Chapter 5

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

"I approve of all methods of attacking provided they are directed at the point where the enemy's army is weakest and where the terrain favors them the least."

Frederick the Great

Offense is the decisive form of war. The main purpose of the offense is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize an enemy force. Army doctrine emphasizes the necessity to quickly seize the initiative. The commander uses initiative to select the time and place to concentrate and synchronize his combat power to overcome the enemy defense; destroy his command, control, and communications system; and to defeat him in detail. Initiative is used at lower echelons to achieve the commander's intent. Brigades and battalion task forces are the principal offensive force in the corps and division. Cavalry units normally perform reconnaissance and security missions in support of corps and division offensive operations. Cavalry units may also perform certain offensive operations. These are normally performed during the conduct of reconnaissance or security missions. If required, cavalry units may perform offensive operations as an economy of force for the corps or the division. The ability of cavalry units to find the enemy, to develop the situation, and to provide the commander with reaction time and security make them ideal for economy of force. The armored cavalry regiment normally requires little augmentation to perform missions as an economy of force. The division cavalry squadron often requires augmentation with additional combat, combat support, and combat service support assets. Augmentation requirements are based on the organization and status of the squadron and the situation.

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Section I. Purpose and Characteristics

PURPOSE

Offensive operations are designed primarily to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy. They may be undertaken to secure key or decisive terrain, to deprive the enemy of resources or decisive terrain, to deceive and divert the enemy, to develop intelligence, and to hold the enemy in position. Offensive operations include deliberate attack, hasty attack, movement to contact, exploitation, pursuit, and other limited objective operations. The offense is undertaken to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.

The objective of any particular offensive operation is to defeat an enemy force or to destroy his will or ability to continue the fight. Terrain serves to support this objective but is seldom an objective in itself. The concept of any offensive operation includes the following actions:

- Conduct reconnaissance.
- Identify or create a weak point.
- Suppress enemy fires.
- Isolate the enemy and maneuver against the weak point.
- Exploit success.

CHARACTERISTICS

Successful offensive operations have four characteristics:

- Surprise.
- Concentration.
- Tempo.
- Audacity.

Surprise

Surprise is a product of striking the enemy at a time or place, or in a manner, for which he is unprepared. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses his command and control, reduces the effectiveness of his weapons, and induces psychological shock in soldiers and leaders. The effect of surprise is temporary and a capable enemy will recover from the initial shock. The attack must exploit the initial shock of surprise ruthlessly, allowing the enemy no time to recover. Surprise may be achieved by—

- Thorough reconnaissance and surveillance.
- Employing deception.

- Striking the enemy from an unexpected direction, at an unexpected time, or at an unexpected place.

- Integrated air and ground operations.

Concentration

Concentration is the ability to mass effects without massing large formations and is therefore essential for achieving and exploiting success. Commanders must mass available forces, weapons, and firepower. With concentration, however, the force becomes vulnerable. To overcome this vulnerability, the attacking commander must manipulate his own and the enemy's concentration of forces through a combination of dispersion, concentration, deception, and attack. Dispersion stretches the enemy's defenses and denies lucrative targets to deep fires. By concentrating forces rapidly on converging axes, the attacker overwhelms enemy forces at the point of attack by massing the effects of combat power. Concentration requires flexible leaders, agile units, and synchronized combat, combat support, and combat service support. Concentration is how the commander achieves decisive combat power. The commander must rapidly concentrate and disperse to preclude becoming a lucrative target. Concentration is achieved by—

- Designating a main effort and a decisive point.

- Allocating adequate combat power to the main effort.

- Ensuring commanders simultaneously retain centralized control of sufficient assets to shift the main effort to a supporting attack if it appears more advantageous.

- Thorough planning modified by reconnaissance information.

- Rapid and accurate maneuver.

- Fixing the enemy to prevent his reaction to maneuver.

- Rapidly massing the effects of combat power to overwhelm the enemy.

- Synchronizing combat support with maneuver.

Tempo

Tempo is the rate of speed of a military action; controlling or altering that rate is essential for maintaining the initiative. Tempo is a combination of speed and mass that creates pressure on the enemy. Tempo can be fast or slow. Units may go slow at one point in order to go fast at another. Commanders must plan and, if necessary, adjust tempo to ensure synchronization. Tempo is achieved by—

- Identifying the best avenues of attack.

- Planning the operation in depth.

- Planning for a quick transition to other phases of the offense.

- Concentrating and combining forces effectively.

- Aggressive, stealthy reconnaissance.
- Synchronizing all combat support and combat service support functions.

Audacity

Audacity is the willingness to risk bold action to win. The audacious commander is quick, decisive, and willing to take prudent risks. He bases his decisions on sound tactical judgment, personal observation of the battlefield, and first-hand knowledge of the battle. He constantly seeks to attack the enemy from a position of advantage and is located at the critical place on the battlefield.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

Offensive missions may be assigned to cavalry as an economy of force by the corps or division commander. Economy of force is a principle of war that means the allocation of minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts so that forces may be concentrated in the area where a decision is sought. The commander assumes risk when assigning an economy-of-force role to have decisive combat power elsewhere. Cavalry is a natural organization around which to build an economy of force. This allows the commander to preserve the combat power of divisions, brigades, and battalion task forces for the main effort. As an economy of force, cavalry may attack; perform movement to contact and spoiling attack; raid; defend; delay; or conduct deception operations.

To the commander executing a mission, economy of force is the intent. These missions are performed in the same manner as any other offensive mission, but often entail greater risk and intensity. When assigned a mission as an economy of force, cavalry loses its ability to perform reconnaissance and security in support of the corps or division. The risk entailed in the mission may result in a long-term loss or reduction of unit capability as well. These considerations are weighed against the requirement to perform the mission in an economy-of-force role.

ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT ROLE

The ACR performs a variety of offensive operations in support of the corps scheme of maneuver. The primary missions of the regiment are reconnaissance and security operations. During these missions, especially offensive cover, the regiment may perform movement to contact and hasty attacks to destroy enemy reconnaissance, security, and main body forces.

The regiment is also frequently assigned offensive missions as an economy of force for the corps. The regiment requires only minimal reinforcement with combat, combat support, and combat service support assets to perform in an economy-of-force role. This minimal diversion of corps assets allows the corps commander to preserve the combat power of his divisions for use in the main effort. The specific mission the corps commander assigns will determine the amount of reinforcement

the regiment requires. The regimental commander must assess the mission to determine the minimum reinforcement required and request this reinforcement if it has not been provided.

In some situations, the regiment may be retained as a reserve initially, to exploit penetrations achieved by other units in the corps. The regiment's combined arms nature and its ability to operate independently make it highly suitable for exploitation or pursuit operations.

SQUADRON ROLES

The following paragraphs address the roles of three different squadron organizations in offensive operations: the regimental armored cavalry squadron, the regimental aviation squadron, and the division cavalry squadron.

Regimental Armored Cavalry Squadron

This organization performs its missions as part of the regiment, in support of the overall regimental mission. Its primary missions are reconnaissance and security. During the conduct of these operations, the squadron can conduct hasty attacks throughout its zone to destroy enemy reconnaissance and security elements.

