

Chapter 11

The Retrograde

The withdrawal should be thought of as an offensive instrument, and exercises framed to teach how the enemy can be lured into a trap, closed by a counter-stroke or a devastating circle of fire.

B.H. Liddell Hart, 1944

The *retrograde* is a type of defensive operation that involves organized movement away from the enemy (FM 3-0). The enemy may force these operations or a commander may execute them voluntarily. In either case, the higher commander of the force executing the operation must approve the retrograde. Retrograde operations are transitional operations; they are not considered in isolation.

- 11-1. The commander executes retrogrades to—
- Disengage from operations.
 - Gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.
 - Resist, exhaust, and damage an enemy in situations that do not favor a defense.
 - Draw the enemy into an unfavorable situation or extend his lines of communication (LOCs).
 - Preserve the force or avoid combat under undesirable conditions, such as continuing an operation that no longer promises success.
 - Reposition forces to more favorable locations or conform to movements of other friendly troops.
 - Position the force for use elsewhere in other missions.
 - Simplify the logistic sustainment of the force by shortening LOCs.
 - Position the force where it can safely conduct reconstitution.
 - Adjust the defensive scheme, such as secure more favorable terrain.

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- Deceive the enemy.

11-2. The three forms of retrograde are delay, withdrawal, and retirement. In each form, a force moves to the rear, using combinations of combat formations and marches. (Chapter 3 discusses combat formations; Chapter 14 discusses troop movement.) The commander may use all three forms singularly or in combination with other types and forms of offensive or defensive operations.

11-3. Retrogrades can negatively affect the participating soldiers' attitude more than any other type of operation because they may view the retrograde as a defeat. A commander must not allow retrograde operations to reduce or destroy unit morale. Leaders must maintain unit aggressiveness. By planning and efficiently executing the retrograde and ensuring that soldiers understand the purpose and duration of the operation, the commander can counter any negative effects of the operation on unit morale. After completing a retrograde operation, the commander may reconstitute the force. FM 4-100.9 establishes the basic principles of reconstitution.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

11-4. The following historical example illustrates how conducting a retrograde operation can preserve an army for future operations.

The Atlanta Campaign, 1864

The first two months of the Atlanta campaign illustrate the successful conduct of a delay in the face of superior forces. Between 5 May and 17 July, Johnston held Sherman to an average gain of one mile a day while preserving his freedom of maneuver and his army for future operations. This part of the campaign contains examples of successful delays, withdrawals, and retirements. Confederate actions at Resaca early in the campaign will be used to illustrate an unassisted withdrawal under enemy pressure. See [Figure 11-1](#), page 11-2.

In May 1864, Confederate GEN Joseph E. Johnston and his 55,000-man *Army of Tennessee* had the mission of defending Atlanta. Johnston faced 110,000 Union soldiers, organized into seven corps under MG William T. Sherman's overall command. Johnston's campaign strategy was to force Sherman to culminate before reaching Atlanta, conserving his army's strength until he crippled the Union army in a defensive battle, and then launch a counteroffensive.

Union forces began the campaign on 5 May with an advance from positions southeast of Chattanooga. Forced to withdraw from his initial positions at Dalton because of a turning movement around his left flank by two Union corps, Johnston raced to position his forces to defend Resaca, Georgia. Johnston intended to hold at Resaca until he could cross his entire force over the Oostanaula River to its southern bank. At Resaca were three bridges that supported the Confederate's line of communication with the logistics base at Atlanta.

Johnston positioned the three corps—then constituting his army—to defend Resaca as they arrived on 13 May. May 14th and 15th saw attacks around Resaca, with neither side gaining a marked advantage. However, the right flank of the Union army moved within cannon range of the bridges. Forces that Sherman sent four miles to the southwest on another turning movement crossed

the river on 15 May, although they did not break out from their bridgehead on that day. Sherman intended to follow with his main force and either envelope Johnston or strike his flank during a retreat. Faced with these prospects, Johnston decided to withdraw across the river. A deceptive Confederate attack late on the 15th convinced Sherman that Johnston intended to stay in his current positions. The withdrawal commenced at midnight. Johnston left skirmishers along the line (a detachment left in contact), withdrawing forces in succession from his corps farthest from the bridges, then from his center corps, and finally from the corps closest to the bridges. One division from his right-wing corps constituted the army's rear guard. After the rear guard crossed the bridges, Johnston's engineers commenced their destruction. During the three hours required to withdraw Johnston's army across the river, Union forces did not detect the withdrawal until the Confederates began to destroy the bridges.

Johnston's mix of retrograde and defensive operations preserved his army as a constant threat to Sherman. Nevertheless, his strategy was unacceptable to Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis replaced him on 17 July 1864 with GEN John B. Hood. Hood attacked Sherman three times in two weeks, suffering heavy casualties and failing to seize the initiative. On 1 September, Sherman seized Atlanta, achieving the Union's strategic objective in the Western Theater before the national elections.

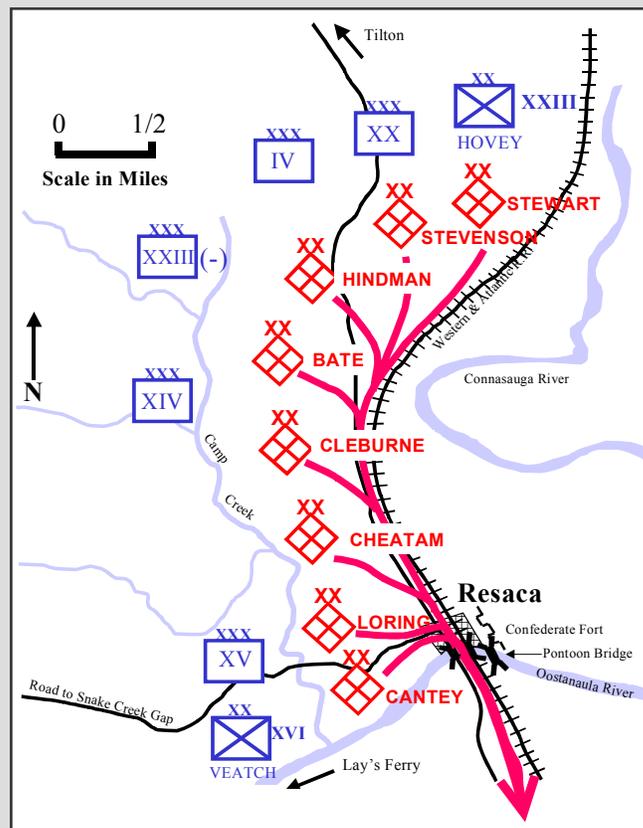


Figure 11-1. Withdrawal from Resaca

DELAY

11-5. A *delay* is a form of retrograde [JP 1-02 uses *an operation*] in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged (JP 1-02, see delaying operation). The delay is one of the most demanding of all ground combat operations. A delay wears down the enemy so that friendly forces can regain the initiative through offensive action, buy time to establish an effective defense, or

determine enemy intentions as part of a security operation. Normally in a delay, inflicting casualties on the enemy is secondary to gaining time. For example, a flank security force conducts a delay operation to provide time for the protected force to establish a viable defense along its threatened flank. Except when directed to prevent enemy penetration of a phase line (PL) for a specific duration, a force conducting a delay normally does not become decisively engaged.

11-6. A delay operation can occur when the commander does not have enough friendly forces to attack or defend. It may also occur, based on a unit's mission, in conjunction with a higher commander's intent. The decision to conduct a delay may not be based on the unit's combat power, but on the other factors of METT-TC. For example, during security operations, the commander may conduct a delay as a shaping operation to draw the enemy into an area where he is vulnerable to a counterattack. Another example would be a delay instituted as an economy of force effort to allow the commander to conduct an offensive operation elsewhere.

11-7. The ability of a force to trade space for time requires depth within the area of operations (AO) assigned to the delaying force. The amount of depth required depends on several factors, including the—

- Amount of time to be gained.
- Relative combat power of friendly and enemy forces.
- Relative mobility of the forces.
- Nature of the terrain.
- Ability to shape the AO with obstacles and fires.
- Degree of acceptable risk.

Ordinarily, the greater the available depth, the lower the risk involved to the delaying force and the greater the chance for success.

11-8. A delay succeeds by forcing the enemy to repeatedly concentrate his forces to fight through a series of defensive positions. A delaying force must offer a continued threat of serious opposition, forcing the enemy to repeatedly deploy and maneuver. Delaying forces displace to subsequent positions before the enemy is able to concentrate sufficient resources to decisively engage and defeat delaying forces in their current position. The length of time a force can remain in a position without facing the danger of becoming decisively engaged is primarily a function of the factors of METT-TC, such as the relative combat power and the terrain and weather.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

11-9. The commander normally organizes the delaying force into a main body, a security force, and a reserve. The security force usually conducts a screen forward of the initial delay positions. For a divisional cavalry squadron or a corps cavalry regiment conducting a delay, the security force executing the screen mission may consist of scouts or air cavalry. For a brigade or battalion conducting a delay, the security force may consist of the brigade reconnaissance troop, battalion scouts, or another element tasked to conduct security operations.

11-10. The main body, which contains the majority of the delaying force's combat power, may use alternate or subsequent positions to conduct the delay. The commander usually deploys his main body as a complete unit into a forward position when conducting a delay from subsequent positions. He divides his main body into two parts, roughly equal in combat power, to occupy each set of positions when conducting a delay from alternate positions.

11-11. The commander normally retains a reserve to contain enemy penetrations between positions, to reinforce fires into an engagement area (EA), or to help a unit disengage from the enemy. All of these missions require that the reserve has the mobility and strength to strike with such force that an enemy has no option but to face the immediate threat.

11-12. The extended frontages and ranges common to retrograde operations make the provision of fire support difficult and act to limit the commander's ability to mass fires. Therefore, retrograde forces, especially delay forces, often have more than the normal allocation of fire support assets. The commander's risk of losing artillery systems and their ammunition also increases when he is supporting retrograde operations. Therefore, he balances his decision to commit fire support systems forward against anticipated requirements in subsequent battle stages. In particular, he protects his towed artillery systems from being overrun by a mobile enemy. He can use available rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft to augment or replace his artillery systems.

11-13. Combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets are widely dispersed and often attached to the units they support because of the width of the AOs normally assigned in a delay. Engineer priorities are normally countermobility first, then mobility. However, restrictive terrain that impedes friendly movement may require the commander to reverse the priorities. Close coordination is necessary so that engineer obstacles are covered by fire and do not impede the planned withdrawal routes of delaying forces or the commitment of a counterattacking reserve force. The delaying force should have a greater-than-normal allocation of fire support systems.

11-14. The requirement to maintain continuous support during the delay requires CSS organizations to echelon their assets. This echelonment, coupled with the wide dispersion of combat forces that is inherent in a delay, complicates conducting the delay.

CONTROL MEASURES

11-15. The delay consists of a series of independent small-unit actions that occur simultaneously across the front. Subordinate commanders must have freedom of action. The tactical mission graphic for the delay appears in [Figure 11-2](#). It is not a control measure. The control measures used in the delay are the same as those introduced in [Chapter 8](#). Common graphics used in a delay include AOs, PLs, battle positions (BPs), coordination points, checkpoints, EAs, trigger lines, target reference points (TRPs), and disengagement lines. (See [Figure 11-3](#).) The commander designates contact points in front of, between, and behind units to assist coordination, ensure continuity of the delay, and draw attention to enemy avenues of approach into unit flanks. ([Chapter 15](#) addresses passage points with the passage of lines discussion.)

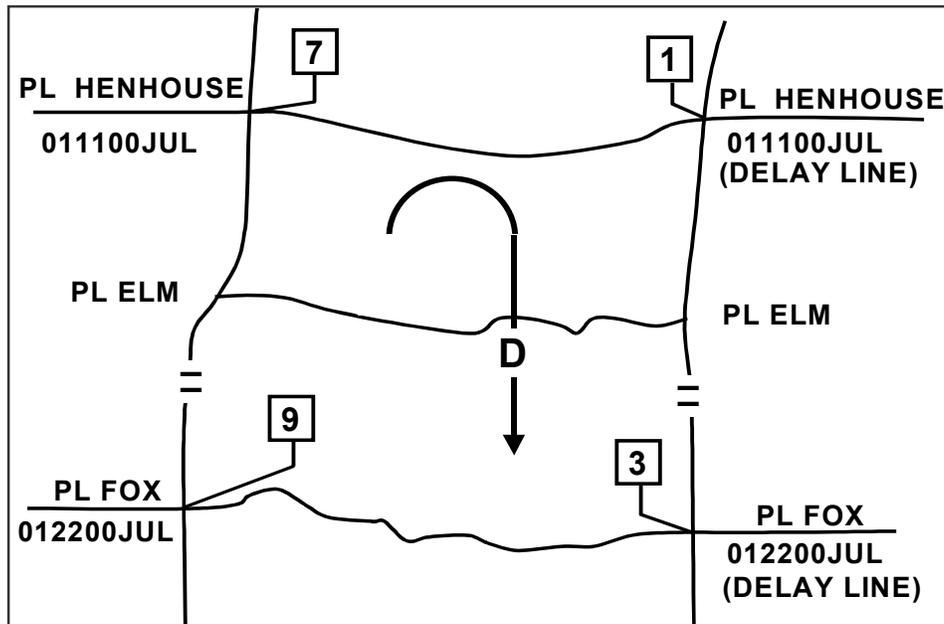


Figure 11-2. Delay Tactical Mission Graphic

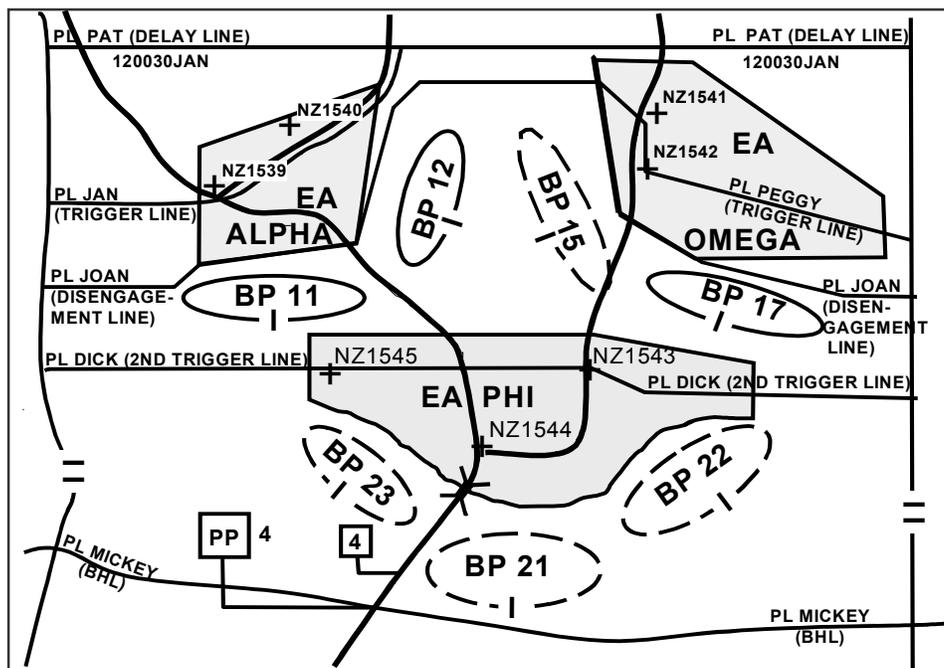


Figure 11-3. Control Measures for a Delay

11-16. In planning for a delaying action, the commander assigns an AO to each committed unit down through the company or troop level. The commander assigns each likely enemy avenue of approach to only one subordinate unit when he designates subordinate units' AOs. When the commander draws the boundaries of these subordinate AOs, he includes the terrain that controls fire and observation into those areas.

11-17. The commander designates additional PLs beyond those established by his higher commander as necessary to control movement during the delay. **A *delay line* is a phase line where the date and time before which the enemy is not allowed to cross the phase line is depicted as part of the graphic control measure.** Designating delay lines is a command decision that imposes a high degree of risk on the delaying unit. The delaying unit must do everything in its power—including accepting decisive engagement—to prevent the enemy from crossing that line before the time indicated. A delay line may also be event-driven. For example, a commander can order a delaying unit to prevent penetration of the delay line until his engineers complete construction of a rearward obstacle belt.

PLAN

11-18. Unit commanders and soldiers must understand and exercise the basics of defensive operations outlined in Chapter 8 to conduct a successful delay. However, these defensive basics have unique considerations, and the significance of these considerations varies depending on the factors of METT-TC. In a delay, units operate on extended frontages at great risk from advancing enemy forces. The tactical situation constantly changes with maneuver opportunities existing for only extremely short periods. Subordinate commanders must have the flexibility to take immediate action to retain the integrity of their forces. This helps retain their freedom of maneuver and inflict maximum destruction on the enemy.

11-19. The commander identifies ground and air avenues for enemy attacks and friendly counterattacks. When avenues of approach diverge or pass from one AO to another, adjacent units must coordinate with each other. Using the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process, the commander designates initial and subsequent delay positions on key terrain that covers likely enemy avenues of approach throughout the depth of the AO allocated to the delay mission.

11-20. Maintaining a mobility advantage over the attacker by the delaying force is key to successfully conducting a delay. Robust engineering and fire support are critical to this effort. The commander plans to maintain this advantage by taking full advantage of the mobility inherent in the combat and tactical systems available to the delaying force. In addition he takes other steps to enhance friendly mobility and degrade the enemy's mobility, such as building combat trails between delay positions and preparing bridges over major rivers for demolition. The delaying force should be capable of constructing large numbers of obstacles and delivering long-range fires. For example, while the enemy seeks to travel in movement formations that allow him to press his attack at the greatest speed, the delaying force's aim is to engage the enemy as early and often as possible. This forces the enemy out of those formations through a multiple series of time-consuming deployments into an assault formation.

11-21. The air defense portion of the plan has three main considerations—the protection of the force while it is in position, the protection of any forces left in contact, and the protection of the force as it moves to the rear. Priority of protection should be toward maintaining the mobility of the force. Air defense assets remain mobile yet able to engage aerial targets with little advance

warning. These assets should work in teams, able to move to the rear in alternating bounds. This ensures that dedicated air defense assets will always be in position, with the flexibility to keep pace with the operations. These firing points are not obvious positions that an enemy will probably target as part of his preparatory or support fires. Early warning of enemy air attack is provided over combat net radios using the command net at the brigade echelon and below.

11-22. Flanks and gaps between units are always areas of concern for a commander. In a linear deployment, the enemy can bypass or outflank the delaying force if coordination between adjacent friendly units is weak, or if one unit creates a gap by moving rearward too rapidly. Therefore, the commander normally designates BPs to guard approaches into his AO. Adjacent units of different commands must exchange liaison.

11-23. Displacement criteria should specify at what point—either event, or time-driven—the delaying force should begin its displacement. The commander should calculate enemy closure rates for the terrain and compare them to friendly displacement rates between positions. By comparing time and distance factors, he can calculate his movement window of time. By applying the enemy's probable rates of advance and formations to the avenues of approach, the commander can decide what obstacles to use and where to emplace them (covered by fires). It also helps the commander determine if and where decisive engagement is likely or required to achieve the delay objective. Careful consideration of the factors of METT-TC, especially terrain analysis, is an inherent part of delay planning.

Parameters of the Delay Order

11-24. An order for a delay mission must specify certain parameters. First, it must direct one of two alternatives: delay within the AO or delay forward of a specified line or terrain feature for a specified time. That time is usually based on another unit completing its activities, such as establishing rearward defensive positions. A mission of delay within the AO implies that force integrity is a prime consideration. In this case, the delaying force delays the enemy as long as possible while avoiding decisive engagement. Generally, this force displaces once predetermined criteria have been met, such as when the enemy force reaches a disengagement line. The control measures are the same for both alternatives, except that during a delay forward of a specified line for a specified time, the commander annotates the PL with the specified time. (See [Figure 11-4](#).) If the commander establishes a delay line, mission accomplishment outweighs preservation of the force's integrity. It may require the force hold a given position until ordered to displace.

11-25. The second parameter is that the order must specify the acceptable risk. Acceptable risk ranges from accepting decisive engagement in an attempt to hold terrain for a given time to maintaining the integrity of the delaying force. The depth of the AO available for the delay, the time needed by higher headquarters, and subsequent missions for the delaying force determine the amount of acceptable risk. A delay mission that does not specify times, control of key terrain, or other guidance and control measures implies a lower degree of risk.

11-26. Third, the order must specify whether the delaying force may use the entire AO or must delay from specific BPs. A delay using the entire AO is preferable, but a delay from specific positions may be required to coordinate two or more units in the delay. To enhance command and control and to coordinate the battle across a broad front, the commander assigns units down to platoon-level specific BPs. However, he may assign them missions to delay within their AO if that best supports the scheme of maneuver.

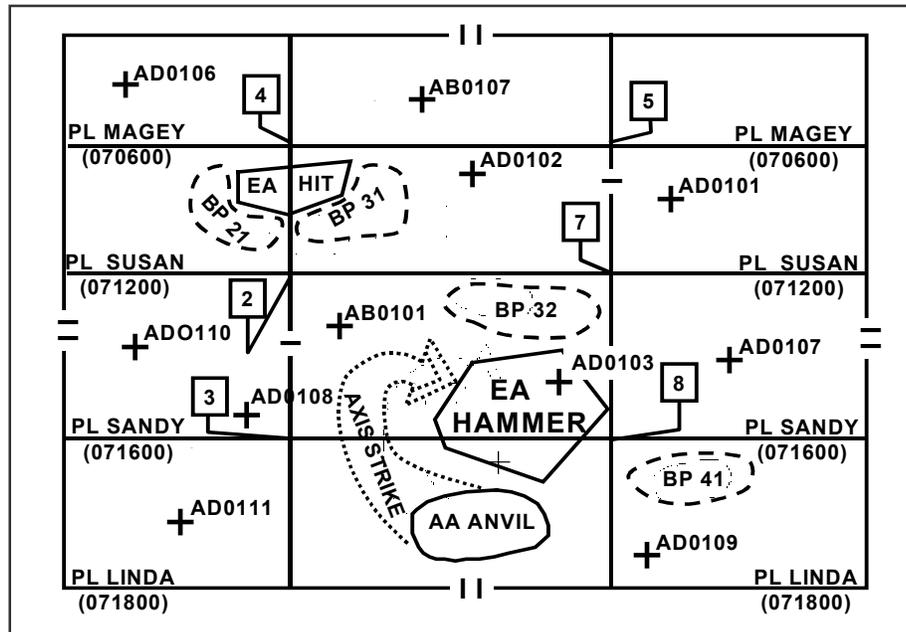


Figure 11-4. Delay Forward of a Specified Line for a Specified Time

Alternate and Subsequent Positions

11-27. The commander normally assigns his subordinate units contiguous AOs that are deeper than they are wide. He uses obstacles, fires, and movement throughout the depth of each assigned AO. He may be forced to fight from a single set of positions if the delay is only planned to last a short time or the AO's depth is limited. If the delay is expected to last for a longer period, or if sufficient depth is available, he may delay from either alternate or successive positions.

11-28. In both techniques, delaying forces normally reconnoiter subsequent positions before occupying them and, if possible, post guides on one or two subsequent positions. Additionally, in executing both techniques, it is critical that the delaying force maintains contact with the enemy between delay positions. (The advantages and disadvantages of the two techniques are summarized in [Table 11-1](#), page 11-10.)

11-29. A commander normally prefers to use alternate positions when he has adequate forces and his AO has sufficient depth. In a delay from alternate positions, two or more units in a single AO occupy delaying positions in depth. (See [Figure 11-5](#), page 11-10.) As the first unit engages the enemy, the second occupies the next position in depth and prepares to assume responsibility for

the operation. The first force disengages and passes around or through the second force. It then moves to the next position and prepares to reengage the enemy while the second force takes up the fight. Alternate positions are normally used when the delaying force operates on a narrow front. A delay from alternate positions is particularly useful on the most dangerous avenues of approach because it offers greater security than a delay from successive positions. However, it requires more forces and continuous maneuver coordination. Additionally, the delaying forces risk losing contact with the enemy between delay positions.

Table 11-1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Delay Techniques

METHOD OF DELAY	USE WHEN	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Delay from Subsequent Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO is wide. • Forces available do not allow themselves to be split. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masses fires of all available combat elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited depth to the delay positions. • Less available time to prepare each position. • Less flexibility.
Delay from Alternate Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO is narrow. • Forces are adequate to be split between different positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows positioning in depth. • Allows more time for equipment and soldier maintenance. • Increases flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires continuous coordination. • Requires passage of lines. • Engages only part of the force at one time.

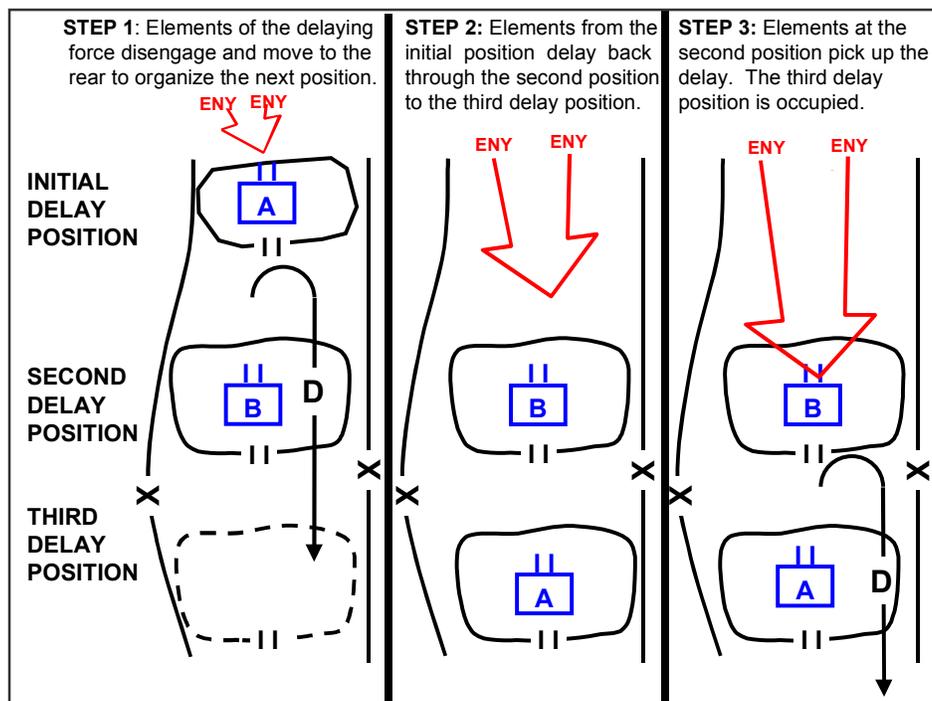


Figure 11-5. Delay from Alternate Positions

11-30. The commander uses a delay from subsequent positions when the assigned AO is so wide that available forces cannot occupy more than a single tier of positions. (See Figure 11-6.) In a delay from subsequent positions, all delaying units are committed to each of the series of BPs or across the AO on the same PL. Most of the delaying force is located well forward. The mission dictates the delay from one BP or PL to the next. The commander staggers the movement of delaying elements so that not all elements are moving at the same time.

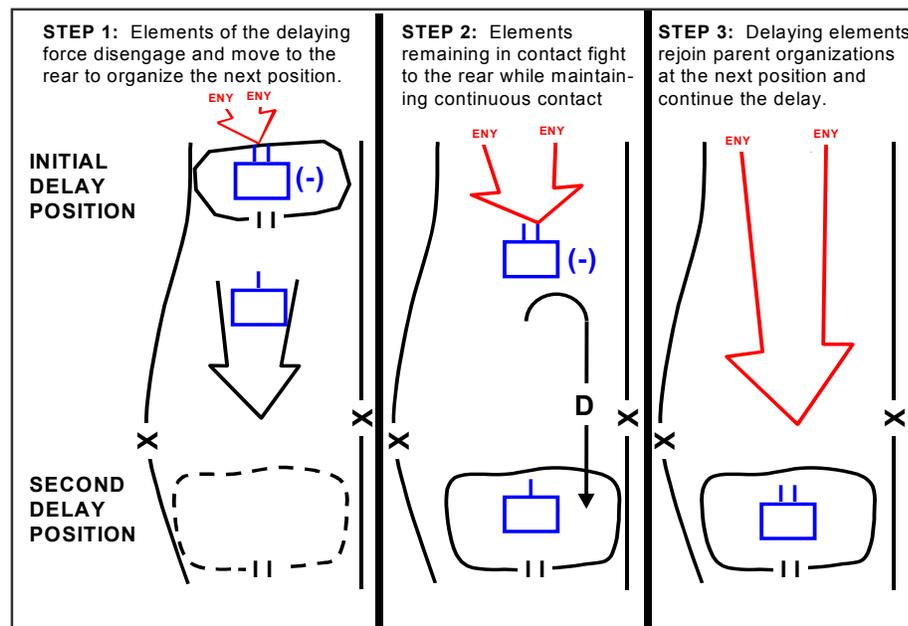


Figure 11-6. Delay from Subsequent Positions

Effects of Terrain

11-31. The commander always takes advantage of the terrain when planning how he positions his forces and conducts operations. He wants the terrain to favor his actions and not be a neutral factor. The terrain dictates where a delaying force can orient on a moving enemy force and ambush it. During a delay, compartmentalized terrain facilitates shorter displacements initiated at closer range to the enemy. The commander conducting operations in such terrain looks for locations that restrict the enemy's movement and prevent him from fully exploiting his combat superiority. On the other hand, flat or open terrain requires earlier displacements at greater distances to stay in front of the advancing enemy. In open terrain, the most important consideration in selecting a position is a good, long-range field of fire. **A field of fire is the area that a weapon or group of weapons may cover effectively from a given position.**

11-32. In restricted terrain, where a light force conducts the primary action, positions may be close together, except when conducting a delay using air assault techniques. In open terrain, delay positions are often far apart. In

selecting positions, the commander considers natural and artificial obstacles, particularly when the enemy has numerous armored combat systems.

