (ROM), supported by both COSCOM and DISCOM assets. In addition to ROM sites, the corps may pre-position CSS units and supplies to support the move. Also, COSCOM may recover and evacuate all equipment left in place. It may also effect movement control with movement control teams or movement regulating teams.

A movement to contact normally terminates on an objective or limit of advance (LOA). It might result in a meeting engagement where friendly forces attempt to fix the enemy with the minimal force while maintaining freedom of action with the maximum combat power.

The covering force, if designated, normally initiates the meeting engagement, develops the situation, and defeats the enemy force within its capability. If the enemy force is stronger than the covering force, the force may have to go over to the hasty defense and await the main body.

Subordinate unit advance guard elements move rapidly forward to reinforce the covering force, seize key or decisive terrain, or seek an exposed enemy flank. If the corps is advancing on multiple routes, main body forces normally attack from the march to defeat or destroy the enemy force. If the enemy force is sufficiently strong and the corps' advance restricted, leading units may occupy attack positions until the corps can generate sufficient combat power.

Search and attack operations are a variation of the movement to contact. The corps conducts search and attack operations by predominantly light forces to counter enemy forces operating in restricted terrain, such as cities, jungles, mountains, and so forth.

This form of offense may also be appropriate in areas where the corps wants to deny enemy movement. The corps may even leapfrog light units ahead to conduct search and attack operations to facilitate movement of the corps' main body through restrictive terrain. Based on METT-T, light units are normally task-organized with aviation and some armored units.

Attack

In most instances, the corps transitions into the attack after making contact with the enemy. The corps applies overwhelming combat power at the point of the main effort rupturing and destroying the continuity of the enemy's defense. The attack must make the enemy abandon his defense or face piecemeal destruction.

The corps, synchronizing organic systems and joint assets, attacks the enemy throughout the depth of his defense keeping him off balance and limiting his freedom of action. The corps accepts risk in its zone of attack, achieving concentration at decisive points and making use of tactical deception in support of the attack.

The corps must meet a variety of threats that will not necessarily follow specific models or templates. Thorough and timely intelligence, or lack of it, will drive the corps commander to choose between a movement to contact and a deliberate attack. Forces conduct hasty attacks as a part of a larger operation, based on battle drill, unit SOPs, and FRAGOs.

Hasty Attack. Hasty attacks are the desired outcome of meeting engagements. They are launched with minimal preparation by either the unit in contact or by follow-on forces. The purpose of hasty attacks is to (one) destroy the enemy before he can concentrate forces or establish an effective defense or (two) fix the enemy using the smallest force necessary. Units maneuver against the exposed enemy flank or rear to gain the initiative and overwhelm the enemy before he can react.

After receiving the IPB, the latest intelligence update, and combat information, the commander initiates the hasty attack using FRAGOs and forces on hand. Simple, rehearsed plans and SOPs from standard formations minimize the loss of synchronization. Maintaining a reserve enhances the commander's flexibility by providing a force to exploit success or react to unforeseen contingencies.

The hasty attack is usually the most risky offensive operation. Information regarding the strength, disposition, and intentions of the enemy will be limited, and subordinate units must seize opportunities and act within the commander's intent to respond to avariety of situations. Consequently, war-gaming situations that the corps might confront is essential.

Because of time constraints that affect external support, the initial CSS package for a hasty attack is normally limited to items that attacking units can carry. To sustain the attack, units use the same resupply procedures as in a deliberate attack.

Deliberate Attack. The corps conducts a deliberate attack when a hasty attack has failed or will not succeed. Deliberate attacks are fully synchronized operations that employ all the assets of corps and joint and/or multinational forces available to the corps.

Deliberate attacks are characterized by the development of detailed intelligence on the enemy and the preparation time to plan and rehearse the attack. Forces normally conduct deliberate attacks from defensive positions.

The corps covers its preparation for deliberate attacks by employing OPSEC measures, engaging in deception, and selecting a time and location for the attack to achieve tactical surprise. Spoiling attacks enhance deception operations and prevent the enemy from concentrating reserves.

During a deliberate attack, CSS emphasizes the resupply of critical items (fuel and ammunition) and the provision of medical and maintenance support. The momentum of the attack may not allow for any other CSS operations. The force needs to establish priorities to weight the main effort and to support shifting the main effort as the operation unfolds. The force must consider the effects of follow-on operations to ensure a swift and smooth transition to the exploitation and pursuit.

When attacking, the corps may use one, or a combination, of the basic forms of maneuver (the frontal attack, the envelopment, the penetration, the turning movement, and the infiltration). Ideally, the corps will attempt to envelop the enemy's flank (or bypass his flank), seize decisive terrain or a decisive point in the enemy's rear, and force him to come out of his positions and react.

If the enemy does not have an assailable flank, the corps may conduct a frontal attack or penetration. The corps also uses these forms of maneuver when conducting an exploitation or pursuit.

Exploitation

Seldom will attacks annihilate a defending enemy force. More often, the enemy will attempt to disengage, withdraw, and reorganize a coherent defense. Exploitation seeks to extend the destruction of the enemy force by maintaining offensive pressure and by exploiting opportunities. The purpose of exploitation is to prevent the enemy from reconstituting an organized defense, counter-attacking, conducting an orderly withdrawal, or continuing to support his operations.

Exploitation is the primary means of translating tactical success into operational advantage. It can be directed by the next higher echelon or initiated by the corps. The following factors usually indicate an opportunity to conduct an exploitation:

- An increase in EPWs, especially in leaders.
- The disintegration of defending enemy units after initial attacks.
- An increase in captured and destroyed enemy equipment.
- The presence of equipment from several units in one formation.
- The lessening of enemy fires.
- The detection by deep surveillance operations of a general enemy withdrawal.

Commanders should follow up every attack without delay. When conducting an exploitation, the corps attacks enemy support systems by—

- Expanding the area of envelopment or penetration.
- Securing decisive terrain deep in the enemy rear.
- Cutting the enemy's major LOC and sources of supply.
- Disrupting enemy reserves and uncommitted forces.
- Synchronizing corps deep operations and joint interdiction to disrupt the enemy's attempts to reestablish a coherent defense.
- Positioning units to support the follow-on mission or subsequent objectives.

Commanders should not expect the units creating the opportunity for the exploitation to perform the exploitation to an extended depth. Other units should replace these units as soon as possible. A mobile force specifically tasked for the purpose should accomplish the full exploitation.

Commonly, there are two missions associated with an exploitation—follow and assume and follow and support. A follow and assume mission commits one force to follow another when conducting an offensive operation. The follow and assume force continues the offensive once the lead force is unable to continue. The follow and support force is not a reserve.

The follow and support mission commits a unit to accomplish any or all the following tasks:

- Destroy bypassed units.
- Relieve in place any direct pressure or encircling force that has halted to contain the enemy.
- Block movement of reinforcements.
- Secure lines of communications.
- Guard prisoners, key areas, and installations.
- Secure key terrain.
- Control refugees.

The exploitation force and the follow and support force maintain direct communications. The corps commander ensures the accomplishment of forward echelonment of CSS elements in a timely manner to support the exploitation.

Since the exploitation continues day and night, the exploiting force requires continuous maintenance and sustainment support. Adequate maintenance support must accompany the exploiting force, and the sustainment of the exploitation requires well-timed movement of assets.

The logistic structure's ability to move forward with fuel, ammunition, and maintenance support often determines the force's limits of advance. Commanders and staffs must plan for and use aerial resupply to help exploitation units sustain the operation, particularly until opening and securing ground LOC.

As the exploitation continues, the corps plans a series of objectives so divisions can orient their movement. The corps also designates routes, zones, and relative dispositions. The corps may designate a limit of advance to control the advance of the divisions. The corps must also look forward to the next operation to ensure that disposition of units and support assets will aid any new schemes of maneuver.

Pursuit

Pursuit normally follows a successful exploitation. Unlike an exploitation, the pursuit focuses on catching and destroying retreating enemy forces

that can no longer organize a coherent defense. Destroying the enemy force is the goal of pursuit, although the commander may also designate terrain objectives.

Pursuit operations usually require a direct pressure force and an encircling force (Figure 5-2). The corps can use tank and mechanized forces for both direct pressure and encircling forces. However, even though tank-heavy forces are normally preferred as encircling forces, the corps may also use airborne and air assault forces.

Attack helicopters are essential. Close air support and interdiction operate along with encircling forces. The corps also synchronizes joint intelligence and attack systems to support the pursuit.

During pursuit operations, the corps may encounter encircled enemy forces and should plan for their defeat. The size of an enemy force the corps may bypass and how it is to deal with such forces must be clear.

Sustainment arrangements must be flexible and capable of rapid response during pursuit operations. Fuel and ammunition commonly are the principal logistic requirements. The corps must plan aerial resupply to augment ground transportation assets hampered by bypassed enemy units, road congestion, and disruption.

Opening and securing LOC suitable to support the transportation of adequate supplies is also essential to a successful pursuit. The pursuit, even more than the exploitation, is a transportation-intensive operation.