Offensive missions may be assigned to the squadron to support the regimental mission. The type of mission assigned to the squadron depends on the needs of the regimental commander. These missions may include the full range of reconnaissance and security operations, attack, movement to contact, spoiling attack, raid, feint, or demonstration. The squadron may require augmentation with additional combat, combat support, and combat service support assets to accomplish certain offensive missions.

An armored cavalry squadron may be required to perform in an economy-of-force role in support of the regiment. Squadrons within the regiment may not have the same missions. For example, in a regimental movement to contact two squadrons may be performing a movement to contact, while the third squadron may be performing a security mission along one of the regiment's flanks.

Regimental Aviation Squadron

This organization is the fourth maneuver squadron of the armored cavalry regiment, and enhances the regiment's ability to conduct all types of missions. During offensive operations, the aviation squadron may be called upon to perform reconnaissance and security operations, attack, and movement to contact. During offensive operations, the regimental commander may employ the squadron across the regimental zone or task organize its elements with the ground cavalry squadrons (see FM 1-114). If the regimental commander chooses to task organize, he will normally place one air cavalry troop with each ground squadron and retain the attack helicopter troops as part of the reserve. In some situations, he may assign the

aviation squadron a zone and reinforce it with elements of a ground squadron. The speed and mobility of the aviation squadron also make it an ideal force for quick reaction to contingencies in the regimental zone.

Division Cavalry Squadron

During reconnaissance operations, the squadron may conduct hasty attacks to destroy enemy reconnaissance and security forces encountered. Hasty attacks may also occur during security missions. These hasty attacks are part of actions on contact. During an advance guard, the squadron commander may assign movement to contact to subordinate troops or attached maneuver companies to focus the effort on finding and defeating the enemy.

The squadron can perform offensive operations as an economy of force for the division commander. The specific situation may require, however, that the squadron be reinforced to perform the mission desired by the division commander. The squadron commander makes this assessment and recommends the minimum additional combat power required to perform the mission if none is already provided. These missions may involve decisive engagement that the squadron will have to fight to a conclusion with the forces available. FM 71-2 provides a detailed discussion of offensive operations that may be referred to when performing missions as an economy of force.

TROOP AND TEAM ROLES

Ground troops may perform zone or route reconnaissance during a squadron offensive operation. A troop may perform movement to contact as part of a squadron advance guard mission or offensive operation. They conduct hasty attacks as required during all missions. During the squadron's attack on an objective, the troop may provide the supporting attack, security along an exposed flank, or reconnaissance to guide the main attack.

Air cavalry troops perform reconnaissance, provide security along exposed flanks, or serve as part of the reserve. Attack helicopters may be used in the attack role. Weather and limited visibility considerations are weighed when designating an aviation-only reserve. Attack helicopters are highly effective against exposed enemy forces on the move, but are less effective against enemy forces in prepared positions. The following situations support commitment of attack helicopters:

- Enemy forced out of their positions.
- Bypassed enemy security forces attempting to move back to the main defensive area.
- Commitment of the enemy reserve.
- Contact made with a moving enemy force.

Attached company teams form an ideal reserve force for division cavalry. They provide the assault force to attack the objective. This causes the least disruption to the operational teamwork of the squadron prior to the attack. If the enemy forces are already clearly identified on the objective, the company team may conduct the main attack for the squadron.

The tank company of the regimental cavalry squadron also serves in this role. The squadron commander normally retains the tank company as his reserve force during most missions.

BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK (OFFENSE)

Offensive operations are organized into three complementary elements: deep, close, and rear operations.

Deep Operations

In critical parts of the attack zone, deep operations contribute to the success of the regiment's close fight. Deep operations limit the enemy's options and disrupt its coordination and synchronization. Deep operations are conducted against enemy forces out of contact using indirect fires, electronic warfare, air interdiction, Army aviation, deception, and maneuver forces. These operations are performed by corps and division commanders and by the regiment to a limited extent. Identification of corps and division operations assist the regiment in targeting units and setting priorities for regimental deep operations.

Close Operations

The main attack, with supporting attacks as necessary, is identified. The commander designates the main effort and allocates the necessary combat power and combat support assets to ensure its success. Reconnaissance and security operations are conducted forward and to the flanks and rear of the main and supporting attacks. The reserve force and potential missions are clearly designated and available for commitment at the decisive point and time.

Rear Operations

Rear operations are necessary to maintain offensive momentum. Rear operations ensure freedom of action of committed and uncommitted forces and protect the means necessary to sustain offensive operations and support the force. Lines of communications, reserves, and displacing support elements are logical targets for enemy deep operations. Commanders protect them by planning for and remaining capable of quick reaction to any posed threat.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

Forms of maneuver are the general orientation of a force approaching an enemy. Commanders determine which form of maneuver to use by careful analysis of METT-T. However, this is an art—not a science—and more than one form of maneuver may apply. Forms of maneuver include envelopment, the turning movement, penetration, frontal attack, and infiltration. Frequently, an attack will use more than one form of maneuver. Not all forms of maneuver are appropriate for squadrons or troops. They are the basis for the scheme of maneuver used during any operation when the commander decides to attack the enemy force.

Envelopment

An envelopment uses movement and fires to put greater relative combat power against the defender and strip him of his advantages. To use this form of maneuver, commanders must find or create an assailable flank. Cavalry commanders locate an assailable flank through aggressive reconnaissance. Sometimes the enemy will expose his flank by his own forward movement, unaware of his opponent's location. In a fluid battle involving noncontiguous forces, the combination of air and indirect fires may isolate the enemy on unfavorable terrain and establish the conditions for maneuver against an assailable flank. The attacker may develop the assailable flank by arriving from an unexpected direction. He may also fix the defender's attention forward through a combination of fires and supporting or diversionary attacks while he maneuvers his main effort to strike at the enemy's weak flanks or rear. The attacker must be agile enough to concentrate his forces and mass his combat power effects before the enemy can reorient his defense. (See Figure 5-1.)
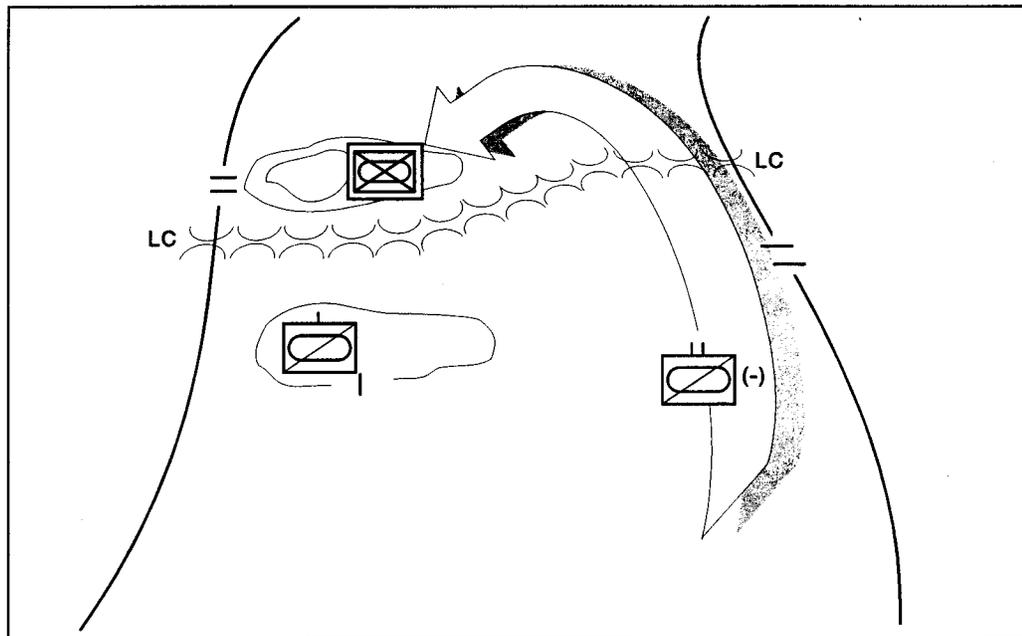

Figure 5-1. Squadron conducting an envelopment.

