

CHAPTER 4

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The offense is the decisive form of battle. Divisions seize and retain the initiative through offensive action. Divisions normally fight offensive battles as part of a corps or joint force operation with joint support. Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity; the initiative of all commanders; and the application of simultaneous, violent combat power are intrinsic to decisive division offensive operations.

With today's technology, division commanders prefer offensive operations that find and destroy the enemy. They use the maximum range of available assets to set the conditions for precise maneuver. They leverage technological advantages to gain intelligence and employ lethal and nonlethal precision fires as a precursor to maneuver, and the decisive blow. Division commanders apply combat power at the time and place of their choosing, while minimizing risk to their soldiers.

The aim of offensive operations is to destroy the enemy's ability and will to resist. This is done by defeating the integrity of his defensive system; capturing his territory; and destroying his supporting fire systems, command and control systems, command posts, reserves, and logistics support. Offensive operations may also secure key terrain, deceive or misdirect enemy forces, deprive the enemy of resources, fix or isolate enemy units, gain information, or spoil an enemy's offensive preparation.

This chapter provides doctrinal concepts for the employment of the division in offensive operations. The factors of METT-T will influence and modify their specific application.

FUNDAMENTALS

Simultaneous Operations

The Army's vision of fighting battles sequentially has evolved to emphasize conducting operations simultaneously to gain their total, synergistic effect. Tactical commanders may have to fight sequentially to secure advantages for later engagements, but the preferred method is to overwhelm an enemy force during a short period of time throughout the depth

of the battlefield. Multiple attacks place several critical enemy functions at risk all at once. Such attacks deny the enemy the ability to synchronize or generate combat power. They also deny him any unit cohesion to execute a plan. Simultaneous attacks in depth induce friction into the enemy's scheme of maneuver and significantly degrade his will to fight.

Simultaneous attacks cause destruction, confusion, and demoralization of the enemy, giving friendly commanders the opportunity to strike decisively. Simultaneous attacks allow our commanders to completely dominate the tempo of the battlefield. Thus, friendly commanders control their own tempo and, through synchronized operations, influence the tempo of the enemy. This allows us to gain (or retain) initiative and freedom of maneuver. When we strike at the time and place of our choosing throughout the battlefield, we cause the enemy commander multiple, critical problems—little warning time, compressed planning, poor decisions, and no good courses of action.

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Forms of the Offense

When executing offensive operations, the division uses four general forms of offense. These are *movement to contact*, *attack*, *exploitation*, and *pursuit*. Although it is convenient to think of these actions as sequential, they may not be. Offensive operations are fluid; they ebb and flow from one form of maneuver to another.

Movement to Contact

Division offensive operations may start with a movement to contact. This form of the offense develops the situation and establishes or regains contact with enemy forces. The search and attack is a variant of the movement to contact. Divisions use electronic detectors to determine enemy location, dispositions, and capabilities. When appropriate, the commander attempts to make initial contact with the enemy using the smallest possible friendly force. The bulk of his force is then available to respond immediately when and where needed. (See Figure 4-1.) Once contact is made, the commander further develops the situation, concentrates the effects of his combat power, and transitions to a hasty attack (or in some cases a hasty defense). The commander continually analyzes the situation based on current reports and intelligence. He integrates CSS units with tactical units for needed support.

Reconnaissance assets find the enemy. Once the enemy is found, the division's covering force (if employed) develops the situation. The covering force is self-sustaining and operates well forward of the division's main body. The covering force prevents unnecessary delay of the main body, destroys enemy resistance where possible, secures key terrain, and contains enemy forces. When the division marches as part of a larger formation, the corps or JTF headquarters normally provides and controls the covering force. In this case, the division advance guard (often the cavalry squadron) maintains contact between the division and the higher headquarters's covering force.

In movement to contact, the division always establishes an advance guard. The leading element of the main body usually furnishes and controls the advance guard, which is task-organized to secure the division's uninterrupted movement. METT-T analysis determines the organization of the covering force and advance guard. Both normally include

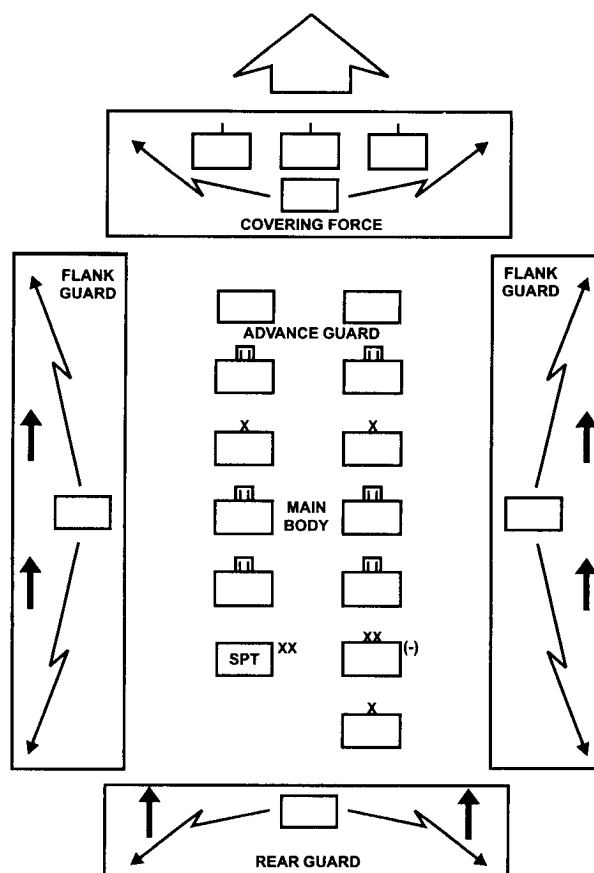


Figure 4-1. Example organization of a division movement to contact

engineers, intelligence collection assets, and artillery.

Flank and rear security forces protect the division's main body from ground observation and surprise attack. These forces are strong enough to defeat small enemy units or to delay a stronger enemy attack. Flank security travels on routes parallel to the main body and occupies key terrain along routes where appropriate. Rear security follows the division's main body. (Security operations are discussed in Appendix A and FM 17-95.)

In movement to contact, march dispositions of the main body must allow maximum flexibility for maneuvers during the movement and when contact with the main enemy force is established. The movement to contact is characterized by high consumption of petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL); high vehicular maintenance requirements; and low ammunition expenditure. The speed of the operation

and the POL consumed require careful combat service support planning to sustain the division's uninterrupted movement.

Hasty attacks usually follow movements to contact, but other courses of action are possible. The commander may choose to fix the enemy force and bypass with the bulk of his division. He may choose to transition to a defense or to a deliberate attack. Whether attacking or defending, at the point combat forces collide, the commander must generate and sustain overwhelming combat power to rapidly defeat the enemy.

Elements of the main body may be committed to reduce enemy bypassed or contained by the covering force. (These pockets of enemy may also be left for follow and support units.) Elements of the covering force containing enemy units are normally relieved as rapidly as possible. They rejoin the covering force to avoid dissipating its strength. The commander monitors the progress of the leading and engaged combat units. He anticipates their requirements. When his units encounter resistance, he commits the combat power necessary to maintain the momentum of the advance.

