

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Tank and mechanized infantry battalion task forces are organized to fight and win engagements on any part of the battlefield in conventional, nuclear, or chemical environments. They combine the efforts of their company teams and combat support to perform tactical missions as part of a brigade or division operation. The key to victory is to quickly mass the combat power of maneuver company teams and integrate and synchronize combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) combat multipliers.

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Section I. MISSION, CAPABILITIES, AND LIMITATIONS

Mechanized infantry battalions and tank battalions are organized, equipped, and trained to accomplish compatible missions; each type battalion has unique capabilities and limitations.

1-1. MISSION

- a. The missions of mechanized infantry and tank battalions in their pure configurations are as follows:
 - (1) **Mechanized infantry battalion.** Their mission is to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver in order to destroy or capture him, or to repel his assault by fire, close combat, and counterattack.
 - (2) **Tank battalion.** Their mission is to close with and destroy enemy forces using fire, maneuver, and shock effect, or to repel his assault by fire and counterattack.
- b. Battalion task forces accomplish missions and tasks as part of a brigade's operation. Occasionally, task forces will conduct operations directly under the control of a division or an armored cavalry regiment such as when they are participating in the higher headquarters covering force, acting as a reserve, or forming a tactical combat force in rear area operations.

1-2. CAPABILITIES

- a. The capability of the tank and mechanized infantry battalions is increased through task organization. Based on his estimate of the situation, the brigade commander task-organizes tank and mechanized infantry battalions by cross-attaching companies between these units. As a rule, cross-attachment is done at battalion, because battalion has the necessary command and control and support capabilities to employ combined arms formations. The brigade commander determines the mix of companies in a task force. Similarly, the task force commander's estimate may require cross-attaching platoons to form one or more company teams for specific missions.
- b. Tank and mechanized infantry battalion task forces apply their mobility, firepower, and shock effect—
 - To conduct sustained combat operations in all environments.
 - To accomplish rapid movement and limited penetrations.
 - To exploit success and pursue a defeated enemy as part of a larger formation.

- To conduct security operations (advance, flank, or rear guard) for a larger force.
- To conduct defensive, retrograde, or other operations over assigned areas.
- To conduct offensive operations.

1-3. LIMITATIONS

- a. Because of the high density of tracked vehicles, the battalion has the following limitations:
 - Mobility and firepower are restricted by urban areas, dense jungles and forests, very steep and rugged terrain, and significant water obstacles.
 - Strategic mobility is limited by substantial quantities of heavy equipment.
 - Consumption of supply items is high, especially Classes III, V, and IX.
- b. Battalions are task-organized according to mission, and they are routinely augmented to improve engineer, fire support, air defense, intelligence, and CSS capabilities.

Section II. BATTALION TASK FORCE ON THE AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD

The foundation of AirLand Battle doctrine at the task force level is classical maneuver warfare. In its simplest form, maneuver warfare involves using a part of the force to find, then fix or contain the enemy, while the remainder of the force attacks his weakest point—usually a flank or the rear. The goal is to mass enough combat power at the critical place and time to destroy the enemy or threaten him with destruction, while preserving freedom for future action.

The task force commander must understand the intent of the brigade commander and division commander so he can properly employ his force. The task force commander develops his intent and concept and accepts risks to achieve decisive results. He seizes the initiative early and conducts offensive action aimed at imposing his will on the enemy. The objective of his maneuver is to position strength against weakness, throw the enemy off balance, and aggressively follow-up to complete defeat and destruction of the enemy.

*1-4. TENENTS OF ARMY OPERATIONS

The Army's success on and off the battlefield depends on its ability to operate in accordance with five basic tenets: **initiative**, **agility**, **depth**, **synchronization**, and **versatility**. A tenet is a basic truth held by an organization. The fundamental tenets of Army operations doctrine describe the characteristics of successful operations. All training and leadership doctrine and all combat, combat support, and combat service support doctrine derive directly from, and must support, the fundamental tenets. The US Army believes that its five basic tenets are essential to victory. In and of themselves they do not guarantee victory, but their absence makes it difficult and costly to achieve. (See FM 100-5.)