The enveloping force may be air cavalry or mounted or dismounted ground cavalry. It must have the mobility and enough combat power to achieve its purpose. The surprise achieved by an envelopment often allows a smaller force to defeat a larger one.

Variations of the envelopment include double envelopment and encirclement. These forms of maneuver may occur at regimental level but seldom at squadron level. Squadrons participate as part of a larger force.

An encirclement is an extension of either an envelopment or a pursuit. A direct pressure force maintains contact with the enemy, preventing his disengagement and reconstitution. It attempts to inflict maximum casualties. Meanwhile, an encircling force maneuvers to envelop the enemy, cutting off his escape routes. If necessary, the encircling force establishes a hasty defense behind the enemy, synchronizing fires to complete the destruction of the encircled force.

In the double envelopment, the attacker seeks to pass simultaneously around both flanks of the enemy. This requires two assailable flanks. Precise coordination, sufficient combat power, and detailed timing are required.

Turning Movement

The turning movement is a variation of the envelopment in which the attacker seeks to pass around the enemy, avoiding his main forces, to secure an objective deep in his rear. Faced with a major threat to his rear, the enemy is forced out of his defensive positions to attack rearward at a disadvantage. Cavalry normally conducts a turning movement as part of a larger force. Bypassing security zone forces during reconnaissance achieves this effect as the enemy seeks to fall back to the main defensive area.

Penetration

In the penetration the attacker concentrates his forces to rupture the defense on a narrow front. The gap created is then widened and used to pass forces through to defeat the enemy in detail and to seize objectives in depth. A successful penetration depends on surprise and the attacker's ability to suppress enemy weapons, to concentrate forces and weapons effects at the point of attack, and to quickly pass sufficient force through the gap to destroy the enemy's defense.

A penetration is normally attempted when enemy flanks are unassailable, or when the enemy has a weak or unguarded gap in his defense. A penetration is planned in three phases:

- Isolation of the site selected for penetration.
- Initial penetration of the enemy position.
- Exploitation of the penetration.

The penetration of a well-organized position requires a quick rupture and a rapid destruction of the continuity of the defense to deny the enemy time to react. Without rapid penetration, the enemy can reposition forces to block or counter the maneuver.

A penetration normally requires substantial combat power and dismounted infantry to make the initial penetration. Cavalry seldom conducts a penetration of a prepared enemy position, but may participate in a penetration as part of a larger force.

Frontal Attack

The frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide front and over the most direct approaches. It is normally used when commanders possess overwhelming combat power and the enemy is at a clear disadvantage. Commanders mass the effects of direct and indirect fires on enemy positions, shifting indirect and aerial fires just before the assault. The frontal attack is the least preferred and may be the most costly form of maneuver since it exposes the attacker to the concentrated fires of the defender while limiting the effectiveness of the attacker's own fires. As the most direct form of maneuver, however, the frontal attack is useful for overwhelming light defenses, covering forces, or disorganizing enemy defenses. This attack is an appropriate form of maneuver to be employed when the mission is to fix the enemy in position or to deceive him. Although the frontal attack strikes the enemy's entire front within the zone of the attacking force, it does not require that the attacker do so on line or that all subordinate unit attacks be frontal. Frontal attacks, unless in overwhelming strength, are seldom decisive. The attack is conducted as an attack by fire or assault.

Infiltration

Infiltration is a form of maneuver where combat elements move by stealth to objectives to the rear of the enemy's position without fighting through prepared defenses. All or part of the unit may move by infiltration. Infiltrations are slow and are often conducted during reduced visibility. Cavalry seldom conducts a large scale infiltration. Scouts may infiltrate at times to conduct stealthy reconnaissance of enemy forces in depth.

SEQUENCE OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Generally, the following sequence is executed in an offensive operation:

- Reconnaissance. Reconnaissance begins as soon as possible after receipt of the mission and continues throughout the attack.
- Rehearsal.

- Movement to a line of departure. When the attack is not made from positions in contact, the unit moves from an assembly area in the rear, through an attack position behind the line of contact, conducts a forward passage of lines, and begins the attack.

- Maneuver. Once the forward passage of lines is complete, the unit maneuvers to accomplish the commander's intent, which may include breaching operations and changes in formations and movement techniques. Reconnaissance elements report changes in the enemy situation and FRAGOs are issued to ensure units respond to the changing situation.

- Deployment. The unit deploys to attack the enemy or to fix the position for bypass. The unit may briefly occupy an assault position while other units occupy attack-by-fire positions. At this point, final adjustments and instructions are executed to maximize unit effectiveness during the attack. Because of the proximity of the enemy during the attack, the time spent in the assault position is minimal. If the unit mission is to fix and bypass, similar measures must be taken to ensure the enemy cannot respond to friendly maneuver. Enemy handover to follow-on forces must occur with minimum confusion.

- Attack. The attack consists of the break-in and fight-through phases. The break-in phase begins with the approach to the objective. This includes the isolation of the objective by indirect and direct fires-artillery fires and smoke missions to isolate the objective from the supporting fires and observation of adjacent positions. Artillery and mortars provide suppression of the objective in support of the assault. Once the objective is isolated, the unit begins the actual penetration of the enemy defensive position. It is the responsibility of the breach force commander, who has been task organized with specific breaching equipment, to accomplish the obstacle breaching. The support force continues to suppress the enemy position and the assault force prepares to move through the breach. Once the breach is completed, the assault force begins the actual assault on the enemy position. After the assault force is on the enemy position, the fight-through phase begins. Scouts may suppress and destroy enemy bunkers and infantry fighting vehicles (IFV). Tanks concentrate on the ground fight by destroying hard targets and enemy antitank systems. Tanks also assist in sealing off the objective, suppressing adjacent enemy positions, and preparing to defeat enemy counterattacks. Fire support teams (FIST) continue to keep the objective isolated by shifting suppressive fires and smoke missions to other enemy positions. The commander positions himself where he can best control the operation. He must be prepared to commit the reserve, while also protecting the objective from the influence of other enemy positions.