Fragmentary or oral orders are normally used once the movement to contact begins. However, in their absence, leaders take appropriate action to achieve the division commander's intent. While leaders rely on initiative, the decision to commit the entire force or to halt the attack remains with the division commander.

Attacks

Hasty attacks most often follow movements to contact. (However, a movement to contact may terminate in a hasty defense, a deliberate attack, or even a retrograde. Commanders direct the appropriate action based on their analysis of the situation.) In combat, the force that first deploys and assaults its enemy with maneuver and fires normally gains an initial advantage.

Division commanders launch hasty attacks with minimum preparation. Hasty attacks are used to seize an opportunity or destroy an enemy before he is able to concentrate forces or establish a coordinated defense. They may be force-oriented or terrain-oriented, but commanders prefer force-oriented attacks because they allow greater freedom

of action. Terrain-oriented attacks secure key terrain, the occupation of which will significantly impact on the outcome of the battle. When conducting hasty attacks, the division—

- Envelops one enemy flank while the enemy force is fixed from the front.
- Envelops both enemy flanks while the enemy force is fixed from the front.
- Conducts a frontal attack.

In contrast to hasty attacks, *deliberate attacks* involve much more detailed planning. Deliberate attacks fully synchronize the support of every available asset to defeat an enemy force. Detailed reconnaissance, thorough planning and rehearsal, violent concentration of combat power, rapid exploitation of enemy weaknesses, and positive, aggressive leadership at all echelons of command characterize the deliberate attack.

Fire support during the attack is critical. Fire support planning is continuous. Covering, preparatory, and on-call fires are planned in detail and must be extremely responsive. Generally artillery positions well forward to exploit weapon ranges and preclude untimely displacement when fires are needed most. Field artillery normally positions well forward with the attacking brigades to ensure the majority of fire support assets support the attack.

Engineer support is also critical to the attack. Engineers reduce obstacles as part of a combined arms breaching operation, assisting the movement of maneuver elements and supporting units. They assist in the assault of strongpoints, create obstacles on avenues of approach to protect friendly flanks, maintain routes, and assist in organizing captured ground against counterattacks. Engineer vehicles and launch bridges locate forward where they can support leading elements of the brigade.

Other types of attacks include *counterattack*, *spoiling attack*, *raids*, *feints*, and *demonstrations*. Friendly forces counterattack to defeat an enemy after he has launched his attack, revealed his main effort, or exposed an assailable flank. Spoiling attacks, on the other hand, normally strike an enemy while he is preparing for his attack or on the move prior to crossing his line of departure. A raid is a very limited-objective attack, normally conducted by smaller combat elements in the division. Commanders destroy key enemy installations and

facilities, capture or free prisoners, or disrupt enemy C² or support functions with raids. Although feints and demonstrations are diversionary operations, division commanders exploit these attacks if the opportunity arises. Feints and demonstrations deceive the enemy of the true intentions of the attacker.

Exploitation

Exploitations usually follow successful attacks. Exploitations disorganize the enemy throughout his depth. They take advantage of weakened or collapsed enemy organization, 'prevent reconstitution of enemy defenses, defeat enemy withdrawal, and secure deep objectives. Their ultimate goal is the enemy's disintegration to the point he can only surrender or be destroyed. Exploiting forces can secure objectives deep in the enemy rear, cut lines of communication, surround and destroy enemy forces, deny escape routes to an encircled force, and destroy enemy reserves. Division commanders plan for and move rapidly to exploit at the earliest possible opportunity.

The division can exploit its own success, act as the exploiting force for a higher echelon, or follow and support another exploiting force. In most cases, the division's committed units exploit directly from their attack dispositions. There is rarely a pause between attack and exploitation. Indications that the attack should shift to an exploitation include an increase in captured prisoners; an increase in abandoned material; and the overrunning of artillery, command and signal facilities, and supply dumps.

In the exploitation, reconnaissance assets maintain contact with the enemy, locate enemy movements, search for under-defended or weakly defended positions, locate ambushes, find enemy strongpoints, and advise commanders of enemy activities. The division performs aggressive reconnaissance to both its front and flanks.

The division commander employs his forces in the exploitation as in the movement to contact. Exploiting from multiple march columns is normal. The exploiting force clears only enough of its zone to permit it to advance and secure its flanks. Commanders avoid dissipating forces to achieve minor tactical success. Enemy forces that interfere, or can interfere, with the mission are destroyed, contained, or bypassed. Bypassed enemy forces are reported to adjacent units, to follow and support units, and to

higher headquarters. Approval to bypass rests with the next higher commander, who then becomes responsible for reducing the bypassed enemy unit.

As the exploiting force advances, follow and support units secure lines of communication, capture or destroy bypassed pockets of resistance, expand the area of exploitation from the axis of advance of the exploiting force, and block the movement of enemy reinforcements into the area. (Follow and support is discussed on page 4-9.)

Decentralized execution characterizes the exploitation. However, commanders must watch for and prevent overextension of the command. CS and CSS plans must support extremely long lines of communication. Petroleum consumption rates will be high. Rapid resupply forward is essential.

Pursuit

A pursuit is an offensive operation against a retreating enemy force. It follows a successful attack or exploitation and is ordered when the enemy cannot conduct an organized defense and attempts to disengage. The pursuit's object is to completely destroy an opposing force. Commanders conduct air and ground operations to intercept, capture, and destroy the enemy. Unlike exploitations, pursuits are rarely anticipated; units must be agile enough to react when a pursuit opportunity presents itself.

The pursuit usually consists of direct pressure and encircling forces. The direct pressure force prevents enemy disengagement and subsequent reconstitution of the enemy's defense. Attacking day and night, the pressure force inflicts maximum casualties on the enemy. Leading elements of the direct pressure force move rapidly, containing or bypassing small enemy pockets of resistance. At every opportunity, the direct pressure force envelops, cuts off, and destroys enemy units.

The mission of the encircling force is to move rapidly to the rear of the enemy and block his escape. The encircling force advances along (or flies over) routes that parallel the enemy's line of retreat to reach defiles, communications centers, bridges, and other key terrain ahead of the enemy main force. Airborne, air assault, armored, and mechanized units are effective encircling forces. If the encircling force cannot outdistance the enemy, it attacks the enemy main body on its flanks. The division can

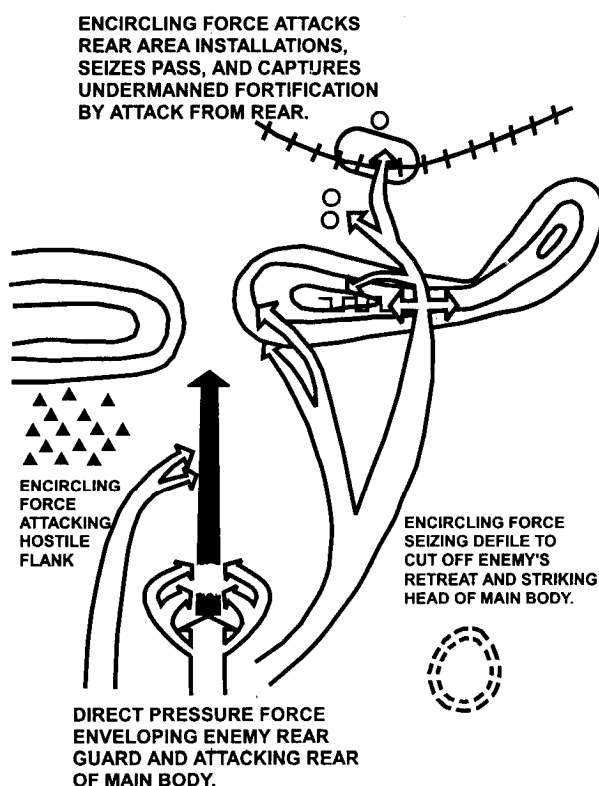


Figure 4–2. Example of a division conducting a pursuit

conduct a local pursuit or be used as the direct pressure or encircling force for the corps or JTF. (See Figure 4-2.)