- a. **Initiative.** Initiative sets or changes the terms of battle by action and implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations. Applied to the force as a whole, initiative requires a constant effort to force the enemy to conform to commanders' operational purposes and tempos, while retaining freedom of action. It means depleting the enemy's options, while still having options of their own. This requires leaders to anticipate events on the battlefield so that they and their units can act and react faster than the enemy. Applied to individual soldiers and to leaders, initiative requires a willingness and ability to act independently within the framework of the higher commander's intent.
 - (1) In battle, initiative requires the decentralization of decision authority to the lowest practical level. At the same time, decentralization risks some loss of synchronization. Commanders constantly balance these competing risks, recognizing that loss of immediate control is preferable to inaction. Decentralization demands well-trained subordinates and superiors who are willing to take risks.
 - (2) In operations other than war, initiative implies controlling the environment rather than letting the environment control events. In responding to a natural disaster, commanders direct their forces to the critical points or facilities where prompt action is needed to stabilize the environment. The objective is to allow local governments to assume control at an appropriate time while the community regains control of basic services. Commanders direct their military activities in combination with other elements of national and coalition power to restore stability.
- b. **Agility.** Agility is the ability of friendly forces to react faster than the enemy and is a prerequisite for seizing and holding the initiative. It is as much a mental as a physical quality. Greater quickness permits the rapid concentration of friendly strength against enemy vulnerabilities. Forces will need to mass their effect rapidly so that by the time the enemy reacts to one action, another has taken its place, disrupting the enemy's plans and leading to late, uncoordinated, and piecemeal responses. This process of successive massing against locally weaker or unprepared enemy forces enables smaller forces to disorient, fragment, and eventually defeat much larger opposing formations. To achieve such a defeat, leaders and units must be agile.

- (1) In operations other than war, as commanders perceive changes to their environment, they devise imaginative methods of applying their resources to those changes and act quickly to gain or maintain control of the environment. For example, Army forms in disaster relief operations can use tactical vehicles and communication systems to reach isolated locations, to direct efforts, and to restore services to supplement the efforts of local governments whose normal resources are overwhelmed.
 - (2) In peacekeeping operations, Army forces might defuse conditions that would otherwise lead to a resumption of fighting by recognizing the inherent dangers and by resolving grievances before they ignite into open combat. A situational awareness that perceives and anticipates changes in the environment, combined with the ability to act quickly within the intent of higher commanders, leads to an agility in operations other than war that is vital to successful outcomes.
- c. **Depth.** Depth is the extension of operations in time, space, resources, and purpose. These factors vary by echelon and by constraints given to commanders. What is most important, however, is the fact that in any operation, the Army must have the ability to gain information and influence operations throughout the depth of the battlefield. This ability highlights the joint nature of deep operations, which means participation by the other services.
- (1) In offensive and defensive tactical actions, commanders fight the enemy throughout the depth of his disposition with fires and with attacks on his flanks and rear. They attack committed and uncommitted forces and synchronize the attack of enemy artillery in depth with close operations. Such in-depth operations degrade the enemy's freedom of action, reduce his flexibility and endurance, and upset his plans and coordination. Most importantly, these operations prevent the enemy from impacting on friendly actions. Commanders retain reserves and adjust their main effort to exploit tactical opportunities and carry the fight into the depths of the enemy's formations or defenses. At the same time, commanders guard their own freedom of action by protecting their forces and the means needed to sustain combat operations.
 - (2) In operations other than war, depth extends activities in time, space, resources, and purpose to affect the environment and the conditions that are to be resolved. Seldom are short-term situations conclusive. Commanders envision simultaneous activities and sequential stages that lead to a long-term outcome. For example, to solve the problem of feeding the local population, commanders may set up kitchens and distribute food in the first stage, assist in the reestablishment of commercial food distribution points in the second stage, and finally assist in improving road networks as the local government regains the ability to provide a steady supply of food. Similarly, peacekeeping operations may begin with an initial objective of observing a cease-fire, then move to support of an economic recovery program, and finally conclude in

support of an international agency program that results in cultural assimilation and the resolution of the underlying conflict. Just as in war, commanders anticipate future situations and decide how to coordinate activities in depth that will achieve the desired end state.