Forms of Maneuver

Frontal Attack. A frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide front over the most direct approaches. The corps should only use a frontal attack when it possesses overwhelming combat power and when the enemy is at a clear disadvantage. This could occur if the enemy has been significantly weakened or if the enemy is defending on an unusually wide front, only part of which is within the corps zone of attack (Figure 5-3). Other reasons for conducting frontal attacks are the lack of an assailable enemy flank, critical time constraints, or the desire to deal a severe psychological blow to the enemy.

Envelopment. To conduct an envelopment, the corps must find or envelop an assailable enemy flank, using a portion of its force to fix the enemy while the remainder conducts the envelopment

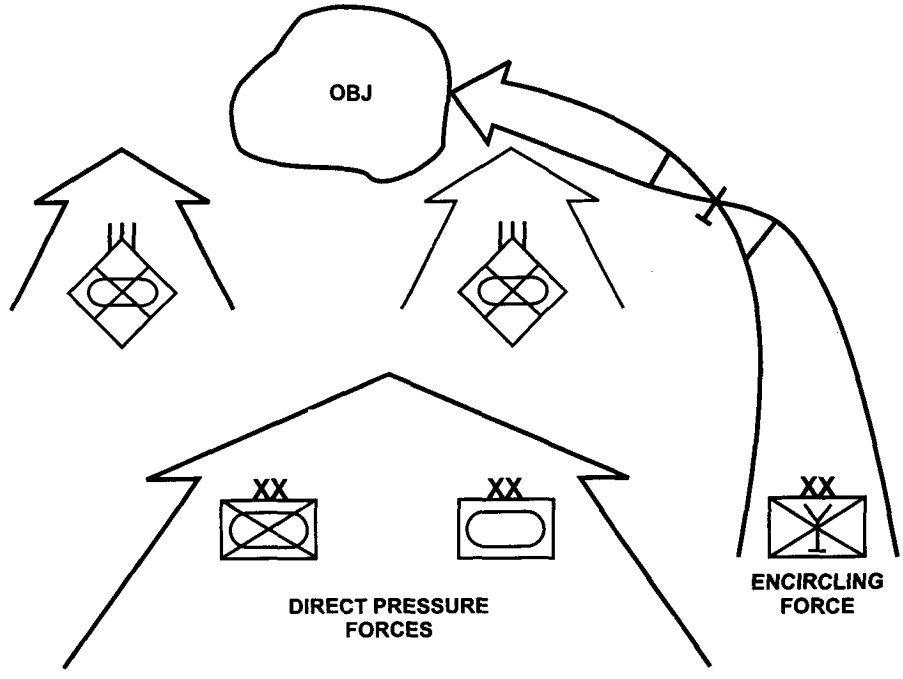


Figure 5–2. An example of a pursuit

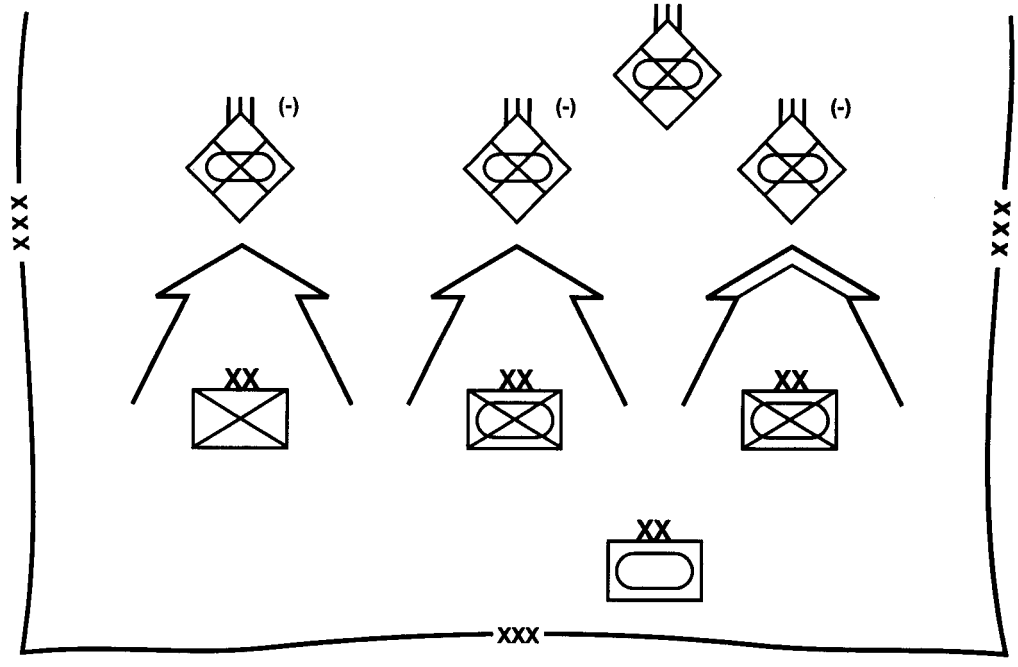


Figure 5–3. An example of a frontal attack

(Figure 5-4). Envelopment occurs either as a result of maneuver against an open flank or as a result of a penetration. In an envelopment, a supporting attack distracts the enemy, fixes him in his main defenses, and tries to get him to commit his reserve prematurely or in effectively (Figure 5-5).

Penetration. Either infantry or armored units, supported by concentrated fires and nonlethal means, can achieve a penetration (Figure 5-6). A corps attacking division can penetrate a defending enemy division by concentrating sufficient combat power against battalion-size defenses or by attacking