Forms of Maneuver

The basic forms of offensive maneuver used by Army divisions are *envelopment*, *turning movement*, *penetration*, and *frontal attack*. (The double envelopment is a variation of the envelopment.) The *infiltration* is a form of maneuver seldom used by the division as a whole. However, divisions help plan infiltrations for companies and battalions. The turning movement is similar to an envelopment. The turning movement is normally conducted by corps and larger units. Rarely will divisions conduct a turning movement by themselves.

The corps or higher commander seldom dictates the division's form of maneuver. The division's mission, characteristics of the area of operations, disposition of opposing forces, and relative combat

power of the opposing forces determine the best form of maneuver for a particular operation. Terrain, available time, own dispositions, ability to support the attack, and the enemy situation also impact on choosing the form of maneuver. The division commander specifically addresses in his OPLAN or OPORD the form of maneuver that the division will use.

Envelopment

An envelopment causes the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet converging attacks. In the envelopment, the division attempts to pass around the enemy's main defensive positions, avoiding the enemy's strength. Envelopments attack an enemy's flanks or secure objectives in his rear that cut his lines of communication and escape routes. Supporting frontal attacks and penetrations often hold the enemy in position during the envelopment. In a corps envelopment, the division may be the fixing force, the corps' reserve, or the corps' enveloping force. In a division envelopment, brigades perform these functions. Figure 4-3 illustrates a division conducting an envelopment.

An envelopment normally requires the friendly force to find or create an assailable enemy flank. Success depends on agility, surprise, and the ability of supporting attacks and deception to hold the enemy in place. Rapid and unimpeded movement

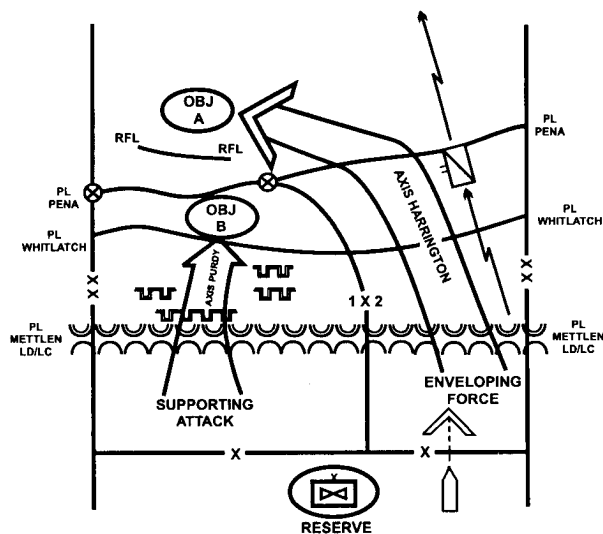


Figure 4–3. Division conducting an envelopment

of enveloping forces and deep attacks are essential to prevent the enemy's reserves from counterattacking or occupying prepared positions. Mobile security elements, scatterable mines, attack helicopters, air cavalry, and obstacles secure the flanks of enveloping forces. The division commander uses aviation, airborne, air assault, armor, and mechanized units to envelop.

Fire support during the envelopment is unrelenting. When within range, supporting fires are planned in detail; however, as the envelopment develops, fires may have to come from many places on the battlefield. The primary fire support may come from the supporting attack force or artillery attached directly to the enveloping force.

An envelopment involves minimum control measures. A zone of action, checkpoints, or an axis of advance clarify the division commander's scheme of maneuver. They also simplify movement and coordination among supporting units. An aerial envelopment also requires control measures (such as an air axis) and normally local air superiority, JSEAD, and suppressive fires.

A double envelopment normally consists of two enveloping forces and a supporting attack force. The division normally conducts a double envelopment only when there is very strong fire support or a very weak enemy. However, an initial envelopment of one flank may create conditions favorable to committing the division reserve around the other flank, resulting in a division double envelopment. To execute this type of maneuver, the amount of combat power required for two enveloping forces, a supporting attack force, and the reserve will tax the division.

Turning Movement

The division participates in a turning movement as part of a larger force. The turning movement normally is not directed at destroying the enemy. Rather its purpose is to secure vital areas deep in the hostile rear that will prevent an enemy's escape or reinforcement. It is used when an opportunity exists to secure decisive terrain in the enemy's rear causing the enemy to abandon his prepared defenses. If the enemy occupies a strong defensive position, the turning movement offers a means to fight on ground more favorable to the attacker.

A turning movement normally uses two forces—turning and fixing. Each force will operate beyond the other's mutual support, so each will require sufficient organic combat power and mobility.

Penetration

Commanders use penetration when enemy flanks are not assailable. The division masses its combat power, normally at a single point, to overwhelm the enemy. The division ruptures the enemy's defense, holds the rupture open, and allows additional division forces to continue the attack through the rupture. (Figure 4-4.) Because penetration attacks into the strength of an established defense, it may be costly in casualties.

Divisions plan and execute a penetration in three stages: 1) rupture the enemy's defensive position, 2) widen the gap, and 3) overrun or secure objectives that will destroy the continuity of the enemy's defense. If the penetration is successful, the division moves immediately into a planned exploitation.

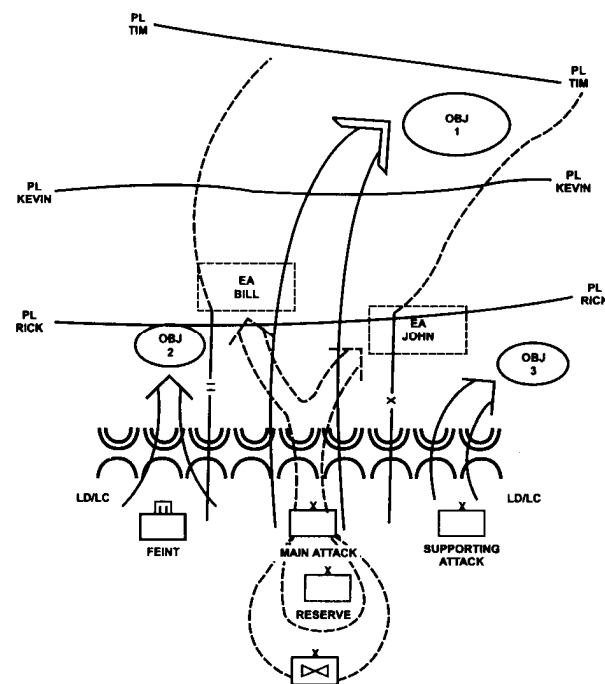


Figure 4-4. Division conducting a penetration

Follow and support forces continue to widen the rupture, clear enemy in the zone, and secure the flanks of the main attack.