- d. **Synchronization.** Synchronization is arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point and achieve a desired effect. For example, integrating the activities of intelligence, logistics, and fire support with maneuver leads to synchronized operations.
 - (1) Synchronization includes, but is not limited to, the massed effects of combat power at the point of decision. Some of the activities that commanders synchronize in an operation, such as jamming enemy communications, suppressing enemy air defenses, and shifting reserves, might occur before the decisive moment. They may take place at locations distant from one another. Though separated in time and space, these activities must be well synchronized if their combined effects are to be felt at the decisive time and place. Synchronization seeks to gain overwhelming combat power.
 - (2) Synchronization usually requires explicit coordination among the various units and activities participating in any operation. By itself, however, such coordination is no guarantee of synchronization unless commanders first visualize the consequences to be produced and how they must sequence activities to produce these consequences. Staffs must understand their commander's intent since they make a large part of the synchronization plan happen. Synchronization thus takes place first in the minds of commanders and then in the actual planning and coordination of movements, fires, and supporting activities. Rehearsals are key to successful execution of synchronized operations.
- e. **Versatility.** Versatility is the ability of units to meet diverse mission requirements. Commanders must be able to shift focus, tailor forces, and move from one role or mission to another rapidly and efficiently. Versatility implies a capacity to be multifunctional, to operate across the full range of military operations, and to perform at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.
 - (1) Versatility is the ability of tactical units to adapt to different missions and tasks, some of which may not be on unit mission-essential task lists (METLs). Army forces have always been versatile; in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, they adapted quickly to the environment and to the tactics of the enemy. In a force-projection army, however, the demands for versatility increase. Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Provide Comfort introduced Army forces to dynamic environments that called for quick, successful action across a wide range of war and operations other than war. Forces must be prepared to move rapidly from one geographical region to another and from one type of warfare to another in quick succession.

(2) Versatility denotes the ability to perform in many roles and environments during war and operations other than war. It allows for the smooth transition from one mission to another. Versatility requires competence in a variety of missions and skills. This suggests that all military organizations must have the ability to organize in different combinations of units, and it also suggests that they must have the capacity to redeploy from one area or region to another without the loss of focus. Versatility is the result of well-led, well-trained, and well-equipped forces, high standards, and detailed planning. Versatility ensures that units can conduct many different kinds of operations, either sequentially or simultaneously, with the same degree of success.

1-5. BATTALION BATTLEFIELD FOCUS

- a. Battalion is the lowest echelon at which firepower, maneuver, intelligence, and support are combined under a single commander. Battalions normally fight enemy forces they can see and engage—this defines an area of operations extending from less than 100 meters in forests, urban areas, or close terrain, out to about 5 to 6 kilometers from the battalion's direct and indirect fire weapon systems.

- b. During the offense, the battalion task force is expected to defeat a defending enemy company. The close fight consists of breaching obstacles, penetrating defenses, and defeating defending platoons. Following any penetration, the battalion prepares to fight enemy battalion reserves (platoon or company). The battalion has no rear battle and responds to rear threats as a part of the close fight. Battalion reserves are designated as required to meet changing situations. Reserves provide weight to the main effort. The task force provides security and reconnaissance to support attacking company teams. During the battalion close fight, the brigade conducts its deep fight against enemy regimental reserves, then fights enemy units defending in subsequent defensive positions.
- c. During the defense, the battalion task force is expected to defend against and defeat a threat regiment. The battalion task force close fight consists of subordinate companies defeating the companies of the enemy first echelon battalions and then defeating the companies of second echelon battalions. The battalion has no deep fight, but may be charged with the execution of the fight against follow-on enemy battalions. The battalion responds to defensive rear threats, as part of the close fight. The battalion normally designates a company-size reserve as a counterattack force. Battalion employs defensive security measures in concert with the brigade plan. The brigade deep fight supports the battalion close fight by interdicting the follow-on battalions, then shifting to the lead battalions of the second echelon regiment.