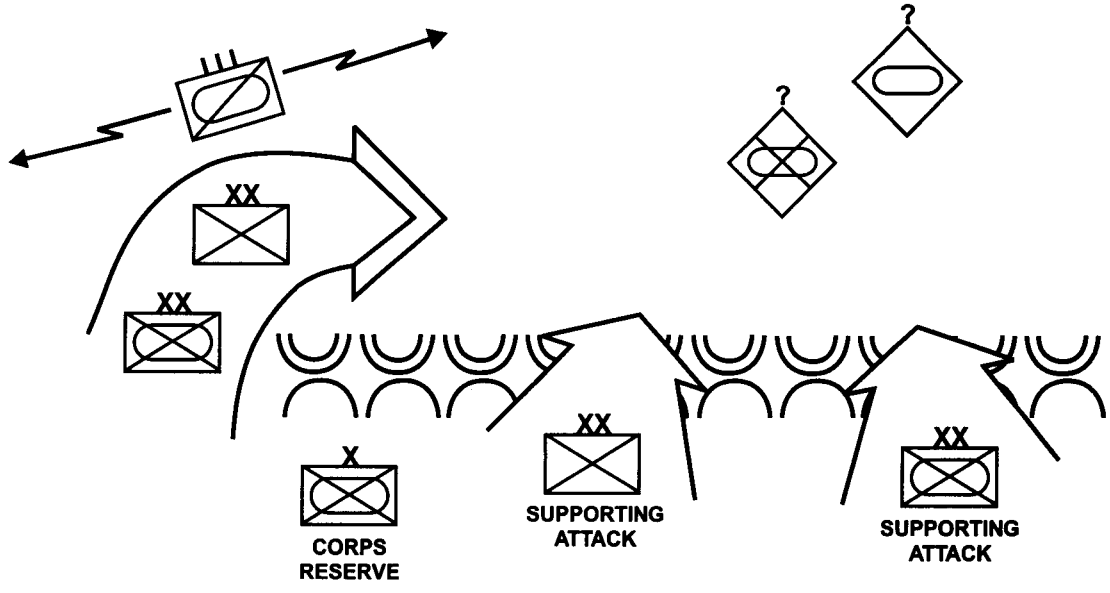


Figure 5–4. An example of a single envelopment

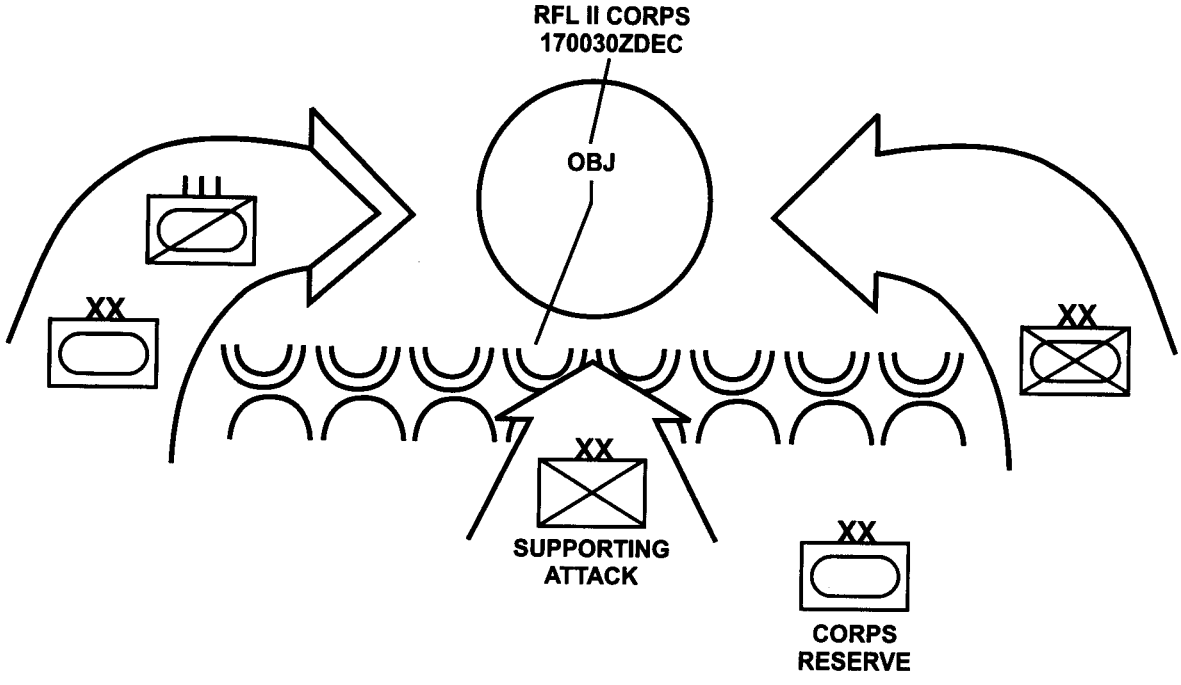


Figure 5–5. An example of a double envelopment

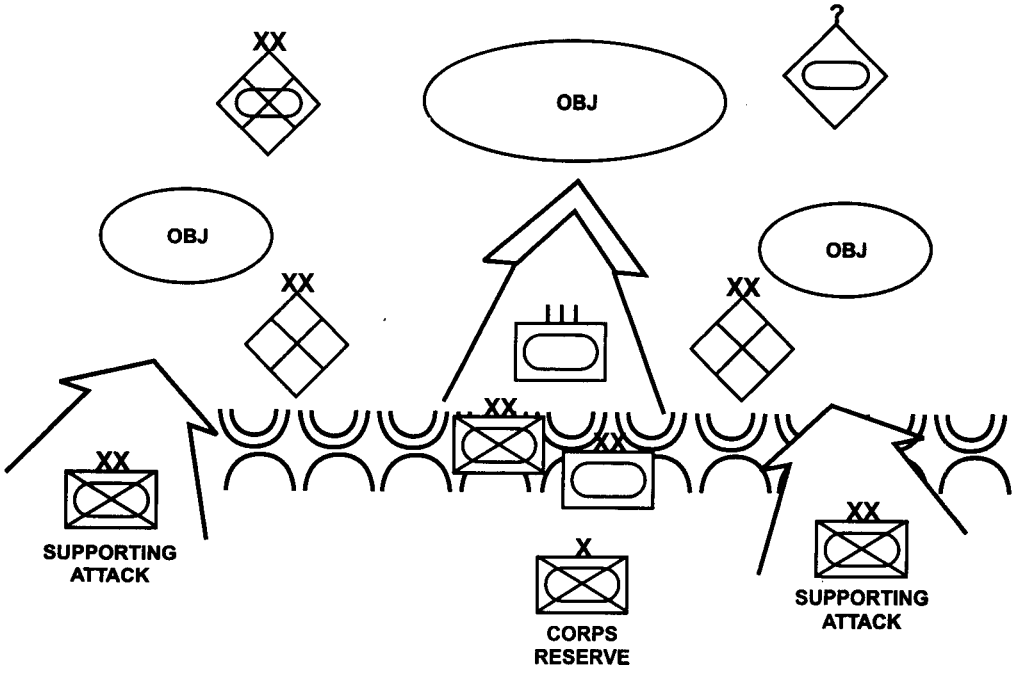


Figure 5–6. An example of a penetration

throughout the depth of the enemy division. (For example, during the breaching operation in Operation Desert Storm, the 1st Infantry Division (Mech) concentrated battalions against enemy platoons.)

Corps supporting attacks and deep operations normally fix or draw off enemy reserves that might react to the zone of penetration, or that are either adjacent to and/or in subsequent positions outside of the assigned zone of the division conducting the penetration. After penetrating the main defensive position, the corps may commit trailing divisions to either further penetrate or envelop subsequent enemy positions.

Turning Movement. The corps may also envelop an enemy by striking deep and seizing decisive terrain in the enemy's rear, cutting his LOC, or isolating his forces. This deep maneuver differs from an envelopment chiefly by the depth of its objectives and by what the commander intends it to accomplish.

In a turning movement, the corps avoids the main enemy force, passes around enemy defensive positions, and secures an objective deep in the enemy's rear to make the enemy's situation untenable (Figure 5-7).

The turning movement forces the enemy to divert major forces to cope with the new threat or to abandon his position. While a supporting attack may be required to fix the enemy in an envelopment, a turning movement does not always require a fixing attack. Because of the great distances between forces, if a fixing attack occurs, each force must be sufficiently strong and mobile to operate independently.

Infiltration. Infiltration is another form of maneuver the corps can use to gain positional advantage and to attack the enemy in depth while avoiding enemy strengths. The corps uses infiltration with other forms of maneuver to unhinge a defending enemy. Light infantry units up to brigade size are best suited to conduct infiltrations.

In some circumstances, armored forces operating in small units conduct infiltrations. Since success requires avoiding detection, at least until the objective is reached, the size, strength, and composition of the corps unit conducting the infiltration is usually limited. Consequently, specific objectives and tasks assigned to this force will also be limited.

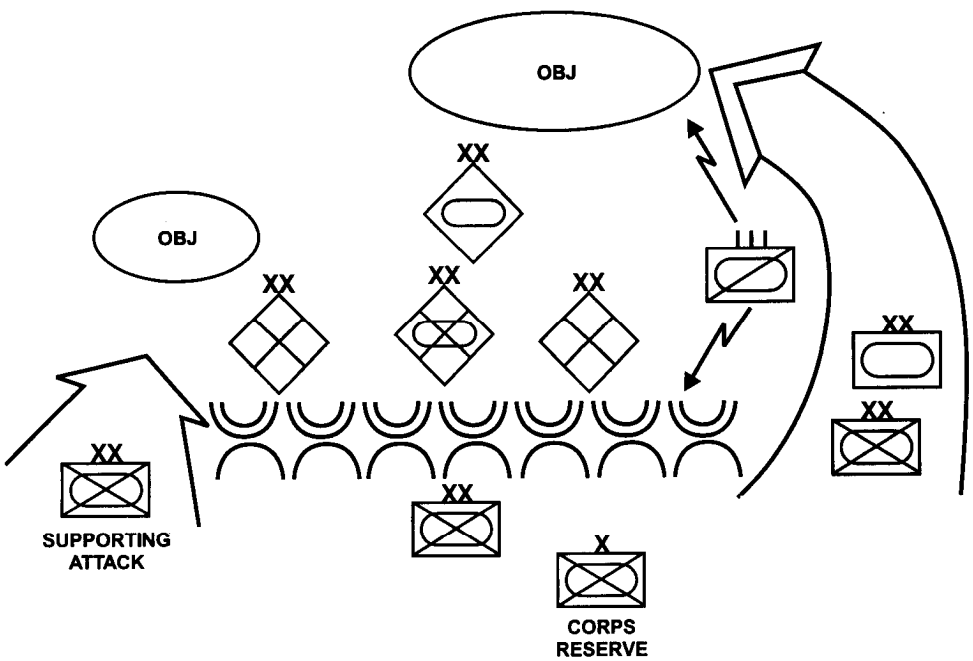


Figure 5–7. An example of a turning movement

Special Purpose Operations

In addition to the forms of the tactical offense, the corps may conduct certain special purpose operations to support a larger offensive or defensive plan. Some special purpose operations are spoiling attacks, counterattacks, demonstrations, feints, and raids. Although subordinate units usually conduct these operations as part of corps-directed operations, the corps might execute such operations as part of an EAC plan.

NOTE: Two other special-purpose operations that this section does not discuss are reconnaissance in force and offensive relief.

The corps conducts spoiling attacks and counterattacks from a defensive posture. The commander either pre-plans these attacks as decisive elements of the defensive plan or conducts them as branch plans in response to an enemy threat occurring during the battle. The entire corps may execute such attacks as part of an EAC plan, or a corps subordinate unit may conduct them as part of the corps' defensive plan.

The corps conducts spoiling attacks to disrupt an expected enemy attack or to disrupt the enemy's concentration and timing. Spoiling attacks can be either hasty or deliberate attacks. The corps must be prepared to exploit success in a spoiling attack. Units critical to the integrity of the defense should not conduct spoiling attacks.