11-33. The commander identifies routes that reinforcements, artillery units, command posts (CPs), and CSS elements will use and keeps them under his control and free of obstacles. Alternate routes should be available so that a friendly force can bypass choke points if they are closed or contaminated.

11-34. Disengaging from the enemy while displacing from one position to the next is difficult. The unit's disengagement plans include the following:

- The maneuver concept of operations for tactical elements after disengagement, which includes the movement routes for each small unit.
- Fires to suppress the enemy and cover the unit's movement.
- Offensive information operations to disrupt enemy C2 at critical moments.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement, conduct a deception operation, or cover passage points.
- Contact and passage points if moving through friendly lines.
- Disengagement start times.
- The earliest time for CS and CSS elements to move.
- Designating units responsible for closing lanes through obstacles and executing reserve obstacles.

Intelligence

11-35. When conducting a delay operation, the commander may not get the most effective use of his intelligence assets. The commander echelons his organic and supporting ISR systems rearward to maintain at least partial coverage of the AO during the delay. This increases his need to ensure the effective management of collection assets. However, he must rely on a downward flow of intelligence and combat information, such as unmanned aerial vehicle and joint surveillance target attack radar system data, from higher echelons to make up for the degradation in collection capabilities that occurs when systems displace.

11-36. Initially, intelligence assets attempt to determine if the enemy recognizes the delay. Subsequently, the focus is on how the enemy reacts to the delay. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems monitor and predict enemy attempts to envelop the flanks or strike the rear of the rearward-moving friendly force. They also focus on actions of any enemy airborne, air assault, and attack aviation units that may try to interdict the movement of the friendly force. The delaying commander must detect the enemy's advance early to adjust his maneuver scheme and concentrate sufficient combat power to effectively delay the enemy.

Maneuver

11-37. A delay is one of the most difficult forms of defensive operations to execute. The primary reason is that the delaying force must engage the enemy sufficiently to slow his movement, yet not become decisively engaged. Also, the delaying unit must maintain continuous coordination with any flank units as it displaces rearward.

11-38. There are many similarities in the tactics and techniques of a mobile defense and a delay. However, units conducting a delay normally do not become decisively engaged except to prevent the enemy from prematurely crossing a delay line or to risk a part of the force to prevent the whole delaying force from being jeopardized.

11-39. Heavy forces—armor, mechanized infantry, and armored cavalry elements supported by indirect fires—are highly suitable for delay operations in most terrain. Their organic firepower allows them to engage the enemy effectively at long ranges, and their mobility allows them to move quickly between successive positions or to a flank. Their vehicles provide protection that simplifies battlefield movement. These same characteristics also allow heavy reserve forces to rapidly launch counterattacks to extract delaying forces from untenable situations.

11-40. Light forces are especially suited to conduct delays in broken, close, and built-up terrain. They take advantage of such terrain, reinforced by the extensive use of situational obstacles, to hinder the mobility of enemy combat systems and supporting tactical vehicles. They can also participate in stay-behind operations. (See paragraphs 11-118 to 11-122.) This type of terrain offers cover for the movement of light forces and favors using ambushes against the enemy. Because of the restrictions on organic motorized transportation assets and the limited protection available to light infantry units, the commander must specifically plan for their displacement. While all light forces can move rapidly by air, a delay offers little opportunity for airborne forces to use their unique capability.

11-41. The commander may employ air assault forces in a manner similar to that of other light infantry units in a delay. However, they possess additional useful capabilities in a delay operation. They can rapidly deploy, redeploy, and disperse in open terrain if the weather is suitable and the necessary landing zones and pickup zones exist. The combination of light infantry, attack helicopters, and fire support systems found in air assault units allows the delaying commander to rapidly concentrate combat power at key locations to attrit the enemy through repeated ambushes. The combined arms nature of air assault units also makes them extremely useful for conducting security and reserve operations over large geographical areas against heavy and light enemy forces. However, their extraction is a high-risk activity when pressured by a heavy enemy or in the presence of a significant air defense threat.

11-42. The mobility, lethality, and long range of attack aviation firepower make it invaluable to the force conducting a delay. The commander can also use them to conduct counterattacks and spoiling attacks as part of his combined arms team. Other uses of Army aviation in a delay include the rapid rearward movement of CSS assets, the deployment of light forces, and reconnaissance.

Command and Control

11-43. Centralized planning and decentralized execution characterize command and control in a delay operation. Communications are essential to the success of this type of operation, and the commander ensures that redundancy is built into his communications architecture. Digital command and

control systems help ensure that redundancy through the promulgation of a common operating picture and a distributed database. This allows one CP to temporarily assume the duties of another CP if the latter is destroyed.

11-44. The echelon rear CP is normally the first CP within an echelon to displace during a delay. It displaces by echelon with other CSS assets. The echelon main CP controls the movement of forces not in contact. It displaces by echelon with the main body. The echelon tactical CP usually remains forward to control and support forces in contact.

MOBILITY/COUNTERMOBILITY/SURVIVABILITY

11-45. Normally, countermobility is the most important engineer task, unless the delaying force must cross one or more major obstacles, in which case the major engineer task is mobility, specifically breach operations. The commander must set realistic and specific priorities for the engineer effort. He monitors its progress to prevent it from dissipating throughout the area. The commander employs his engineers in depth. This is crucial when the commander conducts noncontiguous operations or when the enemy attacks deep into the rear area of a force conducting contiguous operations, or when the enemy has the ability to employ weapons of mass destruction. The maneuver element provides security for the engineers so that they can concentrate their efforts on engineer tasks.

11-46. Because of the importance of mobility and countermobility tasks, a unit conducting a delay probably has few engineer assets to devote to the survivability function. Units should maximize the use of smoke when and where weather conditions allow to provide concealment for movement and assembly. Smoke curtains, blankets, and haze may protect withdrawing columns, critical points, and routes. The commander takes precautions to ensure that the smoke does not provide a screen for the enemy's advance. (See FM 3-11.50.)

PREPARE

11-47. The defensive preparations outlined in Chapter 8 also apply when conducting a delay. As always, resources—including the time available—determine the extent of preparations. The commander assigns a high priority to reconnaissance. Additionally, the preparation of subsequent positions receives a higher priority than it does in either a mobile or an area defense. It is not always possible to complete all preparations before starting the delay operation. Consequently, delaying units continue to prepare and adapt plans as the situation develops.

11-48. In the delay, the commander uses BPs in a manner similar to the defense. However, when organizing his BPs, he places more emphasis on width than depth, as well as reconnaissance and preparing routes for displacement. Within each BP, most of the available firepower is oriented toward the expected enemy avenue of approach. However, the commander must provide adequate flank and rear security since the delaying unit must furnish its own security. Each crew and squad should be familiar with the routes from its primary positions to alternate, supplementary, and sequential positions. In preparing a BP, the commander conducting a delay places less emphasis on installing protective obstacles, final protective fires (FPFs), and ammunition

stockpiling than he would in either an area or a mobile defense. In a delay, BPs are sometimes referred to as delay positions.

EXECUTE

11-49. The complex nature of a delay requires the subordinate elements of a delaying force to execute different yet complementary actions. In a single delaying operation, attacks, area defenses, mobile defenses, and other actions may occur in any sequence or simultaneously. For example, the commander may elect to assign one delaying element the task of holding a key road intersection for a period of time so a reserve force can strike the enemy's flank. Therefore, the enemy must deploy into a hasty defense, which delays his attack.

11-50. The commander deploys his security force well forward of his initial delay position to give early warning of any enemy approach. When the security force detects and reports an approach, the commander reconciles these reports against his decision support and event templates to confirm the enemy's probable course of action. Based on his interpretation of how the battle will unfold, the commander can direct one subordinate element to maneuver in a manner designed to draw the advancing enemy into a position of disadvantage.

11-51. The security force fixes, defeats, and destroys the enemy's reconnaissance and security elements without risking decisive engagement. It directs fires at the approaching enemy force as far forward of the delay positions as possible. Engaging a moving enemy at long ranges tends to inflict far more casualties on him than he can inflict on the delaying force; it also slows his tempo of operations. The more a delaying force can blind an enemy and eliminate his reconnaissance assets, the more likely he is to hesitate and move with caution.

11-52. Once the security force makes contact with the enemy, it maintains contact. As the enemy approaches, it moves by bounds back to the flanks of the defending units, keeping the enemy under constant observation. This helps prevent the enemy from finding gaps between delaying units and attacking the exposed flanks of delaying units. The security force uses covered, concealed, and coordinated routes to avoid enemy and friendly fires.

11-53. Recovering security assets may be more difficult if the security force needs to pass through the range fan of friendly tanks and other direct-fire weapons in their movement. Recovery should be to the flanks of delay positions and not through EAs and TRPs unless necessary. Security forces should move so that they do not reveal the locations of other friendly elements.

11-54. The main body uses a variety of tactics to execute the delay. These include ambushes, counterattacks, spoiling attacks, artillery raids, jamming, and close air support. The commander of the delay force preserves his freedom to maneuver by engaging the enemy with sufficient force to temporarily stop his advance. The delay force uses obstacles and defensive positions in depth to slow and canalize the enemy and exploit the mobility of its combat systems to confuse and defeat the enemy. Once a delay starts, units displace rapidly between positions. Whenever possible, the commander grasps any fleeting opportunity to seize the initiative, even if only temporarily. By

aggressively contesting the enemy's initiative through offensive action, the delaying force avoids passive patterns that favor the attacking enemy. The delaying force may conduct strong counterattacks from unexpected directions to temporarily confuse the enemy commander. Attacking an enemy throws him off stride, disorganizes his forces, confuses his picture of the fight, and helps prolong the delay. In turn, this confusion may affect the enemy's tempo and momentum. It also affects the movement of enemy reserves and other follow-on forces. However, the delaying force seeks to avoid decisive engagement.

11-55. In a delay, the commander uses his fire support assets to delay enemy forces, inflict casualties on them, and assist the friendly force to gain a mobility advantage over them. Indirect fires continue throughout the delay. The effects of the commander's fire support assets can disrupt the enemy's follow-on forces and restrict the immediate battle to his committed forces. Close air support and attack helicopters can engage enemy forces before they come within range of the supporting field artillery systems. The commander should weigh the effects required, however, since attack aviation is a limited resource and CAS aircraft are a fleeting resource. Massing of fires, to include the killing power of the unit in contact, should be the objective. However, this should not delay integration of CAS aircraft, given limited loiter times.

11-56. Artillery and mortar systems support the direct-fire fight to prevent the enemy from conducting a combined arms attack on the delay position. As the enemy encounters each situational obstacle, he is engaged by these fire support systems. These fires should cause enemy armored forces to button up and slow down. Artillery and mortar systems can use fires to separate enemy formations by striking the enemy when he concentrates near choke points and in EAs. Integrating fires and obstacles makes it difficult for the enemy to traverse EAs. The delaying force breaks the enemy's momentum by forcing him to deploy and by inflicting casualties. Fires assist delaying forces by—

- Assisting in disengaging maneuver forces.
- Suppressing the enemy.
- Degrading the enemy's ability to move and communicate.
- Obscuring the enemy's overwatching support by fire positions and degrading his ISR and target acquisition systems.
- Reinforcing or closing breaches or lanes in obstacles.
- Executing FPFs.
- Screening friendly displacements and disengagements by using smoke. (This also degrades the enemy's terminal guidance of his precision-guided munitions.)
- Destroying high-payoff targets.
- Supporting limited counterattacks.

11-57. As the enemy approaches the delay position, he crosses one or more trigger lines and moves into EAs within the range of the delaying force's anti-armor missiles, tank cannons, and small arms. The commander holds his direct fire until the enemy is positioned where the fire plan and scheme of maneuver require their use. He controls these fires from the delaying force in the same manner as in any defensive operation. The more damage the delaying force can inflict on the enemy, the longer it can stay in position.

11-58. As the enemy presses his attack and attempts to maneuver against the delaying force, the commander constantly assesses the action to guide the displacements of the delay force to anticipate possible decisive engagement while accomplishing the delay mission. When the enemy begins to think he is successfully maneuvering against a friendly position, he is engaged by indirect fires while the delaying force disappears behind a cloud of smoke, dust, and exploding munitions. Intense FPFs and fires aimed at and behind recently evacuated friendly delay positions allow the delaying force to disengage from an attacking enemy.

11-59. Division and brigade commanders generally decentralize execution of a delay to battalion and lower levels. Those senior commanders must rely on their subordinates to execute the mission and request help when needed. The commander establishes the acceptable risk and displacement criteria. Subordinates displace once they meet the previously established delay criteria. This displacement may be a preplanned event or time dependent. The senior commander monitors the delay and intervenes when the displacement of one unit threatens the survival of another.

11-60. The delaying force relies heavily on artillery fires and air support to suppress the enemy so the force can disengage, move, and occupy new positions. If a subordinate element cannot maintain separation from the enemy, the commander can shift additional combat multipliers and other resources to that particular AO to counter the enemy's unplanned success. As one subordinate element displaces, the delaying commander may order other subordinate elements to change their orientation to cover the move. Each displacing element travels along its designated route, using reserve demolitions as required and requesting additional fire support if the enemy is able to maintain contact.

11-61. Passing through obstacle lanes during displacement between positions poses significant risks to the delaying force. The unit passing through a linear obstacle becomes more vulnerable to enemy attack because of the danger of the delaying force becoming congested on the far side of the obstacle. Obstacle lanes also increase the amount of time required for a passing unit to transit through a given area. The commander must attempt to prevent the enemy from engaging the passing unit until it can redeploy into a tactical formation.

11-62. The commander retains his reserve for the decisive moment. As with aviation, the reserve should not be committed early in the delay unless its integrity is threatened. Typically, the commander commits his reserve to help a unit disengage and regain its ability to maneuver or to prevent the enemy from exploiting an advantage. The reserve normally uses a support-by-fire position for this task. If the reserve is committed early, the commander's ability to influence the battle is greatly reduced unless he can reconstitute a new reserve. It is possible to commit the reserve several times throughout the battle, but only when it can be extracted, redesignated, or otherwise reconstituted quickly.

11-63. In the delay, the force's CSS elements should be located outside of enemy artillery range but be able to provide adequate support. Artillery ammunition stocks must be capable of sustaining the quantity of fire support required in the delay. Maintenance operations focus on evacuating rather than

returning damaged vehicles to combat. Unless vehicles can be fixed quickly on the spot, the unit should evacuate them to the rear area because vehicles left behind must be destroyed to prevent their capture.

TERMINATION OF A DELAY

11-64. A delay operation terminates when the delaying force conducts a rearward passage of lines through a defending force, the delaying force reaches defensible terrain and transitions to the defense, the advancing enemy force reaches a culminating point, or the delaying force goes on the offense after being reinforced. If the advancing enemy force reaches a culmination point, the delaying force may maintain contact in current positions, withdraw to perform another mission, or transition to the offense. In all cases, the senior commander must plan for the expected outcome of the delay executed by a subordinate. If he expects a friendly counterattack, he plans for the forward passage of the counterattack force, husband resources to ensure relative combat superiority, and provides for the smooth handoff of appropriate AOs.

WITHDRAWAL

11-65. A *withdrawal*, a form of retrograde, is a planned operation in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force (FM 3-0). The commander may or may not conduct a withdrawal under enemy pressure. Subordinate units may withdraw without the entire force withdrawing. A unit conducts a withdrawal for a variety of reasons, which are listed at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, a withdrawal may precede a retirement operation.

11-66. Although the commander avoids withdrawing from action under enemy pressure, it is not always possible. He may conduct a withdrawal when the situation requires rapid action to save the command from disaster. This usually occurs after a tactical reverse or after a unit reaches its culminating point. When an aggressive enemy becomes aware of a friendly force's withdrawal or its intention to withdraw, he attempts to exploit the withdrawal, using all his capabilities to try to turn the withdrawal into a rout. He may have ground and air superiority and continuously attempt to pursue, encircle, and destroy the withdrawing force. He will try to use a combination of direct pressure and enveloping forces and fires to isolate the withdrawing friendly force for later destruction.

11-67. Withdrawals are inherently dangerous because they involve moving units to the rear and away from what is usually a stronger enemy force. The heavier the previous fighting and the closer the contact with the enemy, the more difficult the withdrawal. Operations security (OPSEC) is extremely important. A unit usually confines its rearward movement to times and conditions when the enemy cannot observe the activity, so that he cannot easily detect the operation. To help preserve secrecy and freedom of action, for example, the commander must consider visibility conditions and times when enemy reconnaissance satellites can observe friendly movements. Operations security is especially critical during the initial stages of a delay when the majority of CS and CSS elements displace.

11-68. A unit withdraws to an assembly area or a new defensive position. Alternatively, it can withdraw indirectly to either area through one or more

intermediate positions. When preparing the new position, the commander balances the need for security with the need to get an early start on the defensive effort.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

11-69. The commander typically organizes his withdrawing unit into a security force, a main body, and a reserve. He also organizes a detachment left in contact (DLIC) and stay-behind forces if required by his scheme of maneuver. He avoids changing task organization unless his subordinates have sufficient planning time. However, circumstances may dictate rapid task organization changes immediately before the withdrawal, such as when the unit must conduct an immediate withdrawal to prevent encirclement.

11-70. The security force maintains contact with the enemy until ordered to disengage or until another force takes over. It simulates the continued presence of the main body, which requires additional allocation of combat multipliers beyond those normally allocated to a force of its size. The greater its mobility and range advantages over the enemy, the easier for the security force to successfully cover the main body's withdrawal. The commander organizes the majority of available combat power to the security force as a rear guard or a rear-covering force; the most probable threat to a withdrawing force is a pursuing enemy. However, the commander must maintain all-around security of the withdrawing force. When the enemy can infiltrate or insert forces ahead of the withdrawing force, the commander may establish an advance guard to clear the route or AO. He designates a flank guard or screen, if required.

11-71. When a security zone exists between the two main opposing forces, the existing security force can transition on order to a rear guard or rear-covering force. It then conducts delay operations until ordered to disengage and break contact with the enemy. When the withdrawing force is in close contact with the enemy, a security zone does not normally exist. Withdrawals under these conditions require that security forces adopt different techniques. One technique is to establish a DLIC to provide a way to sequentially break contact with the enemy.

11-72. A *detachment left in contact* is an element left in contact as part of the previously designated (usually rear) security force while the main body conducts its withdrawal. Its primary purpose is to remain behind to deceive the enemy into believing the parent unit is still in position while the majority of the unit withdraws. It simulates—as nearly as possible—the continued presence of the main body until it is too late for the enemy to react by conducting activities, such as electronic transmissions or attacks. The DLIC must have specific instructions about what to do when the enemy attacks and when and under what circumstances to delay or withdraw. If the DLIC must disengage from the enemy, it uses the same techniques as in the delay. If required, this detachment receives additional recovery, evacuation, and transportation assets to use after disengagement to speed its rearward movement.

11-73. Two methods to resource the DLIC exist. The first is for each major subordinate element of the withdrawing force to leave a subelement in place.

For example, in a brigade withdrawal, each task force leaves a company team in contact. Typically, these teams fall under a senior DLIC commander designated by the brigade commander. Alternatively, one major subordinate command of the withdrawing force can stay behind as the DLIC. For example, a brigade could leave one battalion task force as the DLIC, which then expands its security responsibilities to cover the width of the AO. (See Figure 11-7.)

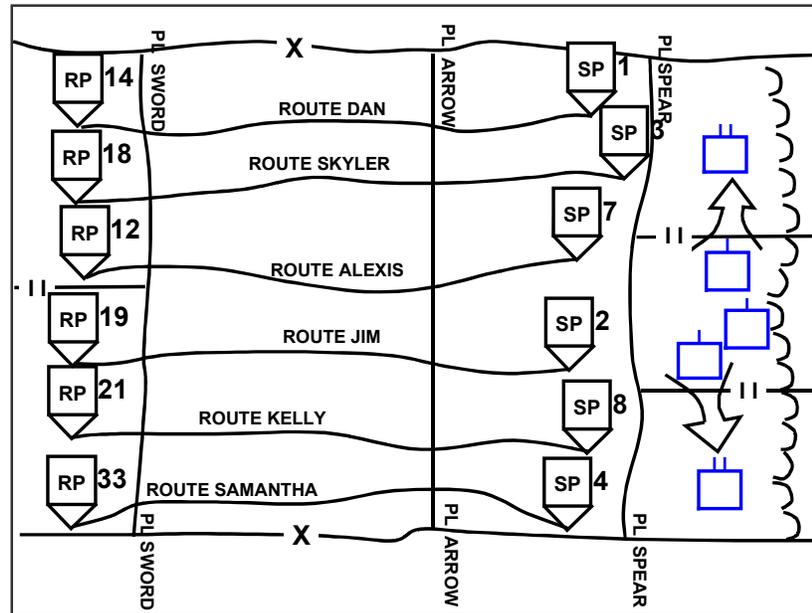


Figure 11-7. Detachment Left in Contact

11-74. Often when a DLIC is used, the commander creates an additional security force behind the existing main defensive positions to assist in the withdrawal process. The commander can create an additional force from the withdrawing unit or from an assisting unit. The DLIC can delay to this additional security force and join it, or delay back, conduct battle handover, and then conduct a rearward passage of lines. In either case, the additional security force becomes the rear guard.

11-75. The main body of the withdrawing force consists of all elements remaining after the commander resources his security force and his reserve. He generally finds it difficult to resource a reserve, but he makes every attempt to do so. When the complete formation withdraws under pressure, the reserve may take limited offensive action, such as spoiling attacks, to disorganize, disrupt, and delay the enemy. It can counter penetrations between positions, reinforce threatened areas, and protect withdrawal routes. Reserves may also extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces.

CONTROL MEASURES

11-76. Withdrawing forces must apply combat power to protect themselves while simultaneously moving combat power away from the enemy. This

requires careful coordination among all forces. Throughout the operation, the commander must tightly control rearward movement and maintain the ability to generate decisive combat power at key times and places. As shown in Figure 11-8, the control measures used in the withdrawal are the same as those in a delay or a defense. The routes used by each unit in the withdrawal and the block movement times are also withdrawal control measures.

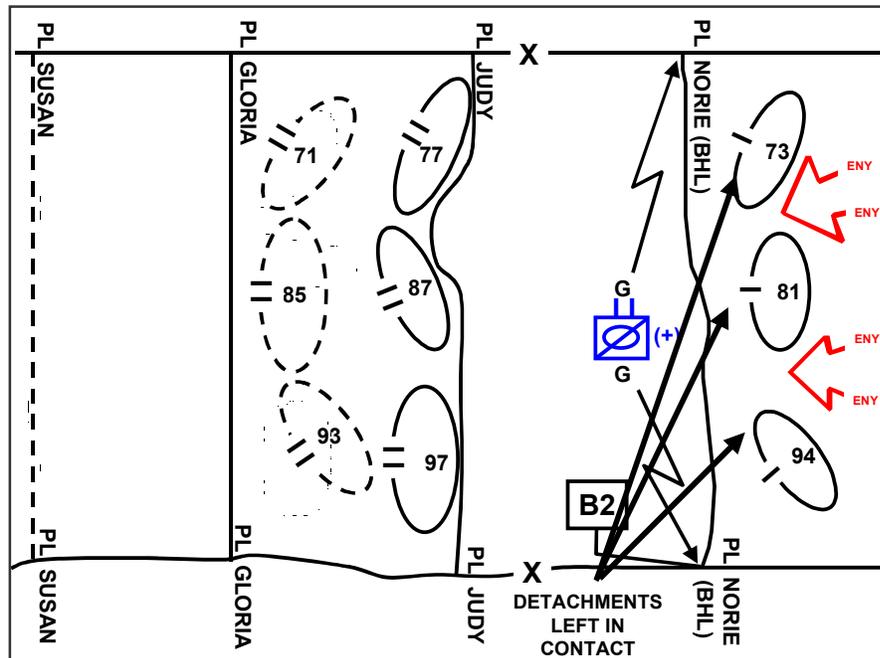


Figure 11-8. Withdrawal Control Measures

PLANNING A WITHDRAWAL

11-77. The commander plans and coordinates a withdrawal in the same manner as a delay. Some factors of METT-TC apply differently because of the differences between a delay and a withdrawal. A withdrawal always begins under the threat of enemy interference. Because the force is most vulnerable if the enemy attacks, the commander always plans for a withdrawal under pressure. He then develops contingencies for a withdrawal without pressure. In both cases, the commander's main considerations are to—

- Plan a deliberate break from the enemy.
- Displace the main body rapidly, free of enemy interference.
- Safeguard the withdrawal routes.
- Retain sufficient combat, CS, and CSS capabilities throughout the operation to support forces in contact with the enemy.

11-78. A withdrawal may be assisted or unassisted. It may or may not take place under enemy pressure. These two factors combined produces the four variations shown in Figure 11-9, page 11-22. That figure also depicts the tactical mission graphic for a withdrawal and a withdrawal under enemy pressure. The withdrawal plan considers which variation the force currently faces. Each variation requires a different blend of the three retrograde options.

11-79. A commander prefers to conduct a withdrawal while not under pressure and without assistance. Actions by the enemy, as well as the additional coordination needed because of the presence of an assisting unit, complicate the operation.

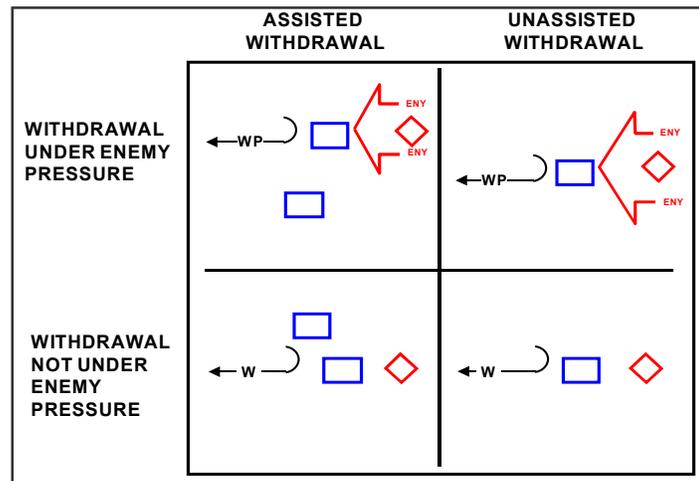


Figure 11-9. Types of Withdrawals

11-80. A withdrawing force can

receive assistance from another force in the form of—

- Additional security for the area through which the withdrawing force will pass.
- Information concerning withdrawal routes.
- Forces to secure choke points or key terrain along withdrawal routes.
- Elements to assist in movement control, such as traffic control points.
- Required combat, CS, and CSS, which can involve conducting a counterattack to assist the withdrawing unit in disengaging from the enemy.

11-81. In a withdrawal under enemy pressure, all units withdraw simultaneously when available routes allow, using delaying tactics to fight their way to the rear. In the usual case, when simultaneous withdrawal of all forces is not practical, the commander decides the order of withdrawal. Several factors influence his decision:

- Subsequent missions.
- Availability of transportation assets and routes.
- Disposition of friendly and enemy forces.
- Level and nature of enemy pressure.
- Degree of urgency associated with the withdrawal.

The commander must make three interrelated key decisions: when to start the movement of selected CS and CSS elements, when forward elements should start thinning out, and when the security force should start its disengagement operations. The commander avoids premature actions that lead the enemy to believe a withdrawal is being contemplated. Commanders must anticipate enemy means of interference and plan for employing security forces, attack helicopters, and close air support.

11-82. The commander conducting a withdrawal without enemy pressure can plan when to begin the withdrawal. He has the option of taking calculated risks to increase the displacement capabilities of his force. For example, he may order the main body to conduct a tactical road march instead of moving

in tactical formations. The commander can plan for stay-behind forces as part of the operation. (The stay-behind operations starts on page [11-30](#).)

PREPARING A WITHDRAWAL

11-83. Before withdrawing, the main body dispatches quartering parties to help it occupy the new position. (Chapter 14 details the responsibilities of a quartering party.)

11-84. In an unassisted withdrawal, the withdrawing unit establishes its own security force and reserve. It reconnoiters and secures the routes it will use in its rearward movement while sustaining itself during the withdrawal. The withdrawing unit must disengage from the enemy.

11-85. By concealing supplies along movement routes, CSS operators can simplify support requirements and reduce the enemy's ability to interfere with logistics operations. This allows CSS units to withdraw earlier than they otherwise could. The commander carefully considers whether to place his supplies in caches. Once cached, supplies are difficult to recover if the operation does not go as planned. Other than medical items, the unit evacuates or destroys all supplies to prevent their capture. The commander establishes his destruction criteria, which is time- or event-driven for each class of supply.

EXECUTING A WITHDRAWAL

11-86. Typically, when under enemy pressure, the less heavily engaged elements of the withdrawing force withdraw first. The more heavily engaged units generally withdraw under the cover of a security force using support provided by available fire support and electronic warfare assets. They take advantage of obstacles to assist in breaking contact with the enemy. The commander conducts night movements and uses obscuration smoke to screen friendly movement while reducing both the accuracy of enemy direct-fire systems and his ability to visually observe friendly movements. The security force continues to use alternate and successive positions until the entire force breaks contact with the enemy.