Frontal Attack

A division frontal attack is the least desirable form of maneuver. It is used to overrun, destroy, or capture a weaker enemy in position or to fix an enemy force in position. A frontal attack may be appropriate, however, when attacking through an enemy's security area to destroy forces and secure lines of communication.

The division frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide area within the zone of action. The frontal attack is only favored against a weak or disorganized enemy when the situation is not fully developed, when the attacker has overwhelming combat power, when the time and situation require immediate reaction to enemy action, or when the mission is to fix the enemy in position, deceive him, or assist the main attack. Frontal attacks squander combat power. Unless the attacker has overwhelming strength, frontal attacks are seldom decisive and are costly in resources and casualties. Consequently, the division rarely uses this form of maneuver against prepared enemy defense.

Infiltration

Infiltration is the covert movement of all or part of the attacking force through enemy lines to an objective in the enemy's rear. The division assigns this form of maneuver to forces to support other maneuvers. Divisions themselves seldom infiltrate. An infiltration is a slow operation and requires stealth. Infantry or cavalry company/troop or battalion/squadron units are best suited for infiltration operations. However, small armor or mechanized units may also infiltrate taking advantage of faulty enemy dispositions, gaps created in obstacles, and diversionary attacks.

Organization of Battles

We view tactical offensive battles as operations in depth that consist of three interrelated parts—one battle consisting of three interdependent operations. These are—

- Deep operations.

- Close operations, which include reconnaissance and security actions, main effort, and reserve actions.
- Rear operations.

In divisions, all are equally important. It is the simultaneous application of combat power within deep, close, and rear operations and the division commander's ability to protect his forces that bring victory in division battles.

Deep Operations

The division commander thinks and fights in depth. He visualizes the requirements of both today's and tomorrow's engagements. He uses deep operations to destroy, delay, disrupt, or divert critical enemy elements not currently engaged in the close fight. Specifically, he attacks key enemy functional nodes such as command posts, logistics sites, and air defenses to create vulnerabilities that his division can exploit. Deep operations attack high-payoff targets such as enemy artillery, enemy maneuver forces, air defense artillery, air forces, and enemy sustainment units whose destruction will contribute directly to the success of the division's offensive operation. All divisions execute deep operations as part of division battles. As the close fight moves forward, the division refocuses its deep operations on appropriate targets.

Deep attacks may be completely decisive by themselves or secure advantages for the division commander in his current and future engagements. That is, the division commander often takes action during today's fight (given available resources) that will significantly affect tomorrow's fight.

To ensure unity of effort, the division coordinates its deep operation with corps or joint force deep operations. Normally, these operations complement each other. Forward boundaries usually separate the corps or joint force's deep operational area from that of the divisions. In some circumstances, phase lines may reduce the complexities of deep operations. These operations have many moving parts; their synchronization is vital to overall success. Divisions strike deep (after obtaining needed intelligence) with a combination of organic and supporting artillery, attack helicopters, infantry task-organized to conduct air assault operations, air interdiction, armored and mechanized maneuver forces,

supporting joint fires, and EW. Chapter 2 of this manual, FM 71-100-1, and FM 71-100-2 have more on division deep operations.

Close Operations

A division's close offensive operations normally secure the friendly force, find the enemy and develop the situation through reconnaissance, attack to fix enemy forces adjacent to our main effort, envelop or penetrate in the main attack sector, and exploit and then pursue enemy forces.

Reconnaissance locates the enemy and provides information on terrain. The division relies on the complementary capabilities of organic and supporting reconnaissance assets. Technical reconnaissance yields low-risk, multispectral, large-area intelligence information. Ground and air reconnaissance provides "eyes on" intelligence information. Ground and air reconnaissance units make contact with the enemy, develop the situation, and orient the movement of maneuver friendly forces to exploit weaknesses in the enemy's defenses. The division uses cavalry, Army aviation, maneuver units, UAVs, scouts, electronic means, and other assets in reconnaissance roles. Additionally, the division accesses EAD systems for intelligence information.

In the offense, as in all operations, the division commander *secures* his force. Surveillance, fires (lethal and nonlethal), OPSEC, the effective use of obstacles, as well as security forces protect the division. Assets employed for reconnaissance may also be employed in security roles.

Security in the offense prevents unexpected enemy force interference with our attacking formation. Division security forces orient their movement on the division's main body. Frequently, however, the best security is the violence and speed of the attack itself. It keeps the enemy so involved that he has neither the time nor means to endanger the attack's success. The retention of a reserve provides the commander flexibility but also enhances his security. (Appendix A discusses reconnaissance and security.)

In close operations, the division normally establishes a main effort, a *main attack*, and supporting attacks. The main effort achieves a critical task at a decisive point in the division commander's concept of operations. It is assigned to only one unit at a time.

However, as battles ebb and flow, the main effort may occasionally shift from one unit to another. All other elements, including those assigned secondary efforts, support the unit that is assigned the main effort.

The *main attack* is the principal attack into which the commander throws the full weight of his offensive power. The main attack seizes the division's principal objective or destroys a designated force which will significantly contribute to the enemy's defeat. The attack's momentum is maintained until the mission is accomplished. Mass concentrations of fires, coupled with rapid, violent, and bold advances supported by dedicated CS and CSS, characterize the main attack. Subordinate and supporting commanders focus on the main attack to link their actions to the actions of those around them. This part of the commander's concept permits initiative but maintains cohesion. Except during extraordinary times in a battle (air assaults, airborne assaults, and deep aviation attacks), the main attack will be the division commander's main effort.

Enemy actions, minor changes in the situation, or lack of success of other elements should not divert forces from the main attack once it is launched. The approval to bypass enemy units, however, rests with the next higher commander. Bypass criteria is normally included in the division's OPLAN or OPORD. Once bypass is approved, forces are left in contact with the bypassed enemy and reports sent to adjacent and follow and support units. (See page 4-9 for follow and support actions.)

Supporting attacks assist the success of the main attack. Supporting attacks seize key terrain, fix the enemy in position, prevent enemy disengagement, deceive the enemy on the location of the main attack, and force commitment of enemy reserves early or at an indecisive point. Supporting attacks can be deliberate, hasty, or limited objective. They can be feints or demonstrations. Units conducting these attacks have fewer resources than units conducting the main attack. Fire support, however, is essential for a supporting attack's success.