Spoiling attacks are generally most effective when anticipated, planned, and rehearsed. Planners must address the following considerations, especially if ground maneuver units (reserve or committed forces) conduct the counterattack or spoiling attack:

- The position of the attacking force. Units must be located to reduce vulnerability to detection and targeting, yet they must remain where they can effectively attack designated battlefield objectives. Concentration of forces should only occur before arriving at the line of departure (LD), possibly by use of attack positions.
- Routes. Since timing is a critical element of attacks, the attacking unit receives priority on the usage of routes to its LD. Since units normally traverse the assigned AO of a defending MBA unit, these routes must be predesignated. The attacking unit must be able to minimize the time spent on movement because it is most vulnerable to detection and targeting during its movement to the LD. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of large-unit movement.)
- Passage of lines. If the unit must attack beyond the FLOT of another unit, the preferred method would be for the attacking unit to pass around. If not, then a passage of lines will be necessary. Coordination must be accomplished during the planning stage. (See Chapter 8.)
- Command and control. Control measures, such as on-order boundaries and/or fire control measures, must be pre-planned.
- Command and control warfare activities. Electronic attack, OPSEC efforts, deception, jamming, and PSYOP are integral to the plan. (See FM 100-6.)
- The subsegment mission of attacking units. Commanders plan for and designate this mission before the attack.

Demonstrations and feints are diversionary operations. A demonstration is a show of force in an area where a decision is not sought. An entire corps may execute a demonstration as part of an EAC plan, or designated subordinate units might execute one as part of a corps plan. In either case, positioning units normally conduct a demonstration without making contact with the enemy, and it is often part of a deception plan. (See FM 90-2.)

Feints are a supporting attack to divert the enemy's attention from the main effort. They are usually shallow, limited-objective attacks occurring before or after the main attack. (The 1st Cavalry Division's operations in the Wadi Al Batin before the ground war in Operation Desert Storm is an excellent example.)

Raids are limited-objective attacks into enemy territory for a specific purpose other than gaining and holding ground. Division and smaller-size units normally conduct raids to seize and destroy critical assets or decisive points. The corps may receive the OPCON of SOF units (such as ranger units), attack helicopter units, and AASLT units to conduct raids.

PLANNING CORPS OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The corps plans to fight within an area of operations (AO) that a higher headquarters normally assigns. An AO is a geographic area, including the airspace above it, as defined by lateral, rearward, and forward boundaries. The corps structures the battlefield and assigns objectives, boundaries, phase lines, and other control measures within the AO to ensure the successful synchronization of subordinate formations and activities.

The corps ensures that the operations and actions of joint and multinational forces assigned to or supporting the corps are also filly synchronized to bring the maximum combat power to bear in the attack. Normally, the corps assigns specific AOs or zones for offensive operations to define geographic responsibility to subordinate units. Based on the nature of the threat and the mission, these subordinate AOs may be noncontiguous.

Operations in Depth

Corps offensive operations are further structured within an AO between deep, close, and rear operations. The corps fights these three operations simultaneously throughout the depth of the battlefield. The attack should appear to the enemy as one continuous operation.

The boundaries between what is deep, close, or rear are not well-defined lines; they shift over time as the corps concentrates and varies the tempo of the attack to keep the enemy off balance.

The corps structures the battlefield to strike the decisive blow according to the corps commander's vision. In some cases, the corps conducts deep operations to isolate the enemy in the forward area, thus setting the conditions for a decisive operation in the close fight. In other instances, the corps conducts a penetration in the close area only as a means to maneuver forces deep into the enemy's defenses to strike the knock-out blow against forces arrayed in depth.

Organization of the Offense

The corps considers five complementary elements in planning and conducting offensive operations:

- Continuous deep operations in vital parts of the zone of attack.
- Reconnaissance and security operations forward and to the flanks and rear of main and supporting attacks.
- Main attacks with supporting attacks as required.
- Reserve operations in support of the attack.
- Rear operations necessary to maintain offensive momentum.

This organization can serve as a useful vehicle in formulating the corps concept of operations and in facilitating the synchronization of close, deep, and rear operations. The size enemy force and specific support systems targeted as part of corps close, deep, or rear operations are strictly METT-T dependent. The following discussion only cites the most likely case when a corps is confronting a prepared defense in depth.

Deep Operations

The corps might conduct deep operations in either of two ways: isolate the corps' close operations or conduct the main effort of the corps' attack to defeat or destroy the enemy's cohesion, nullify his firepower, disrupt his C^2 destroy his supplies, and break his morale.

Maneuver, combined with both lethal and nonlethal firepower, is the primary tool of deep operations. (The corps uses attack helicopters in deep operations combined with fires.) When conducting deep operations, the corps ensures full integration of joint assets, particularly the effects of joint fires and joint acquisition systems.

If the intent of the corps attack is to fight a decisive close operation, then deep operations must isolate the close area by disrupting and/or severing the enemy's support system and his command and control. To do so, initial corps deep operations focus on—

- Enemy units arrayed in depth behind the enemy main defensive positions, particularly his air defense and artillery.

- Mobile reserve formations, including helicopter units, which could influence attacks in the close area.
- Higher echelon enemy C^2 facilities.
- Key support facilities or infrastructure.
- Nuclear and chemical delivery systems.

Normally, the corps establishes specific responsibilities for subordinate echelon deep operations. Divisions focus on supporting close operations while using supporting corps assets to conduct counterfires.

Corps augment counterfire operations, and attack deeper targets, with ATACMs and attack helicopters. The corps establishes control measures to ease and aid the shifting of responsibilities for deep operations between itself and attacking divisions (advancing to a certain phase line or objective, for instance).

The enemy's counterattack forces are usually high-payoff targets for corps deep operations efforts. The corps identifies enemy formations possessing significant firepower and the mobility to easily influence the outcome of the corps attack if they are not countered.

The corps must disrupt or preclude such forces from interfering with the penetration and/or envelopment of static enemy positions in main defensive positions.

Enemy attack helicopter units also pose a formidable threat because of their ability to mass and maneuver in support of main defensive positions. Ideally, the corps identifies and considers such units for destruction while still in their assembly areas.

The corps jams enemy C^2 nets and disrupts his intelligence-collection efforts to preclude and/or disrupt the flow of information. The corps destroys enemy command posts to disrupt his capability to provide direction and control. These actions degrade the cohesion of enemy defenses and limit his flexibility in altering his defensive scheme. Such actions should be a priority corps effort unless an effective enemy C^2 system is necessary to support a friendly deception.

The corps continually monitors the progress of a pursuit or exploitation against the development of a significant enemy threat by reinforcing enemy formations. During the exploitation and pursuit, corps deep operations normally focus on—

- Isolating the retreating enemy force and preventing its reinforcement.
- Attacking the enemy at critical chokepoints.
- Disrupting, turning, and stopping lead elements of the retreating enemy force.

The purpose of deep operations might extend beyond shaping the close battle and establishing favorable conditions for the close fight. Deep operations might even be the decisive operation against enemy forces. As such, the corps might only conduct close operations to facilitate cross-FLOT operations and to attack the enemy's center of gravity.

Reconnaissance and Security Operations

Before contacting the enemy main body, the corps normally conducts reconnaissance forward of the corps, or it provides security. However, once the corps commits its main body forces, the attacking divisions provide their own security.

In some situations, the attacking divisions or the main effort may control the corps' covering force or reconnaissance assets. Divisions normally designate an advance guard and conduct a flank screen of their most vulnerable flank. This option is usually more feasible from the standpoint of control. However, the corps may elect to provide a separate security force on a particularly sensitive flank bordering the corps' assigned zone.

The introduction of another corps-controlled element between its deep operations area and the attacking divisions only tends to increase the coordination necessary between units and to complicate the control and execution of close operations.

During the exploitation and pursuit, the extended distances and changing rates of advance make it more feasible for the leading elements (exploiting force and encircling force) to control security to the corps' front and forward flanks. The more fluid the corps operation, the more the corps must rely on air cavalry for reconnaissance and attack helicopters for rapid response.

Flank security will be more difficult for the divisions to coordinate and adequately cover. There-

fore, the corps should provide assets to screen its most vulnerable flanks.

The distance on a flank may be too extensive for a single unit. Therefore, the corps may elect to cover the flank of leading echelons and to direct follow and support forces to cover their own flanks.

Main and Supporting Attacks

When attacking an enemy in prepared defensive positions, the corps normally attempts an envelopment to fix the enemy in his main defensive positions, then defeat him in depth. If the enveloping force cannot bypass the main defensive positions, the corps' initial main attack focuses on penetrating a point in the main defensive position while the supporting attacks fix any adjacent forces or mobile counterattack forces that could react to the penetration.

The main effort would typically shift to a trailing corps unit (usually a division) moving through the penetration once that unit assumes control of the zone and begins its attack against enemy defenses in depth. This shift does not normally occur until at least a brigade of the trailing division has passed through the penetration. Of the units attacking enemy defenses in depth, priority generally goes to the unit tasked with defeating a counterattack by large mobile enemy formations.

During the exploitation, the lead exploiting force usually conducts the main attack while follow and support units conduct supporting attacks. In the pursuit, the direct pressure force usually conducts the main attack until such time that the enemy force is destroyed or encircled. Once the enemy is encircled, the corps' main and supporting efforts are contingent on the concept to reduce the encirclement. (See Chapter 8.)