11-87. The security force may remain in position and maintain a deception. The main body moves rearward to intermediate or final positions as rapidly as possible. After the main body withdraws a safe distance, the security force begins its rearward movement. Once the security force begins moving, it assumes the duties of a rear guard. Even if the enemy does not pursue the withdrawing force, the security force continues to act as the rear guard unless the commander assigns that mission to another element. However, if not pursued by the enemy, the security force may remain in a march column. ([Chapter 14](#) provides a definition of a march column.)

11-88. On order, the main body moves rapidly on multiple routes to reconnoitered positions. It may occupy a series of intermediate positions before completing the withdrawal. Usually CS and CSS units, along with their convoy escorts, move first and precede combat units in the withdrawal movement formation. The commander needs to maintain the disciplined use of routes during a withdrawal. Despite confusion and enemy pressure, subordinate units must follow specified routes and movement times.

11-89. When the main body withdraws, its reserve remains well forward to assist the security force and other units by fire and counterattack. The reserve can launch spoiling attacks to disorganize and delay the enemy and extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces.

11-90. If the security force and the reserve cannot prevent the enemy from closing on the main body, the commander must commit some or all of the main body to prevent the enemy from further interfering with the withdrawal. The main body delays or defends if the security force fails to slow the enemy. In this event, the withdrawal resumes at the earliest possible time. If the enemy blocks movement to the rear, the commander shifts to alternate routes to bypass the interdicted area. Alternatively, he can attack through the enemy.

TERMINATING A WITHDRAWAL

11-91. Once the withdrawing force successfully disengages from the enemy, it has two options. It can rejoin the overall defense under more favorable conditions or transition into a retirement and continue its movement away from the enemy and toward its next mission.

RETIREMENT

11-92. A *retirement* is a form of retrograde in which a force out of contact with the enemy moves away from the enemy (JP 1-02). Figure 11-10, page 11-24 shows the tactical mission graphic for a retirement. A retiring unit organizes for combat but does not anticipate interference by enemy ground forces. Typically, another unit's security force covers the movement of one formation as the unit conducts a retirement. However, mobile enemy forces, unconventional forces, air strikes, air assaults, or long-range fires may attempt to interdict the retiring unit. The commander must plan for enemy actions and organize the unit to fight in self-defense. The commander usually

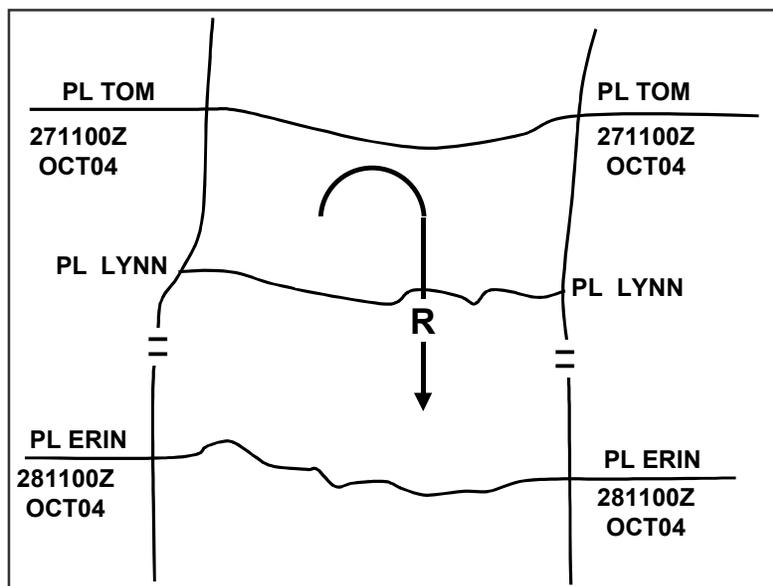


Figure 11-10. Retirement Tactical Mission Graphic

conducts retirement operations to reposition his forces for future operations or to accommodate the current concept of the operation.

11-93. When a withdrawal from action precedes a retirement, the actual retirement begins after the unit breaks contact and organizes into its march formation organization. (While a force withdrawing without enemy pressure can also use march columns, the difference between the two situations is the probability of enemy interference.) Units conduct retirements as tactical road marches where security and speed are the most important considerations.

11-94. The retiring unit generally moves toward an assembly area, which should support the preparations for the unit's next mission. When determining the routes the retiring force takes to the assembly area, the commander considers the unit's capability to support defensive actions if combat occurs during the retirement.

11-95. The initial action in a retirement is to move CSS units and supplies to the rear. At the designated time, the retiring unit executes a withdrawal from action and forms into a march formation. The unit can first move into an assembly area if this step is necessary before moving into a march formation to reestablish command and control or resupply. Once it forms a march formation, the force is prepared to initiate the retirement. During the initial phase, the force retires in multiple small columns. As the distance from the enemy increases, smaller columns can consolidate into larger ones for ease of movement control. Road nets and the potential for hostile interference influence how and when this consolidation occurs.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

11-96. The commander normally designates security elements and a main body in a retirement. (See Figure 11-11.) The formation and number of columns employed during a retirement depend on the number of available routes and the potential for enemy interference. The commander typically wants to move his major elements to the rear simultaneously. However, a

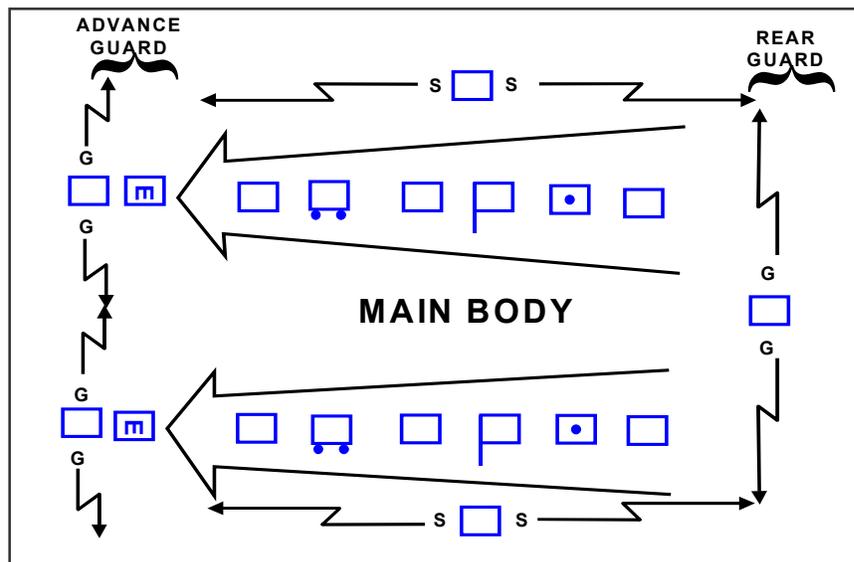


Figure 11-11. Organization of Forces for a Retirement Operation

limited road net or a flank threat may require echelonment of the movement in terms of time and ground locations.

11-97. The terrain and the enemy threat dictate whether the retiring force establishes a single rear security force, which is usually a rear guard, or whether each column forms a separate rear security force. These security forces protect the rearward moving columns from surprise, harassment, and attack by any pursuing enemy force. Their size and composition depend on the strength and imminence of the enemy threat. These security elements generally remain in march columns unless there is a potential for enemy interference. If the enemy establishes contact, the rear security element conducts a delay.

11-98. The retiring march columns normally require an advance guard augmented by engineers. The commander assigns a flank security element to prevent potential enemy interference with the retiring force's extended columns. The commander may designate flank security responsibilities to subordinate march units.

11-99. The main body organizes in a manner opposite that of an approach march. (Chapter 14 explains the approach march.) The movement of CS and CSS units should precede the movement of combat forces. When necessary, elements of the main body can reinforce the rear guard or any other security element. Because fire support elements and attack helicopter elements of the main body can respond most rapidly, they are usually the first elements tasked for this mission.

CONTROL MEASURES

11-100. The control measures used in a retirement are the same as those in a delay and a withdrawal. As in a withdrawal, thorough planning and strict adherence to routes and movement times facilitate an orderly retirement. Typically, the commander controls movement using movement times, routes, and checkpoints. (Chapter 14 discusses movement control measures.)

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

11-101. During retrograde operations, CSS units echelon their movements to maintain adequate support to the committed force. They maintain maximum dispersion consistent with control and local security. Their goal is to provide uninterrupted support and maximum protection during the time it takes to conduct the retrograde operation. By echeloning support, the commander reduces the amount of time each CSS unit spends moving, preventing it from performing its primary support tasks. High-priority assets may require added protection to prevent their loss or capture. To reduce congestion and interference with the operations of combat and combat support units, the commander should displace his CSS assets as early as possible, normally in an environment that provides the enemy limited visibility. The early displacement of CSS units can also prevent revealing friendly future operations to the enemy.

11-102. The commander anticipates the effects of retrograde movements on logistics support to ensure adequate support for the operation and the prompt evacuation of casualties. Retrograde movements generally result in increased distances between CSS and combat units, which makes providing this

support more difficult. Executing retrograde operations generally requires more Class III, and possibly more Class V, supplies than other types of defensive operations. These supplies must be available for emergency issue. These two factors combine to increase the demand for transportation assets and the allocation of space on main supply routes. This, in turn, increases the need for movement management and pre-positioned services and supplies. Combat service support units carry and cache necessary fuel and ammunition stocks as required by the specific situation.

11-103. The logistics support provided must be mobile to cope with demands of the fluid tactical situation that typically occurs during a retrograde operation. The commander prevents unnecessary supplies from accumulating in areas that will be abandoned. Only essential medical and logistics support should be located in the area involved in the retrograde operation.

11-104. The commander establishes his maintenance, recovery, and evacuation priorities and his destruction criteria for inoperable equipment in paragraph 4 of the operations order. Maintenance requirements generally overwhelm the organic capabilities of forward units during a retrograde operation. Forward units place as much maintenance, recovery, and evacuation assets forward as possible to augment or relieve combat elements of the burden of repairing unserviceable equipment. Recovery and evacuation vehicles position themselves at critical locations to keep disabled vehicles from blocking movement routes. Forward units evacuate systems that cannot be repaired within established timelines, using all available means, such as equipment transporters and armored vehicles with inoperative weapon systems. When recovery and evacuation are impossible, units destroy inoperable equipment to prevent capture. When possible, units destroy the same vital components in each type of system to prevent the enemy from rapidly exploiting captured friendly systems through battlefield cannibalization.

11-105. The commander assigns transportation priorities to the movement of combat troops and their supplies, the movement of obstacle materials to impede the enemy, and the evacuation of casualties and repairable equipment. He keeps his main supply routes open and decontaminated as necessary. Units control the back-haul of transportation assets before the retrograde begins, reducing the amount of transportation needed to support the operation.

11-106. Generally, the commander prefers to use many separate supply routes rather than just a few main supply routes. Some routes remain open for traffic moving to the front while the bulk of CS and CSS units displace farther rearward. Routes reserved for evacuating displaced civilians avoid crossing or otherwise interfering with the unit's main supply routes to the maximum extent possible.

11-107. The commander bases his medical evacuation priorities on the availability of transportation assets and the results of casualty triage by medical personnel. Medical elements supporting the retrograding force must provide rapid evacuation of casualties to medical facilities. Medical evacuation requirements are especially demanding in the large AOs common to the retrograde. The commander should consider augmenting the ground ambulance capabilities of his forward medical units.

11-108. Military police elements of the retrograde force are involved primarily in battlefield circulation control to ensure smooth traffic flow. The commander may augment his military police force to establish traffic control points and route and convoy security. They also help control dislocated civilians and enemy prisoners of war.

UNIQUE RETROGRADE SITUATIONS

11-109. Conditions that require conducting denial and stay-behind operations can arise during retrograde operations. These two operations have their own unique planning and execution considerations.

DENIAL OPERATIONS

11-110. **Denial operations are actions to hinder or deny the enemy the use of space, personnel, supplies, or facilities.** It may include destroying, removing, and contaminating those supplies and facilities or erecting obstacles. It is inevitable that, on occasion, an enemy will be in a position to capture friendly equipment and supplies. This situation often occurs during retrograde or defensive operations. As a result, the defending commander may be required to conduct denial operations. The principles of denial are:

- The commander should deny his enemy the use of military equipment and supplies.
- Steps taken to deny equipment and supplies to the enemy should, if possible, not preclude their later use by friendly forces.
- The commander orders the destruction of military equipment and supplies only when friendly forces cannot prevent them from falling into enemy hands.
- The user is responsible for denying the enemy the use of its military equipment and supplies by means of its destruction, removal, or contamination.
- Deliberately destroying medical equipment and supplies and making food and water unfit for consumption is unlawful under the terms of the Geneva Conventions.

In denial operations, the definition of a unit's military equipment and supplies could expand to include military installations and any civilian equipment and supplies used by the friendly force. Under the law of war the destruction of civilian property is only permitted where required by immediate military necessity. The determination of whether there is sufficient necessity to justify destruction is a complex analysis that requires consideration of moral, political, and legal considerations.

11-111. The commander who orders the denial operation must consider the potential value of the military equipment and supplies to an enemy when determining the priorities and the extent of the denial operation. Examples of high priorities for denial include—

- Classified equipment, material, and documents.
- POL.
- Sophisticated weapon systems or electronic equipment.
- Heavy weapons and associated ammunition.

- Communications equipment.
- Ferrying and bridging equipment.
- Air, sea, and land transport systems.

Of lesser priority for denial would be any other military supplies, equipment, or facilities that may be of use to an enemy.

11-112. The commander must issue detailed instructions to deny military equipment and supplies to prevent the enemy from directly using such assets. Denial must also prevent an enemy from repairing a system through the cannibalization of several systems. The unit must destroy the same parts in each type of system.

11-113. Denial differs from countermobility operations because the commander designs denial operations to deprive the enemy of some or all of the short-term benefits of capturing a geographical region. The impact of denial operations on civilian inhabitants and the environment of the region act as a moral and a legal restraint on their use and scope by US forces. The commander should involve his staff judge advocate and civil-military operations officer in planning denial operations.

11-114. The commander ensures that executing the denial plan does not adversely affect his future operations. This includes carefully considering the force's demolition policy in relation to the purpose of the rearward movement and the contemplated subsequent actions of the force. Widespread demolitions during a retrograde may become a greater hindrance to a friendly force moving back into the area than to the enemy during the friendly retrograde. For example, destroying the transportation infrastructure increases friendly logistics difficulties once the area is recaptured. Removing or destroying militarily significant supplies and equipment, such as fuel, obstacle materials, and rail cars, from an area requires the friendly force to bring similar assets with them when they reoccupy the area.

11-115. The commander can expand a denial operation to prevent the enemy from exploiting resources, such as fuel, minerals, and the indigenous population; routes of communication, such as river locks, railroad switching yards, road interchanges, and bridges; and facilities, such as telephone exchanges, radio and television stations, and the industrial plants of a region. The defending force can assist civil authorities in evacuating the civilian population. The defending force either removes the resources, supplies, and facilities from the geographical area being abandoned to the enemy or destroys them in place. Such denial operations may be either total or limited in nature.

11-116. Total denial operations can produce long-term political, economic, military, and environmental effects. Total denial operations have operational-level, and possibly strategic-level, impact. Total denial operations consume large quantities of transportation and engineer resources and require considerable time to plan and execute.

11-117. Limited or partial denial operations are particularly suitable if the defending force expects to regain control of the geographical area within a short time. The removal or destruction of only a few key components can reduce a facility to limited utility, yet it allows for the facility's quick restoration of all functions once it is returned to friendly control. American forces

only destroy discrete targets of significant military value. Limited denial operations normally do not affect the advance of properly supported enemy combat formations possessing cross-country mobility. However, they can seriously impede an enemy's road-bound and rail-bound logistics support if executed with skill and imagination according to an overall plan.

STAY-BEHIND OPERATIONS

11-118. A *stay-behind operation* is an operation in which the commander leaves a unit in position to conduct a specified mission while the remainder of his forces withdraw or retire from an area. The force should consist of enough combat, CS, and CSS elements to protect and sustain its fighting capability for the duration of the mission. A stay-behind force may also result from enemy actions that bypass friendly forces.

11-119. The main purpose of a stay-behind force is to destroy, disrupt, and deceive the enemy. This force has a high-risk mission because of the danger that it will be located, encircled, and destroyed by the enemy. Resupply and casualty evacuation are also extremely difficult. A commander considers assigning this mission only after a thorough METT-TC analysis. The stay-behind force attacks enemy combat forces and C2, CS, and CSS elements from unexpected directions. (See Figure 11-12.) These attacks may cause enemy follow-on forces to be more cautious and to slow down to clear possible attack and ambush sites. The stay-behind force may be required to conduct a breakout from encirclement and linkup operations after it completes its mission. (Appendix D discusses the conduct of a breakout from encirclement.)

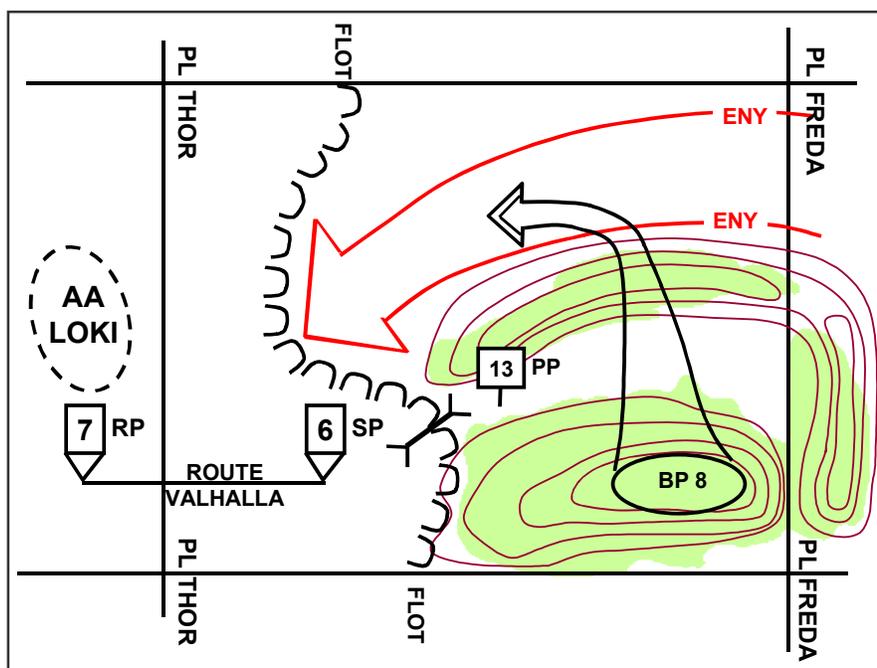


Figure 11-12. Stay-Behind Force

11-120. A light infantry, stay-behind force surprises an enemy by conducting a series of raids and ambushes. The light infantry force can be inserted via infiltration, air assault, or parachute; it can also be a bypassed force. Attacks in the enemy rear area by heavy forces can cover a larger area than attacks by light infantry forces.

11-121. Stay-behind operations eventually require the force to reenter friendly lines or link up with other elements, often in more than one location. The commander must carefully coordinate this reentry to prevent fratricide. The return routes for the stay-behind force must be the best-covered and concealed routes available. Obstacles along these routes that cannot be bypassed should have guarded lanes or gaps.

11-122. A stay-behind operation is not a suicide mission. The commander conducts this operation only when he has confidence that the stay-behind force will rejoin the main body, extract itself in alternative ways, or the main body will fight its way forward to link up with the stay-behind force.

PART FOUR

Tactical Enabling Operations

Chapter 12

Security Operations

The officers and men who permit themselves to be surprised deserve to die, and the commanding general will spare no efforts to secure them their desserts.

D. H. Hill, 1863

Security operations are those operations undertaken by a commander to provide early and accurate warning of enemy operations, to provide the force being protected with time and maneuver space within which to react to the enemy, and to develop the situation to allow the commander to effectively use the protected force. The ultimate goal of security operations is to protect the force from

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surprise and reduce the unknowns in any situation. A commander may conduct security operations to the front, flanks, or rear of his force. The main difference between security operations and reconnaissance operations is that security operations orient on the force or facility being protected, while reconnaissance is enemy and terrain oriented. Security operations are shaping operations.

12-1. There are five forms of security operations—screen, guard, cover, area security, and local security.

- **Screen is a form of security operations that primarily provides early warning to the protected force.**
- **Guard is a form of security operations whose primary task is to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body. Units conducting a guard mission cannot operate independently because they rely upon fires and combat support assets of the main body.**
- **Cover is a form of security operations whose primary task is to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body.**
- **Area security is a form of security operations conducted to protect friendly forces, installations, routes, and actions within a specific area.**
- **Local security consists of low-level security operations conducted near a unit to prevent surprise by the enemy.**

The screen, guard, and cover, respectively, contain increasing levels of combat power and provide increasing levels of security for the main body. However, more combat power in the security force means less for the main body. Area security preserves the commander's freedom to move his reserves, position fire support means, provide for command and control, and conduct sustaining operations. Local security provides immediate protection to his force.

12-2. All maneuver forces are capable of conducting security operations. Ground and air cavalry units and scout platoons are specially trained, equipped, and organized to conduct security missions; however, there are rarely enough of them to meet all the security needs of a force. A commander should ensure that subordinate maneuver units train to perform specific security missions. This allows subordinate units to add these missions to their mission-essential task list (METL) and train for them. Habitual relationships with attachments are required to obtain proficiency in these missions.

12-3. A maneuver force commander normally designates the security area within which his security force operates. In this chapter, the force (or facility) being secured is called the main body. When discussing the forms of security operations, the terms *stationary* and *moving* describe the actions of the main body, not the security force.

12-4. All forces, regardless of whether they are combat, combat support (CS), or combat service support (CSS), have an inherent responsibility to provide for their own local security. Local security consists of observation posts (OPs), local security patrols, perimeter security, and other measures to provide close-in security of a force. This chapter focuses on security operations conducted by one force or a subordinate element of a force that provides security for the larger force. Echelon-specific manuals discuss local security.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SECURITY OPERATIONS

12-5. Successful security operations depend on properly applying five fundamentals:

- Provide early and accurate warning.
- Provide reaction time and maneuver space.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

PROVIDE EARLY AND ACCURATE WARNING

12-6. The security force provides early warning by detecting the enemy force quickly and reporting information accurately to the main body commander. The security force operates at varying distances from the main body based on the factors of METT-TC. As a minimum, it should operate far enough from the main body to prevent enemy ground forces from observing or engaging the main body with direct fires. The earlier the security force detects the enemy, the more time the main body has to assess the changing situation and react. The commander positions ground security and aeroscouts to provide long-range observation of expected enemy avenues of approach, and he reinforces and integrates them with available intelligence collection systems to maximize warning time.

PROVIDE REACTION TIME AND MANEUVER SPACE

12-7. The security force provides the main body with enough reaction time and maneuver space to effectively respond to likely enemy actions by operating at a distance from the main body and by offering resistance to enemy forces. The commander determines the amount of time and space required to effectively respond from information provided by the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process and the main body commander's guidance regarding time to react to enemy courses of action (COA) based on the factors of METT-TC. The security force that operates farthest from the main body and offers more resistance provides more time and space to the main body. It attempts to hinder the enemy's advance by acting within its capabilities and mission constraints.

ORIENT ON THE FORCE OR FACILITY TO BE SECURED

12-8. The security force focuses all its actions on protecting and providing early warning to the secured force or facility. It operates between the main body and known or suspected enemy units. The security force must move as the main body moves and orient on its movement. The security force

commander must know the main body's scheme of maneuver to maneuver his force to remain between the main body and the enemy. The value of terrain occupied by the security force hinges on the protection it provides to the main body commander.

PERFORM CONTINUOUS RECONNAISSANCE

12-9. The security force aggressively and continuously seeks the enemy and reconnoiters key terrain. It conducts active area or zone reconnaissance to detect enemy movement or enemy preparations for action and to learn as much as possible about the terrain. The ultimate goal is to determine the enemy's COA and assist the main body in countering it. Terrain information focuses on its possible use by the enemy or the friendly force, either for offensive or defensive operations. Stationary security forces use combinations of OPs, aviation, patrols, intelligence collection assets, and battle positions (BPs) to perform reconnaissance. Moving security forces perform zone, area, or route reconnaissance along with using OPs and BPs, to accomplish this fundamental.

MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT

12-10. Once the security force makes enemy contact, it does not break contact unless specifically directed by the main force commander. The security asset that first makes contact does not have to maintain that contact if the entire security force maintains contact with the enemy. The security force commander ensures that his subordinate security assets hand off contact with the enemy from one security asset to another in this case. The security force must continuously collect information on the enemy's activities to assist the main body in determining potential and actual enemy COAs and to prevent the enemy from surprising the main body. This requires continuous visual contact, the ability to use direct and indirect fires, freedom to maneuver, and depth in space and time.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

12-11. Military history contains numerous examples of the importance of security operations. The following historical example illustrates the major role of security operations in ensuring the success of an operation. This non-US example illustrates that the study of other armies and other times can contribute toward helping to understand the art and science of tactics.

Operation Bagration, 1944

During Operation Bagration, 22 June to 29 August 1944, the Red Army destroyed the German *Army Group Center* and recaptured the last significant part of the Soviet Union remaining under German control. Soviet security operations played a major role in this operation's success. Soviet field regulations of 1944 specified the purposes of security operations: prevent surprise attack of the main body by enemy ground or air forces, prevent enemy reconnaissance, and give friendly forces time and conditions for deployment against the enemy.

From April through June, the Red Army conducted security operations against German reconnaissance and intelligence activities. During this period, Soviet operations directed against German sustaining operations and facilities, conducted

by partisans, kept the Germans so busy conducting area security operations that they had few resources to devote to ground reconnaissance. The Red Army Air Force kept German aerial reconnaissance from looking deep into the Red Army's rear to operational depths. All the Soviet fronts (army groups) preparing for the summer offensive established a 25-kilometer-deep security area against German ground reconnaissance. Frontline divisions conducted numerous and frequent patrols to counter German reconnaissance efforts and maintain regular physical contact with adjoining divisions.

The Soviets used all available assets to maintain the security of forces involved in the operation. Throughout the operation, the Red Army Air Force provided aerial cover, especially for mobile groups and forward detachments. Because the marshy nature of much of the terrain prevented using large mechanized formations, the Soviets used horse cavalry corps, augmented with tanks, to cover ground unsuitable for heavier forces and maintain contact between separated elements of their forward mobile forces.

On the flanks of Operation Bagration, the Soviet 1st Guards Tank Corps served as a covering force against reinforcements or relief efforts from the German *Army Group North*. A combined horse-cavalry mechanized group served the same role in the south for the 1st Byelorussian Front against the German *Army Group North Ukraine*.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY OPERATIONS

12-12. There are a number of general considerations when conducting security operations. These apply to all forms of security operations but are most applicable to screen, guard, and cover missions.

COMMON SECURITY CONTROL MEASURES

12-13. Security operations are depicted on overlays using a lightning bolt on either side of the symbol representing the unit conducting the security operation and are labeled with the letter S, G, or C to denote screen, guard, or cover. The end of the lightning bolt has arrowheads that touch the designated operational graphics, which define the left and right limits of the security operation. (See [Figure 12-1](#).)

12-14. The screen, guard, and cover have many common control measures, starting with boundaries defining the security area. The main body commander establishes the security area. For a security force operating to the front of the main body, the lateral boundaries of the security area are normally an extension of the lateral boundaries of the main body. The security force's rear boundary is normally the battle handover line (BHL).

12-15. To establish a screen to the rear of a force, the lateral boundaries are also an extension of the boundaries of the main body, with the screening force's rear boundary being the rear boundary of the entire force. For a flank screen, the lateral boundaries of the security area are an extension of the rear boundary of the main body and its forward edges of the battle area (FEBA) or forward line of own troops (FLOT). The rear boundary of a flank screen is the lateral boundary of the main body. The rear boundary or another phase line (PL) may serve as a BHL between the security force and the main body to

control the passing of responsibility for the enemy to the main body. Normally, the responsibility of the flank security force begins at the trail element of the advance security force or the lead combat element in the main body. It ends at the rear of the main body or the lead element of the rear security force. The main body commander clarifies responsibilities as necessary.

12-16. Either the main body or the security force commander designates additional PLs to control the operation. These PLs may serve as subsequent screen or delay lines. Each element of the security force must report when crossing or occupying them. Displacement to these subsequent PLs is event-driven. The approach of an enemy force, relief of a friendly unit, or movement of the protected force dictates the movement of the security force. The security force commander normally assigns additional lateral boundaries within the security area to delineate the areas of operations (AOs) for subordinate units.

12-17. The commander uses checkpoints and named areas of interest (NAIs) to indicate specific areas of interest and to coordinate movement and surveillance. He uses contact points to facilitate coordination with flank units during front and rear security missions or between elements of a security force within the security area. Units conducting flank security for a moving force physically contact the main body at contact points. If the security force commander wants to ensure coverage of a specific NAI or avenue of approach, he establishes OPs.