Section III. ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

A tank or mechanized infantry battalion consists of pure companies under the command of a battalion headquarters. It participates in brigade or division operations in accordance with the principles and concepts set forth in FM 71-3 and FM 71-100.

1-6. BATTALION COMMANDER

- a. The fighting characteristics of a battalion are a reflection of the character of the battalion commander. Bold and tenacious battalion commanders have bold and tenacious battalions. If a commander is tactically skillful and innovative, history supports that most of his battalion's missions will be successful and his battalion will suffer minimum casualties. Battalion commanders who possess the technical, tactical, and leadership skills, and

who develop teams out of individual soldiers and units, will win — even if outnumbered. Battalion commanders who are also competent and courageous can successfully lead soldiers on the dynamic, lethal, and chaotic modern battlefield.

- b. Because the battalion task force commander must organize his task force based on the mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and time available (METT-T), he must have an understanding of all of the tools at his disposal. Then, he must effectively combine these tools for each tactical situation. The commander achieves maximum effectiveness from the battalion task force by being aware of all of his assets and knowing how to employ them.

1-7. SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS

The company team commanders and special-purpose platoon leaders directly influence the battle by employing their fire and maneuver elements in a way that accomplishes the mission. They are the commander's principal assistants for fighting the battle. They must understand the commander's concept and know the capabilities and employment techniques of their combat assets as well as the combat support assets provided to them by the task force commander.

1-8. BATTALION STAFF

The battalion is the lowest tactical echelon with a staff. Small but essential, they assist the commander in doing all those things necessary to coordinate the battle and to ensure adequate combat and combat service support to allow for continuous operations. The commander is then free to fight the battle. Supply, maintenance, communications, administration, and reporting are all supervised by the staff. The staff normally conducts much of its business in accordance with SOPs. The staff ensures continuous support to the company teams to allow them to fight the battle.

1-9. SCOUT PLATOON

The battalion scout platoon performs reconnaissance, provides limited security, and assists in controlling movement of the battalion task force. The platoon is not organized or equipped to conduct independent offensive, defensive, or retrograde operations. It operates as part of the battalion and should be assigned missions that capitalize on its reconnaissance capabilities. The scout platoon is

one of the commander's primary sources of combat intelligence before the battle and is his eyes and ears during the battle. (See FM 17-98.)

1-10. MORTAR PLATOON

Mortars are organic to the battalion. They are high-angle, relatively short-range, area fire weapons, well suited for providing close indirect-fire support to maneuver units. (See FM 7-90.)

1-11. COMMUNICATIONS PLATOON

The battalion communications platoon is responsible for establishing and operating the battalion radio and wire communications systems. In addition, the platoon provides couriers to supplement the battalion liaison officers.

1-12. SUPPORT PLATOON

The support platoon provides organic transportation, as well as Class I, Class III, and Class V resupply to the battalion. It is composed of a platoon headquarters, ammunition section, POL section, transportation section, and mess section. The platoon provides the majority of the battalion's combat service support.

1-13. MEDICAL PLATOON

The battalion medical platoon is responsible for providing treatment and evacuation of casualties.

1-14. MAINTENANCE PLATOON

The battalion maintenance platoon is structured to maintain, evacuate, and repair the vehicles in the battalion. It is organized into a platoon headquarters, an inspection and quality control section, a maintenance administrative section, a recovery support section, a maintenance/services section, and company maintenance teams.

1-15. COMBAT SUPPORT

In addition to the organic mortars, the task force commander will receive additional fire support from divisional and nondivisional

units. The commander must integrate and synchronize his supporting fire support elements to suppress and destroy the enemy in support of the maneuver plan. Synchronization also requires close coordination with adjacent units and Army aviation assets. Combat support assets normally available to the battalion task force are —

- Cannon field artillery.
- Close air support.
- Air defense artillery.
- Engineers.
- Military intelligence.