Reserve forces provide the division commander a hedge against uncertainty and are best used to exploit success. They are used to expedite victory, not merely to blunt enemy penetrations. Division commanders maintain the momentum of the attack with their reserves. Reserves can provide security,

weight the main effort, exploit opportunities, regain the initiative, and defeat enemy counterattacks. Reserves are not a committed force until committed by the division commander. For planning purposes, the reserve is assigned “be prepared missions.”

Dispersal of the reserve into multiple assembly areas or march columns reduces vulnerability to attack. The reserve is located—

- To permit rapid movement to points of probable employment.
- To support the main attack or to exploit supporting attack success.
- To provide additional security to the attack formation.

The commitment and size of the reserve is a commander’s decision, based on the most accurate information available. The size, although determined by METT-T factors, generally increases with the amount of uncertainty.

Rear Operations

Division rear operations in the offense help provide the commander and committed forces freedom of action. They enhance the commander’s ability to influence the close fight. Rear operations consist of terrain management, security, movement, and sustainment. Rear units anticipate critical requirements and prepare to secure and move (push) sustainment packages forward. The division rear CP and the DISCOM monitor attacking brigades and redirect the priority of CS and CSS to support changes to the division main effort. Division rear operations are discussed in Chapter 2 and detailed in Appendix E.

Additional Considerations

Sequence of Attack

When preparing for an attack, the division commander determines how he will attack through his zone in each phase of the operation and how he must stage his units through forward assembly areas to the objective. The normal attack sequence requires divisions—

- To move from rear to forward assembly areas (or from staging areas to tactical assembly areas).

- To deploy and initiate their attacks either through defending friendly units or through earlier committed divisions.
- To fight through their own zones between the line of departure (LD) and their objective area.

Approach March

Commanders conduct approach marches when they are relatively certain that enemy locations are some distance from their approaching friendly force. By using detection systems to determine the enemy’s location, disposition, and capabilities, they avoid committing large formations to gain details on every location and disposition.

Follow and Support

Follow and support is not a form of the offense but rather a mission. Follow and support units relieve elements of the exploiting force left to block or contain enemy forces, or continue the mission of the exploiting force. Commanders of follow and support units and the exploiting force maintain close liaison. Elements of the follow and support unit may even be attached to the exploiting force. Follow and support force tasks include—

- Destroy bypassed units.
- Relieve units halted to contain enemy forces.
- Block enemy reinforcements.
- Secure lines of communications, or key areas.
- Secure prisoners of war and refugees.

The entire division may be assigned a follow and support mission in a corps or joint force offensive operation. Division may also assign follow and support missions to its brigades as part of the division’s offense. Note that the follow and support force is not a reserve. It is a committed force that is provided the appropriate amount of combat, CS, and CSS forces to perform its mission.

Follow and Assume

Follow and assume, like follow and support, is not a form of the offense. A follow and assume force is also a committed force. It plans and prepares to take over the complete mission of the force it is following. This mission is common in offensive

operations. A follow and assume force often follows the main attack.

Contingency Plans

The division staff prepares contingency plans that allow the division to shift from one type of offensive operation or from one form of maneuver to another with minimal delay. These are called branches to the current operations. The division staff also develops sequels, the next major division operation. Plans are refined as intelligence confirms or denies the location and composition of defending enemy units. This information could require modifying the task organization and combat, CS, and CSS priorities.

Deception

Division deception activities support a higher headquarters' deception operations. Division actions are designed to mislead an enemy commander, prompting him to plan and conduct his activities in a manner that serves the division commander's objectives. The division's deception story and plan are coordinated with higher-level deception plans to ensure unity of effort. Techniques such as feints, demonstrations, displays, and ruses, combined with a variety of deception means and measures (camouflage, decoys, smoke, electronic means), are synchronized to portray a deceptive picture. Deception allows the division to surprise an enemy on the timing, location, and strength of the pending attack. A good deception story reinforces the enemy commander's perceptions about the disposition and intentions of the division.

Support of Brigades

The division resources the close fight around its brigades. Attacking brigade commanders normally fight their battalions, which use direct and indirect fires and maneuver against the defending enemy. Attack helicopters, combat engineers, electronic combat, air defense weapons, field artillery units, and joint fires support maneuver battalions in destroying enemy units. The division provides additional combat, CS, and CSS assets to brigades where needed. The main effort most often receives additional tactical units, engineers, air defense, CSS, reinforcing artillery fires, and joint fires. The

division ensures that every available resource supports the main effort.

The division commander does not limit his attacks to the vicinity of the FLOT. He supports the main effort brigade throughout the depth of the battlefield. He uses fires and supporting maneuvers that reach deep into the enemy's zone of action and strike vulnerable, high-payoff targets or engage uncommitted enemy forces.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The corps or joint force commander assigns the division offensive missions in broad terms that leave the division commander the greatest possible freedom of action. The division commander plans for the synchronization of all combat, CS, and CSS units to close with and destroy the enemy and exploit his successes with additional forces and fires. As necessary, he adjusts the direction of the attack.

The division launches its attack from either an assembly area, a lodgment, or an assigned defensive sector, or from the march. All require a concerted planning effort. When attacking from an assembly area, the commander considers—

- Movement times.
- Road networks.
- March orders (sequencing).
- Passage of lines.

Attacking from an occupied defensive sector may require the division to thin its forces from forward positions to mass attack formations. If this cannot be done, division units move directly from their defensive positions into the attack. Attacking from a march formation requires a responsive and flexible command and control system to respond rapidly and aggressively through battle drills without losing division momentum.

Intelligence

All IEW collection means gather detailed information that provides the basis for sound offensive plans. The MI battalion's effort is to gain real-time information on the location, identification, size, and composition of enemy units, and to disseminate intelligence rapidly to maneuver and fire support

units. Priority intelligence collection focuses on enemy units most likely to influence the division main effort. The division commander is particularly concerned with the location of uncommitted enemy forces and enemy air defense units, command posts, artillery, mortars, and rocket forces. The division commander weights his main attack with appropriate intelligence support.

Maneuver

Application of Maneuver Forces

The division's maneuver forces are generally infantry, armored, or aviation. Light or dismounted infantry forces can defend rugged, restricted terrain and conduct infiltration attacks to secure key objectives that block enemy counterattacking forces. Infantry forces are effective in built-up areas, mountains, and thickly wooded or jungle environments. Their ability to air assault provides division or corps commanders a rapidly deployable force to seize initiative on battlefields.

On the other hand, armored and mechanized forces concentrate their lethality, survivability, ground mobility, speed, and offensive shock effects to defeat or destroy enemy forces. Armored and mechanized units are particularly effective in conducting mobile combat against enemy armored forces in open terrain.

Finally, the division's aviation forces conduct the full range of combat, CS, and CSS operations. Aviation units are especially skilled in conducting attacks, air assaults, reconnaissance, and security operations.

Army Aviation

Attack helicopters are most effective at night against exposed threat forces on the move, and least effective against threat forces in prepared defensive positions. In offensive operations, aviation units are normally integrated into the scheme of maneuver and given missions similar to those of other maneuver units. Attack helicopter units are also used as deep attack assets, security forces, or the division's reserve.