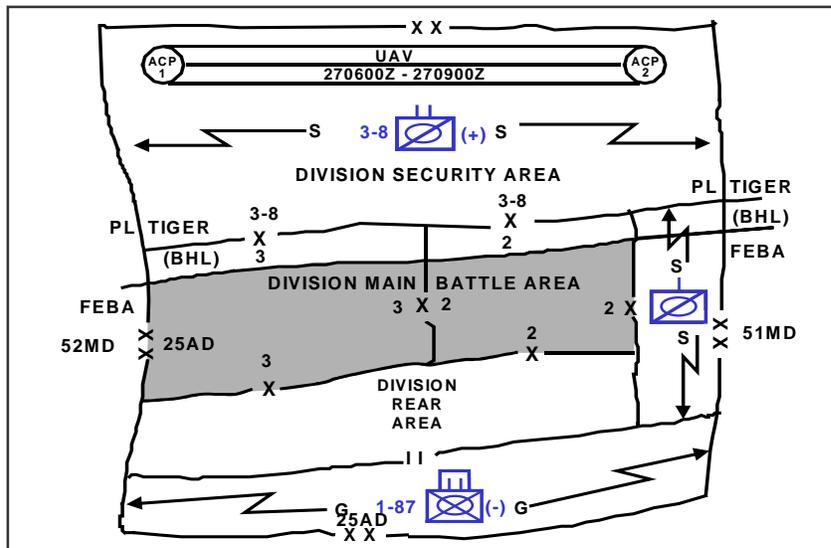


Figure 12-1. Common Security Control Measures

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY MISSIONS

12-18. In addition to the planning considerations applicable to other types of operations discussed in this manual, such as control of key terrain and avenues of approach, the commander assigning a security mission and the security force commander must address special considerations:

- Force to be secured.
- Location and orientation of the security area.

- Initial observation post locations.
- Types of OPs.
- Time to establish the security force.
- Criteria for ending the security mission.
- Augmentation of security forces.
- Intelligence support to security operations.
- Special requirements or constraints.
- Fire planning.
- Integration of ground and air operations.
- Planning the engineer effort.
- Reporting.
- Positioning of command and control (C2) and CSS assets.
- Combat service support.

Force to Be Secured

12-19. The main body commander must designate the exact force to secure. This designation determines the limits of the security force’s responsibilities. The security force must orient on the force it is securing. If the main body moves, the security force also moves to maintain its position in relation to the main body. Table 12-1, page 12-8, shows the typical size of security forces for a given echelon. The limited capabilities of most maneuver platoons prohibit them from having a mission separate from their parent company. Scout platoons are the exception to this rule.

Table 12-1. Typical Size of Security Forces for a Given Mission and Echelon

ECHELON	SECURITY MISSION			
	Screen	Advance Guard	Flank/Rear Guard	Cover
Battalion/Task Force	PLATOON	CO/TM		
Brigade	CO/TM	BN TF	CO/TM	BN TF(+)
Division	DIV CAV BN TF	DIV CAV (+) BDE	DIV CAV BN TF	DIV CAV (+) BDE
Corps	AR CAV SQD BN TF BDE	ACR	AR CAV SQD(+) or BN TF	ACR (+) or Division
Echelons Above Corps (JTF/Numbered Army)	ACR (+)	DIV (+) or Corps	ACR or BDE	DIV (+) or Corps

Location and Orientation of the Security Area

12-20. The main body commander determines the location, orientation, and depth of the security area in which he wants his security force to operate. He identifies specific avenues of approach and NAIs he wants covered. Depth in the security area provides the main body with more time to react to approaching enemy ground units. Occupying a deep security area allows the security force to destroy enemy reconnaissance assets without compromising

critical OPs or positions. It also prevents the enemy from penetrating the security area too easily and prevents gaps from occurring when OPs or units displace or are lost. The wider the area to secure, the less the security force can take advantage of the increased depth because it will have fewer forces to position in depth. A very shallow security area may require a guard to provide needed reaction time.

12-21. The security force commander conducts a detailed analysis of the terrain in the security area. He establishes his initial dispositions (usually a screen line) as far forward as possible on terrain to allow good observation of avenues of approach. Next, he assigns clear responsibility for identified avenues of approach and designated NAIs. For a screen or guard, the initial screen line must be within supporting range of the main body, yet provide the desired amount of early warning.

Initial Observation Post Locations

12-22. The security force commander determines tentative initial OP locations along or behind the screen line to ensure effective surveillance of the sector and designated NAIs. The unit or asset that occupies each OP may shift its exact location to achieve the commander's intent. A commander may place more than one OP along a high-speed avenue of approach to allow an enemy contact to be tracked from one OP to another, thus maintaining enemy contact without requiring security forces to displace. The security force commander tasks subordinate units to perform reconnaissance and combat patrols to cover gaps between OPs. To prevent fratricide, the commander places a restrictive fire support coordinating measure around OP locations.

Types of Observation Posts

12-23. Observation posts may be either mounted or dismounted. Mounted OPs can use their vehicular optics, weapon systems, and speed of displacement. However, an enemy can detect them more readily than dismounted OPs. Dismounted OPs provide maximum stealth but lack the speed of displacement, optics, and weapons of mounted OPs. It takes a minimum of two soldiers to man an OP, and then for no more than 12 hours. Observation posts manned for more than 12 hours require, as a minimum, an infantry squad or scout section to ensure continuous operation. The screening force patrols dead space and the area between OPs, conducts resupply operations, and rests or sustains its personnel.

Time the Security Force Must Be Established

12-24. The main body commander must determine when to establish the security force. He decides this based on the activity of the main body and expected enemy activity. He must allow enough time for the security force to move into and occupy the security area to prevent enemy forces from penetrating the security area undetected. The factors of METT-TC influence how the security force deploys to and occupies the screen line. If the security mission is the result of a current reconnaissance mission, the security force is already positioned to begin its mission. This occurs frequently when a reconnaissance mission halts at a designated PL. Analyzing the factors of METT-TC determines which deployment technique meets mission requirements.

Criteria for Ending the Security Mission

12-25. Security missions are usually time- or event-driven. The criteria for ending a security mission can be an action by the main body (such as completing a specific mission), a fixed-time period (for example, not allowing enemy penetration of a PL for two hours), or criteria based on the enemy force (such as its size). To terminate its security mission, the security force commander normally requires the permission of the main body commander to withdraw behind the rear boundary.

Augmentation of Security Forces

12-26. The main body commander is responsible for reinforcing the security force. When the security area is large, additional combat and CS assets may reinforce the security force's organic combat power. Any unique requirement posed by the mission may require assets not organic to the security force. Ground surveillance radars, engineers, and chemical reconnaissance elements are common attachments at the company or troop level.

Intelligence Support to Security Operations

12-27. Intelligence assets can greatly enhance security operations. These assets can conduct rapid surveillance of large areas to detect enemy presence. Remote sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, battlefield surveillance radars, signal intelligence systems, and downlinks from theater and national assets can expand the area under surveillance and cue the security force. Advanced aircraft, such as the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior and the AH-64D Longbow, can detect and report enemy forces at extended ranges with thermal imaging and other advanced detection equipment. This permits a commander to concentrate his security force on likely enemy avenues of approach, NAIs, targeted areas of interest (TAIs), and restrictive terrain that degrades sensor performance. The commander can use his intelligence assets to detect enemy movements. This gains time to reposition his security force and mass other assets to counter enemy actions. The commander increases the size of his security force to reduce his risk if he cannot anticipate sufficient advance warning from his intelligence assets.

Special Requirements or Constraints

12-28. The main body commander may impose special requirements or constraints, including engagement, disengagement, and bypass criteria. He may order the security force not to become decisively engaged or fall below a certain combat strength. He may be willing to accept a lesser degree of security, which results from either the loss of more terrain or reduced preparation time by the main body, to preserve his security force for later use.

Fire Planning

12-29. The main body commander positions his fire support assets to support his screen and guard forces. He allocates additional artillery to support a covering force. If the security force is assigned a wide AO, the commander may have to position his fire support assets to provide effective coverage of only the most likely enemy avenues of approach. This is particularly important for a screen because often the screen force can rely only on indirect fire

to delay or disrupt the enemy. Providing adequate indirect fire support to the security force may require the main body to position its artillery well forward in the formation of the main body.

Integration of Ground and Air Operations

12-30. Integrating ground and air operations is critical to the success of many security missions. Aviation units, especially air cavalry, assist in reconnaissance of the security area as the ground element of the security force moves forward. They can perform the following tasks:

- Extend the screen in front of the flank security element's screen line.
- Screen forward of the ground security force.
- Conduct reconnaissance of areas between ground maneuver units.
- Assist in maintaining contact between the security force and the main body.
- Assist in clearing the area between the flank security element and the main body during moving flank security missions.
- Assist in disengaging ground units, which is especially valuable when conducting battle handover and passage of lines with the main body.
- Monitor terrain that is hard to reach or would require too much time to cover with ground reconnaissance assets.

Planning the Engineer Effort

12-31. Countermobility plays a critical role in the security area. With properly integrated obstacles, the security force can maintain a mobility advantage over the enemy. The commander may mass engineer support in the security area initially and then shift support to the main battle area (MBA) once those units are prepared to begin developing engagement areas. They also enhance the mobility of the security force by identifying repositioning routes and task organizing engineers to provide breaching capability. However, the senior commander must consider the impact of prioritizing the countermobility effort in the security area rather than in the MBA or at the decisive point. In the offense, a commander can employ situational obstacles, covered by fire, on the flanks of an advancing force to provide additional security.

Reporting

12-32. The security force reports enemy activities to the main body. The main body headquarters is responsible for disseminating that information to other affected friendly forces. The main body commander ensures that the security force has access to all pertinent intelligence and combat information obtained by the main body. This supplements the security force's capabilities. By continuously exchanging information, both the security force commander and the main body commander have time to choose a suitable COA. Force digitization greatly assists commanders in maintaining a common operational picture.

Combat Service Support

12-33. The unit logistics staff ensures that security element sustainment requirements are embedded in the unit's logistic chain and CSS orders and annexes. A key component in security element sustainment is developing,

maintaining, and using standing operating procedures (SOP). Logisticians and operators must use the SOP and should be involved in their development. The SOP should be exercised and tested during training and changes made as needed. The commander ensures that his staff includes the sustainment of these security elements in logistics rehearsal.

12-34. The security element commander designates the individual within the security element who is responsible for sustaining the element. This is normally the senior noncommissioned officer within platoons and companies assigned security tasks. For example the platoon sergeant of a scout platoon assigned the mission of establishing a flank screen for a battalion task force would coordinate with the first sergeant of the adjacent company team to include the scout platoons sustainment requirements in the company team's logistics package. Likewise the first sergeant of a brigade reconnaissance troop assigned a screening mission coordinates directly with the brigade logistics and forward support battalion staffs for resupply and medical treatment. This individual must have access to the appropriate nets to coordinate logistic support and casualty evacuation.

12-35. That individual coordinates with the appropriate supporting logistics point of contact as soon as possible after receiving the security mission warning order. Coordination includes such items as the mission of the security element, the AO assigned to the security element, the routes it will take to that area from its current location, and movement times. He gives the exact sustainment requirements for the security element—including any specialized items of supply required by the mission, such as cratering charges—to the supporting logistics element. He ensures the support element establishes communication links with the security element and receives a copy of the support element's CSS overlay.

12-36. The commander must place special attention on treating and evacuating casualties for security elements operating removed from normal medical support because of time, terrain, or distance factors, or a need for the security element to remain undetected by the enemy. For this reason, the security element should include as many soldiers trained as combat lifesavers as is possible. The more combat lifesavers within the security element, the more prepared it is for casualties.

Positioning of C2 and CSS Assets

12-37. The security force commander positions himself where he can best control the operation. This is often where he can observe the most dangerous enemy avenue of approach. He positions his command post to provide continuous control and reporting during initial movements. His combat trains position behind masking terrain but remain close enough to the combat elements of the security force to provide rapid response. They are best sited along routes that provide good mobility laterally and in-depth.

MOVEMENT INTO SECURITY AREAS FOR STATIONARY SECURITY MISSIONS

12-38. All stationary security missions are established in a similar manner. In deploying into the security area, the security force must deal with competing requirements: to establish the security area quickly to meet mission

requirements, and to provide the necessary level of security for itself. The security force moves into the security area using one of three basic methods: tactical road march, movement to contact, or zone reconnaissance.

12-39. The fastest but least secure method of deploying is a tactical road march from the rear boundary of the security area to the initial positions. The security force moves to a release point on the rear boundary. From the release point, subordinate elements deploy to occupy initial positions, moving by the quickest means possible. This method is appropriate when enemy contact is not expected, time is critical, or an aviation unit is conducting a zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and has found no enemy in the security area.

12-40. In the second method, the security force conducts a movement to contact from a line of departure (usually the rear boundary of the security area) to the initial positions. This method is slower than a tactical road march but more secure. It is appropriate when enemy contact is likely, time is limited, terrain reconnaissance is not needed, or an aviation unit is conducting zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and enemy forces have been detected in the security area.

12-41. The most secure method for moving to the initial positions is for the security force to conduct a zone reconnaissance from the security area rear boundary to its initial security line positions or the forward limit of the security area. Given adequate time, this method is preferred because it allows the security force to clear the security area and become familiar with the terrain that it may have to defend. The security force can reconnoiter potential subsequent positions and fire support system firing positions as it moves to its initial positions. A zone reconnaissance is appropriate when time is available and information about the enemy or terrain is unknown. While this technique provides information of tactical value on the enemy and terrain in the area, it may also be time consuming. Using air reconnaissance forward of the ground units increases the speed and security of the movement.

MOVEMENT DURING MOVING FLANK SECURITY MISSIONS

12-42. There are three techniques of occupying and moving in a flank security area for moving security missions based on how the security force crosses the line of departure:

- Security force crosses the line of departure (LD) separately from the main body and deploys to perform the mission.
- Security force crosses the LD separately from main body; lead elements conduct a movement to contact.
- Security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the limit of the security area.

12-43. The security force should not be required to make its own penetration when it faces prepared enemy defenses. This may prevent or significantly delay the security force from assuming its duties. These three techniques are often combined.

12-44. In the first technique, illustrated in [Figures 12-2](#) and [12-3](#), page 12-12, the security force crosses the LD separately from the main body and deploys

to perform the mission. The security force then conducts a tactical road march, an approach march, or tactical movements parallel to the main body and drops off OPs or occupies BPs along the flank of the main body. This technique keeps the two forces from interfering with each other during deployment. It is appropriate when another force penetrates the line of contact, the main body is not in contact with the enemy and is moving quickly, the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates that enemy contact is not likely in the area through which the security force is moving. It is the fastest but least secure technique.

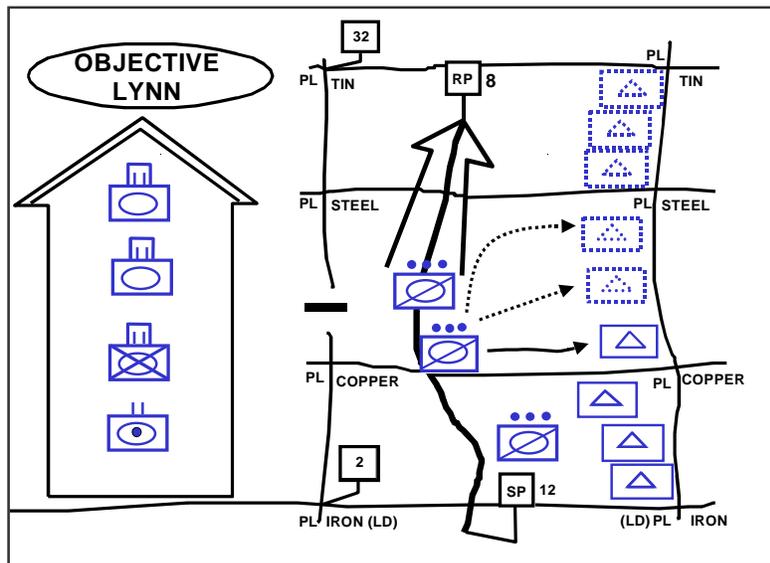


Figure 12-2. Security Force Crossing the LD Separately from the Main Body to Establish a Flank Screen

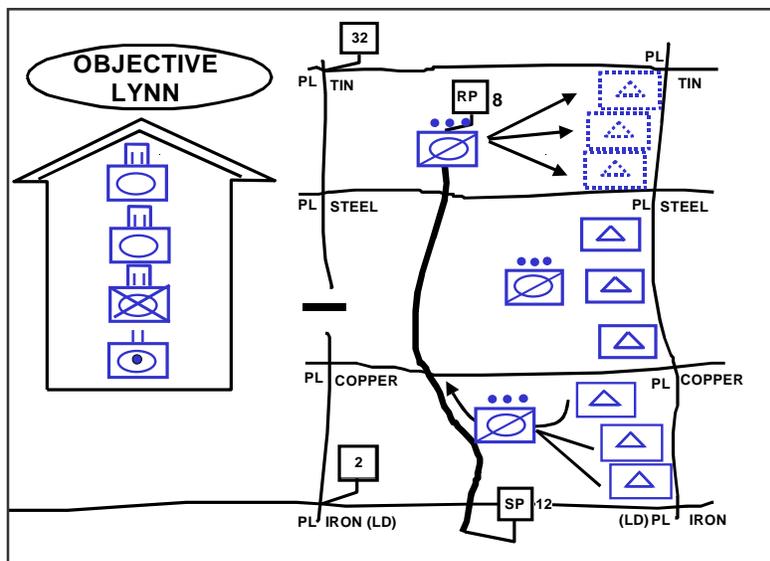


Figure 12-3. Security Force Continuing to Cross the LD Separately from the Main Body to Establish a Flank Screen

12-45. In the second technique, the security force crosses the LD separately from the main body, and its lead elements conduct a movement to contact. Follow-on elements occupy positions as they are reached. (See Figure 12-4.) This technique is appropriate to use when the main body is moving slower than in the first method, the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates possible enemy contact. It is slower than the previous technique but provides better security.

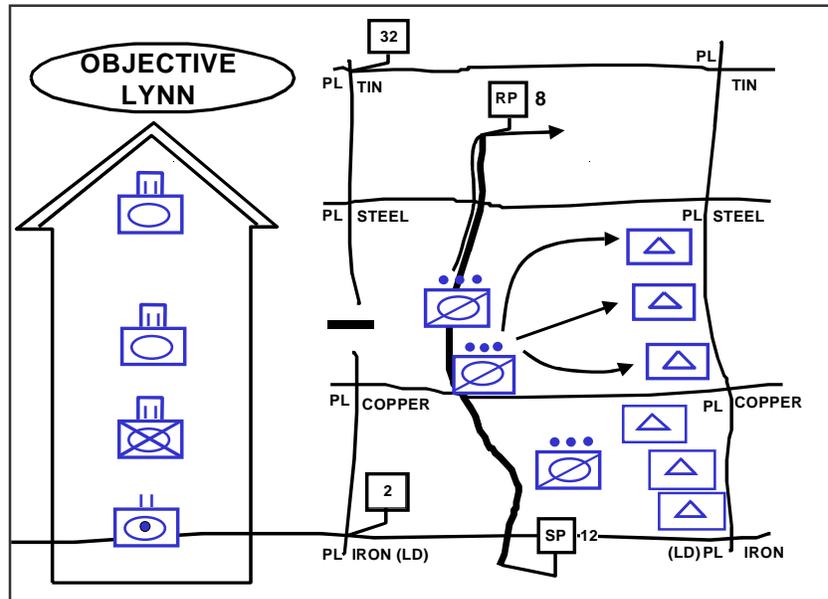


Figure 12-4. Second Technique Used by a Moving Flank Security Force to Establish a Moving Flank Screen

12-46. Finally, in the third technique, the security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the far limit of the security area. (See Figure 12-5, page 12-14.) This technique is appropriate when the LD is also the line of contact, the main body makes its own penetration of the enemy defenses along the line of contact, the main body is moving slowly, and the enemy situation is not clearly understood. The security force may follow the lead element of the main body through the gap and deploy when the situation permits. This technique provides increased security for both the security force and the main body; it is also the most time-consuming.

SCREEN

12-47. A unit performing a screen observes, identifies, and reports enemy actions. Generally, a screening force engages and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements within its capabilities—augmented by indirect fires—but otherwise fights only in self-defense. The screen has the minimum combat power necessary to provide the desired early warning, which allows the commander to retain the bulk of his combat power for commitment at the decisive place and time. A screen provides the least amount of protection of any security mission; it does not have the combat power to develop the situation.

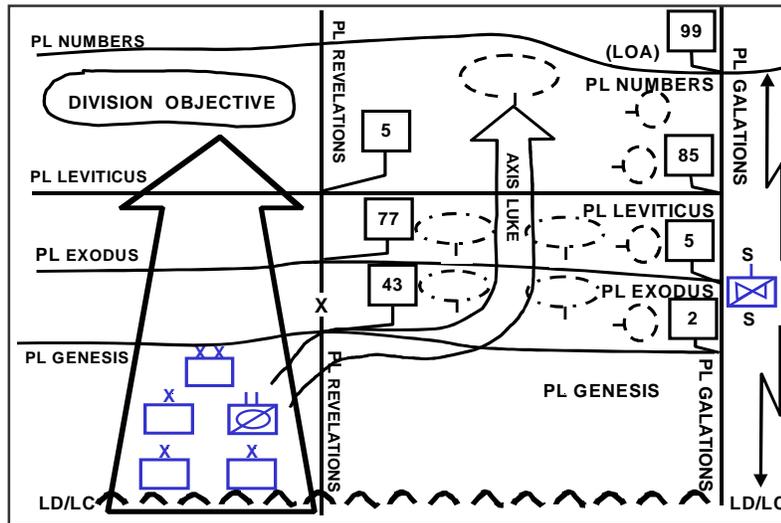


Figure 12-5. Third Technique Used by a Moving Flank Security Force to Establish a Flank Guard or Cover

12-48. A screen is appropriate to cover gaps between forces, exposed flanks, or the rear of stationary and moving forces. The commander can place a screen in front of a stationary formation when the likelihood of enemy action is small, the expected enemy force is small, or the main body needs only limited time, once it is warned, to react effectively. Designed to provide minimum security with minimum forces, a screen is usually an economy-of-force operation based on calculated risk. If a significant enemy force is expected or a significant amount of time and space is needed to provide the required degree of protection, the commander should assign and resource a guard or cover mission instead of a screen. The security element forward of a moving force must conduct a guard or cover because a screen lacks the combat power to defeat or contain the lead elements of an enemy force.

12-49. A security force normally conducts a screen by establishing a series of OPs and patrols to ensure adequate surveillance of the assigned area. The commander uses reconnaissance patrols (mounted, dismounted, and aerial), relocates OPs, and employs technical assets to ensure continuous and overlapping surveillance. The commander also employs terrain data base analytical support systems to ensure the integration of his reconnaissance and surveillance assets to provide that necessary coverage.

CRITICAL TASKS FOR A SCREEN

12-50. Unless the commander orders otherwise, a security force conducting a screen performs certain tasks within the limits of its capabilities. A unit can normally screen an avenue of approach two echelons larger than itself, such as a battalion scout platoon screening a battalion-size avenue of approach or a cavalry troop screening a regimental or brigade-size avenue of approach. If a security force does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, the security force commander must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks must be completed and their priority. After starting the screen, if the security unit

commander determines that he cannot complete an assigned task, such as maintain continuous surveillance on all avenues of approach into an AO, he reports and awaits further instructions. Normally, the main force commander does not place a time limit on the duration of the screen, as doing so may force the screening force to accept decisive engagement. Screen tasks are to—

- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the screen undetected and unreported.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of all avenues of approach larger than a designated size into the area under all visibility conditions.
- Destroy or repel all enemy reconnaissance patrols within its capabilities.
- Locate the lead elements of each enemy advance guard and determine its direction of movement in a defensive screen.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report any activity in the AO.
- Maintain contact with the main body and any security forces operating on its flanks.
- Impede and harass the enemy within its capabilities while displacing.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

12-51. A screen normally requires the subordinate elements of the security force to deploy abreast. A screen force normally organizes itself into a number of OPs determined by the number of avenues of approach into the main force and any additional NAIs it must cover, as specified by the main force commander. The screening force may retain a small reaction force or reserve to extract endangered OPs.

12-52. The size of the avenue of approach kept under surveillance varies by echelon. Normally, a unit maintains observation over avenues of approach used by operationally significant enemy forces. These are normally avenues of approach used by enemy forces one echelon smaller than the friendly unit. For example, a battalion maintains surveillance over enemy company-size avenues of approach, while the corps maintains surveillance over division-size avenues of approach. The situation may require the unit to maintain surveillance over mobility corridors that can be used by enemy units two echelons smaller than the friendly force.

SCREEN CONTROL MEASURES

12-53. The control measures necessary to conduct a screen were previously discussed in this chapter under common security control measures in paragraphs 12-13 to 12-17. (Figure 12-6, page 12-16 displays examples of control measures associated with a screen.)

EXECUTING A STATIONARY SCREEN

12-54. In setting up the screen, the screening force establishes OPs with overlapping fields of observation. The screen commander adjusts the location of his screening elements to take advantage of established links with higher-echelon sensors and collection assets. Patrols reconnoiter areas that cannot be observed from an OP. The force retains a small reserve if possible. If forces are available and the depth of the security area allows, the screening force

establishes OPs in-depth on high-speed avenues of approach. The commander plans routes between the initial and subsequent screen lines to facilitate rapid occupation of subsequent screen lines. The screening force reserve deploys in-depth and positions itself to react to contingencies that develop during the screen. The screening force takes advantage of its surveillance, target acquisition, and night-observation equipment and information provided by higher-level systems to expand the area and quality of security provided.

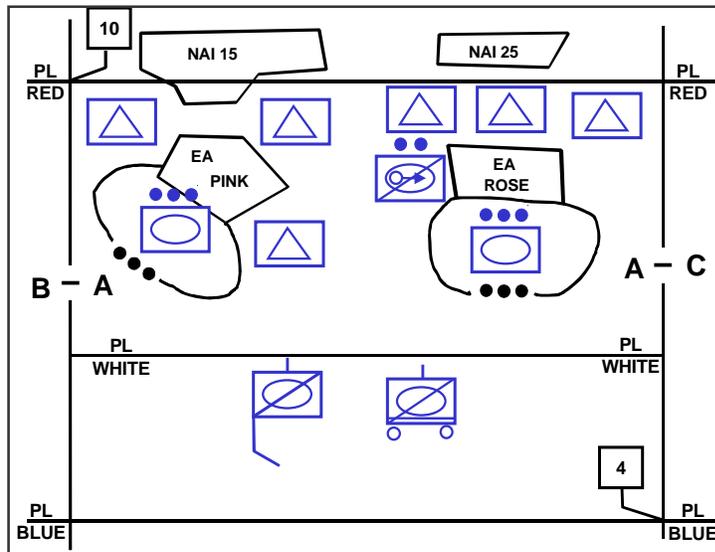


Figure 12-6. Control Measures Used in a Screen Mission

12-55. Observation posts should remain undetected while those manning them report the presence of enemy elements. Prompt, accurate reporting is essential to keep the assets constituting the screen from being overrun or unknowingly bypassed. Once the enemy is detected, the OP uses fire support channels to direct engagement of the enemy at maximum range. This helps the OP avoid detection by the enemy and prevents the enemy from penetrating the screen line. The screening force may destroy enemy reconnaissance assets with direct fire if indirect fire cannot accomplish this task. It also attempts to slow the movement of other enemy elements, primarily using indirect fires and close air support.

12-56. As enemy pressure threatens the security of the OP, the unit reports and requests to move to the next screen line. The commander may have previously established criteria that allow the screening force to displace to subsequent screen lines, based on certain enemy or friendly actions. These criteria should allow subordinates to use their initiative when conducting operations. When displacing from one screen line to another, the screening force emphasizes rapid movement while maintaining contact with the enemy. This ensures that any gaps that occur during movement are quickly closed. The screen's C2 elements displace as required to maintain control and keep from being overrun. The force repeats this procedure as often as necessary.

12-57. The screening force commander decides when to move from one screen line to another. However, the main body commander decides when the

screening force can move behind the PL that designates the rear boundary of the security area and hand off the battle to the main body.

EXECUTING A MOVING SCREEN

12-58. The screening force may use several methods to move the screen as the protected force moves. Table 12-2 summarizes each method's advantages and disadvantages.

12-59. A force maintains a moving screen along the flanks and rear of the protected force. The screen movement is keyed to time and distance factors associated with the main body's movement. (See Figure 12-7.) Responsibilities for a moving flank screen begin at the front of the main body's lead combat element and end at the rear of the protected force. They do not include front and rear security forces. A force executes a moving screen in the same way it conducts a stationary screen, except for the movement techniques.

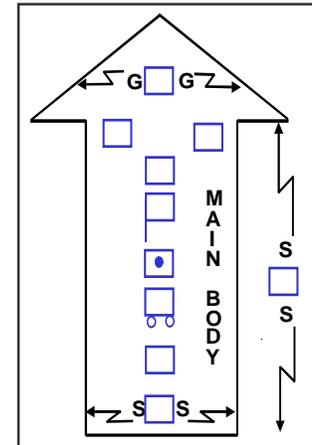


Figure 12-7. Moving Flank Screen

Table 12-2. Screen Movement Methods

METHOD	CHARACTERISTICS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Alternate Bounds by OPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main body moves faster Conducted by platoon or company/ troop Contact is possible Conducted from rear to front 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very secure method Maintains maximum surveillance over the security area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution takes time Disrupts unit integrity
Alternate Bounds by Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main body moves faster Conducted by platoon or company/ troop Contact is possible Conducted from rear to front 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution does not take a great deal of time Maintains good surveillance over the security area Maintains unit integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May leave temporary gaps in coverage
Successive Bounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main body is moving slowly Conducted by platoon or company/troop Contact is possible Conducted simultaneously or in succession Unit should maintain an air screen during ground movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most secure method Maintains maximum surveillance Maintains unit integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution takes the most time Unit is less secure when all elements are moving simultaneously Simultaneous movement may leave temporary gaps
Continuous Marching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main body is moving relatively quickly Performed as a route reconnaissance Enemy contact is not likely Unit should maintain an air screen on the flank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPs displace quickly Maintains unit integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Least secure method

12-60. The commander considers the factors of METT-TC in his decision regarding the movement method employed. Figures 12-8 and 12-9, page 12-18, illustrate four methods of controlling movement along a screen line:

- Alternate bounds by individual OPs from the rear to the front. (This method is usually employed at the company/troop level and below.)
- Alternate bounds by subordinate units from the rear to the front.
- Successive bounds by units along the screen line.
- Continuous marching along the route of advance.