Section IV. BATTLEFIELD OPERATING SYSTEMS

1-16. OPERATING SYSTEMS

Task force functions are grouped into seven battlefield operating systems that must be integrated to support the commander's intent. The functioning of each system requires the coordinated efforts of all elements of the task force. The commander and staff integrate these systems into a combined arms force tailored to the situation.

a. Command and Control.

- (1) The commander fights from a forward location where he can best see, hear, and influence the battle. He issues the orders necessary to control his subordinate units. His subordinate commanders and his soldiers must be aware of his presence on the battlefield.
- (2) The task force uses standard military terminology, symbol-ogy, and reports and orders formats to distribute information and instructions. Face-to-face coordination is the most reliable of all means of communication. Copies of orders and instructions are limited and are generally in the form of operations overlays with superimposed execution matrixes. Wire is used as the preferred means of communications between elements that will be in position for more than a few hours. Radio communication is critical to fast-moving operations, but it has limitations and the enemy can disrupt it during critical times. Knowing the commander's intent and concept of the operations allows subordinates to act on their initiative and precludes an overdependence on radio communications.

- (3) The S3 is responsible for orders preparation and, through the task force signal officer, manages the electronic, wire, and messenger systems.
- b. **Maneuver.** The maneuver companies of the task force destroy enemy forces and seize and hold terrain. All other task force assets support the maneuver elements.
- (1) Historically, the infantry has been most effective during limited visibility, where observation and fields of fire were limited, and in close combat with the enemy. With the introduction of the improved TOW vehicle and Bradley fighting vehicle, the infantry has gained increased flexibility to destroy enemy armor at long range and to fight mounted, during limited visibility, while retaining the ability to fight dismounted as the situation requires.
 - (2) Tanks are most effective where they can move fast and provide rapid, accurate direct fire at extended ranges. Thermal sights increase the capability of tanks to fight during limited visibility.
 - (3) Attack helicopters are a maneuver asset that may operate with the battalion even though they are normally under OPCON of the brigade. They are highly mobile and can provide accurate long-range antitank fires during the defense, attack, exploitation, or pursuit. Attack helicopters can deny terrain to the enemy, but cannot seize and hold terrain, and they are not effective against a dug-in enemy.
- c. **Fire Support.** The task force commander plans and coordinates his fire support to suppress, neutralize, or destroy the enemy. The FSO assists the commander in planning and coordinating fire support. In addition to organic mortars, the commander receives fire support from field artillery units and close air support from the Air Force.
- (1) The mortar platoon provides organic indirect fires for the task force.
 - (2) Field artillery provides a variety of indirect fires to the task force. It can deliver smoke, scatterable mines (FASCAM), cannon-launched guided projectiles (Copperhead), antipersonnel and antimateriel munitions, and, when they have been released, chemical and nuclear munitions.
 - (3) US Air Force close air support (CAS) provides additional fires. Each battalion task force is augmented with a TACP from the US Air Force.

- d. **Intelligence.** All units have a responsibility to report information about the enemy. However, the task force has only the scout platoon and infantry patrols dedicated to gather information. Ground surveillance radar (GSR) may be attached from the divisional military intelligence battalion; electronic warfare units operate in support of higher headquarters. The brigade provides intelligence to the task force that is beyond the task force's capability to collect.
- e. **Air Defense.**
 - (1) The battalion task force has no organic, dedicated air defense weapons. Normally, the minimum air defense provided to the battalion is a Stinger section or a Vulcan platoon. However, the task force often must rely solely on passive air defense measures such as concealment, camouflage, and dispersion coupled with the use of small-arms, machine guns, and even main tank guns as its means of defense.
 - (2) Airspace command and control procedures are issued by corps and coordinated down to task force. These measures are used to synchronize the efforts of Air Force, Army aviation, indirect fire, and ADA. This allows the commander to simultaneously apply the combat power of all systems. The S3 air coordinates airspace command and control measures, and the S3 ensures that they complement the scheme of maneuver.
- f. **Mobility, Countermobility, and Survivability.**
 - (1) Engineers.
 - (a) All units can perform limited engineering tasks, such as digging two-man fighting positions and emplacing mines. Combat engineers provide additional mobility, countermobility, and survivability support to the task force. Engineers construct obstacles, emplace and clear minefield, prepare demolitions, improve roads, provide bridging, and dig fighting positions.
 - (b) Depending on the engineer support available, the brigade commander normally places at least an engineer platoon, and usually an engineer company, in support of the task force. The engineer unit leader advises the commander on the employment of his unit; the S3 ensures the obstacle plan supports the scheme of maneuver.
 - (2) Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical. Units must be able to operate under NBC conditions to survive and accomplish