Reserve Operations

The corps reserve is not committed to a particular COA. It does not have a planned, subsequent mission. Its commitment solely depends on the flow of the battle. The corps commander establishes its planning priorities for likely contingencies. In addition to reserve forces, there are trailing units that, although initially unengaged, are committed to a subsequent COA.

Reserves provide the commander flexibility to exploit success or to react to contingencies through offensive action. They reinforce or maintain. the momentum of the attack by—

- Exploiting success when the opportunity arises.
- Countering enemy counterattacks against committed units.
- Sustaining the attack of a committed unit.
- Countering rear threats.

A contingency for the use of the reserve should be part of the corps plan. "Be prepared" tasks are given to the reserve to aid planning and execution. Planners must also consider the aspects of time and space when positioning these forces.

Normally, corps planning focuses on probable large-scale enemy counterattacks against committed divisions. If a corps contingency calls for the reserve to be prepared to attack and defeat the counterattacking enemy force, the reserve should possess at least comparable combat power. If the reserve lacks combat power and the commander only intends to block the counterattack, the reserve force conducts a hasty defense.

The reserve's command and control is another important consideration. If the reserve makes contact with the attacking enemy force before that force can influence the committed division, the corps may opt to retain control of the reserve. If not, the corps may place the reserve under the committed unit's control (OPCON / attached). The key issue is who can best control the possible convergence of the two friendly units and the coordination of their fires.

The commander may also commit the reserve to sustain the momentum of the attack of a committed unit. If so, there are three basic options for its use:

1. The reserve continues the attack as a separate force under corps control and is given responsibility for the remainder of the assigned zone of the committed unit.

2. The reserve is placed under the control of the committed unit.

3. The reserve assumes control of the committed unit and the entire zone of attack.

To exploit success, the commander can commit the reserve at any stage of the battle. However, in

most instances it will be committed during the later stages of the battle once it achieves the majority of the corps' subordinate unit objectives. The reserve will then probably be given a separate zone of attack and an objective resulting from the flow of the battle (a target of opportunity).

If there is low risk to the rear, the reserve may also perform a be-prepared mission to respond to Level III threats as the corps' tactical combat force. This chapter later addresses special considerations regarding the composition and the size of this force.

The corps should make prior provisions for designating another reserve once the commander commits the initial reserve force. This is especially important if commitment occurs during the early stages of the battle and the reserve becomes decisively engaged.

During exploitation or pursuit, corps units operate at greater distances and normally move much more rapidly than during an attack. Extended distances make it difficult for a corps-controlled reserve to provide responsive support to either leading element (exploiting force or encircling force) during these operations unless they are air mobile (attack helicopter or air assault) forces.

The usual necessity to position a follow and support force or a direct-pressure force immediately behind the lead elements makes it difficult to locate a corps ground reserve in a position to support either the exploiting or encircling force. Consequently, a greater decentralization of assets and control of the battle to these lead elements is usually necessary.

The exploiting or encircling force should be sufficiently weighted so reserves can obtain maintenance at their level. They can then sustain their attacks and/or exploit success.

Rear Operations

The fluidity and quick tempo of corps offensive operations pose challenges to corps rear operations planning. The forward movement of units and sustainment (both being essential parts of rear operations) are critical if the corps is to maintain the initiative necessary for successful offensive operations.

The enemy looks for opportunities to counter the corps' attack. It will strike deep into the corps' rear in an attempt to rob the corps of initiative, flexibility, and agility.

If the corps' offense is to be successful, it must keep LOCs open to sustain its attacking maneuver units. It must also detect and defeat enemy forces that intend to interrupt the corps' rear operations effort.

Level II threats during offensive operations will most likely be enemy special operations teams, long-range reconnaissance units, and bypassed enemy elements. These threats' primary objectives are C^2 and logistic facilities and disrupting and/or interdicting LOCs.

Where possible, corps rear MP brigade assets screen friendly C^2 facilities and critical sites from threat forces. The corps also establishes a rear operations plan for base or base cluster defense to counter the initial contact with threat forces.

The MPs provide follow-on forces to engage and defeat Level I and II threats. The corps commander might designate an MP brigade as the TCF responsible for Level III threats.

The brigade is augmented according to METT-T factors. The most likely Level III threat to a corps rear during offensive operations is a large, mobile force or bypassed units intent on—

- Severing or disrupting the corps' C^2.
- Disrupting or destroying CSS to committed units and CSS facilities.
- Interdicting MSRs and supply points.
- Destroying CP facilities, airfields, aviation assembly areas, and arming and refueling points.
- Interfering with the commitment of corps reserves.

The corps designates a TCF, usually of at least brigade size, to contend with such a threat. Limited reaction times and extended distances require the TCF to be extremely mobile and capable of moving by air and/or by ground.

The TCP must be able to destroy armor protected vehicles and dismounted infantry as well as being able to suppress enemy ADA systems. Consequently, the TCF typically consists of infantry, attack helicopter, and air cavalry elements with engineer and FA support. The TCF may also possess

armored, mechanized, or motorized infantry units if the situation dictates.

The corps should anticipate the possibility of a counterattack into its rear by a ground maneuver force from an adjacent enemy unit not within the corps' zone of attack. This is likely if the corps' zone of attack overlaps the lateral boundaries of two defending enemy units. Given this situation, a brigade-size TCF may only be able to contain or block such a force's attack. It may then be necessary to defeat or destroy the force by either diverting assets from committed units or obtaining EAC support.

The key consideration before diverting any corps assets from the decisive operation is whether the corps can still accomplish its mission given the threat to its rear. Although the corps may be able to sustain the temporary loss of support from its rear, it cannot sustain the loss of its decisive operations. (See also Appendix C.)

Plans for offensive operations must contain provisions for control of captured or constructed airfields in the corps' zone. Normally, the corps can operate two airfields until control of the airfields passes to other services. Air base defense remains the corps' responsibility unless it is assumed by a higher headquarters, a sister service, or a host nation. (See Appendix C for further discussion.)

PREPARING FOR CORPS OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Intelligence

In the offense, the IEW effort helps the commander decide when and where to concentrate overwhelming combat power. Collection assets answer the corps commander's PIR and other information requirements, which flow from the IPB and the war-gaming process. Information required may include—

- Enemy centers of gravity or decisive points.
- Location, orientation, and strength of enemy defenses.
- Location of enemy reserves, fire support, and other attack assets in support of defensive positions.
- Close air support and aviation assets for defensive areas, air avenues of approach, and likely enemy engagement areas.
- Key terrain, avenues of approach, and obstacles.

The G2 identifies rear area threats, such as enemy special operations forces and partisan activities, that may interfere with C^2 and sustainment aspects of the corps attack. He also synchronizes intelligence operations with combat operations to ensure all corps IEW collection means provide timely information in support of current operations. He recommends specific reconnaissance tasks for the ACR, realizing the commander may task the regiment to conduct a security or attack mission.

In keeping with the commander's PIR, the G2 tasks collection assets to support the targeting process (decide, detect, deliver, and assess). Collection assets locate and track high-payoff targets and pass targeting data to fire support elements.

The capabilities of joint, multinational, and national assets are synchronized into corps operations. A focused approach in allocating collection assets maximizes the capability of the limited number of assets available to the corps.

Maneuver

The corps may conduct an initial attack as part of a forcible entry operation after it arrives in the theater of operations. Once in theater, corps units preparing to attack remain dispersed until immediately before the attack.

At the prescribed time, the corps concentrates attacking units sufficiently to mass their effects at a specific point in the enemy defense. This achieves decisive results by appropriately weighting the main attack and main effort.

To achieve tactical surprise, this concentration occurs under strong OPSEC measures and within the parameters of the corps' deception plan. If the corps must move a considerable distance to gain contact or attack the enemy, it conducts an approach march to close with the enemy force.

When the intelligence picture is incomplete or dated, the corps may conduct a movement to contact, employing its reconnaissance assets to find the enemy and determine his dispositions. If the mission

dictates, the ACR and division cavalry squadrons develop the situation.

In a movement to contact, the ACR and division cavalry squadrons usually conduct a detailed reconnaissance of their respective zones. Once the corps commander initiates contact and determines enemy dispositions, he maneuvers divisions into the fight to take advantage of the terrain and to exploit enemy weaknesses.

The movement to contact may be particularly applicable during OOTW when fighting against unsophisticated threats in restrictive terrain where corps IEW systems are less effective. There, the corps G2 would be increasingly dependent on HUMINT resources, including ground reconnaissance.

When the corps develops thorough and timely intelligence on the enemy, the corps commander normally conducts a deliberate attack. Although a subordinate unit's deliberate attack plans are detailed, the corps' plan must retain flexibility to facilitate branches and sequels.