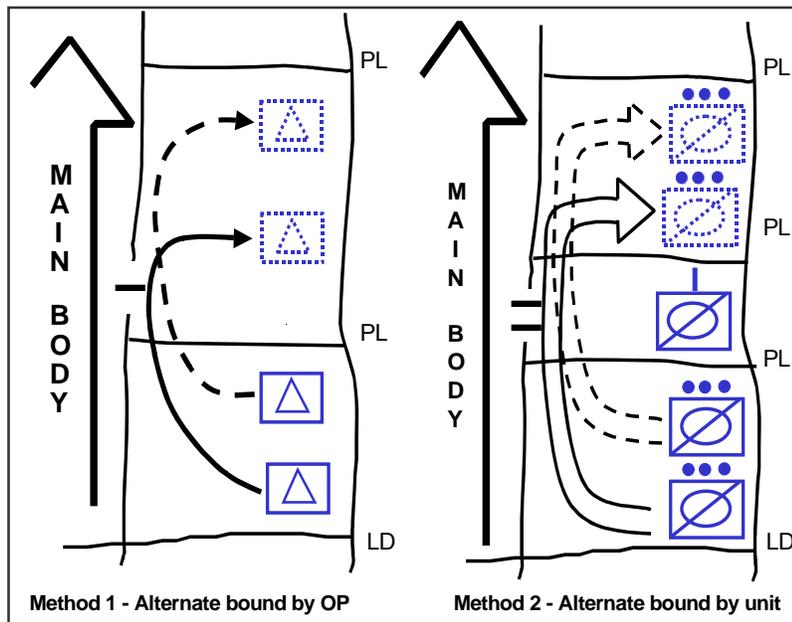


Figure 12-8. Displacement Methods for a Flank Screen

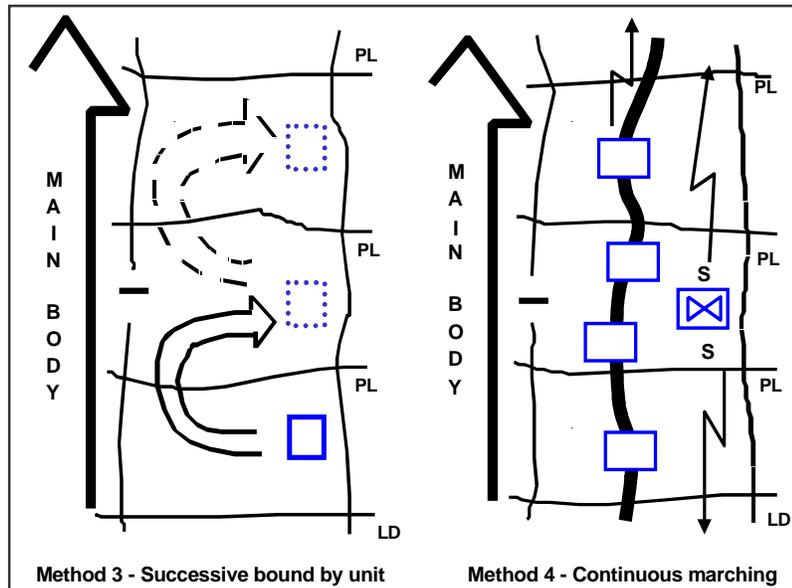


Figure 12-9. More Displacement Methods for a Flank Screen

SCREENING OPERATIONS DURING LIMITED VISIBILITY

12-61. Limited visibility often affects the screening force's ground and air observation capabilities. During limited visibility, the screening force uses all available night and thermal observation devices and depends more on electronic surveillance devices. Although the screening force can use technical reconnaissance and surveillance assets to offset limited visibility, it should also adjust its techniques and procedures to the conditions. For example, the commander of a screening force may need to adjust the number and location of his OPs in limited-visibility conditions. He can establish more OPs to cover avenues of approach that become masked in these conditions. He plans for indirect illumination and uses it when necessary. He closely coordinates his patrols to prevent misidentification and engagement by friendly elements. Rigorous sound and light discipline prevents compromise and potential bypass of OPs by enemy reconnaissance forces. Near OPs and along dismounted avenues of approach, the screening force can use trip flares, protective minefields, and mechanical devices, such as noisemakers integrated into tanglefoot obstacles, to detect the enemy and warn of his approach. Additional OPs along enemy avenues of approach can provide depth to facilitate detecting enemy forces that may have eluded forward security elements.

GUARD

12-62. A guard differs from a screen in that a guard force contains sufficient combat power to defeat, cause the withdrawal of, or fix the lead elements of an enemy ground force before it can engage the main body with direct fire. A guard force routinely engages enemy forces with direct and indirect fires. A screening force, however, primarily uses indirect fires or close air support to destroy enemy reconnaissance elements and slow the movement of other enemy forces. A guard force uses all means at its disposal, including decisive engagement, to prevent the enemy from penetrating to a position where it could observe and engage the main body. It operates within the range of the main body's fire support weapons, deploying over a narrower front than a comparable-size screening force to permit concentrating combat power.

12-63. The three types of guard operations are advance, flank, and rear guard. A commander can assign a guard mission to protect either a stationary or a moving force. (See Figure 12-10.)

12-64. A unit conducting a guard performs certain tasks within its capabilities unless ordered otherwise. If a unit does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and

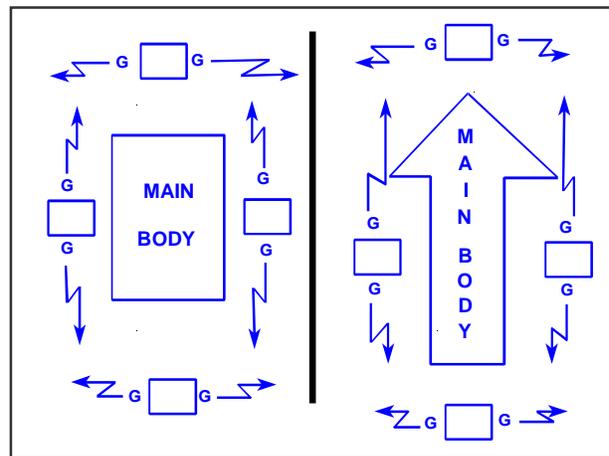


Figure 12-10. Guard Locations

request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the guard, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as cause deployment of the enemy advance guard, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. Guard tasks—

- Destroy the enemy advance guard.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report activity in the AO.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of avenues of approach into the AO under all visibility conditions.
- Impede and harass the enemy within its capabilities while displacing.
- Cause the enemy main body to deploy, and then report its direction of travel.
- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the security area undetected and unreported.
- Destroy or cause the withdrawal of all enemy reconnaissance patrols.
- Maintain contact with its main body and any other security forces operating on its flanks.

12-65. A commander employs a guard when he expects enemy contact and requires additional security beyond that provided by a screen. The multiple requirements of the guard mission are often performed simultaneously over relatively large areas. While the guard force's exact size is determined by prevailing METT-TC conditions, [Table 12-1](#) provides general guidance on the size of an echelon's guard force.

ORGANIZATION OF A GUARD FORCE

12-66. Whether the guard is for a stationary (defending) or moving (attacking) force, the various types of guard missions and knowledge of the terrain and enemy dictate the specific task organization of the guard force. The guard force commander normally plans to conduct the guard mission as an area defense ([Chapter 9](#)), a delay ([Chapter 11](#)), a zone reconnaissance (see FM 3-55), or a movement to contact ([Chapter 4](#)) mission within the security area.

CONTROL MEASURES

12-67. The commander uses graphic control measures to control the operations of his guard force within the security area. The assigned mission also influences the size of the AO given to subordinate elements. For example, a movement to contact normally takes place across a narrower frontage than if the same unit makes a zone reconnaissance to allow adequate concentration of combat power.

12-68. The guard force may task its subordinate elements to conduct screen missions to the front and flanks of the guard force. This provides early warning of enemy forces and helps maintain contact with flank forces and any higher-echelon security force. An example of the latter would be a corps covering force operating in front of a division advance guard. The presence of a higher-echelon security force also influences how the guard force commander organizes his force and conducts operations. It specifically impacts the areas of fire support and CSS.

- Eliminate enemy forces bypassed by the covering force.
- Coordinate and conduct a forward passage of lines through the covering force and fix enemy forces in the enemy's main defensive positions to allow the friendly main body to maneuver.

12-73. The movement of multiple security forces and the handoff of a detected enemy force from the higher-echelon security force to the lower-echelon security force is controlled using PLs, checkpoints, BHLs, and disengagement criteria, in addition to other graphic control measures. As a minimum, the covering force has a

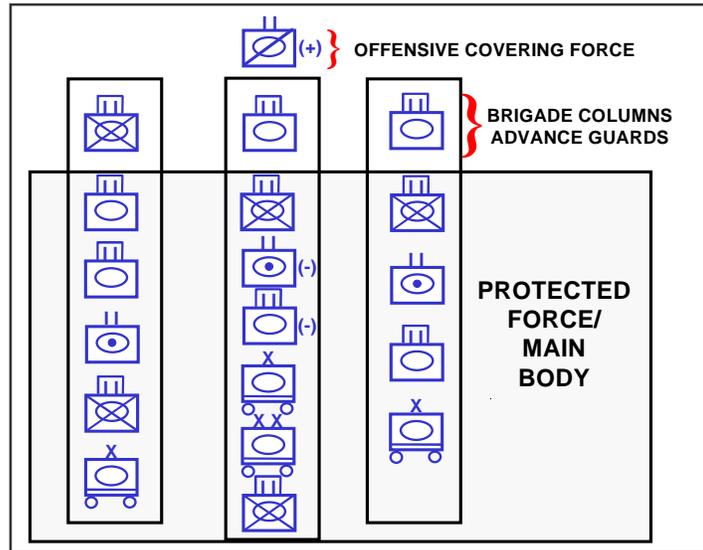


Figure 12-12. Multiple Security Forces

rear boundary that is also the forward boundary of the advance guard.

12-74. The advance guard engages in offensive operations when necessary to accomplish the mission. After the guard makes enemy contact, the commander determines whether the guard mission requires an attack, a defense, or a delay based on the factors of METT-TC. For example, if the guard force has sufficient combat power to defeat an enemy, it may conduct a hasty attack or defend from its current location. The guard force will not assault strong enemy positions from the front if this can be avoided. The advance guard then destroys the withdrawing enemy force as it exposes itself by moving to other positions. If the advance guard encounters an enemy force that it cannot stop from interfering with the movement of the main body, the security force reports its presence to the main body. It then establishes a defense, continues reconnaissance operations, and prepares to pass elements of the main body forward while facilitating the deployment of the main body.

12-75. If the guard force does not have enough combat power to defeat an approaching enemy, and the depth of the security area permits, the commander can delay back one or more positions before becoming decisively engaged. This reduces the enemy's combat power. Unless the security force is relieved of the guard mission, it must accept decisive engagement to prevent enemy ground forces from using direct fires to engage the main body.

FLANK GUARD

12-76. A flank guard protects an exposed flank of the main body. A flank guard is similar to a flank screen except that the commander plans defensive positions in addition to OPs.

12-81. The lead element of a moving flank guard must accomplish three tasks. It must maintain contact with the protected force's main body, reconnoiter the area between that main body and the flank guard's routes of advance, and reconnoiter the flank guard's route. It accomplishes these tasks by conducting a zone reconnaissance. The speed of the main body determines how thoroughly it can carry out the reconnaissance. The exact size of the AO for any given unit conducting a guard is METT-TC dependent. For example, on typical central European terrain, an AO wider than 10 kilometers from the guard line to the boundary of the main body should not be assigned to a company or troop. An organization of this size quickly finds itself unable to match the movement of the main body. When the distance from the guard line to the main body boundary exceeds 10 kilometers, the commander of the flank security element should use two or more company-size elements abreast. This ensures that the element making contact with the main body is not overtaken and can match the tempo of the main body. An air cavalry troop may maintain contact with the main body, or a following ground element may perform route reconnaissance along the flank guard's route of advance. Under these conditions, the lead security element does not reconnoiter BPs or occupy them unless required when making contact.

12-82. The rest of the flank guard marches along the route of advance and occupies BPs as necessary. Criteria for the route are the same as in a moving flank screen. The commander designates company-size BPs parallel to the axis of the main body. He places these BPs outside the flank guard's route of advance and along avenues of approach into the flank guard. The flank guard occupies OPs along a screen line forward of these BPs.

12-83. Since the flank guard is moving in one direction and orienting on providing protection to the secured force in another direction, the flank guard commander plans control measures to facilitate this dual orientation. These control measures are normally associated with the moving screen, as well as PLs that run parallel to the direction of movement of the main body. The commander uses these PLs to control the delay or defense if the enemy attacks from the flank being protected. (See [Figure 12-14](#).) He may also assign the flank guard an objective that secures the flank for the main body's objective or otherwise serves to orient its security efforts.

12-84. The flank guard regulates its movement along the route of advance by the pace of the main body, the distance to the objective, and the enemy situation. The three methods of movement are successive bounds, alternate bounds, or continuous marching. (See [Chapter 14](#).) If the main body stops, the flank guard occupies blocking positions. As the speed of the main body changes, the flank guard changes its movement methods. The guard commander must not allow the force to fall behind the main body or present a lucrative target by remaining stationary along the route.

12-85. If the flank guard becomes overextended, the guard commander informs the main body commander and recommends one of the following COAs:

- Reinforce the flank guard.
- Reduce the size of the flank guard's AO.
- Screen a portion of the area and guard the rest.

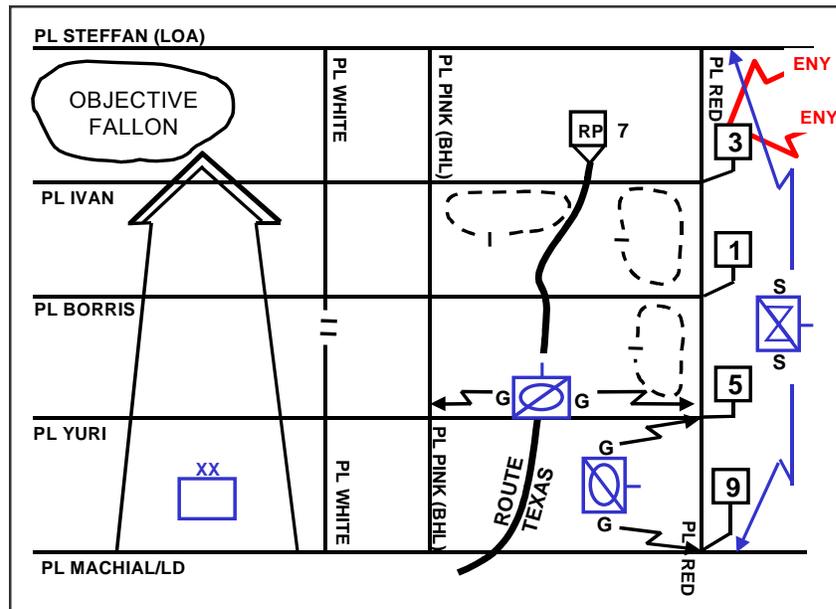


Figure 12-14. Moving Flank Guard Control Measures

REAR GUARD

12-86. The rear guard protects the exposed rear of the main body. This occurs during offensive operations when the main body breaks contact with flanking forces or during a retrograde. The commander may deploy a rear guard behind both moving and stationary main bodies. The rear guard for a moving force displaces to successive BPs along PLs or delay lines in depth as the main body moves. The nature of enemy contact determines the exact movement method or combination of methods used in the displacement (successive bounds, alternate bounds, and continuous marching).

12-87. During a retrograde, the rear guard normally deploys its ground maneuver elements abreast, behind the main body's forward maneuver units, generally across the entire AO. After the main body conducts a rearward passage of lines, the rear guard accepts battle handover and then defends or delays. Alternatively, the rear guard may conduct a relief in place as part of a deception plan or to take advantage of the best defensive terrain. In both cases, the rear guard establishes passage points and assists the rearward passage of the main body, if necessary. The rear guard accomplishes its defensive mission in the same way as any other guard operation after the main body clears the security area. As the main body moves, the rear guard moves to subsequent PLs in depth. Contact with the enemy force may eventually be lost if it does not follow the retrograding friendly force. Fighting a defense or a delay is necessary if the enemy detects the movement and attacks. ([Chapter 11](#) discusses retrograde operations.)

COVER

12-88. The covering force's distance forward of the main body depends on the intentions and instructions of the main body commander, the terrain, the location and strength of the enemy, and the rates of march of both the main

body and the covering force. The width of the covering force area is the same as the AO of the main body.

12-89. A **covering force is a self-contained force capable of operating independently of the main body, unlike a screening or guard force.** A covering force, or portions of it, often becomes decisively engaged with enemy forces. Therefore, the covering force must have substantial combat power to engage the enemy and accomplish its mission. A covering force develops the situation earlier than a screen or a guard force. It fights longer and more often and defeats larger enemy forces.

12-90. While a covering force provides more security than a screen or guard force, it also requires more resources. Before assigning a cover mission, the main body commander must ensure that he has sufficient combat power to resource a covering force and the decisive operation. When the commander lacks the resources to support both, he must assign his security force a less resource-intensive security mission, either a screen or a guard.

12-91. A covering force accomplishes all the tasks of screening and guard forces. A covering force for a stationary force performs a defensive mission, while a covering force for a moving force generally conducts offensive actions. A covering force normally operates forward of the main body in the offense or defense, or to the rear for a retrograde operation. Unusual circumstances could dictate a flank covering force, but this is normally a screen or guard mission.

ORGANIZATION OF A COVERING FORCE

12-92. Whether the cover is for a stationary (defending) or moving (attacking) force, the various types of cover missions, as well as knowledge of the terrain and enemy, dictate the specific task organization of the covering force. The covering force commander normally plans to conduct the cover mission as an area defense (Chapter 9), a delay (Chapter 11), a zone reconnaissance (see FM 3-55), or a movement to contact (Chapter 4) mission within the security area.

12-93. The commander normally assigns subordinate units one of these missions or the mission of screen or guard. The covering force uses those organizations and control measures associated with these missions. In addition, the commander establishes those control measures necessary for conducting the covering force's passage of lines (forward and rearward). (See Chapter 15.)

12-94. Although the commander can deploy any mobile force as a covering force, the corps covering force is normally built around the armored cavalry regiment or a division. Both have the C2 structures necessary for the forces involved and the capability to cover the geographical area typically required in a cover security mission. The corps commander tailors this unit to be self-contained by reinforcing it with assets such as attack helicopters, field artillery, engineers, air defense, tank, and infantry units with appropriate CSS to sustain the resulting force. A covering force is usually allocated additional artillery and engineer support beyond that normally given to a force of its size because it is operating beyond the main body's supporting range. The covering force commander normally maintains a sizable reserve to conduct counterattacks in the defense and to defeat enemy counterattacks in the offense.

12-95. A division covering force is normally a reinforced brigade, often with the divisional cavalry squadron as part of the covering force, to perform reconnaissance or other security missions. If the division AO is narrow enough, an adequately reinforced cavalry squadron may perform a cover mission. At both corps and division echelons, the amount of reinforcement provided to the covering force determines the distance and time it can operate away from the main body. These reinforcements typically revert to their parent organizations on passage of the covering force. Brigades and battalions typically organize a guard force instead of a covering force because their resources are limited.

12-96. Since one task of the covering force is to deceive the enemy into thinking he has found the main body, the commander should supply the covering force with combat systems that are representative of the main body. For example, if the main body has organic or reinforcing systems, such as MLRS, available to it, the commander should organize the covering force with the same systems.

OFFENSIVE COVER

12-97. An offensive covering force seizes the initiative early for the main body commander, allowing him to attack decisively. Figure 12-15 shows an attacking main body with an advance covering force and a flank guard.

12-98. Unless the commander orders otherwise, an offensive covering force performs specific tasks within its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the mission, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as destroying or repelling enemy reconnaissance and security forces in the enemy security area, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. Offensive covering force tasks include—

- Performing zone reconnaissance along the main body's axis of advance or within the AO.
- Clearing or bypassing enemy forces within the AO in accordance with bypass criteria.
- Denying the enemy information about the strength, composition, and objective of the main body.

12-99. Covering tasks against a defending enemy include—

- Penetrating the enemy's security area to locate enemy main defensive positions.

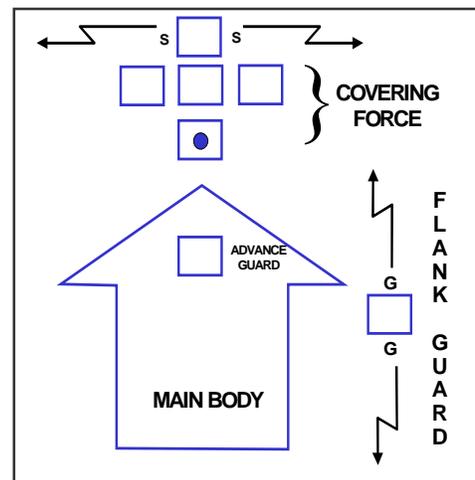


Figure 12-15. Attack Using a Covering Force

- Determining enemy strengths and dispositions.
- Locating gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive scheme.
- Defeating or repelling enemy forces as directed by the higher commander.
- Deceiving the enemy into thinking the main body has been committed and causing him to launch counterattacks prematurely.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strengths or through weaknesses.

12-100. In a meeting engagement, covering tasks include—

- Destroying enemy reconnaissance, the advance guard, and the lead elements of the main body.
- Determining the location of enemy assailable flanks.
- Fixing enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strengths or through weaknesses.

12-101. Planning for offensive covering force operations is similar to planning for zone reconnaissance or movement to contact. Mission analysis using the products of the IPB process helps determine the width of the area to cover and areas (NAIs and TAIs) or routes of special importance. The commander determines specific missions for subordinate elements and assigns boundaries. The covering force commander retains a reserve, which is ready to deploy anywhere in the covering force area. This reserve may be centrally located; it typically locates itself on the most dangerous or critical avenue of approach in the security area.

12-102. The covering force advances on a broad front, normally with its subordinate ground maneuver elements abreast (except for the reserve). This force should clear the enemy's security area of small combat elements while penetrating into the enemy's main defenses. Air cavalry normally reconnoiters forward of advancing ground covering force elements. On enemy contact, the air cavalry reports the enemy's location to the appropriate ground unit and maintains contact. Once the air cavalry makes contact, the covering force rapidly develops the situation. It reports enemy dispositions immediately to the main body commander so he can exploit enemy weaknesses. The covering force fixes encountered enemy forces and destroys them using fire and movement. The covering force does not bypass enemy forces without the permission of the main body commander.

12-103. If the covering force discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, it prepares to exploit the weakness and disrupt the integrity of that defense. The covering force commander immediately reports this to the main body commander so he can divert main body follow-on forces to support the penetration. The main body commander synchronizes the penetration by the covering force with the arrival of other maneuver units, CS, and CSS to prevent counterattacking enemy forces from isolating and destroying the penetrating elements of the covering force.

12-104. When the covering force can advance no farther, it defends and prepares to assist the forward passage of lines of main body units. It continues to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks. The covering force may guide main body units as they attack through or

around the covering force. If the covering force has accomplished its mission, the main body commander will attack the enemy's weak point with previously uncommitted main body forces at the appropriate time.

FLANK COVER

12-105. When the main body commander perceives a significant threat to one of his flanks, he normally establishes a flank covering force. That force conducts its mission in much the same way as a flank guard performs its mission. The main differences between the two missions are the scope of operations and the distance the covering force operates away from the main body.

12-106. Just as in a flank guard, the flank covering force must clear the area between its route of advance and the main body. It must also maintain contact with an element of the main body specified by the main body commander. This element is normally part of the advance guard for the flank unit of the main body.

DEFENSIVE COVER

12-107. A defensive covering force prevents the enemy from attacking at the time, place, and combat strength of his choosing. (See Figure 12-16.) Defensive cover gains time for the main body, enabling it to deploy, move, or prepare defenses in the MBA. It accomplishes this by disrupting the enemy's attack, destroying his initiative, and establishing the conditions for decisive operations. The covering force makes the enemy deploy repeatedly to fight through the covering force and commit his reserve or follow-on forces to sustain momentum.

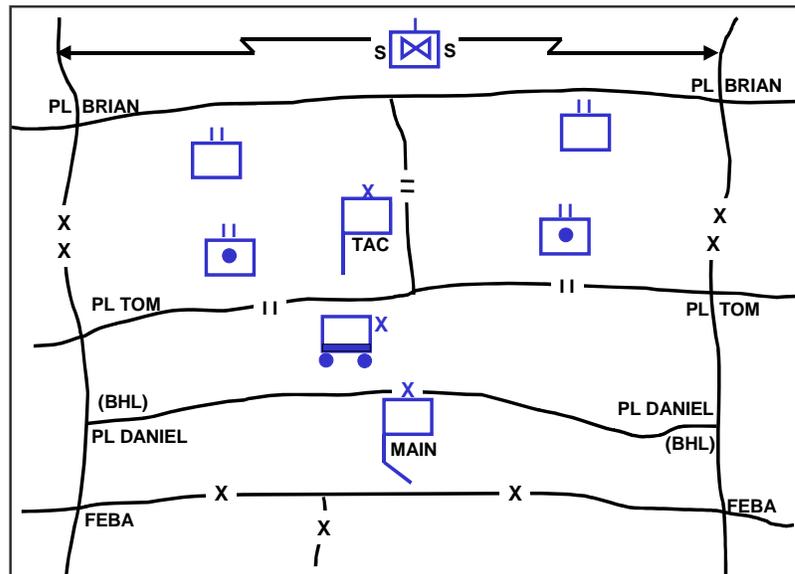


Figure 12-16. Generic Depiction of a Defensive Cover

12-108. Unless the commander orders otherwise, a defensive covering force performs certain tasks within its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the

commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the mission, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as defeat enemy advance guard formations, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. A defensive covering force emphasizes the following tasks—

- Prevent the main body from being surprised and becoming engaged by direct-fire weapons.
- Defeat enemy advance guard formations.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of high-speed avenues of approach into the security area.
- Defeat all enemy reconnaissance formations before they can observe the main body.
- Cause the deployment of the enemy main body.
- Determine the size, strength, composition, and direction of the enemy's main effort.
- Destroy, defeat, or attrit enemy forces within its capacity.
- Deprive the enemy of his fire support and air defense umbrellas, or require him to displace them before he attacks the MBA.
- Deceive the enemy regarding the location of main body and main defensive positions.
- Avoid being bypassed.

12-109. The defensive covering force may be required to defend, delay, or counterattack. If the covering force area is not occupied, the force may have to reconnoiter and clear the area before establishing the cover. As in offensive operations, aerial reconnaissance is necessary to extend the area covered. Aviation units can screen less threatened areas and rapidly reinforce with their fires when other elements of the covering force are heavily engaged.

12-110. Whatever the command relationships may be at the outset, as the defensive covering force battle progresses, the covering force will be forced back toward the MBA. At this time, some or all of the covering force units fall under the control of the brigades charged with defending the MBA. Once the defensive covering force completes its mission, ground maneuver task forces reinforcing the covering force can do one of three things, separately or in combination. They can take up positions in the MBA, undergo reconstitution, or become part of the echelon reserve. The commander may use cavalry and other reconnaissance elements from the covering force as flank or rear security forces. Alternatively, he may use them to locate and follow the movement of the enemy's follow-on forces. They only establish BPs in the MBA as a last resort.

12-111. The conduct of a rearward passage of lines is an inherent part of the conduct of a defensive cover with its associated requirement to transfer responsibility for the battle between units. The commander must thoroughly plan this complex task as an integral part of the covering force mission. Passage of lines may not occur simultaneously for all covering force units. As some units begin passage, others may still be taking advantage of offensive opportunities in other parts of the security area. The covering force

commander prepares to continue fighting in those portions of the security area where his forces are successful to set up offensive opportunities for the main body.

12-112. The covering force commander must exercise caution when issuing orders within the covering force. Commanders at each echelon will have a different perspective of the battle. This is never truer than in a covering force action. For example, while the covering force commander may be told to delay forward of a river line for 72 hours, he may tell his task force commanders to defend in certain BPs, perhaps for a specified period of time. Once the period expires, the covering force should not automatically retire from the covering force area. It must create enough resistance to force the enemy to deploy his main forces. Commanders at each echelon must precisely state the mission to their subordinate commanders without telling them how to do it. (This is mission command. See FM 6-0.) All too often, a small-unit commander, when told to delay, yields to an urge to *shoot too little, pull back too early, and move back too far*. Thus, it is imperative that each commander conveys to his subordinates precisely what their mission is in the context of the overall mission. Within a covering force, company teams and troops are mainly involved in a series of defensive operations.

AREA SECURITY

12-113. Area security operations may be offensive or defensive in nature. They focus on the protected force, installation, route, or area. Forces to protect range from echelon headquarters through artillery and echelon reserves to the sustaining base. Protected installations can also be part of the sustaining base or they can constitute part of the area's infrastructure. Areas to secure range from specific points (bridges and defiles) and terrain features (ridge lines and hills) to large population centers and their adjacent areas.