- Reorganization and consolidation or continuation. The attacker eliminates remaining enemy resistance and prepares for further operations or continues the previous operation.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES AND FORMATIONS

The three movement techniques of traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch are used as in reconnaissance or security operations. Troop or squadron formations may differ to provide for the required degree of concentration. Techniques and formations may change during the mission as terrain conditions or enemy situations change. FM 17-97 and FM 17-98 provide detailed discussion of movement techniques and formations.

Section II. Planning Offensive Operations

The planning process for all operations is outlined in Chapter 2. When planning offensive operations, certain considerations apply as the scheme of maneuver is developed. The scheme of maneuver is the central expression of the commander's concept of the operation and describes the movement, positioning, and tasks of subordinate units from the line of departure through actions on the final objective.

INTELLIGENCE PREPARATION OF THE BATTLEFIELD

IPB is the first essential step of planning. Terrain is analyzed from both friendly and enemy perspectives. Enemy avenues of approach are defined. The situation template indicates how the enemy can use the terrain and how he may deploy along the avenues of approach. Named areas of interest identify critical decision points where enemy action indicates his intent. Decision support templates aid critical maneuver or fire support decisions. Terrain analysis also provides information the S3 and commander can use to plan the scheme of maneuver. Additional information on the IPB process is in FM 34-35 and FM 34-130. Additional information on terrain analysis can be found in FM 5-33.

OBJECTIVE

An objective is assigned to orient the efforts of the attacking force. The objective may be either terrain or force oriented. Terrain oriented objectives require the attacker to seize or secure the designated terrain feature. If the mission is to destroy an enemy force, an objective is assigned for orientation and control, but the effort is focused on the enemy's actual location. Intermediate objectives may be assigned when necessary to control a critical piece of terrain. Objectives are easily identifiable terrain features and should facilitate consolidation, reorganization, and continuation of the mission. During reconnaissance and security operations, objectives are normally force oriented and are frequently assigned by FRAGOs as the situation is developed.

MAIN AND SUPPORTING ATTACKS

The main and supporting attacks are designated. The main attack is the principal attack into which the commander places the bulk of the offensive capability at his disposal. It is assigned to a ground maneuver unit. The main attack is directed against the objective of the mission. As the battle develops, the commander may change or redirect the main effort. To weight the main attack, he will perform the following actions:

- Allocate resources in task organization. Unlike reconnaissance or security operations, squadron commanders may task organize the cavalry troops to provide adequate combat power where required.

- Position overmatching elements.

- Assign priority of fires and priority targets.

- Assign priority of combat service support assets.

- Position and determine priorities for the reserve.

The supporting attack is the secondary effort designed to hold the enemy in position, deceive him as to where the main attack is being made, prevent him from reinforcing the elements opposing the main attack, and cause him to commit his reserves prematurely at an indecisive location. Supporting attacks should come from a different direction than the main attack. This forces the enemy to defend in two directions and avoids masking friendly fires as the main attack closes on the objective. At troop level, the supporting attack may be the base of fire element. The supporting attack contributes to the success of the main attack by accomplishing one or more of the following:

- Occupy terrain to support by direct fire.

- Attack by fire and movement to seize or secure terrain dominating the objective.

- Control indirect fires on the objective.

- Isolate the objective.

- Prepare to assume the main attack or reserve, or assist in final clearing of the objective.

RESERVE

A reserve is normally designated at squadron and regiment level. Troops seldom have adequate combat power to do so. The reserve is that portion of the force withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement so it is available for commitment at a decisive moment. The reserve should receive contingency missions to provide the commander planning focus and to accelerate execution on commitment. Several considerations guide organization and employment of the reserve.

Size

In a vague enemy situation, such as a movement to contact, the commander may organize a strong reserve. With a well-defined situation, a smaller reserve may be adequate.

Composition

The reserve is normally structured around a ground maneuver unit. In division cavalry, this may be a cavalry troop or an attached company team. An attached company team is appropriate as a reserve when the squadron is performing a movement to contact. The reserve may also be an air and ground team under control of the S3 or the XO.

In the armored cavalry regiment, squadron commanders normally retain their tank companies as a reserve. The regimental commander has the option of retaining a reserve of ground units, air units, or a combination of both. He may choose to retain the attack troops of the aviation squadron as part of the reserve, in order to take advantage of their speed and firepower. A ground reserve may consist of an attached task force, companies, teams, or units organic to the regiment. If the reserve is composed of units organic to the regiment, the regimental commander must weigh the size of the reserve force against the degradation of the overall regimental mission that retaining a reserve would cause. In the absence of a dedicated ground reserve, the regimental commander may place constraints on the use of squadron tank companies or attack helicopter troops. He may assign contingency missions to the tank companies or attack helicopter troops to facilitate planning and execution by the commanders.

Location

The reserve follows the main effort at a distance sufficient to keep it from interfering with the movement of the main effort and to maintain its own freedom to maneuver. The reserve remains flexible to shift if the main effort changes. The reserve may move on order, at a prescribed distance behind the main effort, or triggered by the main effort crossing predetermined control measures. When not moving, the reserve occupies blocking or hide positions. An air cavalry troop reserve occupies a series of holding areas.

Commitment

The reserve commander must understand the squadron commander's intent, particularly the decision points for commitment. The reserve remains abreast of the developing situation by eavesdrop. The decision to commit the reserve is a critical command decision. In the absence or loss of the commander, the reserve is

committed according to the intent. When committed, the commander reconstitutes or redesignates a reserve as soon as possible. The reserve is used to—

- Exploit success.

- Assume the mission of a committed unit.

- Maintain the momentum of the attack.

- Destroy bypassed elements that remain a threat.

- Hold key terrain seized by the attacking force.

- Defeat or block counterattacks.

- Block enemy escape routes.

SYNCHRONIZATION

The commander synchronizes combat support and combat service support assets with the scheme of maneuver. These assets build combat power and the concentration necessary for a successful attack.

Fire support is used to destroy, suppress, or neutralize enemy direct-fire weapons and to obscure unit maneuver. Fires support breaching operations, soften enemy forces on the objective before the assault, and suppress the objective area. Fires are shifted as the attack progresses through the enemy defense. The commander and his staff develop the scheme of maneuver and supporting fires concurrently. The fire support officer plans, prepares, distributes, and continually updates the fire support plan. The fire support officer recommends and the commander chooses the fire support tasks that contribute most to the attack.

Fire support available to cavalry normally includes artillery, troop mortars, and close air support. Naval gunfire may also be available. The commander may task organize troop mortars into a platoon to provide more effective massed fire support. Fire support tasks in the attack include the following:

- Suppressing antitank systems that inhibit maneuver.

- Preparation fires. Preparation fires are delivered on targets before an assault. The preparation is planned by a direct support artillery battalion or higher echelon. It is an intense volume of fire delivered in accordance with a time schedule. The fires may start at a prescribed time or be held on-call. The duration of the preparation is influenced by factors such as the fire support needs of the entire force, number of targets and firing assets, and available time. The value of preparation fires is weighed against the potential loss of surprise. Preparation fires are normally associated with a deliberate attack, seldom conducted by cavalry.

- Obscuration and screening fires. Fires using smoke assist breaching efforts, conceal friendly maneuver, and aid in deception efforts.