Corps units should vary the tempo of operations, concentrate rapidly to strike the enemy, then disperse and move to subsequent objectives. These actions will keep the enemy off balance and preclude his effective employment of weapons of mass destruction. Before the main attack, the corps may conduct a feint, demonstration, or reconnaissance in force to deceive the enemy and/or test his dispositions.

The corps might employ both heavy and light forces when preparing for offensive operations. To capitalize on each type's unique capabilities while minimizing their limitations, the corps must determine—

- The appropriate level where mixing should occur.
- The tasks they are to accomplish.
- The appropriate command or support relationships.
- The required amount and type of augmentation and/or support they are to provide to the force.
- The CSS concept.

Corps augmentation normally is required if heavy forces are attached to light forces. Command relationship considerations are an essential factor in ensuring the feasibility of task organizing between heavy and light forces.

The preferred employment option at the corps level is to employ light divisions as a division under corps control. The corps should ensure that the light division's mission capitalizes on its unique capabilities. Light infantry can—

- Conduct an initial penetration to facilitate a subsequent attack by heavy forces.
- Conduct military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT).
- Respond to rear area threats.
- Attack over restrictive terrain.
- Conduct economy of force operations.

Light forces, given the factors of METT-T, may require augmentation to increase their effectiveness, especially with regard to their antiarmor capability and mobility needs. The corps should assign light units' missions based primarily on command estimate considerations.

Light forces can be attached to heavy forces or vice versa. However, light units should not be so overburdened with augmentation that they lose their unique capabilities.

A heavy brigade normally is placed OPCON to a light division. Normal CSS accompanies any attached or OPCON forces.

The support concept must ensure that the losing organization retains its ability to support its remaining forces. This is particularly true in the case of the light division since its DISCOM is an austere organization not easily divisible into) brigade support packages.

When the corps employs heavy and light forces together they must be used so that light forces dominate the close terrain. By controlling close terrain, light units prevent enemy light forces from effectively using it to interfere with the corps' offensive action.

Friendly light forces can deny enemy heavy forces easy access through close terrain. Doing so forces the enemy to fight dismounted to protect his tanks and to engage friendly infantry. The corps can then use friendly heavy forces to strike the decisive blow at the chosen time and place.

In offensive operations, heavy forces can lose the ability to maneuver when confronted by enemy forces that are dominating key terrain along friendly routes of advance. However, light divisions can conduct dismounted attacks over rugged terrain to close with and destroy enemy forces and seize the terrain. They can also air assault with the covering force to secure the decisive or key terrain to aid the movement of the main body.

Staffs must consider several factors when planning this type of operation. Light forces will need—

- Additional transportation assets to rapidly move the light unit's combat elements into forward assembly areas.
- Additional artillery to enhance the divisions' capability to engage the enemy with indirect fires and to execute counterfires.
- Additional intelligence assets.
- Additional attack helicopter assets.
- Allocation of CAS sorties.
- Additional antiarmored assets to protect against an armored threat.
- Support of light forces once inserted.

Fire Support

Allocating and synchronizing all elements of fire support, especially joint fires and nonlethal systems, complements and weights the corps' main effort. Synchronization also helps the corps control the tempo of the attack. In an attack, fire support assets—

- Conduct intense and concentrated preparatory fires before and during the initial stages of the attack.
- Conduct suppressive fires to isolate the objective of the main attack and to help fix enemy forces during supporting attacks.
- Provide continuous suppression to allow attacking formations to close with the enemy.
- Conduct SEAD missions, some of which are appropriate for nonlethal attack assets.
- Supplement division counterfires to diminish or stop the enemy's ability to effectively employ artillery.
- Execute corps deep operations in concert with other corps assets.
- Deny, through electronic attack, enemy use of critical C^2, fire support, and intelligence systems.

The corps' TAC and main CPs must always know the locations of friendly units. The command must ensure that organic fire support agencies and supporting joint assets clearly understand the ground scheme of maneuver so they can maximize their capabilities for the greatest effect.

Timely execution of joint fires is critical when conducting offensive operations. All fire support providers in support of the corps attack must understand coordination measures and procedures for controlling fires. The FSCL gives sister services greater freedom of action in the area beyond the FSCL and facilitates operations in depth. The FSCL's location is METT-T dependent. Considerations include—

- The location of enemy forces.
- The anticipated rate of the friendly advance.
- The scheme of maneuver, including the maneuver of Army aviation units.
- The desired tempo of operations.

Air Defense

The corps' AD units provide low-to high-altitude air defense coverage throughout the battlefield. Units are arrayed to provide as much overlapping coverage as possible. Coverage focuses on protecting key corps assets in the attack, such as CPs, aviation assembly areas, FA locations, logistic bases, and reserve assembly areas. Forward area air defense assets generally provide static or mobile point defense.

High- to medium-altitude air defense (HIMAD) assets are optimized during AD coverage. As the corps advances, AD coverage also advances in order to ensure umbrella protection remains continuous.

The corps integrates AD systems into the protection that sister services and coalition partners provide. This avoids duplication of effort while providing redundancy in protection to high-priority assets.

The corps' AD brigade provides HIMAD and theater missile defense (TMD) coverage for the corps. Corps ADA brigade FAAD elements augment organic division ADA units based on METT-T. The corps' main effort receives priority coverage, particularly in areas where the attack is vulnerable to enemy air action, such as river-crossing sites and mountain passes.

Air defense assets in an attack must focus on protecting critical assets in order to maintain mass. In some circumstances, such as during an approach march, the corps may establish an ISB for CS and CSS units, including HIMAD assets.

Mobility and Survivability

The corps allocates engineer assets to the main effort to give it a greater mobility capability. The engineer focus is on mobility, then countermobility.

The corps places engineer brigade units forward to augment the divisions conducting the main attack. Engineering tasks include—

- Improving and maintaining LOCs by replacing armored vehicle launched bridges (AVLB) with other types of bridging.
- Improving routes.
- Providing general engineering for follow-on forces and logistic units.
- Augmenting reconnaissance forces in terrain analysis, especially in bridge classification and mobility analysis for routes of advance.
- Emplacing obstacles on the corps' flanks and against likely enemy avenues of approach throughout the corps zone.
- Maintaining key facilities, such as airfields and landing strips.
- Conducting survivability engineer operations to protect key assets, such as aviation assembly areas; petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL); and ammunition points.
- Protecting other designated critical facilities, in priority.

Keys to effective counterobstacle operations are contingency planning, well-rehearsed breaching operations, and trained engineers familiar with unit SOPs who are integrated into the attack formation. Complex obstacles require detailed engineer estimates and appropriate engineer assets.

Corps planners must anticipate breaching requirements in time to adequately provide breaching units with additional engineer assets, such as plows, rakes, and supplementary artillery for smoke and counterfire. When possible, all units conduct breaching operations in-stride to allow the force to maintain the attack's momentum.

Corps engineer units operating in the corps' rear area (usually conducting general engineering or survivability tasks) also have the potential to serve as a Level II response force to rear area threats. These engineer units require time to assemble because they are normally dispersed when conducting engineer missions on an area basis. They require augmentation in the areas of fire support and antitank capabilities.

Chemical reconnaissance units orient on vulnerabilities that the IPB process identifies. The corps positions decontamination assets to support the scheme of maneuver and arrays smoke units, particularly infrared-defeating assets to counter likely enemy sensors.

Combat Service Support

Responsive support of corps offensive operations requires CSS from forward locations and sustainment assets that are as mobile as the maneuver units they support. Offensive operations require large amounts of POL, and the provision of continuous support depends on open and secure LOCs.

Combat service support units position themselves and their materiel as close to maneuver forces as the situation allows, commensurate with the level of risk the commander is willing to accept. Sustainment locations support the commander's priorities, with the main attack as the principal focus. Transportation units must optimize their assets to rapidly deliver supplies and replacement personnel to maneuver units when needed.

Lengthening LOCs requires frequent forward movement of stocks and sustainment units and the establishment of forward logistics bases (FLBs). The forward movement of sustainment units and stocks must be timed to minimize the impact on support to maneuver units.

The corps can use captured supplies and materiel to supplement corps stocks and to increase the corps' operating and safety levels. A CA area study can pinpoint potential locations of enemy supplies and materiel.

Command and Control

While preparing for offensive operations, the commander continually visualizes the current situation and formulates a plan to get the forces under his command to the intended end state. The commander goes where he can best influence the battle. where his moral and physical presence can be felt. and where his will for victory can best be expressed. understood. and acted on. The commander exercises command from wherever he is on the battlefield.

In the attack. the corps TAC CP usually moves with the division conducting the main effort. The commander moves with the TAC CP and commands the corps from this forward location. The main and rear CPs displace forward into the corps zone as the attack progresses or the situation permits. The commander maintains control of deep and rear operations by either echeloning these CPs so there is no break in continuity or by handing over control to another CP until the movement is complete.

Key to battle command is the ability to communicate. The signal structure must ensure redundant systems are available to allow for communications throughout the corps. The corps also must be able to communicate with adjacent units. supporting joint forces. and if appropriate. HN or coalition forces. A critical component is the exchange of liaison teams to ensure unity of effort and a common understanding of the commander's intent.