12-114. Operations in noncontiguous AOs require commanders to emphasize area security. During offensive and retrograde operations, the speed at which the main body moves provides some measure of security. Rapidly moving units in open terrain can rely on technical assets to provide advance warning of enemy forces. In restrictive terrain, security forces focus on key terrain such as potential choke points.

12-115. A commander executes rear area and base security as part of an echelon's sustaining operations responsibilities or as part of stability operations and support operations. (Rear area and base security and route and convoy security operations are the subject of Appendix E.) During conventional operations, area security operations are normally economy-of-force measures designed to ensure the continued conduct of sustaining operations designed to support the echelon's decisive and shaping operations. All area security operations take advantage of the local security measures performed by all units regardless of their location within the AO.

12-116. Since civilians are normally present within the AO, a unit restrains its use of force when conducting area security operations. However, the commander always remains responsible for protecting his force and considers this responsibility when establishing his rules of engagement. Restrictions on conducting operations and using force must be clearly explained and understood

by everyone. Soldiers must understand that their actions, no matter how minor, may have far-reaching positive or negative effects. They must realize that either friendly or hostile media and psychological operations organizations can quickly exploit their actions, especially the manner in which they treat the civilian population.

12-117. Sometimes area security forces must retain readiness over long periods without contact with the enemy. This occurs most often during area security operations when the enemy knows that he is seriously overmatched in terms of available combat power. In this case, he normally tries to avoid engaging friendly forces unless it is on his terms. Forces conducting area security should not develop a false sense of security even if the enemy appears to have ceased operations within the secured area. The commander must assume that the enemy is observing his operations and is seeking routines, weak points, and lax security for the opportunity to strike with minimum risk.

LOCAL SECURITY

12-118. Local security includes any local measure taken by units against enemy actions. It involves avoiding detection by the enemy or deceiving the enemy about friendly positions and intentions. It also includes finding any enemy forces in the immediate vicinity and knowing as much about their positions and intentions as possible. Local security prevents a unit from being surprised and is an important part of maintaining the initiative. The requirement for maintaining local security is an inherent part of all operations. Units perform local security when conducting full spectrum operations, including tactical enabling operations.

12-119. Units use both active and passive measures to provide local security. Active measures include—

- Using OPs and patrols.
- Establishing specific levels of alert within the unit. The commander adjusts those levels based on the factors of METT-TC.
- Establishing stand-to times. The unit SOP should detail the unit's activities during the conduct of stand-to.

12-120. Passive local security measures include using camouflage, movement control, noise and light discipline, and proper communications procedures. It also includes employing available ground sensors, night-vision devices, and daylight sights to maintain surveillance over the area immediately around the unit.

COMBAT OUTPOSTS

12-121. A *combat outpost* is a reinforced OP capable of conducting limited combat operations. (See [Figure 12-17](#).) Using combat outposts is a technique for employing security forces in restrictive terrain that precludes mounted security forces from covering the area. They are also used when smaller OPs are in danger of being overrun by enemy forces infiltrating into and through the security area. The commander uses a combat outpost when he wants to extend the depth of his security area, when he wants his forward

OPs to remain in place until they can observe the enemy's main body, or when he anticipates that his forward OPs will be encircled by enemy forces. Both mounted and dismounted forces can employ combat outposts.

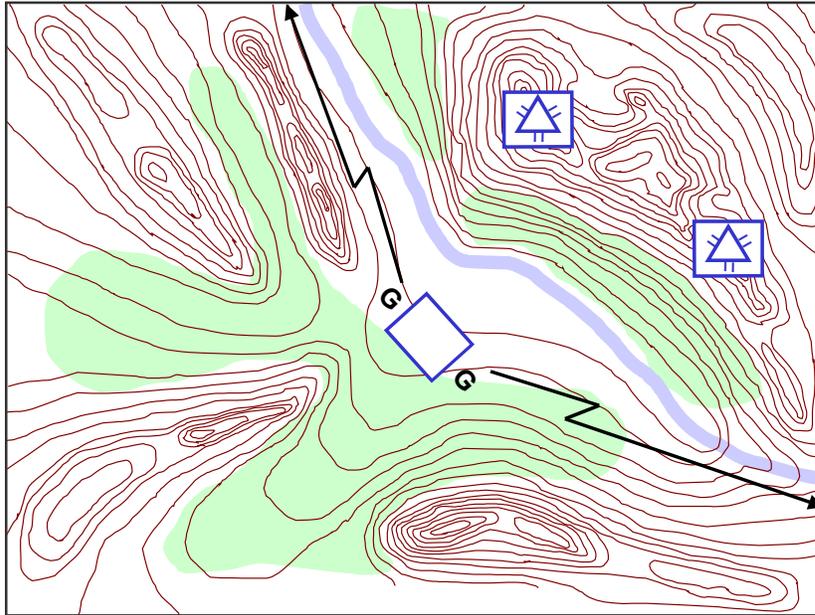


Figure 12-17. Combat Outposts

12-122. While the factors of METT-TC determine the size, location, and number of combat outposts established by a unit, a reinforced platoon typically occupies a combat outpost. A combat outpost must have sufficient resources to accomplish its designated missions, but not so much as to seriously deplete the strength of the main body. It is usually located far enough in front of the protected force to preclude enemy ground reconnaissance elements from observing the actions of the protected force.

12-123. The commander organizes a combat outpost to provide an all-around defense to withstand a superior enemy force. When the enemy has significant armored capability, a combat outpost may be given more than a standard allocation of antitank weapons. Forces manning combat outposts can conduct aggressive patrolling, engage and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements, and engage the enemy main body prior to their extraction. The commander should plan to extract his forces from the outpost before the enemy has the opportunity to overrun them.

Chapter 13

Reconnaissance Operations

You can never have too much reconnaissance.

General George S. Patton Jr., *War As I Knew It*, 1947

Reconnaissance operations are those operations undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographical or geographical characteristics and the indigenous population of a particular area. Reconnaissance primarily relies on the human dynamic rather than technical means. Reconnaissance is a focused collection effort. It is performed before, during, and after other operations to provide information used in the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process, as well as by the commander in order to formulate, confirm, or modify his course of action (COA). The four forms of reconnaissance are route, zone, area, and reconnaissance in force.

13-1. Reconnaissance identifies terrain characteristics, enemy and friendly obstacles to movement, and the disposition of enemy forces and civilian population so the commander can maneuver his forces freely and rapidly. Reconnaissance prior to unit movements and occupation of assembly areas is critical to protecting the force and preserving combat power. It also keeps the force free from contact as long as possible so that it can concentrate on its decisive operation.

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RECONNAISSANCE OBJECTIVE

13-2. The commander orients his reconnaissance assets by identifying a reconnaissance objective within the area of operation (AO). **The reconnaissance objective is a terrain feature, geographic area, or an enemy force about which the commander wants to obtain additional information.** The reconnaissance objective clarifies the intent of the reconnaissance effort by specifying the most important result to obtain from the reconnaissance effort. Every reconnaissance mission must specify a reconnaissance objective. The commander assigns a reconnaissance objective based on his priority information requirements (PIR) resulting from the IPB process and the reconnaissance asset's capabilities and limitations. The reconnaissance objective can be information about a specific geographical location, such as the cross-country trafficability of a specific area, a specific enemy activity to be confirmed or denied, or a specific enemy unit to be located and tracked. When the reconnaissance unit does not have enough time to complete all the tasks associated with a specific form of reconnaissance, it uses the reconnaissance objective to guide it in setting priorities.

13-3. A commander may need to provide additional detailed instructions beyond the reconnaissance objective, such as the specific tasks he wants accomplished or the priority of tasks. He does this by issuing additional guidance to his reconnaissance unit or by specifying these instructions in his tasks to his subordinate units in the operation order. For example, if, based on all technical and human intelligence (HUMINT) sources, a division G2 concludes that the enemy is not in an area and the terrain appears to be trafficable without obstacles, the division commander may decide he does not need a detailed reconnaissance effort forward of his unit. He may direct his cavalry squadron to conduct a zone reconnaissance mission with guidance to move rapidly and report by exception terrain obstacles that will significantly slow the movement of his subordinate maneuver brigades. Alternatively, when the objective is to locate an enemy force, the reconnaissance objective would be that force, and additional guidance would be to conduct only that terrain reconnaissance necessary to find the enemy and develop the situation.

RECONNAISSANCE FUNDAMENTALS

13-4. The seven fundamentals of successful reconnaissance operations are as follows:

- Ensure continuous reconnaissance.
- Do not keep reconnaissance assets in reserve.
- Orient on the reconnaissance objective.
- Report information rapidly and accurately.
- Retain freedom of maneuver.
- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Develop the situation rapidly.

ENSURE CONTINUOUS RECONNAISSANCE

13-5. Effective reconnaissance is continuous. The commander conducts reconnaissance before, during, and after all operations. Before an operation,

reconnaissance focuses on filling gaps in information about the enemy and the terrain. During an operation, reconnaissance focuses on providing the commander with updated information that verifies the enemy's composition, dispositions, and intentions as the battle progresses. This allows the commander to verify which COA is actually being adopted by the enemy and determine if his plan is still valid based on actual events in the AO. After an operation, reconnaissance focuses on maintaining contact with the enemy to determine his next move and collecting information necessary for planning subsequent operations. When information regarding the current operation is adequate, reconnaissance focuses on gathering information for branches and sequels to current plans. As a minimum, reconnaissance is conducted continuously as an integral part of all security missions, including the conduct of local security for forces not in contact. (See [Chapter 12](#).)

13-6. Reconnaissance operations over extended distances and time may require pacing reconnaissance assets to maintain the effort, or rotating units to maintain continuous coverage. The human and technical assets used in the reconnaissance effort must be allowed time for rest, resupply, troop leading procedures, additional and refresher training, and preventative maintenance checks and services. The commander must determine not only where, but also when he will need his maximum reconnaissance effort and pace his reconnaissance assets to ensure that adequate assets are available at critical times and places.

DO NOT KEEP RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS IN RESERVE

13-7. Reconnaissance assets, like artillery assets, are never kept in reserve. When committed, reconnaissance assets use all of their resources to accomplish the mission. This does not mean that all assets are committed all the time. The commander uses his reconnaissance assets based on their capabilities and METT-TC to achieve the maximum coverage needed to answer the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR). At times, this requires the commander to withhold or position reconnaissance assets to ensure that they are available at critical times and places. The rest required by reconnaissance assets to sustain the reconnaissance effort is not to be obtained by placing them in reserve. However, all reconnaissance assets should be treated as committed assets with specific missions assigned at all times. Units with multiple roles, specifically armored and air cavalry, that can conduct reconnaissance, security, and other combat missions in an economy-of-force role may be kept as a reserve for security or combat missions.

ORIENT ON THE RECONNAISSANCE OBJECTIVE

13-8. The commander uses the reconnaissance objective to focus his unit's reconnaissance efforts. Commanders of subordinate reconnaissance elements remain focused on achieving this objective, regardless of what their forces encounter during the mission. When time, limitations of unit capabilities, or enemy action prevents a unit from accomplishing all the tasks normally associated with a particular form of reconnaissance, the unit uses the reconnaissance objective to focus the reconnaissance effort.

REPORT INFORMATION RAPIDLY AND ACCURATELY

13-9. Reconnaissance assets must acquire and report accurate and timely information on the enemy, civil considerations, and the terrain over which operations are to be conducted. Information may quickly lose its value. Reconnaissance units report exactly what they see and, if appropriate, what they do not see. Seemingly unimportant information may be extremely important when combined with other information. Negative reports are as important as reports of enemy activity. Failure to report tells the commander nothing. The unit information management plan ensures that unit reconnaissance assets have the proper communication equipment to support the integrated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) plan.

RETAIN FREEDOM OF MANEUVER

13-10. Reconnaissance assets must retain battlefield mobility to successfully complete their missions. If these assets are decisively engaged, reconnaissance stops and a battle for survival begins. Reconnaissance assets must have clear engagement criteria that support the maneuver commander's intent. They must employ proper movement and reconnaissance techniques, use overwatching fires, and standing operating procedures (SOP). Initiative and knowledge of both the terrain and the enemy reduce the likelihood of decisive engagement and help maintain freedom of movement. Prior to initial contact, the reconnaissance unit adopts a combat formation designed to gain contact with the smallest possible friendly element. This provides the unit with the maximum opportunity for maneuver and enables it to avoid having the entire unit become decisively engaged. The IPB process can identify anticipated areas of likely contact to the commander. Using indirect fires to provide suppression and obscuration as well as destroy point targets is a method reconnaissance assets use to retain their freedom of maneuver.

GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT

13-11. Once a unit conducting reconnaissance gains contact with the enemy, it maintains that contact unless the commander directing the reconnaissance orders otherwise or the survival of the unit is at risk. This does not mean that individual scout and reconnaissance teams cannot break contact with the enemy. The commander of the unit conducting reconnaissance is responsible for maintaining contact using all available resources. That contact can range from surveillance to close combat. Surveillance, combined with stealth, is often sufficient to maintain contact and is the preferred method. Units conducting reconnaissance avoid combat unless it is necessary to gain essential information, in which case the units use maneuver (fire and movement) to maintain contact while avoiding decisive engagement.

DEVELOP THE SITUATION RAPIDLY

13-12. When a reconnaissance asset encounters an enemy force or an obstacle, it must quickly determine the threat it faces. For an enemy force, it must determine the enemy's composition, dispositions, activities, and movements and assess the implications of that information. For an obstacle, it must determine the type and extent of the obstacle and whether it is covered by fire. Obstacles can provide the attacker with information concerning the location

of enemy forces, weapon capabilities, and organization of fires. In most cases, the reconnaissance unit developing the situation uses actions on contact. (See [Chapter 4](#) for a discussion of actions on contact.)

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

13-13. Military history contains numerous examples of the importance of reconnaissance operations. The following historical example illustrates the major role of reconnaissance operations in ensuring the success of an operation. This non-US, medieval example illustrates that the study of other armies and other times has a great deal to contribute in helping the tactician understand the art and science of tactics.

The Battle of the Sajo River

Reconnaissance was critical in determining enemy dispositions and taking advantage of the terrain in this and many other Mongol battles. The Mongol army conducted continuous reconnaissance with a definite reconnaissance objective, and a significant part of their success resulted from their reconnaissance operations. During operations, light cavalry preceded each of their army's main columns performing reconnaissance. They reported on terrain and weather conditions as well as the enemy's size, location, and movements. If a Mongol column met an enemy force that it could defeat, it did so. If it could not, its light cavalry maintained contact with the enemy, developed the situation to its advantage, and maintained freedom of movement. The Mongol light cavalry inflicted casualties and disrupted the enemy's movements while the main Mongol army deployed for action.

In March 1241, a Mongol army of some 70,000 crossed the Carpathian Mountains from Russia into the Hungarian Plain. By mid-April, its light cavalry located the 100,000-man Hungarian army near the cities of Buda and Pest on the Danube River. In response, the Mongol army concentrated its previously dispersed columns as it approached the Danube. Once that the Mongols knew that they had been detected by the Hungarians, they deliberately withdrew about 100 miles northeast and led the Hungarians to a previously selected spot, Mohi Heath, on the Sajo River. The Mongols crossed the Sajo using an existing stone bridge and camped east of the river. The Hungarians followed and halted on the west bank, built a camp, took the stone bridge, and left a bridgehead on the east bank. Mongol reconnaissance discovered the location and dispositions within the Hungarian camp as well as a river-crossing site north of the camp. After dark, the main body of the Mongol army moved to cross the river at the crossing site. In addition to using the ford, the Mongols constructed a bridge to aid their crossing.

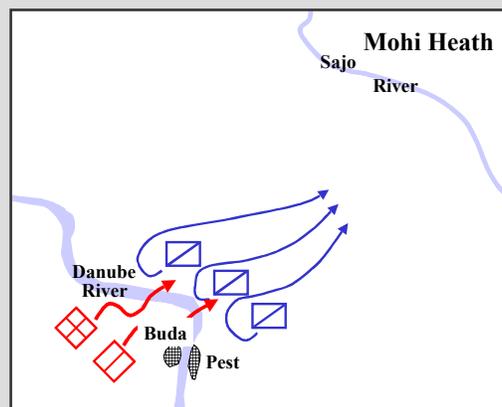


Figure 13-1. Mongol Army Route

The next morning, the remainder of the Mongol army conducted a supporting attack on the Hungarian force at the stone bridge, drawing the Hungarian army out of its camp to fight. While the supporting Mongol forces succeeded in recrossing the Sajo via the stone bridge, the fighting was hard and they nearly lost their battle while waiting for the main body to come to their support. After 2 hours, the Mongol main body fell on the Hungarian rear and flank, driving the Hungarians back into their camp. As was Mongol practice, they deliberately left an escape route from the enemy camp open. The ensuing Mongol pursuit destroyed the Hungarian army when they tried to withdraw from their camp.

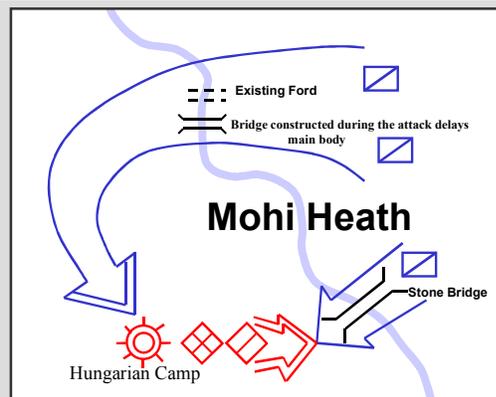


Figure 13-2. Mongol Army Pursuit

CHARACTERISTICS OF RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

13-14. The responsibility for conducting reconnaissance does not reside solely with specifically organized units. Every unit has an implied mission to report information about the terrain, civilian activities, and friendly and enemy dispositions, regardless of its battlefield location and primary function. Frontline troops and reconnaissance patrols of maneuver units at all echelons collect information on enemy units with which they are in contact. In rear areas, reserve maneuver forces, fire support assets, air defense, military police, host nation agencies, combat support, and combat service support elements observe and report civilian and enemy activity. Although all units conduct reconnaissance, those specifically trained in reconnaissance tasks are ground and air cavalry, scouts, long-range reconnaissance units, and Special Forces. Some branches, such as the Corps of Engineers and the Chemical Corps, have specific reconnaissance tasks to perform that complement the force's overall reconnaissance effort. However, the corps and division commanders will primarily use their organic cavalry and intelligence elements to conduct reconnaissance operations.

13-15. At battalion level and above, the commander assigns missions to his ISR assets based on their organization, equipment, and training. The commander must know the capabilities and limitations of his available reconnaissance assets to ensure the employment of these assets within their capabilities and on missions for which they have been trained and equipped. [Table 13-1](#) on page 13-6 shows the typical nesting of ISR assets available at different tactical echelons.

Table 13-1. Typical ISR Assets Available

	Platoon	Co/Tm	BN/TF	Brigade	Division	Corps	EAC
Observation Post	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Reconnaissance Patrol	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Combat Outpost	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Scout Platoon	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX			
Brigade Recon Troop		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Cavalry Troop (Sep Bde)		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Chemical Reconnaissance		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
FA COLT Team	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX			
FA Target Acq Systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	
ADA Target Acq Systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Grd Surveillance Radars		AAA	XXX	XXX			
Other MI Collection Sys			AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Division Cavalry Squadron				AAA	XXX	XXX	
Air Cavalry				AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles			AAA*	XXX*	XXX	XXX	XXX
Cavalry Regiment					AAA	XXX	XXX
Long-Range Surveillance Unit					AAA*	XXX	XXX
SOF (SF/RGR)					AAA	AAA	XXX
Technical Surveillance Platforms			AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX
XXX = Echelon controls or routinely tasks the asset.							
AAA = Echelon can routinely expect the information from that source to be made available to it.							
* Can be found in some divisions.							

13-16. A commander primarily conducts reconnaissance with a combination of manned ground and air assets supported by technical systems. Acting in concert, these assets create a synergy, using the strengths of one system to overcome the weaknesses of another. To produce this synergy, the commander must delineate reporting procedures for all units to pass on information gathered during reconnaissance operations. This facilitates rapid mission execution.

13-17. Dedicated reconnaissance assets are easily overtasked and overextended. The commander uses all available resources, not just reconnaissance units, to satisfy his information requirements. Ground reconnaissance can involve assets not specifically tailored for the mission. Engineer reconnaissance units collect information on how the terrain affects the movement of enemy and friendly forces. Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) reconnaissance teams can determine the presence or absence of NBC contamination and the extent of that contamination. Artillery forward observers, fire support teams, and combat observation and lasing teams (COLTs) report combat information as they observe the battlefield. Air defense units observe and report enemy aircraft and air corridors in use.

13-18. Ground reconnaissance elements are generally limited in the depth to which they can conduct reconnaissance. However, they can operate under weather conditions that prohibit air reconnaissance operations.

13-19. Reconnaissance conducted by manned Army aviation platforms complements ground reconnaissance by greatly increasing the speed and depth with which reconnaissance operations can be conducted over a given area. Air reconnaissance can operate easily over terrain that hinders ground operations, such as swamps, extremely rugged terrain, or deep snow. Aviation assets can operate at a considerable depth, far in advance of the normal capability of dedicated ground reconnaissance elements normally focused on the close fight. Thus, they provide the commander with additional time to attack or otherwise react to the enemy's presence. Scout and attack helicopters use their optics, video, thermal imaging, and communications capabilities to detect and report the enemy. All types of aviation units generate pilot reports in the course of conducting their primary missions. These reports are often a source of valuable combat information.

13-20. While several technical systems can perform reconnaissance, the majority of these types of systems can be more accurately described as surveillance platforms. Surveillance complements reconnaissance by cueing the commitment of reconnaissance assets against specific locations or specially targeted enemy units. Surveillance provides information while reconnaissance answers the commander's specific questions.

13-21. Military intelligence (MI) assets conduct both surveillance and reconnaissance missions. They provide intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) support, such as electronic intercept, ground surveillance radars, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and remotely emplaced sensors. Theater and national reconnaissance and surveillance systems provide broadcast dissemination of information and intelligence to the commander and can provide near real-time imagery as a part of an integrated ISR effort. Artillery and air defense target acquisition radars can complement MI surveillance systems as a part

of the ISR effort. HUMINT collection occurs through face-to-face interrogation of captured enemy soldiers, screening of the civilian population, and debriefing of friendly soldiers, such as scouts and SOF.

FORMS OF RECONNAISSANCE

13-22. The four forms of reconnaissance operations are—

- Route reconnaissance.
- Zone reconnaissance.
- Area reconnaissance.
- Reconnaissance in force (RIF).

Table 13-2 shows what types of dedicated reconnaissance units are typically assigned the missions of conducting the four forms of reconnaissance operations.

Table 13-2. Dedicated Reconnaissance Units and Forms of Reconnaissance Operations

	SCOUT PLATOON	TROOP/CO TEAM	AIR CAV TROOP	AR CAV SQD/ BN	AR CAV REGT/ BDE	DIV
Route	X	X	X			
Zone	X	X	X	X	X	
Area	X	X	X	X	X	
Recon in Force				X	X	X

ROUTE RECONNAISSANCE

13-23. **Route reconnaissance** is a form of reconnaissance that focuses along a specific line of communication, such as a road, railway, or cross-country mobility corridor. It provides new or updated information on route conditions, such as obstacles and bridge classifications, and enemy and civilian activity along the route. A route reconnaissance includes not only the route itself, but also all terrain along the route from which the enemy could influence the friendly force's movement. The commander normally assigns this mission when he wants to use a specific route for friendly movement.

Organization of Forces

13-24. The commander may assign a route reconnaissance as a separate mission or as a specified task for a unit conducting a zone or area reconnaissance. A scout platoon can conduct a route reconnaissance over only one route at a time. For larger organizations, the number of scout platoons available directly influences the number of routes that can be covered at one time. Integrating ground, air, and technical assets assures a faster and more complete route reconnaissance.

13-25. A ground reconnaissance effort is essential if the mission is to conduct detailed reconnaissance of the route or the mission requires clearing the enemy from an AO that includes the route and the terrain around the route. The

places these control measures on terrain features that are identifiable from both the ground and the air to assist in air-to-ground coordination.

Tasks

13-27. Unless the commander orders otherwise, the unit conducting a route reconnaissance performs specific tasks within the limits of its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission. He must then issue further guidance on which tasks the unit must complete or the priority of each task, which is usually clear from the reconnaissance objective. If, after starting the reconnaissance, the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as clearing the enemy or reducing obstacles to create lanes as required to support the maneuver of the main body along the route, it must report and await further instructions.

13-28. Route reconnaissance tasks are as follows:

- Find, report, and clear within capabilities all enemy forces that can influence movement along the route.
- Determine the trafficability of the route; can it support the friendly force?
- Reconnoiter all terrain that the enemy can use to dominate movement along the route, such as choke points, ambush sites, and pickup zones, landing zones, and drop zones.
- Reconnoiter all built-up areas, contaminated areas, and lateral routes along the route.
- Evaluate and classify all bridges, defiles, overpasses and underpasses, and culverts along the route.
- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built-up areas) along the route.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Report the above route information to the headquarters initiating the route reconnaissance mission, to include providing a sketch map or a route overlay.

(See FM 3-34.212 and FM 3-20.95 for additional information concerning route reconnaissance.)

ZONE RECONNAISSANCE

13-29. ***Zone reconnaissance is a form of reconnaissance that involves a directed effort to obtain detailed information on all routes, obstacles, terrain, and enemy forces within a zone defined by boundaries.*** Obstacles include both existing and reinforcing, as well as areas with NBC contamination. The commander assigns a zone reconnaissance mission when he needs additional information on a zone before committing other forces in the zone. It is appropriate when the enemy situation is vague, existing knowledge of the terrain is limited, or combat operations have altered the terrain. A zone reconnaissance may include several route or area reconnaissance missions assigned to subordinate units.

13-30. A zone reconnaissance is normally a deliberate, time-consuming process. It takes more time than any other reconnaissance mission, so the commander must allow adequate time to conduct it. A zone reconnaissance is normally conducted over an extended distance. It requires all ground elements executing the zone reconnaissance to be employed abreast of each other. However, when the reconnaissance objective is the enemy force, a commander may forgo a detailed reconnaissance of the zone and focus his assets on those named areas of interest (NAI) that would reveal enemy dispositions and intentions. A reconnaissance unit can never disregard terrain when focusing on the enemy. However, it minimizes its terrain reconnaissance to that which may influence an NAI.

Organization of Forces

13-31. Considerations for organizing a zone reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a route reconnaissance except that several subordinate units, rather than just one unit, operate abreast during the zone reconnaissance. If the commander expects significant enemy forces to be found within the zone, he should provide the force conducting the zone reconnaissance with a reserve. This reserve should have adequate combat power to extract elements of the reconnaissance force from decisive engagement. In an armored cavalry squadron of an armored cavalry regiment, the tank company normally performs this task. If a unit conducts a zone reconnaissance out of supporting range of the main body, the commander ordering the zone reconnaissance provides the reconnaissance unit with adequate fire support assets that can move with the reconnaissance unit.

Control Measures

13-32. The commander controls a zone reconnaissance by assigning an AO to the unit conducting the reconnaissance. (See Figure 13-4.) The lateral boundaries, a LD, and a LOA define this AO. Within the AO, the force conducting the zone reconnaissance further divides the AO with additional lateral boundaries to define subordinate unit AOs. Subordinate AOs are not necessarily the same size. Phase lines and contact points, located where the commander determines that it is necessary for adjacent units to make physical contact, are used to coordinate the movement of elements operating abreast. He may further designate the time that this physical contact takes place. He uses

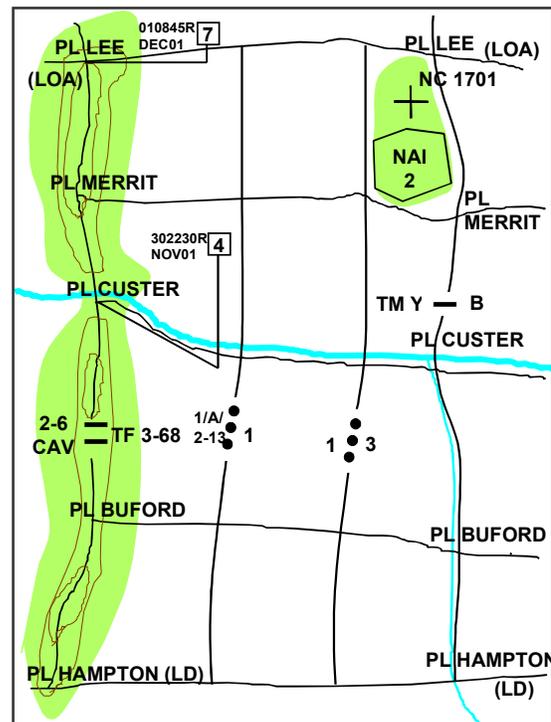


Figure 13-4. Zone Reconnaissance Control Measures

checkpoints to indicate critical terrain features and to coordinate air and ground teamwork. He may use fire support coordinating measures to control direct and indirect fires. He uses additional control measures as necessary. In addition, the commander assigning the zone reconnaissance mission must specify the route the reconnaissance unit must use to enter the AO. All control measures should be on recognizable terrain when possible.