- Illumination fires. Illumination fire is always planned for night attacks, but is usually held on order of the squadron commander.

- Priority targets. Priority targets are normally allocated to weight the main attack.

- Fires during the assault. These assault fires are usually executed in the following sequence:
  – Suppression fires to prevent the enemy from observing and engaging friendly elements and to conceal the movement of troops and teams.
  – Destruction fires to destroy enemy fighting positions near the initial objective.
  – Suppression or neutralization fires that concentrate on deeper objectives.

- Fires during consolidation. The unit places fires on retreating enemy forces and on deeper positions. Targets are planned on likely enemy counterattack routes or placed on enemy withdrawal routes to force his destruction or capture.

Ground surveillance radar supports offensive operations by supporting reconnaissance or providing surveillance along an exposed flank or during limited visibility. Radar is kept as far forward as the tactical situation and terrain permit.

Mobility is normally the priority of support by engineers in offensive operations. Engineers reduce or eliminate obstacles as part of combined arms breaching operations, bridge dry or wet gaps, and improve routes for maneuver and supply forces. Combat engineer assets are normally located well forward in the unit formation to provide responsive support. Family of scatterable mines (FASCAM) is planned by the regimental and squadron engineers in conjunction with their S3 and fire support counterparts. FASCAM may be used to—

- Isolate the objective.

- Fix enemy reserves.

- Block avenues of approach into the squadron flank.

Combat service support functions are performed as far forward as the tactical situation permits. Class III and Class V are pushed forward to subordinate units at logistical release points. The combat trains move with the main body of the squadron. FARPs normally remain to the rear until consolidation on the objective occurs; then they may displace forward.

NIGHT AND LIMITED VISIBILITY ATTACKS

An attack at night or during limited visibility provides several advantages to the attacker. Surprise and deception are enhanced. Opportunities that are impractical during daylight conditions may succeed. Night attacks compensate for inadequate combat power during an economy-of-force mission. Concentration and movement of forces are more difficult to detect and remain concealed longer. In division cavalry, the availability of the air cavalry troop is carefully weighed during consideration of these attacks. Air cavalry troops are more survivable at night due to the reduced effectiveness of enemy direct fire weapon systems.

Planning for a night attack begins as early as possible to allow daytime preparation. Sleep plans are adjusted and commanders ensure leaders are rested before the attack begins. The plan should be simple to facilitate execution. These attacks are planned basically the same as a daylight attack. Night-vision devices and thermal imaging sights facilitate controlled but rapid execution.

Night attacks are frequently made by dismounted infantry. If a squadron has infantry attached, this method is considered. A mounted attack should be planned to support the dismounted effort. A mounted attack may also serve as the supporting effort or a deception. SOPs provide guidance for marking vehicles and positions and for signaling at night.

Control measures at night are usually more restrictive than those used during daylight conditions. All control measures must be easily identifiable on the ground. The commander should impose only those control measures necessary for effective control. Route reconnaissance and marking of the direction of attack facilitate rapid execution. This reconnaissance may begin in daylight. The intent and concept must be well understood to prevent confusion and engaging each other during execution of the mission. Leaders at all levels are well forward to maintain unit orientation during the attack. Indirect illumination is planned, but used only as necessary.

ACTIONS ON THE OBJECTIVE

Actions on the objective consist of the attack on the objective, consolidation, and reorganization. The attack may be by fire or by assault. Both methods of attack may involve fire and movement to position forces on advantageous terrain. Attack by fire is used when the objective can be secured by direct and indirect fires without requiring an assault. This method is particularly appropriate for a force oriented objective. It is advantageous when a squadron is attacking with organic troops and reduces the risk to the attacking force. An assault closes with the enemy by fire and movement to overrun and seize a position occupied by the enemy. This method is used when attack by fire is unsuccessful or the objective must be physically occupied. Infantry may be required. In division cavalry, an attached company team is the best force to assault. The unit making the assault is the main effort of the squadron.

An assault may be mounted or dismounted. During either type, the attacking force executes a rapid, violent, but well-ordered attack. The supporting attack or base of fire provides direct fire support, controls indirect fires, and on order, shifts fires across and beyond the objective. Techniques for conducting an assault should be well rehearsed and part of the unit SOP.

A mounted assault is more rapid, provides greater shock action, and provides protection against small arms and artillery fires. It may be conducted under or closely following friendly indirect fires. Following the mounted assault, infantry may be required to dismount and sweep the objective to clear remaining resistance. A mounted assault is appropriate when—

- Inadequate infantry is available for dismounted assault.
- Enemy positions are weak or hastily prepared.
- A meeting engagement with a moving enemy force is in progress.

A dismounted assault provides greater security for the attacking force, but it is slower. To maintain maximum speed, to gain maximum protection against small arms fire and indirect fires, and to conserve the strength of the infantry, the assaulting force dismounts as close as possible to the objective. A dismounted assault is appropriate when—

- The enemy is in well-prepared positions.
- Tanks are not available to lead a mounted assault.
- Terrain favors a dismounted assault.
- Obstacles prevent maneuver across the objective.
- Stealth is required to close on the objective.
- A mounted assault stalls.

Consolidation will organize and strengthen the seized objective against enemy counterattack. The attacking force also prepares for follow-on operations or to continue the previous operation. The unit that provided the supporting effort during the assault may or may not join the assault force on the objective. Consolidation emphasizes speed, security, and dispersal. These actions are part of the unit SOP. If an attack by fire is successful, scouts should subsequently sweep the objective for remaining forces and combat information. During reconnaissance and security operations, consolidation is a rapid process allowing the cavalry unit to return to the mission as soon as possible.

Reorganization occurs on the objective as necessary to prepare the unit to continue the mission. Continuing the mission is not delayed to conduct service support operations or to wait for a LOGPAC, unless the unit is incapable of further action. Squadrons push emergency resupply forward based on reports or assessment of the nature of the fight. Combat service support operators do not wait for a request.

Hasty reorganization actions are part of the unit SOP and are the responsibility of NCO leaders. The following reorganization actions typically occur:

- Collect and forward combat service support reports.

- Cross-level ammunition and other critical supplies.

- Treat and evacuate casualties and prisoners of war.

- Repair or evacuate damaged equipment.

- Reorganize combat crews.

Section III. Forms of the Offense

There are four general forms of offensive operations. 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

A movement to contact gains initial ground contact with the enemy or regains lost contact. Cavalry performs the movement to contact like a zone reconnaissance. Unlike a zone reconnaissance, the effort focuses on finding the enemy force, developing the situation early, and preventing the premature deployment of the main body following the cavalry. Terrain reconnaissance is conducted as necessary to support the intent of locating the enemy. As a result, movement to contact proceeds much faster than a zone reconnaissance. The division cavalry squadron frequently performs this mission when serving as the advance guard during a division movement to contact. The squadron assigns this mission to troops during a squadron advance guard or movement to contact.

The armored cavalry regiment may assign the movement to contact mission to one or more of the squadrons during the conduct of offensive operations, advance guard, advance covering force, or a regimental movement to contact. The squadron may assign movement to contact to its troops during the conduct of any of these missions.