their missions. This requires that units apply and adhere to the NBC defense fundamentals — contamination avoidance, NBC protection, NBC decontamination.

- (a) The task force has decontaminating apparatuses which provide it a hasty decontamination capability.
- (b) Additional support may be available from the division's chemical company that normally provides each maneuver brigade a decontamination platoon in direct support. NBC support is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

g. Combat Service Support.

- (1) CSS is those actions taken to sustain the task force's ability to fight. The sustainment functions in combat are: manning, arming, fueling, fixing, transporting, and protecting.
- (2) The S1, S4, HHC commander, maintenance officer, medical platoon leader, and support platoon leader, supervise CSS operations. The XO monitors CSS during all phases of operations.

1-17. HUMAN DIMENSION

Though not an operating system, a critical component of task force operations is a consideration of the *human dimension*. Battlefield tasks are accomplished by soldiers and not by "systems." The cohesion of units must be maintained to maximize the trust that soldiers have in their leaders and in their teams. Commanders must consider the training and experiences of personnel to develop plans that use units and key individuals in their best capacity. SOPs must be used, sleep plans and safety discipline must be enforced, and attention must be paid to noncombat details such as ensuring that combat power is sustained through routine, but critical support activities like serving hot rations. All leaders must ensure that every action possible is taken to enhance soldier morale, health, welfare, and overall readiness to fight.

Section V. SPECIAL OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

The battalion task force must be prepared to fight on any type of terrain and during adverse weather conditions.

1-18. URBAN AREA OPERATIONS

On the urbanized battlefield, the battalion uses the advantage of both natural and man-made features. Urban sprawl adds strength to a defense by providing covered and concealed positions and by restricting the attacker's mobility and observation. In restrictive urban terrain, dismounted forces are required to find the enemy and then fight the close-in battle. If a built-up area must be retained, a dismounted defense is organized in depth and supported by strong mobile forces. (See FM 90-10.)

1-19. DESERT OPERATIONS

Desert operations require special training, acclimatization, and a high degree of self-discipline. While the techniques of combat may vary from those used in a temperate climate, the principles and fundamentals of combat do not change. The task force commander must give special consideration to increased visibility, wide enemy mobility corridors, and the special problems associated with logistics support. The desert is especially hard on vehicles, and resupply is complicated by extended distances and increased maintenance problems. (See FM 90-3.)

1-20. JUNGLE OPERATIONS

The jungle environment slows heavy battalion movement and impedes military operations. Severe weather also adversely affects operations in the jungle. The degree to which soldiers are acclimated and are trained to live and fight in the jungle will contribute to a unit's success or failure. This environment is dominated by limited visibility. Problems of flank coordination, mutual and adjacent support, and enemy infiltration are greatly increased. (See FM 90-5.)

1-21. MOUNTAIN OPERATIONS

The mountain environment requires some modification of tactics and techniques. Not only do mountains themselves impose a serious barrier, but also the severity and variance of weather has a significant impact on military operations. Movement and fields of fire are restricted by the terrain, but mechanized vehicles may be used by dismounted troops to reduce the energy and time required to move by foot. (See FM 90-6.)

1-22. COLD WEATHER OPERATIONS

Cold weather conditions vary from those in central Europe to the extremes of the subarctic, and will affect battalion operations. Optical systems may be degraded by snow conditions thus reducing engagement ranges. Cold weather conditions can change the effectiveness of natural and reinforced barriers. (See FM 90-11.)