Tasks

13-33. Unless the commander orders otherwise, a unit conducting a zone reconnaissance performs the following tasks within the limits of its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission. He must then issue further guidance on which tasks the unit must complete or the priority of tasks, which is usually clear from the reconnaissance objective. After starting the reconnaissance, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as clear enemy or reduce obstacles in zone to create lanes as required to support the main body's maneuver, it must report and await further instructions.

13-34. Zone reconnaissance tasks are as follows:

- Find and report all enemy forces within the zone.
- Clear all enemy forces in the designated AO within the capability of the unit conducting reconnaissance.
- Determine the trafficability of all terrain within the zone, including built-up areas.
- Locate and determine the extent of all contaminated areas in the zone.
- Evaluate and classify all bridges, defiles, overpasses, underpasses, and culverts in the zone.
- Locate any fords, crossing sites, or bypasses for existing and reinforcing obstacles (including built-up areas) in the zone.
- Locate all obstacles and create lanes as specified in execution orders.
- Report the above information to the commander directing the zone reconnaissance, to include providing a sketch map or overlay.

AREA RECONNAISSANCE

13-35. **Area reconnaissance is a form of reconnaissance that focuses on obtaining detailed information about the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area.** This area may include a town, a ridgeline, woods, an airhead, or any other feature critical to operations. The area may consist of a single point, such as a bridge or an installation. Areas are normally smaller than zones and are not usually contiguous to other friendly areas targeted for reconnaissance. Because the area is smaller, an area reconnaissance moves faster than a zone reconnaissance.

Organization of Forces

13-36. Considerations for the organization of forces for an area reconnaissance are the same as for organizing a zone reconnaissance. (See paragraphs 13-31 to 13-33.)

Control Measures

13-37. The commander assigning an area reconnaissance specifies the area for reconnaissance with a single continuous line to enclose the area to reconnoiter. Alternatively, he may designate the area by marking lateral boundaries, a LD, and a LOA. An area reconnaissance mission always specifies the route to take in moving to the area. The commander of the unit conducting the area reconnaissance mission can use control measures for a zone reconnaissance within the AO to control the operation of his subordinate elements. (See Figure 13-5.)

Tasks

13-38. The tasks for an area reconnaissance are also the same as for a zone reconnaissance. (See paragraph 13-34.)

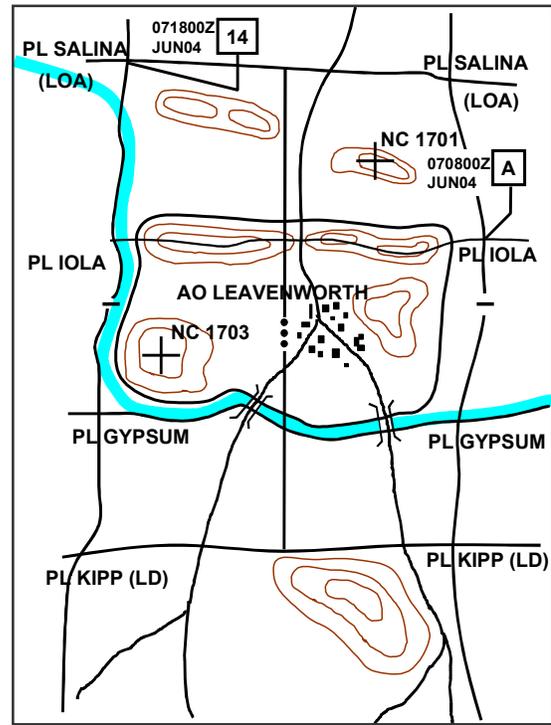


Figure 13-5. Area Reconnaissance Control Measures

RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE

13-39. A *reconnaissance in force* is a deliberate combat operation designed to discover or test the enemy's strength, dispositions, and reactions or to obtain other information. Battalion-size task forces or larger organizations usually conduct a reconnaissance in force (RIF) mission. A commander assigns a RIF mission when the enemy is known to be operating within an area and the commander cannot obtain adequate intelligence by any other means. A unit may also conduct a RIF in restrictive-type terrain where the enemy is likely to ambush smaller reconnaissance forces. A RIF is an aggressive reconnaissance, conducted as an offensive operation with clearly stated reconnaissance objectives. The overall goal of a RIF is to determine enemy weaknesses that can be exploited. It differs from other reconnaissance operations because it is normally conducted only to gain information about the enemy and not the terrain.

Organization of Forces

13-40. While specifically trained and equipped units usually conduct the other forms of reconnaissance operations, any maneuver force can conduct a RIF. The force conducting a RIF is organized as if it is conducting offensive operations. However, the lack of enemy information dictates that the force be large and strong enough to develop the situation, protect the force, cause the enemy to react, and put the enemy at some risk. The less known about the

enemy, the stronger the force conducting the RIF must be. Because of the lack of information about the enemy, a commander normally conducts a RIF as a movement to contact or a series of frontal attacks across a broad frontage.

Control Measures

13-41. The control measures for a RIF are the same as for offensive operations. The operation is conducted as a movement to contact with limited objectives. (Chapter 4 discusses the conduct of a movement to contact.)

Tasks

13-42. A unit conducting a RIF performs the following tasks within the limits of its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission. He must then issue further guidance on which tasks the unit must complete or the priority of tasks, which is usually clear from the reconnaissance objective. After starting the RIF, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, it must report and await further instructions. Reconnaissance in force tasks are—

- Penetrating the enemy's security area and determining its size and depth.
- Determining the location and disposition of enemy main positions.
- Attacking enemy main positions and attempting to cause the enemy to react by using local reserves or major counterattack forces, employing fire support assets, adjusting positions, and employing specific weapon systems.
- Determining weaknesses in the enemy's dispositions to exploit.

PLANNING A RECONNAISSANCE

13-43. Reconnaissance contributes significantly to a commander's battlefield visualization. It supports the overall integrated ISR plan, which in turn supports the commander's decision making process.

13-44. The commander must make judicious yet aggressive use of his reconnaissance assets. Reconnaissance planning ensures that available reconnaissance assets produce the greatest results. Because there are never enough assets to accomplish all tasks, the commander must set priorities. Generating many unfocused missions rapidly wears down assets, making them ineffective. Improperly using assets can also leave an enemy vulnerability undiscovered.

13-45. The commander ensures the coordination and synchronization of his reconnaissance effort at all echelons. Since the need for reconnaissance cuts across all parts of the operational framework and core functions, reconnaissance operations demand an integrated approach to planning, preparation, and execution. The two habitual participants in the reconnaissance planning process are the echelon operations and intelligence staff officers. The echelon operations staff officer (G3 or S3) has primary staff responsibility for reconnaissance planning, allocating, and tasking resources. Normally, he has staff

responsibility for ground and air reconnaissance assets, which includes engineers, NBC, and artillery. The echelon intelligence staff officer (G2 or S2) has primary responsibility for ground surveillance systems and special electronics mission aircraft. The commander ensures these two staff elements adopt an integrated combined arms approach to planning, preparing, executing, and assessing reconnaissance.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE PLAN

13-46. The commander closely integrates reconnaissance missions with other intelligence-collection efforts to ensure that each ISR asset is used to its best advantage. The echelon staff, primarily the intelligence staff officer, identifies gaps in the intelligence available, based on the initial IPB and the situationally dependent CCIR. The IPB process helps determine factors that impact on the reconnaissance effort, such as—

- Avenues of approach that support friendly movement and exploit enemy weaknesses.
- Key terrain, choke points, obstacles, and danger areas.
- Enemy positions, especially flanks that can be exploited.
- Observation points.

The reconnaissance effort and the IPB process are interactive and iterative, each feeding the other. (See FM 2-0 for more information on the intelligence cycle. FM 2-01.3 addresses the IPB process.)

13-47. The intelligence staff officer develops an initial integrated ISR plan to acquire information to help answer those PIR based on available reconnaissance and surveillance assets. The ISR plan assigns specific intelligence acquisition tasks to specific units for action. It integrates surveillance and reconnaissance into the overall intelligence-collection plan.

13-48. The echelon operations staff officer uses the initial ISR plan as the base in preparing the ISR annex to the operation order. The ISR annex provides for the flexible execution of reconnaissance tasks, including providing for adequate command and control, indirect fires, and logistics when completed. (FM 5-0 discusses reconnaissance and the military decision making process.)

RECONNAISSANCE-PULL VERSUS RECONNAISSANCE-PUSH

13-49. In reconnaissance-pull, the commander uses the products of the IPB process in an interactive and iterative way. He obtains combat information from his reconnaissance assets to determine a preferred COA for the tactical situation presented by the factors of METT-TC. In reconnaissance-push, the commander uses the products of the IPB process in an interactive, but not iterative, way with combat information obtained from his reconnaissance assets in support of a previously determined COA. The time available to a commander is normally the chief reason for preferring one method over the other.

13-50. The time required to develop a preferred COA can give the enemy enough time to recover and prepare so that an objective which could be obtained with few casualties one day will cost far more to seize the next day.

There is no available model that a commander can use to determine how much is enough; that determination is part of the tactical art.

RECONNAISSANCE MANAGEMENT

13-51. No single reconnaissance asset can answer every intelligence requirement, and there are rarely enough reconnaissance assets to cover every requirement. The echelon staff uses a mix of reconnaissance management methods, such as cueing, mixing, redundancy, and task organizing, in an attempt to use limited assets most effectively and collect the most critical information with the fewest assets as quickly as possible.

13-52. **Cueing is the integration of one or more types of reconnaissance or surveillance systems to provide information that directs follow-on collecting of more detailed information by another system.** Cueing helps to focus limited reconnaissance assets, especially limited ground reconnaissance assets, which can rarely examine every part of a large area closely. Electronic, thermal, visual, audio, and other technical assets with wide-area surveillance capabilities, often working from aerial platforms, can quickly determine areas of enemy concentration or areas where there is no enemy presence. These assets may cue ground and air reconnaissance assets to investigate specific areas to confirm and amplify information developed by technical assets. For example, joint surveillance target attack radar system (JSTARS) and Guardrail-equipped aircraft can cover large areas and cue ground reconnaissance or UAVs once an enemy force is identified. The commander may dispatch ground reconnaissance or UAVs to verify the information and track the enemy for targeting purposes. Similarly, a ground reconnaissance asset could cue surveillance assets. The key point is to use reconnaissance assets based on their capabilities and use the complementary capabilities of other assets to verify and expand information available.

13-53. **Mixing is using two or more different assets to collect against the same intelligence requirement.** Employing a mix of systems not only increases the probability of collection, but also tends to provide more complete information. For example, a JSTARS aircraft may detect and locate a moving enemy tactical force, while the G-2 analysis and control element uses organic and supporting assets to determine its identity, organizational structure, and indications of future plans. Employing a mix of systems is always desirable if the situation and available resources permit. Mixing systems can also help uncover deception attempts by revealing discrepancies in information reported by different collectors.

13-54. **Redundancy is using two or more like assets to collect against the same intelligence requirement.** Based on the priority of the information requirement, the commander must decide which NAI justifies having more than one asset covering it. When more than one asset covers the same NAI, a backup is available in the event that one asset cannot reach the NAI in time, the first asset suffers mechanical failure, or the enemy detects and engages the first asset. Redundancy also improves the chances that the required information will be collected.

13-55. To increase the effectiveness and survivability of a reconnaissance asset, the commander may task organize it by placing additional assets under

the control of the unit. For example, to conduct an area reconnaissance of possible river crossing sites at extended distances from a division's current location, a ground reconnaissance troop of the division cavalry squadron could be task-organized with a COLT, a signal retransmission element, an engineer reconnaissance element, and a mechanized infantry platoon. The engineers would provide additional technical information on proposed crossing sites; the signal retransmission elements would allow the reconnaissance troop's combat net radios to reach the division tactical command post. The COLT provides additional observation, lazing, and fire coordination capabilities. Last, the infantry platoon would provide additional protection for the reconnaissance troop.

SUSTAINMENT

13-56. Sustaining reconnaissance assets before, during, and after their commitment is a vital part of maintaining the commander's capability to conduct reconnaissance. Because the way that a commander deploys his reconnaissance assets in a given situation depends on the factors of METT-TC, the methods he employs to sustain those assets are equally situationally dependent. He must address them as part of the planning process for each reconnaissance operation.

13-57. Reconnaissance elements frequently operate in locations distant from their organic sustaining base. In this event, reconnaissance elements must either carry a large enough basic load or be task organized with those assets necessary to ensure their sustainment until they can be relieved. With either COA, casualty evacuation remains a problem. An alternative solution would be to plan and coordinate their sustainment from units near their operating locations.

EXECUTING A RECONNAISSANCE

13-58. Reconnaissance can be characterized as either stealthy or aggressive. Depending on how they are employed, scout helicopters and other aerial platforms, as well as mounted and dismounted ground reconnaissance, can be characterized as either stealthy or aggressive.

13-59. A key factor in reconnaissance execution is the time available to conduct the reconnaissance mission. The commander must recognize that he accepts increased risk to both the reconnaissance element and the main body when he accelerates the pace of reconnaissance. This risk can be somewhat offset by employing air reconnaissance and technical means to cover open terrain or areas of lower threat.

13-60. Aggressive reconnaissance is characterized by the speed and manner in which the reconnaissance force develops the situation once it makes contact with an enemy force. A unit conducting aggressive reconnaissance uses both direct- and indirect-fire systems and movement to rapidly develop the situation. Firepower, aggressive exploitation of actions on contact, operations security, and training are required for the unit to survive and accomplish its mission when conducting aggressive reconnaissance. Mounted reconnaissance is normally characterized as aggressive.

13-61. Stealthy reconnaissance emphasizes avoiding detection and engagement by the enemy. It is more time consuming than aggressive reconnaissance. Stealthy reconnaissance takes maximum advantage of covered and concealed terrain and the reduced battlefield signatures associated with systems that typically conduct stealthy reconnaissance, such as dismounted scouts. However, stealth cannot be guaranteed. As a result, units attempting to conduct stealthy reconnaissance must also be drilled to react correctly once the enemy makes contact, and they must have immediate access to supporting fires.

13-62. The commander considers the factors of METT-TC to determine whether to conduct mounted or dismounted reconnaissance. Conditions that may result in a decision to conduct mounted or aerial reconnaissance include—

- Time is limited.
- Detailed reconnaissance is not required.
- Air units are available to perform coordinated reconnaissance with the ground assets.
- The IPB process has provided detailed information on the enemy.
- Terrain is relatively open.
- Environmental conditions permit this type of reconnaissance. Deep snow and muddy terrain greatly hinder mounted reconnaissance.
- Dismounted reconnaissance cannot complete the mission within existing time constraints, while mounted reconnaissance can.

13-63. The following conditions may result in the commander directing a dismounted reconnaissance effort:

- Time is available.
- Detailed reconnaissance is required.
- Stealth is required.
- The IPB process indicates close proximity to enemy positions.
- The reconnaissance force encounters danger areas.
- Restrictive terrain limits the effectiveness of mounted reconnaissance.

FM 3-21.92 describes dismounted patrolling in detail.

13-64. Typically, air reconnaissance operates in concert with ground reconnaissance units. (Friendly ground forces in an area offer additional security to aircrews.) Aviation units can insert surveillance teams at observation posts. Aircraft can observe and provide security on station for extended times using rotation techniques if they have detailed requirements in advance. Dismounting an aircrew member to evaluate bridges, fords, or crossing sights is a last alternative because of the danger to the aircrew and the aircraft. Before resorting to this, the aircrew uses the sophisticated systems on the aircraft to avoid risk and to avoid drawing attention to the area of interest.

13-65. Reconnaissance by fire is a technique in which a unit fires on a suspected enemy position to cause the enemy to disclose his presence by movement or return fire. This technique is appropriate when time is critical and

stealthy maneuver to further develop the situation is not possible. The fires may be either direct, indirect, or a combination. The advantage of indirect fire is that it does not give away friendly locations and usually causes the enemy to displace from the impact area. However, reconnaissance by fire may not cause a seasoned or prepared enemy force to react. Reconnaissance by fire is always characterized as aggressive.

13-66. Smoke and battlefield obscuration, fog, rain, and snow all result in reduced visibility. Generally, reconnaissance during limited-visibility conditions takes more time. However, these conditions provide for better stealth and enhance the survivability of reconnaissance assets. A commander frequently employs dismounted reconnaissance patrols at night. These patrols use light amplification and thermal observation devices, electronic surveillance devices, and surveillance radars to compensate for reduced visibility conditions.

13-67. In limited visibility, mounted reconnaissance tends to focus on road networks. The enemy can detect engine and track movement noises of friendly mounted reconnaissance elements at considerable distances at night, which makes them susceptible to ambush. Strict sound and light discipline, along with masking sounds, such as artillery fires, helps a mounted reconnaissance force from being compromised or ambushed.

13-68. High winds, extreme temperature, and loose topsoil or sand may adversely affect aerial reconnaissance. Air reconnaissance units plan their missions in much the same way as ground units. They use the same type of operations graphics and consider the same critical tasks. The air reconnaissance commander organizes his assets to accomplish his mission by considering the same IPB aspects as those associated with ground forces. He focuses on air hazards to navigation and anticipated enemy air defense capabilities. (The effects of weather and atmosphere conditions are discussed in FM 2-01.3.)

RECUPERATION AND RECONSTITUTION OF RECONNAISSANCE ASSETS

13-69. When any small unit is employed continuously for an extensive period of time, it can become ineffective. When this occurs, restoring the unit to an acceptable level of effectiveness may require either recuperation or reconstitution. Recuperation—a short break for rest, resupply, and maintenance—is often sufficient to return the unit to the desired degree of combat effectiveness. Leaders in reconnaissance units probably need more rest than their subordinates. If the recuperation period is extended, it can also be used to conduct refresher training, new equipment training, or any required specialized training for the next mission.

13-70. Units and systems performing reconnaissance are vulnerable to detection, engagement, and destruction by the enemy. When this occurs and the unit can no longer perform its primary mission, the commander must determine whether to reconstitute, by either regenerating or reorganizing the unit. (See FM 4-100.9 for additional information concerning reconstitution.)

13-71. Regenerating a unit requires significant resources. The organization two echelons above the unit being regenerated conducts the procedure. For example, a battalion task force can regenerate its scout platoon. In the

regeneration process, the battalion could use a combination of weapon system replacement operations, battle damage assessment and repair, normal replacement operations, and medical returnees to provide the needed resources. These resources, combined with training, could be used to regenerate the scout platoon. Alternatively, the commander could designate one of his line platoons as the task force's new scouts. This approach has significant training implications and requires adjustments to the line platoon's table of organization and equipment.

13-72. A unit commander can reorganize his unit with the approval of the next higher commander. For example, an armored cavalry troop commander could reorganize his two scout and two tank platoons into three platoons containing a mix of scouts and tanks. This approach to reconstitution also requires training time and other equipment resources to ensure the combat effectiveness of the resulting composite organization.

Chapter 14

Troop Movement

Aptitude for war is aptitude for movement.

Napoleon I, *Maxims of War*, 1831

Troop movement is the movement of troops from one place to another by any available means. The ability of a commander to posture his force for a decisive or shaping operation depends on his ability to move that force. The essence of battlefield agility is the capability to conduct rapid and orderly movement to concentrate the effects of combat power at decisive points and times. Successful movement places troops and equipment at their destination at the proper time, ready for combat. The three types of troop movement are administrative movement, tactical road march, and approach march.

METHODS OF TROOP MOVEMENT

14-1. Troop movements are made by foot marches, motor transport, rail, water, air, and various combinations of these methods. The method employed depends on the situation, the size and composition of the moving unit, the distance the unit must cover, the urgency of execution, and the condition of the troops. It also depends on the availability, suitability, and capacity of the different means of transportation. Troop movements over extended distances have extensive logistics considerations.

DISMOUNTED MARCHES

14-2. ***Dismounted marches***, also called foot marches, are movements of troops and equipment, mainly by foot, with limited support by vehicles. They increase the number of maneuver options available to a commander. Their positive characteristics include combat readiness—all soldiers

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can immediately respond to enemy attack without the need to dismount, ease of control, adaptability to terrain, and their independence from the existing road network. Their limitations include slow rate of movement and increased personnel fatigue—soldiers carrying heavy loads over long distances or large changes in elevation get tired. A unit conducts a dismounted march when the situation requires stealth, the distance to travel is short, transport or fuel is limited, or the situation or terrain precludes using a large number of vehicles. (FM 3-25.18 has more information on the techniques and procedures for conducting dismounted marches.)

MOUNTED MARCHES

14-3. A unit conducts mounted marches when it employs combat and tactical vehicles to move all of its personnel and equipment. Armored and mechanized units routinely conduct mounted marches. The speed of the march and the increased amounts of supplies that can accompany the unit characterize this march method. Heavy maneuver units are normally self-sufficient to conduct mounted marches over short distances. Light maneuver units and most combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units are not completely motorized and need assistance from transportation elements to conduct mounted marches. Considerations for mounted marches over extended distances include:

- The ability of the route network to support the numbers, sizes, and weights of the tactical and combat vehicles assigned to or supporting the unit making the move.
- Available refueling and maintenance sites and crew-rest areas.
- The need for recovery and evacuation assets.

(FM 4-01.30 discusses considerations for mounted marches.)

ARMY AIR MOVEMENTS

14-4. **Army air movements are operations involving the use of utility and cargo rotary-wing assets for other than air assaults.** The commander conducts air movements to move troops and equipment, to emplace systems, and to transport ammunition, fuel, and other high-value supplies. He may employ air movements as a substitute for a ground tactical movement. Army air movements are generally faster than ground tactical moves. The same general considerations that apply to air assault operations also apply to Army air movements. (See Appendix C for air assault operations. See FM 3-04.113 for additional information concerning air movement.)

14-5. Tactical forces can use rail and water modes to conduct troop movement if they are available within an area of operations (AO). Their use can provide flexibility by freeing other modes of transport for other missions. Their use normally involves a mixture of military and commercial assets, such as defense freight railway interchange railcars pulled by privately owned diesel-electric engines to transport tanks along railroad right of ways from one rail terminus to another. Responsibility for coordinating the use of railroads and waterways resides within the ARFOR headquarters within the theater of operations. (FMs 4-01.41 and 4-01.50 provide additional information concerning these two transportation modes.)

14-6. In cases of tactical necessity, a unit can accelerate its rate of movement by conducting a forced march so that it arrives at its destination quickly. Both heavy and light units can conduct a forced march. Forced marches require speed, exertion, and an increase in the number of hours marched or traveled by vehicles each day beyond normal standards. Soldiers cannot sustain forced marches for more than a short period. In a forced march, a unit may not halt as often nor for as long as recommended for maintenance, rest, feeding, and fuel. The commander must understand that immediately following a long and fast march, his soldiers and combat vehicles experience a temporary deterioration in their physical condition. The combat effectiveness and cohesion of his unit also temporarily decreases. His plan must accommodate the presence of stragglers and address the increased number of maintenance failures.

ADMINISTRATIVE MOVEMENT

14-7. *Administrative movement* is a movement in which troops and vehicles are arranged to expedite their movement and conserve time and energy when no enemy interference, except by air, is anticipated (JP 1-02). The commander conducts administrative movements only in secure areas. Examples of administrative movements include rail and highway movement within the continental United States. Once a unit deploys into a theater of war, administrative movements are the exception, not the norm. Since these types of moves are nontactical, the echelon logistics officer (the G4 or S4) usually supervises the moves. (FM 4-01.40 discusses administrative movement and convoy planning.)

TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

14-8. A *tactical road march* is a rapid movement used to relocate units within an area of operations to prepare for combat operations (FM 3-0). Security against enemy air attack is maintained and the unit is prepared to take immediate action against an enemy ambush, although contact with enemy ground forces is not expected.

14-9. The primary consideration of the tactical road march is rapid movement. However, the moving force employs security measures, even when contact with enemy ground forces is not expected. Units conducting road marches may or may not be organized into a combined arms formation. During a tactical road march, the commander is always prepared to take immediate action if the enemy attacks. (See [Figure 14-1](#), page 14-4.)

ORGANIZATION FOR A TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

14-10. The organization for a tactical road march is the march column. A ***march column*** consists of all elements using the same route for a single movement under control of a single commander. The commander organizes a march column into four elements: reconnaissance, quartering party, main body, and trail party. A brigade conducting a tactical road march is an example of a march column. The subordinate elements of a march column are a march serial and a march unit. A ***march serial*** is a major subdivision of a march column that is organized under one commander

who plans, regulates, and controls the serial. An example is a battalion serial formed from a brigade-size march column. A *march unit* is a subdivision of a march serial. It moves and halts under the control of a single commander who uses voice and visual signals. An example of a march unit is a company from a battalion-size march serial.

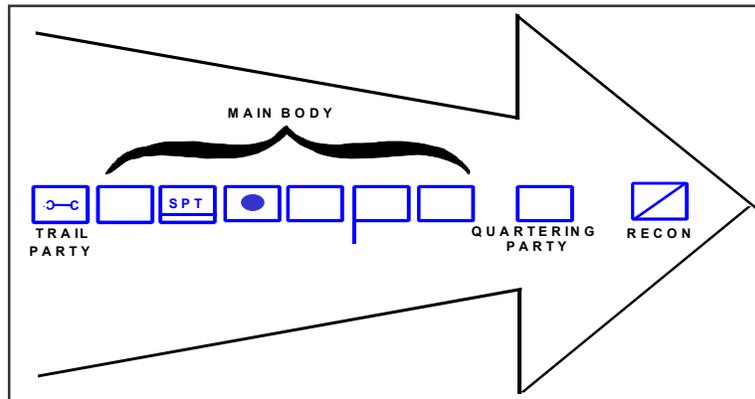


Figure 14-1. Tactical Road March

14-11. A march column provides excellent speed, control, and flexibility, but sacrifices flank security. It provides the ability to deploy forces to the front of the column. The commander uses a march column when speed is essential and enemy contact is unlikely. However, the commander spaces combat support (CS) elements, such as air defense and engineers, throughout the column to protect and support the movement. Reconnaissance elements augmented by engineer, nuclear, biological, and chemical reconnaissance, and other CS assets, as appropriate, conduct a route reconnaissance of the march routes. This reconnaissance confirms and supplements the data obtained from map studies and other headquarters.

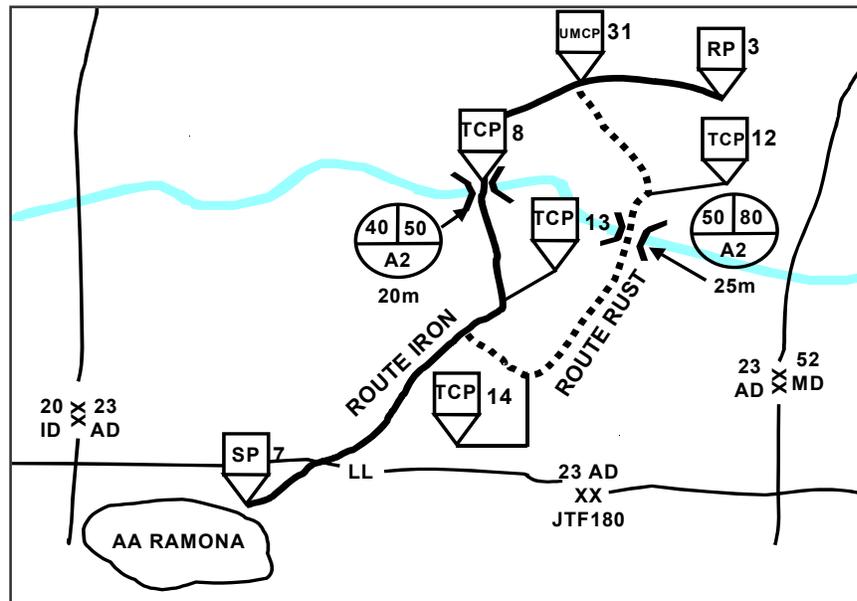
14-12. A unit quartering party usually accompanies the reconnaissance effort to the designated assembly area (AA). Unit standing operating procedures (SOP) establish the exact composition of the quartering party and its transportation, security, and communications equipment needs, and its specific duties. The quartering party secures, reconnoiters, and organizes an area for the main body's arrival and occupation. It typically reconnoiters and confirms the tentative locations selected by the commander of its parent element, based on a map reconnaissance. When necessary, the quartering party changes previously assigned unit locations within the AA. The quartering party guides the main body into position from the release point (RP) to precise locations within the AA.

14-13. The main body of the march column consists of the remainder of the unit, including attachments minus the trail party. The trail party is the last march unit in a march column and normally consists of primarily maintenance elements in a mounted march. It maintains communications with the main body. The function of the trail party is to recover disabled vehicles or control stragglers in a dismounted march. If the trail party cannot repair a disabled vehicle immediately, it tows the disabled vehicle and moves its crew

and passengers to a unit maintenance collection point (UMCP) located at a secure area near the movement route.

GRAPHIC CONTROL MEASURES

14-14. The commander directing a tactical road march often uses a strip map or overlay to graphically depict critical information about the route to his subordinates. The overlay or strip map should show the route of march, start points (SPs), RPs, checkpoints, critical points (such as bridges), light line, and traffic control points (TCPs). (See Figure 14-2.) Other graphic control measures include AA sand phase lines.



The *start point* is a location on a route where the marching elements fall under the control of a

Figure 14-2. Route Control Measures

designated march commander. Figure 14-3 shows SP 7. All routes must have a designated SP and it must be easily recognizable on the map and on the ground, such as a road junction. It must be far enough from the AA to allow units to organize and move at the prescribed speed and interval when they reach the SP.

14-16. A **release point** is a location on a route where marching elements are released from centralized control. Figure 14-4, page 14-6, shows RP 11. Each SP must have a corresponding RP, which must also be easy to recognize on the ground. Marching units do not stop at the RP; instead, as they move through the RP, unit guides meet each march unit and lead it to AAs.