The armored cavalry regiment may be given the mission to conduct a movement to contact, allowing the corps commander to mass divisions on an enemy force. The armored cavalry regiment, when conducting a movement to contact as an independent force, task organizes to provide a security force (forward to the main

body and to the flanks and rear), an advance guard, and a main body. Figure 5-2 depicts a reinforced armored cavalry regiment conducting a movement to contact.

The division cavalry squadron, conducting a movement to contact as an independent force, organizes itself similarly with security forces, an advance guard, and a main body. The division cavalry squadron will normally use the air cavalry troops, with their increased speed and mobility, as security forces. Figure 5-3 depicts a reinforced division cavalry squadron conducting a movement to contact.

The movement to contact terminates when the unit reaches the objective or limit of advance without enemy contact or upon contact with an enemy force. Actions on contact occur at this point and the unit attempts to defeat the enemy force within its capability. Each successive cavalry commander attempts to defeat the enemy as subordinates report the situation. The organization of the cavalry unit is the major factor in determining the size of an enemy force that can be defeated at platoon, troop, squadron, and regiment level. Should the enemy prove to be too strong, the cavalry establishes a hasty defense, delays, or conducts close reconnaissance as appropriate within the intent of the higher commander. Follow-on main body forces then deploy, conduct battle handover, and assume the fight. In a division movement to contact, these actions by the squadron are frequently the opening phase of a division meeting engagement.

A movement to contact is characterized by rapid, aggressive action. The commander rapidly develops the situation and may be permitted, particularly in division cavalry, to bypass enemy forces to maintain momentum. Main body forces subsequently relieve squadron elements left in contact and eliminate the bypassed force. Relieved elements rejoin the squadron to avoid dissipating its strength. Increased consumption of Class III and vehicle maintenance requirements are anticipated.

Critical Tasks

During a movement to contact, certain critical tasks are accomplished. Unless the higher commander gives guidance otherwise, the unit will perform the following actions:

- Reconnoiter and determine the trafficability of all high-speed routes within the zone.
- Inspect and classify all bridges, culverts, overpasses, and underpasses along high-speed routes. Identify all bypasses and fords that cannot support rapid, heavy movement.
- Clear all high-speed routes of mines and obstacles within its capability, or locate bypasses.
- Find and report all enemy forces within the zone and determine their size, composition, and activity.
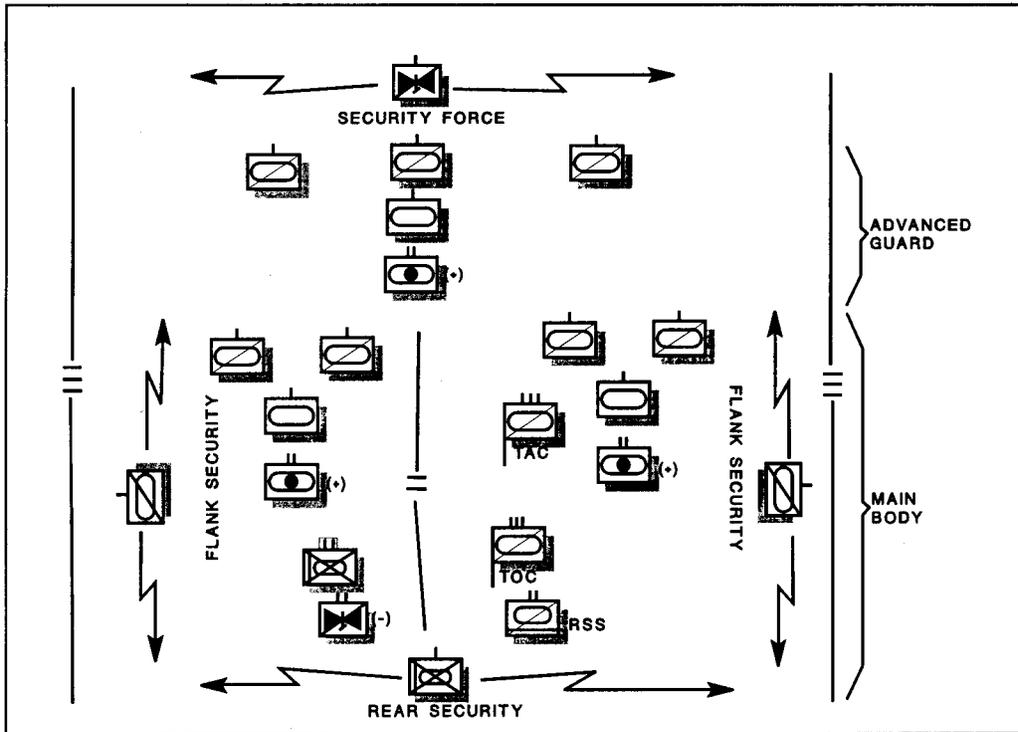
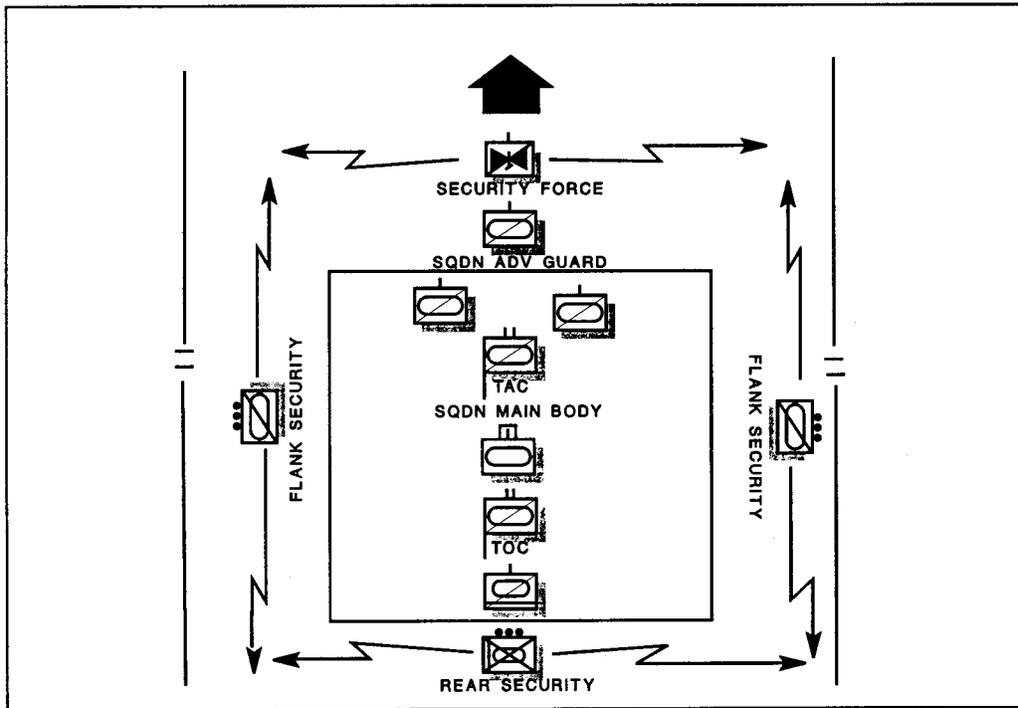Figure 5-2. Reinforced armored cavalry regiment conducting movement to contact.