As the offensive operation transitions to the exploitation and pursuit, Army aviation becomes extremely effective. As the enemy evacuates his defensive positions and displaces to his rear, his

unprotected unit formations are ideal for helicopter attacks. During the exploitation and pursuit, the aviation brigade attacks through or around penetrations to envelop and destroy enemy forces. Detailed planning is necessary to effectively synchronize ground force elements with aviation assets.

Cavalry

During offensive operations, the division's cavalry squadron normally performs reconnaissance or security operations. (See Appendix A.) The cavalry squadron conducts area, zone, route, and reconnaissance in force operations. Additionally, the squadron makes initial contact with enemy forces, develops the situation, and can direct attacking maneuver brigades to the optimal point of attack. The cavalry squadron also conducts security missions to protect the force and to prevent premature deployment of uncommitted brigades. The squadron can control terrain, delay or destroy enemy forces, or be used in an economy of force role. The squadron is normally under division control during offensive operations.

Fire Support

Artillery

The division artillery commander organizes supporting artillery for combat after considering requirements for—

- Counterfire.
- Direct support.
- Covering fires.
- Preparatory fires
- Interdiction (deep fires),
- Suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD).

The artillery task organization and fire support plan provide the capability to rapidly shift fires during the attack. The fire support plan is designed to isolate, suppress, and destroy enemy units. It lays out how the maneuver commander intends to integrate all fire support, both lethal and nonlethal, into his operation.

Combat Air

Air support to the division during offensive operations consists of CAS, AI, tactical surveillance and reconnaissance, and tactical airlift. Indirectly, the theater air forces support division operations through their counterair campaigns. These campaigns attain air superiority and protect ground forces and their freedom to maneuver.

CAS and AI support are integrated and synchronized with the division's organic and attached fire support assets. The fire support element, along with the TACP, plans for the use of joint air support. CAS and AI are included in the commander's fire support plan.

During offensive operations, the main attack receives priority of fires. If the division is conducting the corps main effort, CAS sorties normally are distributed to the division for planning. Corps and EAC commanders appropriately prioritize division AI target nominations or mission-type air requests. CAS sorties normally go to the maneuver brigade making the main attack. Follow and support, reserve, and supporting attack brigades must be prepared to accept and employ CAS sorties if they become the division's main effort. The division commander retains some CAS sorties to influence the battle at decisive times.

CAS and AI should be planned against enemy forces whose destruction or delay would have the greatest potential to unhinge the enemy commander's plan or operational tempo. Priority targets for CAS and AI are high-payoff targets identified throughout the targeting process. AI can add depth and shape the battlefield. It can help isolate the battle by interdicting avenues of approach and lines of communication that lead to the division's axis of advance and objectives.

The division fire support system and the A²C² element coordinate JSEAD airspace coordination areas, ingress and egress routes, and other airspace requirements to deliver aerial and surface-delivered fires simultaneously into a given engagement area or target area.

Mobility and Survivability Engineers

The division engineer receives guidance and priorities for the engineer effort from the commander.

The division engineer is important in developing the division's scheme of maneuver. He consults with the G3, FSO, ADA officer, ALO, PM, chemical officer, aviation officer, G2, and G4 to plan engineer support. The division engineer plans and coordinates mobility, countermobility, and survivability tasks to support the offensive mission. He is the link between engineer planning at corps and division and the execution of engineer tasks throughout the division's AO. In offensive operations, priority of engineer support is to mobility missions. Engineer assets are task-organized with maneuver units to breach obstacles, maintain forward momentum, and ensure routes are open for logistics support.

In the offense, corps engineers usually augment the division. The main attack is weighted with engineer capabilities. Lead brigades normally receive at least one battalion of combat engineers for mobility support. Countermobility planning includes the coordination of family of scatterable mines (FASCAM) employment between the division FSE, engineer, G2, and G3. In the offense, FASCAM blocks potential flank avenues of approach, fixes enemy counterattack forces, and closes enemy retreat routes. Although survivability missions have lower priority during the offense, survivability becomes important during operational pauses and consolidation objectives.

Chemical

In the offense, chemical companies perform chemical reconnaissance, decontamination, and smoke operations to support the division. Airborne and air assault divisions have only decon and smoke platoons. On receipt of the division warning order, the chemical company commander coordinates with the division chemical officer to effect task organization and obtain appropriate augmentation from corps.

Chemical reconnaissance units locate areas free of persistent contamination. They are positioned based on the IPB process. When collocated with the division's security forces, they are attached. They may conduct some independent operations.

The division chemical officer recommends general decontamination sites to the chemical company commander. The commander refines these locations based on a physical reconnaissance and METT-T and requests they be approved and

published to the division. Once he receives final approval, the commander moves his decontamination platoon to establish these sites in accordance with unit SOPs and OPLANs. Normally, the priority for decontamination is to maneuver elements of the division's main attack.

The smoke platoon's preparation for offensive operations begins with a reconnaissance of its area of employment (if possible). Smoke is positioned based on the IPB process to counter the enemy's secure systems or to support camouflage, cover, and deception operations.

Once elements of the chemical company are deployed, the company commander locates where he can best monitor operations and reorient and reorganize chemical assets as needed.

Air Defense

Air defense priorities ensure effective and continuous ADA support for offensive operations. The ADA battalion commander and the division G3 develop and recommend priorities to the commander. Priority of protection is normally to maneuver forces and forward combat support units to sustain the offense.

The G3, with the division ADA battalion commander, coordinates and directs the relationships between air defense units and other units. These relationships will be either command or support. However, the ADA commander retains sufficient control of ADA assets to react to rapid changes in the division's scheme of maneuver.

Combat Service Support Sustainment

During offensive operations, CSS maintains the momentum of the attack. In the attack, CSS units are positioned forward to weight the main attack and sustain all attacking units. Support emphasizes classes III and V resupply; maintenance of weapon systems; and medical evacuation, casualty, and replacement operations. During exploitations and pursuits, the division commander pays particular attention to his CSS and resupply routes. These routes must be adequate and secured to support sustainment operations over extended distances.

(Sustaining operations are discussed further in Appendix E.)

Military Police

The employment of MP units in the offense differs somewhat by type of division. Normally, in lighter divisions (light, airborne, and air assault), the MP companies provide GS to the command. The actual support relationship depends on the factors of METT-T and the amount of corps augmentation. In armored and mechanized divisions, MPs usually provide GS to the division rear area and DS to maneuver brigades. However, some operations require all MP platoons to be GS to the division as a whole. Priorities for MPs are a function of METT-T and the commander's concept of operations. In the offensive, priorities are often battlefield circulation control, EPW and civilian internees, area security, and law and order operations.

Command and Control

Battle Command

The division commander and the command group position themselves well forward 'where they can see and sense the battle once it is joined. As a rule, they locate initially near the lead brigade of the main effort.

The ADC-M at the TAC CP stays in continuous communication with the division commander. The TAC CP ensures the commander's decisions are relayed and acted on by committed units. The main CP synchronizes the battle-deep, close, and rear. The rear CP is heavily committed to coordinating and facilitating the push of CSS forward to sustain the attack. Additionally, the rear CP maintains MSRs; evacuates casualties, equipment, and EPWs; reestablishes CSS bases forward; and conducts rear operations.