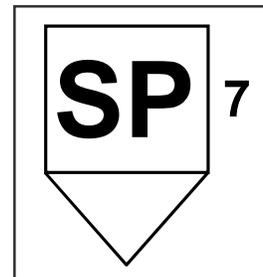


Figure 14-3. Start Point

14-17. The commander designates checkpoints along the route to assist marching units in gauging their compliance with the timetable. Also, the movement overlay identifies critical points along the route where interference with movement might occur. The commander positions manned TCPs along the route to prevent congestion and confusion. They may be manned by MPs or unit personnel. These soldiers report to the appropriate area movement control organization when each convoy, march column, and march serial arrives at and completes passage of its location.

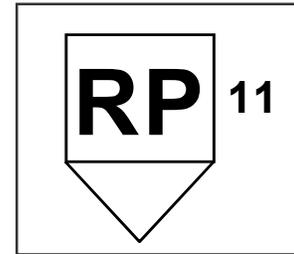


Figure 14-4.
Release Point

14-18. A **light line** is a designated phase line, forward of which vehicles are required to use black-out lights during periods of limited visibility. Commanders at either corps or division echelon establish it based on the risk that the enemy will be able to detect moving vehicles using white light. Figure 14-5 depicts the light line for the 2nd Armored Division as the division rear boundary. (FM 4-01.40 details other march control measures, such as the bridge classification symbols depicted in [Figure 14-2](#).)

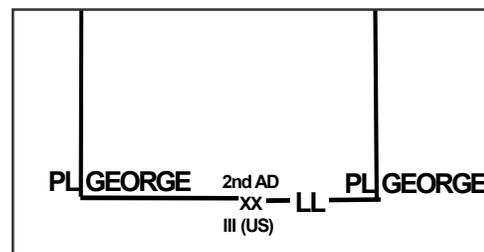


Figure 14-5. Light Line

TACTICAL MARCH TECHNIQUES

14-19. Units conducting tactical road marches employ three tactical march techniques: open column, close column, and infiltration. Each of these techniques uses scheduled halts to control and sustain the road march. The factors of METT-TC require adjustments in the standard distances between vehicles and soldiers. During movement, elements within a column of any length may encounter many different types of routes and obstacles simultaneously. Consequently, parts of the column may be moving at different speeds, which can produce an undesirable accordion-like effect. The movement order establishes the order of march, rate of march, interval or time gaps between units, column gap, and maximum catch-up speed. Unless the commander directs them not to do so for security reasons, march units report when they have crossed each control point. During the move, the commander maintains air and ground security.

Open Column

14-20. In an open column, the commander increases the distance between vehicles and soldiers to provide greater dispersion. The vehicle distance varies from 50 to 100 meters, and may be greater if required. The distance between dismounted soldiers varies from two to five meters to allow for dispersion and space for marching comfort. Any distance that exceeds five meters between soldiers increases the length of the column and hinders control. The open column technique is normally used during daylight. It may also be used at night

with infrared lights, blackout lights, or passive night-vision equipment. Using an open column roughly doubles the column's length and thereby doubles the time it takes to clear any given point when compared to a close column. The open column is the most common movement technique because it offers the most security while still providing the commander with a reasonable degree of control. In an open column, vehicle density varies from 15 to 20 vehicles per kilometer. A single light infantry company, with intervals between its platoons, occupies roughly a kilometer of road or trail.

Close Column

14-21. In a close column, the commander spaces his vehicles about 20 to 25 meters apart. At night, he spaces vehicles so each driver can see the two lights in the blackout marker of the vehicle ahead. The commander normally employs a close column for marches during darkness under blackout driving conditions or for marches in restricted terrain. This method of marching takes maximum advantage of the traffic capacity of a route but provides little dispersion. Normally, vehicle density is from 40 to 50 vehicles per kilometer along the route in a close column.

14-22. The dismounted equivalent to the close column is a limited-visibility march. The distance between individual soldiers is reduced to one to three meters to help maintain contact and facilitate control. Limited-visibility marches are characterized by close formations, difficult command and control (C2) and reconnaissance, a slow rate of march, and good concealment from enemy visual observation and air attack.

Infiltration

14-23. The commander dispatches vehicles in small groups, or at irregular intervals, at a rate that keeps the traffic density down and prevents undue massing of vehicles during a move by infiltration. Infiltration provides the best possible passive defense against enemy observation and attack. It is suited for tactical road marches when there is enough time and road space and when the commander desires the maximum security, deception, and dispersion. The disadvantages of an infiltration are that more time is required to complete the move, column control is nearly impossible, and recovery of broken-down vehicles by the trail party is more protracted when compared to vehicle recovery in close and open columns. Additionally, unit integrity is not restored until the last vehicle arrives at the destination, complicating the unit's onward deployment. Infiltration during troop movement should not be confused with infiltration as a form of maneuver as discussed in [Chapter 3](#).

14-24. During extended road marches, halts are necessary to rest personnel, service vehicles, and adjust movement schedules as necessary. The march order or unit standing operating procedures (SOP) regulates when to take halts. In motor movements, the commander schedules short halts for every two to three hours of movement and may last up to an hour. Long halts occur on marches that exceed 24 hours and last no more than two hours. Long halts are not scheduled at night, which allows maximum time for night movement. During halts, each unit normally clears the march route and moves to a previously selected AA to prevent route congestion and avoid being a lucrative target. Units establish security and take other measures to protect the

force. Unit leaders receive prompt notification of the time and approximate length of unscheduled halts.

14-25. The commander emphasizes the need to maintain security during halts. Once a unit stops moving, there is a natural tendency for soldiers to let their guard down and relax their vigilance. The commander addresses this problem by explicitly defining unit actions in his SOP for various types of halts, such as maintenance halts, security halts, and unexpected halts.

APPROACH MARCH

14-26. An *approach march* is the advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is intended (FM 3-0). However, it emphasizes speed over tactical deployment. Both heavy and light forces conduct tactical road marches and approach marches.

14-27. The commander employs an approach march when the enemy's approximate location is known, since it allows the force to move with greater speed and less physical security or dispersion. (See Figure 14-6.) Units conducting an approach march are task-organized before the march begins to allow them to transition to an on-order or a be-prepared mission without making major adjustments in organization. For example, artillery units march within their supported unit's columns, while engineer units are well forward to facilitate mobility. Air defense units may leapfrog short-range and medium-range assets to ensure continuous coverage. The approach march terminates in a march objective, such as an attack position, AA, or assault position, or can be used to transition to an attack. Follow-and-assume and reserve forces may also conduct an approach march forward of a LD.

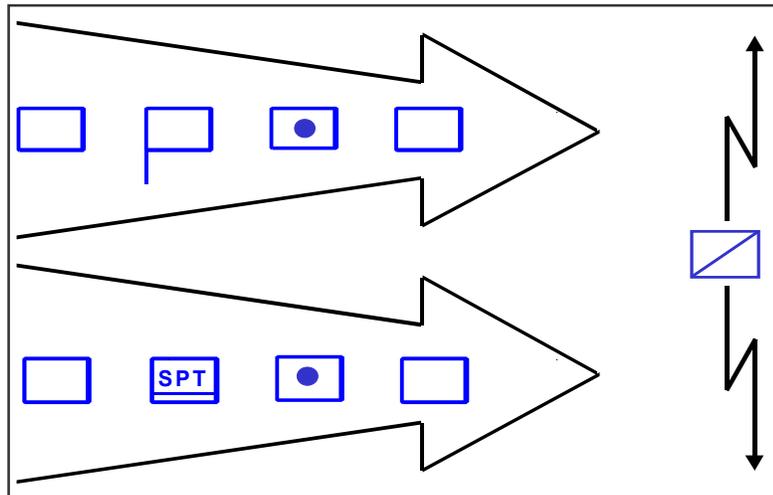


Figure 14-6. Approach March

14-28. Based on the products of his intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process, the overall commander should assign an AO or an axis of advance in combination with routes to the unit conducting the approach march. These routes, AOs, or axes should facilitate the force's movement and maximize its use of available concealment. Within the approach march, the

commander should assign the force conducting the decisive operation and forces conducting each shaping operation separate routes, AOs, or axes of advance unless an individual unit has the task of either follow-and-assume or follow-and-support.

14-29. As the approach march nears areas of likely enemy interference, the commander divides his main body into smaller, less vulnerable columns that move on additional multiple routes or cross-country while continuing to employ security elements. The commander takes advantage of successful reconnaissance and security operations to increase the distance traveled before the main body must transition to a tactical formation. As discussed in [Chapter 12](#), the advance and any flank guards remain within supporting distance of the main body, which stays in these smaller columns to facilitate rapid movement.

14-30. Tactical road marches and approach marches occur within a theater of war when contact with the enemy is possible or anticipated. This style of movement emphasizes tactical considerations such as security and de-emphasizes efficiency and ease of movement. The commander organizes his unit to conduct combat operations in a tactical movement. A unit generally maintains unit integrity throughout its movement. It plans for enemy interference either en route to or shortly after arrival at its destination. Units conducting either a tactical road march or an approach march use formations and techniques consistent with the factors of METT-TC. The unit may conduct them over unsecured routes if there are no friendly forces between the foremost elements of the moving force and the enemy. The echelon operations officer (the G3 or S3) is the primary staff officer responsible for planning these tactical movements, with input from other staff members.

14-31. There are several differences between an approach march and a tactical road march. A force conducting an approach march employs larger security forces because of its greater exposure to enemy attack. Units conducting an approach march arrange their systems into combined arms organizations. An approach march allows the commander to disperse his task-organized force into a tactical formation in unrestricted terrain without being constrained to existing roads and trails. On the other hand, road marches can organize their columns for administrative convenience; for example, vehicles of similar type, speed, and cross-country capabilities move together. Units conducting an approach march establish appropriate tactical intervals between vehicles; they do not normally employ a close column. They also use more routes than units conducting road marches.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

14-32. The commander uses the combat formations described in [Chapter 3](#) in conjunction with three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. [Figure 14-7](#) on page 14-10 shows when a unit is most likely to use each technique.

14-33. Movement techniques limit the unit's exposure to enemy fire and position it in a good formation to react to enemy contact. The commander selects the appropriate movement technique based on the chance of enemy contact. While moving, individual soldiers and vehicles use the terrain to protect

themselves anytime enemy contact is possible or expected. They use natural cover and concealment to avoid enemy fires. The following rules apply to soldiers and vehicle crews using terrain for protection:

- Do not silhouette yourself against the skyline.
- Cross open areas quickly.
- Do not move directly forward from a concealed firing position.
- Avoid possible kill zones because it is easier to cross difficult terrain than fight the enemy on unfavorable terms.
- Avoid large, open areas, especially when they are dominated by high ground or by terrain that can cover and conceal the enemy.
- Take active countermeasures, such as using smoke and direct and indirect fire, to suppress or obscure suspected enemy positions.

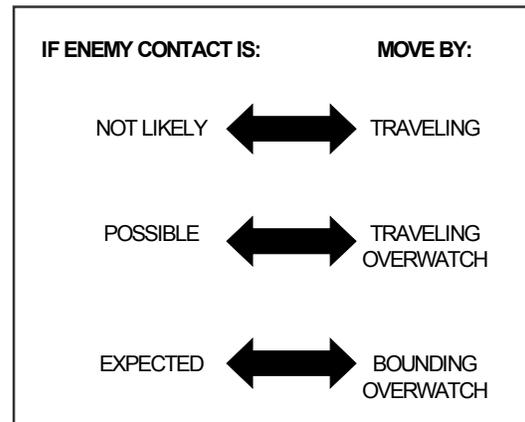


Figure 14-7. Movement Techniques

TRAVELING

14-34. The commander uses the traveling movement technique when speed is necessary and contact with enemy forces is not likely. All elements of the unit move simultaneously. The commander or small-unit leader locates where he can best control the situation. Trailing elements may move in parallel columns to shorten the column and reaction time. (See Figure 14-8.)

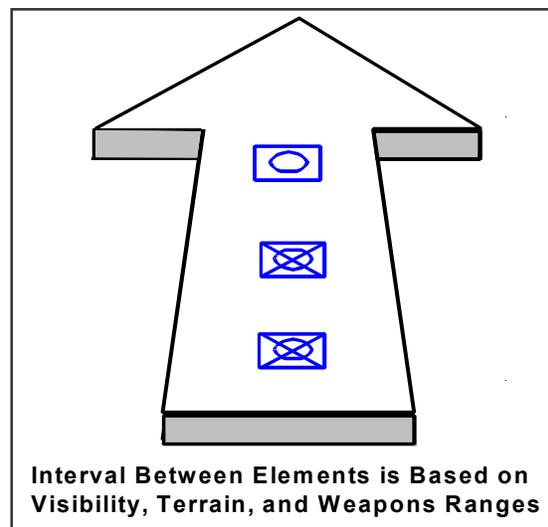


Figure 14-8. Traveling

TRAVELING OVERWATCH

14-35. The commander uses the traveling overwatch movement technique when contact with enemy forces is possible, but speed is important. The lead element is continuously moving, while the trailing elements move at variable speeds, sometimes pausing to overwatch movement of the lead element. (See Figure 14-9.) The trailing elements key their movement to the terrain, overwatching from a position where they can support the lead element if it engages the enemy. The trailing elements overwatch from positions and at distances that will not prevent them from firing or moving to support the lead element.

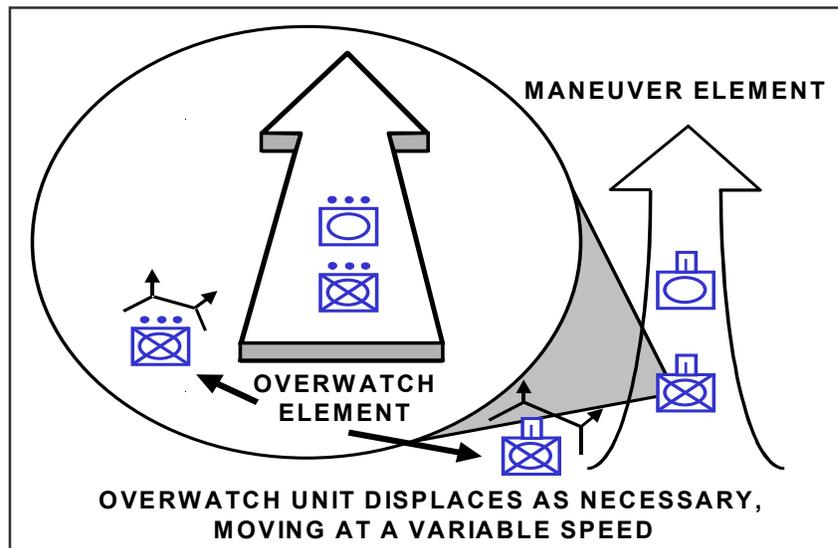


Figure 14-9. Traveling Overwatch

BOUNDING OVERWATCH

14-36. The commander uses the bounding overwatch movement technique when he expects to make contact with enemy forces. There are two variations of this technique: alternate bounds and successive bounds. In both cases, the overwatching elements cover the bounding elements from covered, concealed positions with good observation and fields of fire against possible enemy positions. They can immediately support the bounding elements with maneuver or fires alone if the bounding elements make contact. Unless they make contact en route, the bounding elements move via covered and concealed routes into the next set of support-by-fire positions. The length of the bound is based on the terrain and the range of overwatching weapons. The commander can use the uncommitted part of the force whenever he feels it is needed as part of an immediate and controlled reaction to any threat to the bounding force. In bounding overwatch, all movement keys on the next support-by-fire position, which should offer at least some of the following advantages:

- Cover and concealment.
- Good observation and fields of fire.
- Protection for stationary weapon platforms.

14-37. If the unit uses alternate bounds, the lead element moves forward, halts, and occupies a support-by-fire position that is covered at all times by the rear overwatching element. That former rear overwatching element advances past the former lead element and takes an overwatch position. The initial lead element then advances past the initial trail element and occupies a new support-by-fire position. One element moves at a time. This method is usually more rapid than successive bounds. (See [Figure 14-10](#).)

14-38. If the unit uses successive bounds, the lead element, covered by the trail element, advances and occupies a support-by-fire position. The trail element advances to a support-by-fire position abreast of the lead element and halts. The lead element moves to the next position and the move continues.

Only one element moves at a time, and the trail element avoids advancing beyond the lead element. (See Figure 14-11.)

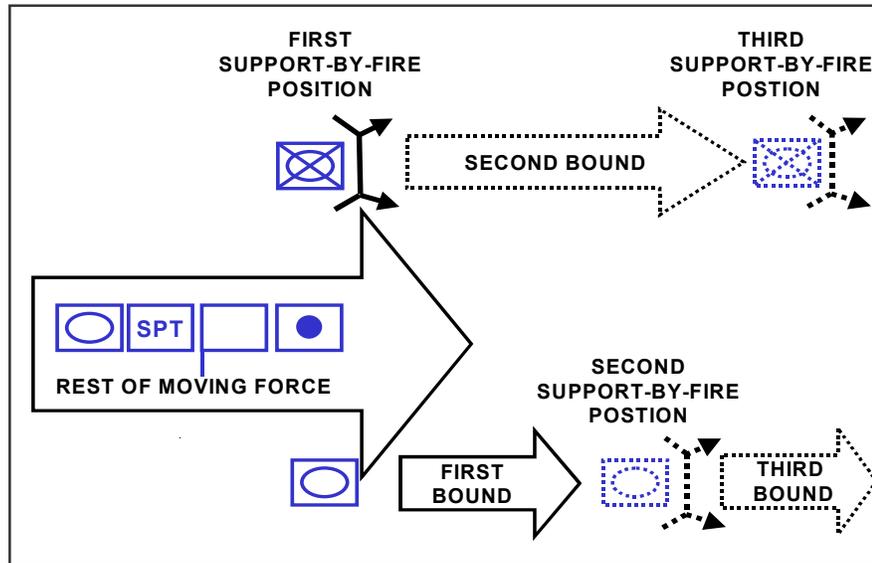


Figure 14-10. Bounding Overwatch—Alternate Bounds

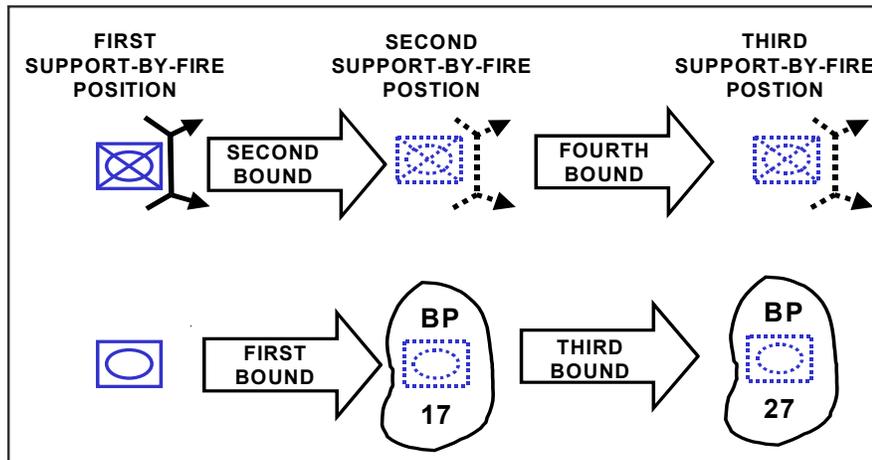


Figure 14-11. Bounding Overwatch—Successive Bounds

PLANNING A TROOP MOVEMENT

14-39. The commander plans, prepares, executes, and assesses troop movements to ensure the organized and uninterrupted flow of tactical units throughout the AO. The objective of a successful move is for the unit to arrive at its destination in a condition suitable to its probable employment. The goal of all movement planning is to retain flexibility to execute a variety of plans to meet ever-changing conditions. The commander ensures that his unit's movement SOP contain specifics, and he conducts rehearsals to ensure that his soldiers and subordinate leaders understand them. The SOP should use a standard task organization to simplify planning, provide flexibility, and allow greater responsiveness. Such SOP allow for smoother cooperation by

establishing habitual relationships between the unit's subordinate elements and outside supporting elements.

14-40. The movement order is the end result of the commander's planning process. The movement order is prepared as an annex to an operations order (OPORD) or as a separate OPORD. Prepared in a five-paragraph format, it consists of critical information needed by a unit to plan and execute the movement. Information normally found in the movement order includes the destination, routes, orders of march, rates of march, times that each serial (or march element for serial movement orders) will arrive and clear its SP, intervals, speeds, scheduled maintenance halts, communications, and location of the commander. The commander should also identify logistics sites and services in his movement order. He need not include information and procedures contained in movement SOP in the movement order. The movement order should include a strip map or overlay. (The format for a movement order is covered in FM 5-0.)

14-41. The commander bases his movement order on the best available information on the enemy, terrain, weather, unit capabilities, and civil considerations. This plan establishes how the unit will move from its current location to the desired location. The integration of and support from combat and CS—such as artillery, air defense, intelligence, military police, and engineers—are critical for a successful tactical movement. The commander's operations staff develops the detailed movement order, with the assistance of the commander's logistics staff, in accordance with his established priorities.

14-42. The movement order and unit SOP must address the possibility of ambushes, indirect fires, and air attacks. A small-unit SOP includes drills for reacting to these circumstances. Passive measures to mitigate the effects of an air attack include route selection, vehicle intervals, and movement during limited visibility. In case of attack, the commander has an evacuation plan for casualties. This plan takes into account SOP items, such as using combat life-savers and dispersing medical evacuation assets throughout the convoy.

14-43. For units that are not 100-percent mobile in organic vehicles, such as a corps headquarters and many CSS units, the commander can either conduct a shuttle with organic vehicles or request assistance from transportation units. Shuttling requires transporting troops, equipment, and supplies by a series of round trips with the same vehicles. It may also be performed by carrying successive parts of a load for short distances while the remaining soldiers continue on foot.

14-44. The higher headquarters logistics staff normally coordinates the provision of logistics support to moving units, although units carry sufficient fuel and lubricants in their unit trains to conduct local movements. In coordination with the engineers, the logistics staff ensures that routes are adequate to support the movement of the types and numbers of vehicles and supplies projected for movement. The commander must be aware of the load-carrying capability of each route and the distances over which forces can be supported. His logistics operators determine if any logistics assets should displace to support the mission. The commander also establishes halts for refueling as part of his movement plan. Halt times should be long enough and locations large enough to allow the entire march unit to refuel.

14-45. The simplest troop movement scenario to plan and conduct is one where the commander directing the movement controls the entire AO. In this situation, he can use his normal C2 system. The headquarters ordering the tactical road march schedules the movement times and approves the routes, while its movements control organization allocates the required space and time on the approved routes. If the movement results in a unit going outside its parent headquarters' AO, coordination through various movement control centers is required. Otherwise, a higher headquarters must plan and control the movement.

14-46. Whenever possible, the commander should use multiple routes to move his unit. This reduces the length of columns, the vulnerability to enemy air attack, and the amount of time the routes are not available to other units. Multiple routes provide the commander with the flexibility to react to unexpected situations and permit more rapid concentration of combat power. The two primary disadvantages of using multiple routes are difficulty in exercising C2, and the unit may not have enough resources to provide logistic and maintenance support on all routes.

14-47. The echelon transportation officer uses route classification components, such as route widths, route types, military load classifications, overhead clearance, route obstructions and special conditions, as he determines his traffic circulation plan. A supporting engineer terrain detachment provides him the majority of this information. Engineer reconnaissance obtains necessary information not contained in existing databases. FM 3-34.212 and FM 3-34.310 defines these components and describes how to use them.

14-48. The staff depicts the echelon traffic circulation plan on overlays using transportation control measures. The traffic circulation plan takes into account—

- The most restrictive route features and route designations.
- Direction of movement over each route.
- Location of boundaries, units, highway regulation points, TCPs, and principal supply points.
- Major geographic features and light lines, if applicable.
- Routes designated for one-way traffic.
- Separate routes for CSS and tactical units.
- Current data on traffic regulation and control restrictions, obstructions, detours, defiles, capacities, surface conditions, and enemy activities that affect the highway net.

From information contained in the traffic circulation plan, a traffic control plan is prepared—usually by the provost marshal—from information contained in the traffic circulation plan. The traffic control plan normally is prepared in the form of an overlay. The commander primarily uses available aviation, movement regulating teams, and MP units to assist in traffic control, but can assign this mission to other units, such as battalion scout platoons.

PREPARING A TROOP MOVEMENT

14-49. Reconnaissance precedes unit movement. Before a unit starts any march, a reconnaissance element from that unit should reconnoiter the route from its current location to the SP and determine how long it will take the unit to reach the SP. This reconnaissance effort continues beyond the start point and carefully examines the route's trafficability, including the impact of weather, such as ice, snow, and rain. This reconnaissance should also include alternative routes and choke points, such as defiles, bridges, and fords, which could slow the march. This reconnaissance effort complements map and technical reconnaissance and provides the commander with important information about the terrain, obstacles, and potential enemy forces within his AO. He can then take steps to establish TCPs at critical locations along the route or mark the route where it becomes confusing.

14-50. A quartering party often accompanies reconnaissance elements to mark routes and battle positions. The party may also secure new positions with observation posts or limited forces until the unit conducting the movement arrives.

14-51. The unit begins a tactical movement, such as a road march, fully supplied. The unit should refuel at every opportunity, such as at halts and on arrival at the final destination. The transportation of fuel and the security of existing stockpiles are major factors in any mounted road march. The commander may choose to conduct a refuel on the move (ROM) to extend the range of his vehicles. Refuel on the move is a technique in which the commander positions tankers just off the route of the march to refuel combat and tactical vehicles rapidly, but only in the previously established quantities necessary to extend their range to the desired length.

14-52. Based on the form of movement selected and the march and movement techniques adopted, the commander may have to pre-position CSS assets to conduct rapid and efficient refueling and resupply. Generally, a column formation is the easiest movement technique to support. Any other formation requires increased logistics planning. Night movements require special preparation because not all soldiers have night-vision devices. These special preparations include marking vehicles and equipment for easy identification by friendly forces and repositioning vehicles and soldiers closer together so they can detect each others' movement.

EXECUTING A TROOP MOVEMENT

14-53. A unit's ability to execute movement depends on its march discipline and ability to maintain required movement standards and procedures as prescribed by its movement SOP and movement order. This includes staying on the given route and maintaining start, passage, and clear times. March discipline is absolutely essential throughout the movement. Any deviation from the movement order may interfere with the movements of other units and may have serious consequences. However, march discipline can only be maintained when the plan matches conditions and the unit's ability to move.

14-54. The strength and composition of the moving unit's security elements vary, depending on the factors of METT-TC. The commander employs his

organic assets and any supporting security assets to protect his forces from enemy activities. He positions them to the front, rear, and flanks of his formations while moving and at the halt to provide all-around security for the main body. He can also enhance security by adopting a march formation and movement technique that facilitate applying combat power in the direction he expects to make contact with the enemy.

14-55. Higher-echelon CSS organizations may support some tactical movements. When the situation permits, CSS organizations establish maintenance, ambulance exchange, and supply points along the route. While procedures, amounts, and types of external support vary among major commands, each logistics organization ensures that these sites are operational at the designated times and locations. External CSS along the route may include aeromedical evacuation, maintenance, water, and POL. Maintenance sites generally consist of UMCPs where disabled vehicles can be moved for limited maintenance and Class IX supplies. Vehicles unable to continue the movement remain at a UMCP and join their parent organization when repaired. The troop movement is complete when the last march unit clears the RP.

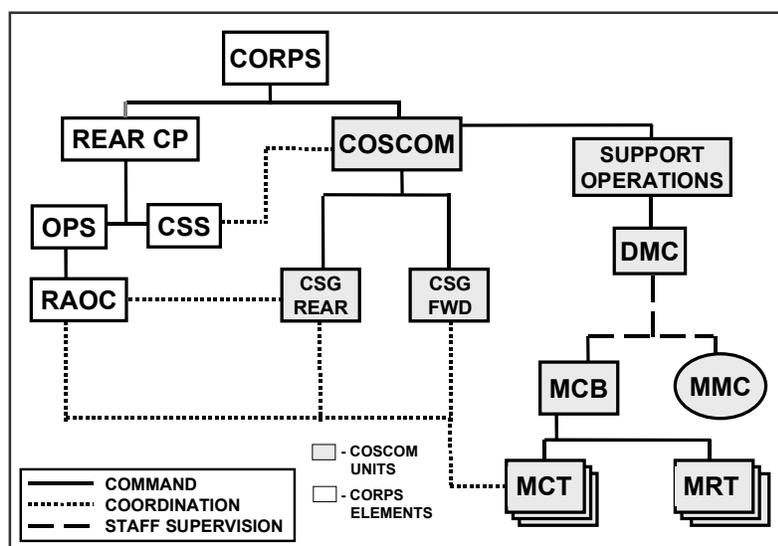


Figure 14-12. Corps Movement Control

MOVEMENT CONTROL

14-56. *Movement control* is the planning, routing, scheduling, and control of personnel and cargo movements over lines of communications (JP 1-02). It is a continuum that involves coordinating and integrating logistics, movement information, and programs that span the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. The balancing of requirements against capabilities and assigning resources based on the commander's priorities guides the conduct of movement control. Movement control gives the commander the ability to de-conflict the movement of units—troop movement—and the distribution of supplies and services inherent in the provision of CSS. It is not a simple system as is shown in Figure 14-12 by the number of different agencies involved in corps movement control. (FM 4-01.30 discusses movement control.)