Figure 5-3. Reinforced division cavalry squadron conducting movement to contact.

Planning Considerations

While similar to a zone reconnaissance, the requirements of a movement to contact pose some differing planning considerations (see Figures 5-2 and 5-3).

A movement to contact is normally performed in a zone narrower than that assigned for zone reconnaissance. This gives the cavalry unit adequate combat power to develop the situation on contact and to maintain the required momentum. Necessary reconnaissance may proceed faster, scouts are readily available to remain in contact with bypassed enemy, and troop and squadron commanders have uncommitted forces available. Required route reconnaissance for main body movement is a specified task for a troop.

The squadron gains contact with the smallest element possible. This is normally scouts or aeroscouts performing reconnaissance for their troop. Actions on contact occur rapidly at platoon and troop level to prevent unnecessarily deploying other squadron assets.

Division cavalry facilitates speed by using air cavalry to reconnoiter forward of the ground troops or to screen along exposed flanks. The reserve allows flexibility on contact and rapid resumption of movement by the troops. Engineers are well forward to facilitate obstacle reduction. NBC reconnaissance elements are well forward to conduct area reconnaissance of a known or suspected contaminated area, allowing troops to bypass and continue movement. Command posts and trains travel along good routes in zone and occupy hasty positions.

Combat formations at troop and squadron level are chosen to provide efficient movement and adequate reserves. These formations are part of the unit SOP.

Speed increases risk. A thorough IPB enhances security by indicating where greater risk is acceptable and more deliberate movement is required. Rapid movement techniques and continuous air and ground surveillance provide security as well.

Combat service support assets are tailored to the mission. Combat trains move with the squadron. Field trains may move in depth, with a forward support battalion in the main body of the division, or with the regimental support squadron. Minimum essential assets move in the combat trains to prevent unnecessarily slowing the squadron. Prepackaged LOGPACs heavy on Class III and Class V may move with the combat trains. If the division cavalry squadron is well forward of the division, a FARP may move with the squadron to reduce aircraft turn-around time. In the regiment, the aviation squadron establishes its FARPs far enough forward to support deployed air cavalry assets. Alternatively, the squadron coordinates with a follow-on force to integrate a FARP into its zone of action. Main supply routes frequently become extended as the operation proceeds.

Meeting Engagement

A meeting engagement occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. The enemy may be either stationary or moving. Cavalry units frequently participate in meeting engagements when acting as the main body security force or during a movement to contact. As such, they are already deployed and are the force that develops the situation for the main body commander. If contact is made while moving in a nondeployed formation, cavalry units immediately execute actions on contact. This response during a tactical road march is an established part of unit SOP.

ATTACK

There are two types of attack: hasty and deliberate. A hasty attack most often follows a movement 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.

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.

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.

Hasty Attack

A hasty attack is an attack for which a unit has not made extensive preparations. It is conducted with the resources immediately available to maintain momentum or to take advantage of the enemy situation. A hasty attack is a course of action available during actions on contact; it may occur during reconnaissance, security, or movement to contact missions. A counterattack is normally conducted as a hasty attack, although prior rehearsal is sometimes possible. The enemy force attacked may be moving or stationary. A hasty attack is characterized by rapid, immediate action without elaborate planning or orders. Normally, only limited intelligence information about the enemy force is available. The attack terminates with destruction of the enemy force, disruption of his movement forcing him to employ larger forces, or lack of success. The troop or squadron subsequently prepares to continue the original mission, if possible, or establishes a hasty defense. If hasty defense is required, the force in contact continues close reconnaissance and prepares to conduct a battle handover with a following force as the higher commander continues to develop the situation.

Time is the critical factor in a hasty attack. A rapidly executed attack before the enemy can act often spells success even when combat power is not as favorable as desired. Detailed planning and orders are not possible. The unit plans and rehearses maneuver techniques and drills as part of the SOP to execute the attack rapidly and with minimum FRAGO guidance. Flexible control measures provided in the original operation are essential. They facilitate clear and simple orders and rapid execution (see Figure 5-4).

The attack is not launched blindly at the enemy upon receipt of a contact report from a scout. The commander does not violate the fundamentals of offensive operations in the haste to begin the attack. Adequate reconnaissance, especially of a stationary force, allows the commander to reach a sound decision on a scheme of maneuver. Stealth prevents the scouts from being discovered by the enemy and forcing more abrupt action. Aeroscouts may detect the enemy early, allowing more time for the squadron commander to make a decision. If the enemy discovers elements of the squadron first, those elements may be forced into a hasty defense while other assets develop the situation.
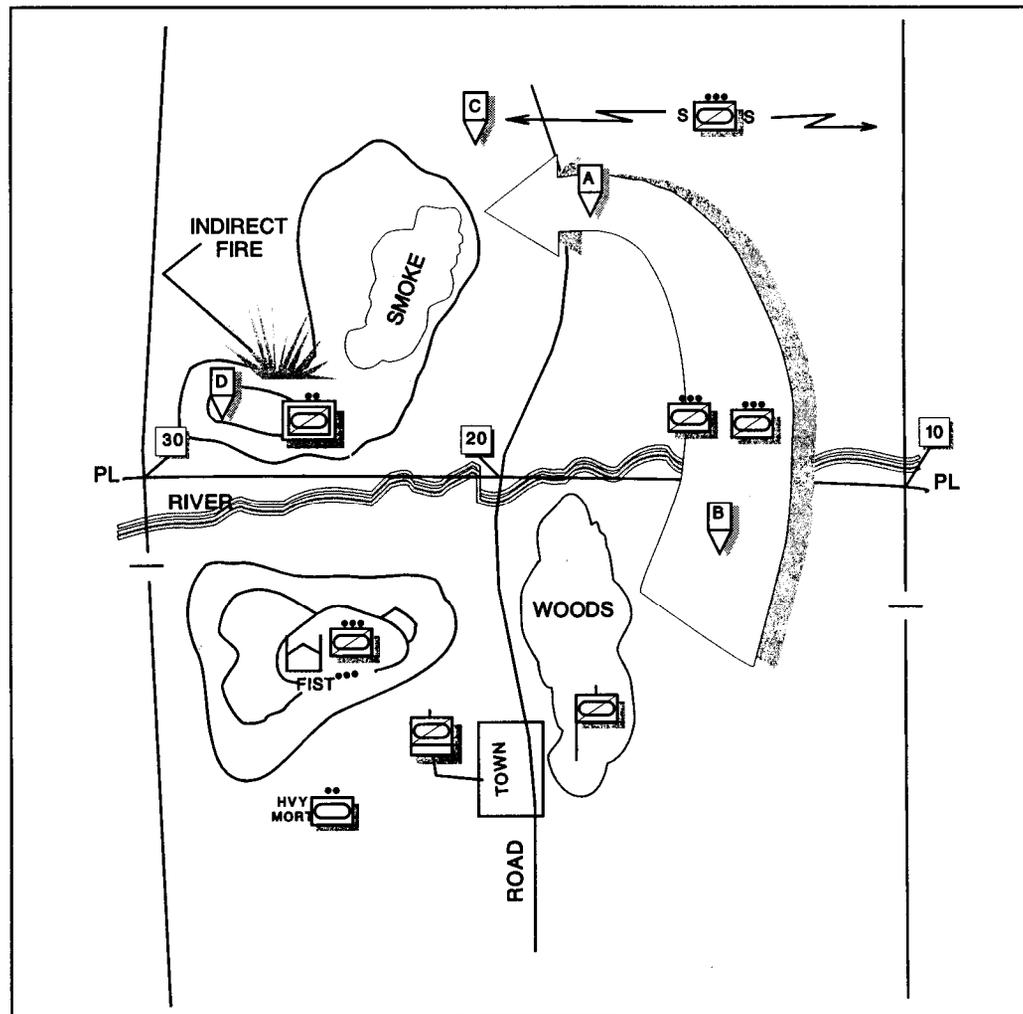

Figure 5-4. Hasty attack.