EXECUTING CORPS OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The VII Corps' Plan for Operation Desert Storm

During Operation Desert Storm. the VII Corps' mission was to attack to penetrate and envelop Iraqi defenses to destroy the Republican Guard forces in zone. After the attack. the VII Corps was to prepare to defend the Northern Kuwait border to prevent the Iraqis from reseizing Kuwait.

The corps' major combat elements were four armored divisions. one mechanized division. an armored cavalry regiment. the corps aviation brigade. and four field artillery brigades employing 145.000 soldiers.

The overall corps plan was drawn up in six phases:

Phase 1. Movement from the ports to tactical assembly areas (TAA). Some VII Corps convoys traveled more than 500 kilometers.

Phase 2. Movement from TAAs to forward assembly areas (FAA) and zones. To enhance the deception that the central command's (CENTCOM's) attack would occur in the east. VII Corps delayed the movement of the corps until only days before the attack.

The corps rehearsed its LD/LC formation as it moved into zone. Distances for corps units ranged from 60 to 160 kilometers. This phase included demonstrations and feints. such as the 1st Cavalry Division's operations at Wadi Al Batin.

Phase 3. Penetration and envelopment of forward defenses. The 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) (ID(M)) conducted a deliberate breach of the Iraqi defenses west of Wadi Al Batin while the 2d ACR. 1st Armored Division. and 3d Armored Division bypassed enemy positions to the west..

Phase 4. Defeat of the enemy's tactical reserves. The 1st United Kingdom (UK) Armored Division passed through the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) and attacked to defeat enemy armored reserves behind Iraqi forward defenses.

Phase 5. Destruction of the Republican Guard.

Phase 6. Defense of Northern Kuwait.

VII Corps' Execution

On 23 February 1991. the 2d ACR bypassed Iraqi defenses to the west and crossed into Iraq in preparation for the corps attack. Attack helicopter-64 and artillery raids intensified in the corps zone. Early on 24 February, the 1st ID(M) penetrated the Iraqi defenses east of the 2d ACR while the regiment pushed 30 kilometers to the north.

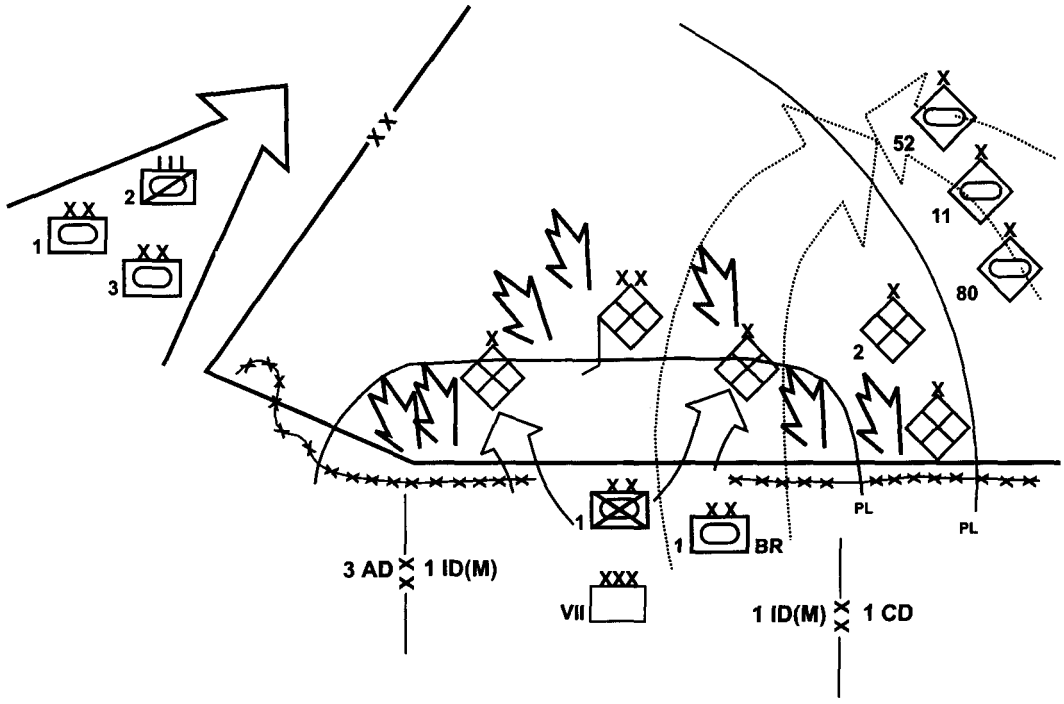


Figure 5–8. Breach and attack to fix Iraqi tactical reserves G-Day, February 24 - G+1, February 25

With increasing evidence of success against the Iraqis, the CINC of CENTCOM accelerated the attack schedule. The VII Corps would attack by 1500 that day. The 1st and 3d Armored Divisions would follow the zone cleared by the 2d ACR while the 1st ID(M) conducted a deliberate breach of the Iraqi defenses (Figure 5-8).

The 1st UK Armored Division conducted a forward passage of lines through the breach lanes and conducted an envelopment against the western flank of the Iraqi tactical reserves behind their forward defenses. The 1st Cavalry Division conducted a movement to contact from the 1st Division breach to the Wadi Al Batin.

At daybreak on 25 February the corps resumed the attack. To increase the momentum of the attack, the 1st Armored Division was committed on the 2d ACR's left flank. By midday, the ACR was in contact with **a** brigade of the 12th Armored Division. Within the hour, the 1st and 3d Armored Divisions were in contact with dug-in infantry from the Iraqi 26th Infantry Division.

Simultaneously, the 1st ID(M) occupied the beachhead line and was passing the 1st UK Armored Division. At this point, VII Corps had completed the destruction of the front-line **units of the Iraqi** 26th Division and was commencing the envelopment of the Iraqi 52d Armored Division to the east.

By evening, the 1st Armored Division was 100 kilometers inside Iraq, engaging a dug-in infantry brigade first with Apaches, then ground forces, near Al-Busayyah. The 2d ACR continued its offensive cover, destroying company-size elements of the Iraqi 50th Brigade, 12th Armored Division.

By midnight, the 1st UK Armored Division completed its forward passage through the 1st ID(M). The corps' main effort then switched to the main enveloping force.

On 26 February, the 75th and 42d Field Artillery Brigades shifted to support the 1st and 3d Armored Divisions, and the 1st Cavalry Division was released to the corps. The 1st Cavalry division raced 250 kilometers in 24 hours, attempting to join the corps' attack on the Republican Guard.

In the early morning, the 1st Armored Division stormed Al-Busayyah, destroying enemy forces and supply stocks (Figure 5-9). The 1st UK Armored

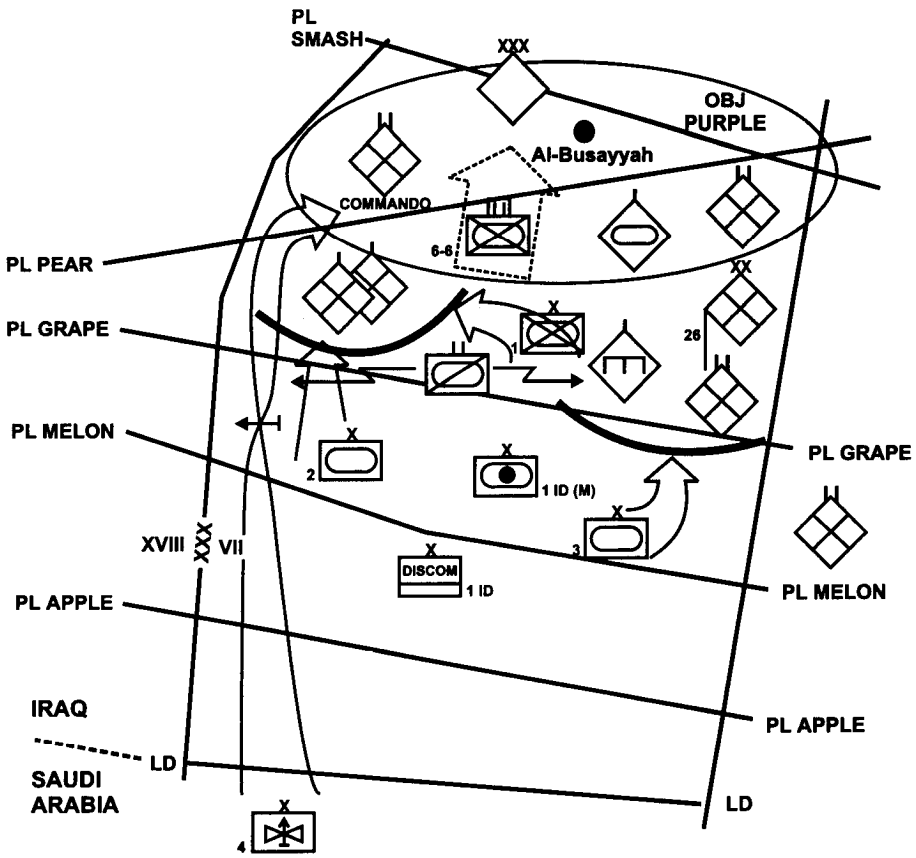


Figure 5–9. The 1st Armored Divison's destruction of the 26th Infantry and the fight for Al-Busayyah G+1, February 25 - G+2, February 26

Division continued its flank attack against the tactical Iraqis reserve northeast of the breach site.