Signal

The division signal battalion commander plans, organizes, and positions the communications assets necessary for continuous and mobile command and control of division offensive operations. He coordinates with the corps signal brigade to ensure continuity of Army Common User System (ACUS), CNR, data distribution, and other signal operations. Signal units are proactive in offensive operations;

During Just Cause and Desert Storm, division commanders were extremely mobile and traveled with a few select staff members. Key members, either with the commanders or in a command post, included the chief of staff, the assistant division commander for maneuver, the G3, the FSCoord/DIVARTY commander, the command sergeant major, and the aide-de-camp.

The assistant division commander for maneuver moved between the forward command post and the command group to keep the division commander informed of corps' guidance. The FSCoord usually traveled with the commander or was always in close communications by radio.

All the commanders emphasized the importance of the aide-de-camp in combat. The aide got the commander to where he needed to be on the battlefield, kept the commander in communications with corps, monitored the division command net for the commander, and kept the TAC CP and the assistant division commander for maneuver posted on the face-to-face meetings with commanders.

that is, they develop detailed plans to support fast-moving division operations. They must rapidly displace to keep up with the division's communication needs. The signal battalion ensures uninterrupted frequency-modulated (FM) voice and digital data communications during offensive operations.

PREPARING FOR OPERATIONS

Transition To The Offense

If the division's defense (discussed in Chapter 5) is successful, the enemy reaches a culminating point within the main battle area (MBA). The combat power of the attacking enemy at the point of his attack no longer exceeds that of the friendly defender. The enemy attack flounders and he attempts to withdraw or transitions to a defense.

Time becomes critical. The division commander must already have a plan to attack quickly. He rapidly reorganizes and refits selected units, moves to attack positions, and attacks. His units are in positions known to the enemy and, unless moved, will be subject to the enemy's supporting fires. *Time* is also critical to the enemy. He uses this time to reorganize, establish a security zone, and dig in his defensive positions.

Unless the division has a large, uncommitted reserve prepared to quickly exploit the situation, the commander must reset its defense as well as maintain contact with the enemy. At the same time, the commander must move forces to prepare for his attack, or conduct a frontal attack with units in contact (normally the least favorable course of action). Successful friendly force commanders must think through this transition period and have a plan to execute.

The division's higher headquarters normally dictates the time of the attack. If the division commander is free to choose the time, he must consider the time required to reconnoiter the terrain and gather additional information about the enemy, if needed. He must also consider the time required by subordinate units to prepare. Time is critical. Time used to prepare the division to attack is time provided the enemy to prepare to defend or even to attack the division.

Offensive Formations

Divisions attack the enemy at the location offering the greatest likelihood of success. Attacks are aimed at weak points in the enemy defense. If no weak point can be found, the division must create one with fire, maneuver, or deception.

Divisions normally deploy in a standard formation for an attack. Traditional formations are a *column* of brigades, a *box* of brigades, a *line* of brigades, a "V" formation, a *wedge* formation, or brigades in *echelon*. Division commanders prescribe initial formations and designate the division unit's march order. Initial dispositions usually change in the course of an attack, however, as forces are committed and plans modified.

The column of brigades is used in narrow or restrictive zones and against deep objectives. The column of brigades provides great depth, flexibility,

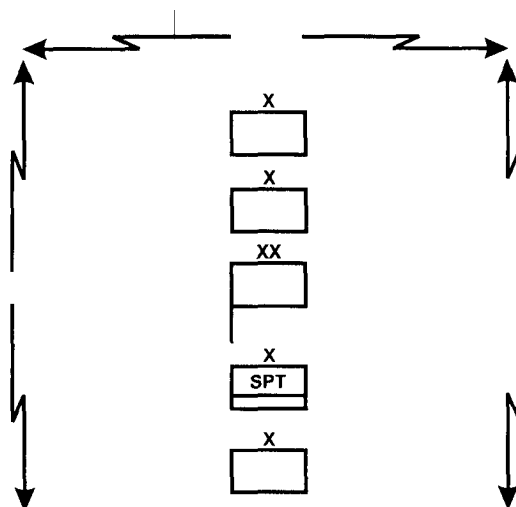
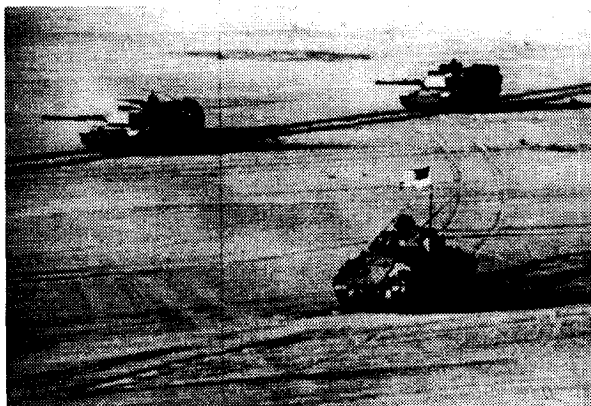


Figure 4-5. Column of brigades

and ease of control. Although the column does not require the battalions of the brigades to march on a single route or to move on a single avenue, it provides poor initial combat power to the front and is easily interdicted. Additionally, deployment of brigades from the second and third positions in the column is time-consuming and normally involves passage through the division artillery. Bringing the trail brigade abreast of the leading brigade when brigades are in column takes several hours even if the division is moving on multiple parallel routes. (See Figure 4-5.)



In the course of an attack, the initial formation and unit march order may change as forces are committed and plans modified.

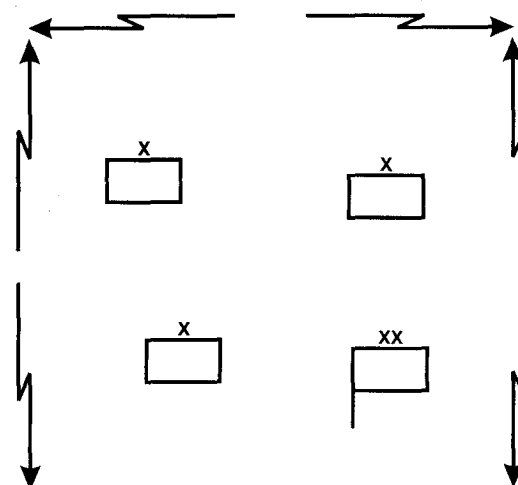


Figure 4-6. Brigades in box formation

The box formation puts additional combat power to the front while providing a high degree of flank security. This formation is very flexible and allows the commander to quickly commit combat power in any direction. (See Figure 4-6.)

The line of brigades is useful in wide zones, against accurately located resistance, or in frontal attacks against shallow objectives. This formation permits divisions to put two brigades on line and to withhold one as a reserve, or to deploy all three brigades on line. The line formation exploits available avenues, puts combat power to the front, and is fairly secure and flexible when one brigade is withheld. However, it provides poor flank security when all brigades are committed on line. Additionally, this formation is difficult to reorient. (See Figure 4-7, page 4-16.)

The "V" formation disposes the unit with two elements abreast and one or more trailing. This arrangement is most suitable to advance against a threat known to be to the front. It may be used when enemy contact is expected and the location and disposition of the enemy are known. Movement techniques are the same as previously discussed. (See Figure 4-8, page 4-16.)

The wedge best disposes the unit to attack an enemy appearing to the front and flanks. The wedge is used when enemy contact is possible or expected, but the location and disposition of the enemy are

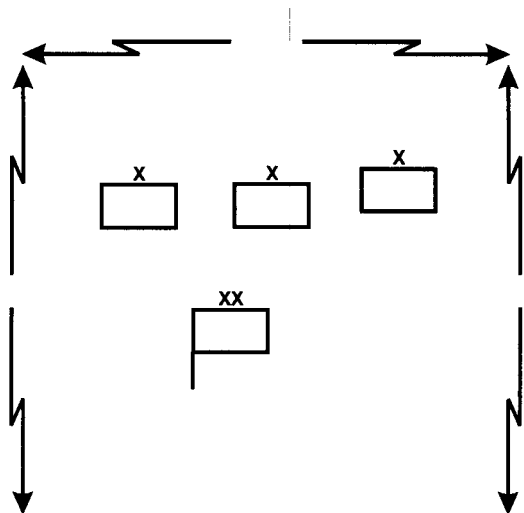


Figure 4-7. Line of brigades

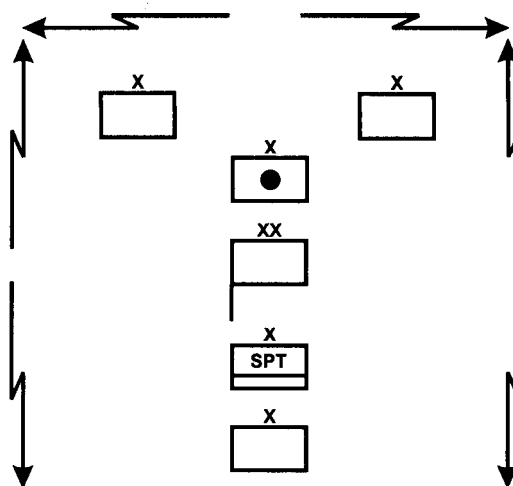


Figure 4-8. V formation

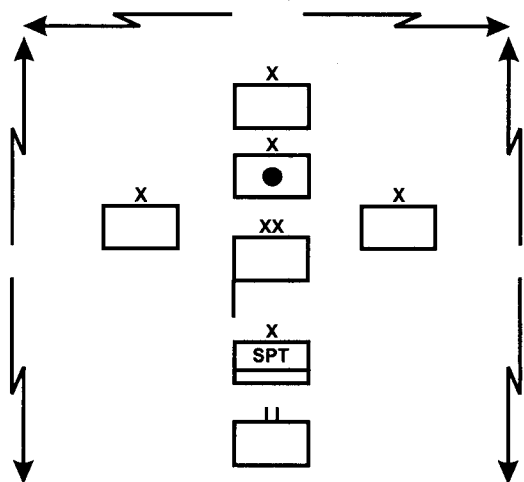
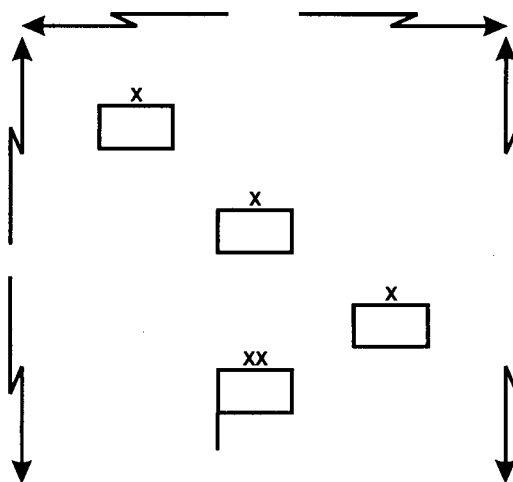


Figure 4-9. Wedge formation

Figure 4-10. Echelon of brigades,
three abreast

vague. It is the preferred formation for a movement to contact as it initiates contact with the smallest element. When enemy contact is not expected, the wedge may be used to rapidly cross open terrain. Within the wedge, subordinate units employ the formation best suited to the terrain, visibility, and likelihood of contact, or directed by the senior commander. (See Figure 4-9.)

Brigades are in echelon when advancing in a wide zone, when a flank threat exists, or when the

division commander plans to envelop a known enemy force in the objective area. The echelon formation provides good flank security and depth but limits flexibility. Brigades in echelon are slow in developing combat power to the front. (See Figure 4-10.)

Enemy resistance, maneuver space and avenues of approach in the zone, road net, weather, and time available all affect the choice of attack formations. Figure 4-11, page 4-17, summarizes these factors.

COLUMN OF BRIGADES	BOX FORMATION	V FORMATIONS	WEDGE FORMATIONS	ECHELON OF BRIGADES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep objectives • Vague enemy information • Restrictive terrain • Light, disorganized enemy resistance • Relatively narrow zone of action • Relatively easy to control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow objectives strongly held by enemy forces • Enemy dispositions well known • Multiple routes of advance available • Presence of four or more maneuver brigades • Secure flanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less easy to reorient than the wedge • Very difficult to control in restricted terrain • Maximum firepower forward • Good firepower to the flanks, but less than provided with the wedge • Facilitates continuation of maneuver after contact is made and rapid transition to the assault • Can be quickly changed to the line, wedge, or column • Requires sufficient space for dispersal laterally and in depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates control; orientation can be rapidly changed • Maximum firepower forward and good firepower to the flanks • Can be quickly changed to the line, V, echelon, or column • Difficult to control in restricted terrain or poor visibility • Requires sufficient space to disperse subordinate units laterally and in-depth • Allows the unit to make contact with one element while retaining the remainder in position to maneuver • Initiates contact with the smallest elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed flank • Limited time available for deployment • Requirement for security in-depth
	LINE FORMATION			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no requirement for a reserve • Relatively wide zone of action • Relatively difficult to control 			

Figure 4-11. Factors favoring types of formations

DIVISION AS AN OFFENSIVE COVERING FORCE

The division may be assigned a covering force mission for a corps or JTF headquarters. The covering force develops the situation early, provides security for the main body, and prevents unnecessary delay of the main body.

To cover the corps' entire zone of action, the division operates on a broad front and requires a well-prepared, coordinated OPLAN. The covering force requires control measures that synchronize actions of the covering force with the movement of the remaining corps or joint force. These measures may include checkpoints or phase lines; boundaries

between brigades; and coordinated use of radio, aircraft, and ground messenger communications. The division advances with most of its maneuver battalions forward. Engineers, air defense artillery, and field artillery are often attached to brigades.

Covering force actions are characterized by maintaining speed and aggressiveness, developing situations rapidly with strength, committing reserves to eliminate enemy resistance, and keeping the enemy off balance. The division concentrates its attention against enemy forces of sufficient size to threaten the movement of the main body while bypassing and reporting minor resistance. Every action is directed toward ensuring the uninterrupted movement of the main force.