By afternoon, the corps' main effort, starting with the 2d ACR, came in contact with the Tawakalna Division of the Republican Guards initiating the Battle of Wadi Al Batin (Figure 5-1 0). The 2d ACR developed the situation in the 73 Easting engagement and was directed to pass through the 1st ID(M).

The 1st Armored Division deep operations went after elements of the Iraqi Adnan Division, while 3d Armored Division deep operations were focused against the reserves of the 9th Brigade, in which they were in contact. Corps deep operations went after the Iraqi 10th Armored Division in two separate attacks. Central Command Air Force (CENTAF) interdiction assisted in isolating the Republican Guards by hitting targets near the Kuwait City-Basra highway.

Early on the morning of 27 February, the VII Corps completed destruction of the Tawakalna Division and continued to press the attack to destroy the remaining Republican Guard Divisions. The 1st and 3d Armored AH-64s ranged ahead of their divisions, employing search and attack techniques.

By midmorning, the corps came in contact with the Medina Division and remnants of the Iraqi 10th and 12th Armored Divisions in an engagement that came to be called Medina Ridge. The corps was deployed with four divisions on-line. The corps commander desired to conduct a double envelopment with the 1st Cavalry Division and 1st ID(M), but because of the tactical situation, he delayed the double envelopment for 24 hours.

Late in the day, the corps destroyed or had in full retreat remaining Republican Guard forces. By the evening, the 1st ID(M) cut the Kuwait City-Basrah highway. The VII Corps' attack covered 90 kilome-

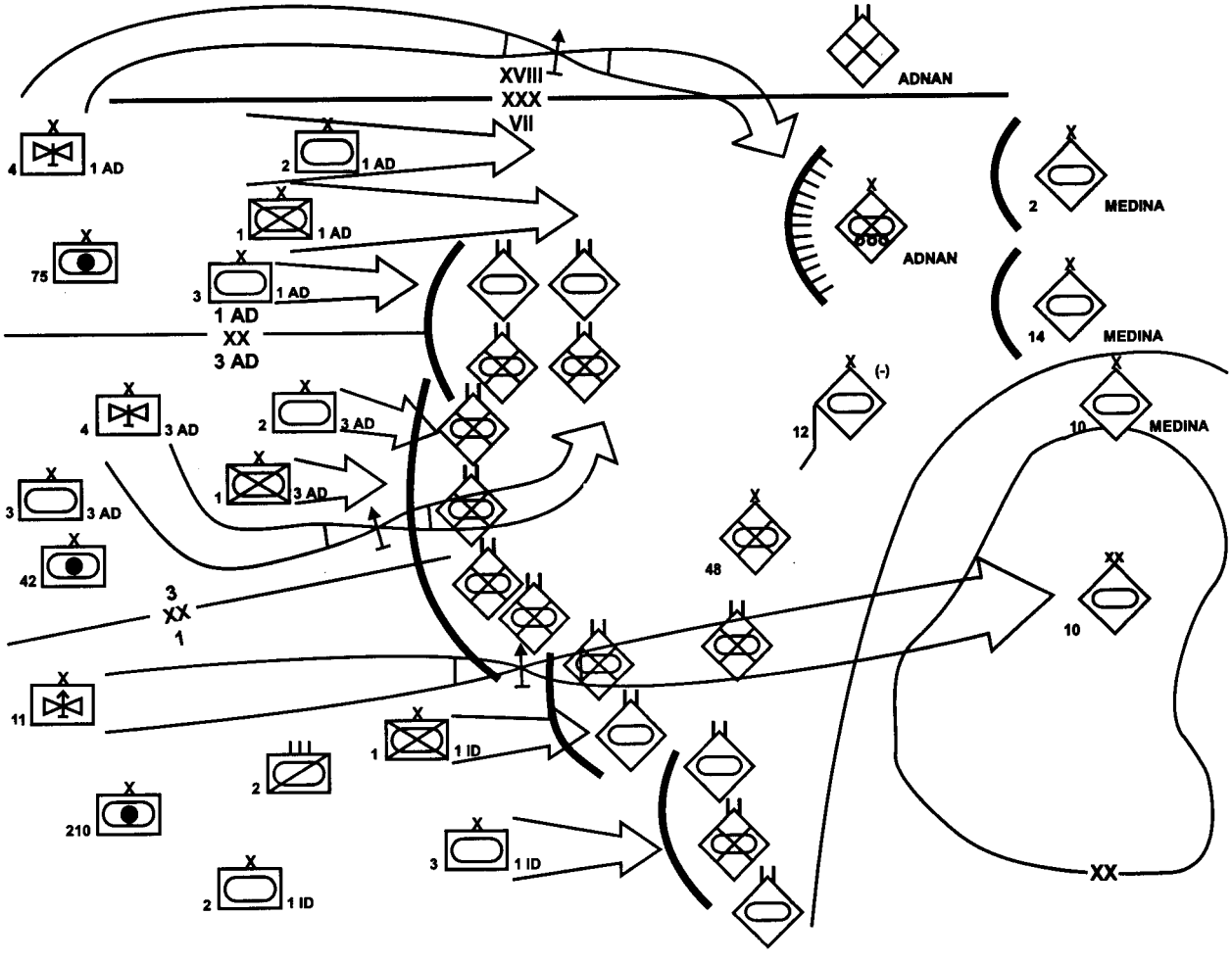


Figure 5–10. The VII Corps' battle for Wadi Al-Batin G+2, February 26 - G+3, February 27

ters in 90 hours, destroying five armored divisions. Only the Hammurabi Division escaped nearly intact.

At 0800 on 28 February, the cease fire went into effect without the double envelopment having been executed. The reasons for the corps' overwhelming success included surprise, speed, and applying overwhelming combat power at the point of the attack.

Almost immediately after declaring the ceasefire, the corps began humanitarian relief operations. It also continued its tactical operations of force presence as well as preparations to resume the offense, if necessary. The corps' humanitarian relief operations—

- Provided food, including 1.1 million meals, 115 tons of bulk foodstuffs, 2. 1 million gallons of bulk water, and 640,000 bottles of water.
- Provided medical care to approximately 17,000 people.
- Patrolled occupied populated areas.
- Built and maintained refugee camps.
- Provided additional supplies, including fuel, insecticide, tents, medical supplies, and water storage facilities.

TRANSITIONING TO THE DEFENSE

If a corps reaches its culmination point in an offensive operation, it may be forced to defend—

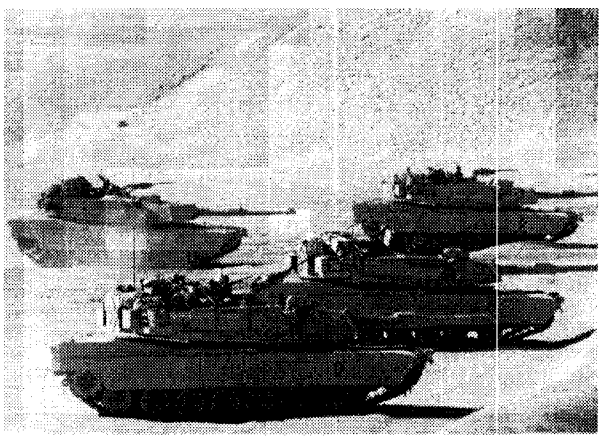
- To buy time.
- To hold specific terrain to facilitate other operations.
- To keep enemy forces occupied in a specific area.
- To build forces.
- To allow for resupply and regeneration of depleted units.

There are two options available to a commander when transitioning to the defense. First, prepare hasty defensive positions, generally along the line of the forward-most advanced forces while pushing a covering force forward to secure enough terrain to establish a security area. Second, move back to defensible terrain to allow room for a security or covering force area on terrain that has already been secured.

The first option could result in additional losses of personnel and resources. Also, the security area may lack sufficient depth to preclude engagement of MBA forces by the majority of enemy artillery. Therefore, in most cases, the second option is the better of the two.

Commanders can pull the bulk of the forces back to defensible terrain and establish an MBA on more familiar ground. If feasible, the newly established forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) can be established beyond range of the majority of enemy artillery. The FLOT would remain the LC along which a covering force or security force would be deployed.

Regardless of which option a commander selects, attacking units are to maintain their general positions until dark. All moves and adjustment of the lines occur under cover of limited visibility. If the situation demands immediate movement in daylight, units are to move only under the protection of artillery, aviation, and other supporting weapons.



In the offense, commanders must remain mentally agile and anticipate a transition to the defense.