A simple scheme of maneuver forms a framework for the attack. A base of fire or supporting attack is designated. This is often the element that first makes contact. Other platoons or troops continue reconnaissance to a designated limit of advance to provide more maneuver space and security, and to determine if other enemy forces are present. A maneuver force is designated and assumes the main effort to destroy the enemy. This may be a tank platoon, squadron reserve, or attack helicopters. Attack helicopters are especially effective against a moving enemy. An envelopment of an exposed flank or rear of the enemy is preferred. The commander moves with the main effort. Task organization is not changed, unless absolutely necessary, to preclude delay and confusion.

Available fire support is massed to support the attack. Other missions may be terminated if necessary. Troop mortars assume hasty firing positions if moving. Mortars displace, if time permits, to provide adequate fire support. The FIST moves to a position where he can observe the objective and personally control fires.

Trains and command posts deploy to hasty positions, if moving. Local defensive measures may be necessary for adequate security. By eavesdropping, combat service support executors monitor the developing fight to determine what support is required.

Deliberate Attack

A deliberate attack is planned and carefully coordinated with all concerned elements based on thorough reconnaissance, evaluation of all available intelligence and relative combat strength, analysis of various courses of action, and other factors affecting the situation. It is generally conducted against a well-organized defense when a hasty attack is not possible or has been conducted and failed. Deliberate attacks normally include large volumes of supporting fires, main and supporting attacks, and deception measures. Cavalry units seldom conduct deliberate attacks. They may be the force maintaining contact and performing close reconnaissance after attempting a hasty attack or upon identifying a strong enemy position. Cavalry performs reconnaissance, security, or deception operations as part of a corps or division deliberate attack. If cavalry units are in contact, they prepare to conduct a battle handover with the force designated to conduct the deliberate attack. Regimental or division cavalry squadrons must receive substantial reinforcement if required to conduct a deliberate attack.

EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is an offensive operation that usually follows a successful attack to take advantage of weakened or collapsed enemy defenses. Its purpose is to prevent reconstitution of enemy defenses, to prevent withdrawal, and to secure deep objectives. Exploiting forces may receive a mission to secure objectives deep in the enemy rear area, cutting lines of communication, surrounding and destroying enemy forces, denying escape routes to an encircled force, and destroying enemy reserves. Terrain is secured only as necessary to accomplish the mission. Aggressive

reconnaissance to the front and flanks of the exploiting force maintains contact, assists in locating enemy strongpoints, and avoids ambush.

The armored cavalry regiment may be designated as an exploitation force. Normally, the squadrons of the regiment perform exploitation as a rapid movement to contact. All squadrons may not have the same mission. For instance, one squadron may be given a security mission on one of the regiment's flanks while the other two squadrons and the aviation squadron perform movement to contact. The regiment may also participate as part of a larger exploiting force. In this case, the regiment may be called upon to perform reconnaissance or security missions in support of the main exploiting force, or to act as part of the main exploiting force.

The division cavalry squadron does not have the organizational depth for a sustained exploitation. However, it may be part of a larger exploiting force. This exploiting force may be a brigade or the division. The squadron will normally perform reconnaissance or security operations for the main exploiting force.

In any exploitation operation, planning is hasty, FRAGOs are the rule, and orders and control measures are simple and flexible. Exploitation is characterized by decentralized execution, rapid movement, deep penetration, and increased consumption of Class III. The regiment or squadron must tailor its combat service support assets to sustain this effort.

PURSUIT

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. Its objective is to maintain relentless pressure on the enemy and destroy him. It differs from the exploitation in that its primary function is to complete the destruction of the enemy force. While a terrain objective may be designated, the enemy force itself is the primary objective. The pursuit usually consists of direct pressure and encircling forces (see Figure 5-6). Command and control is the same as in the exploitation. Like exploitation, combat service support must be mobile and tailored to support rapid movement and increased consumption of Class III and Class V.
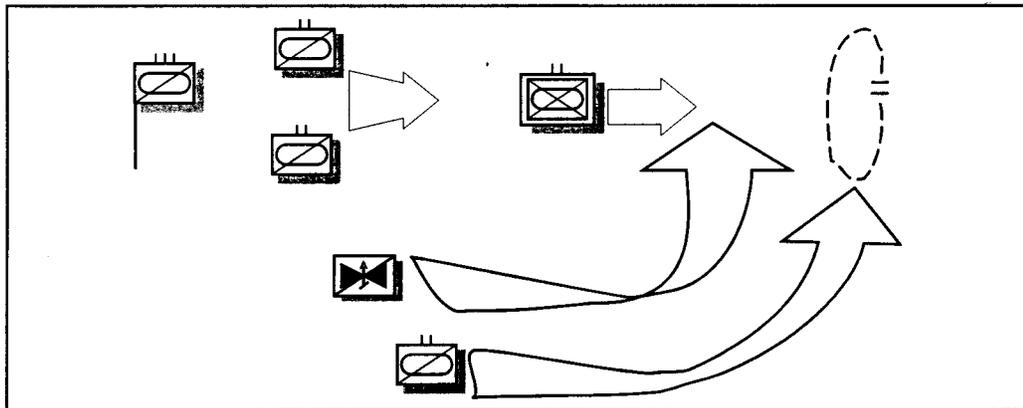

Figure 5-6. Armored cavalry regiment conducting pursuit.

The direct pressure force orients on the enemy main body to prevent enemy disengagement or defensive reconstitution prior to envelopment by the encircling force. It normally conducts a series of hasty attacks to slow the enemy's withdrawal by forcing him to stand and fight. It does this by attacking constantly. The enemy is denied any opportunity to rest or reconstitute. Lead elements of the direct pressure force move rapidly along all available routes, containing or bypassing small enemy pockets of resistance that are reduced by follow-and-support units.

The encircling force envelops an enemy force that has lost its ability to defend or delay in an organized fashion. The encircling force cuts off escape routes and, with direct pressure forces, attacks and destroys the enemy force. The encircling force penetrates the rear of the enemy and blocks his escape so that the enemy is destroyed between the two attacking forces. The encircling force advances along parallel routes to the enemy's line of retreat to reach defiles, communications centers, bridges, and other key terrain ahead of the enemy main force. If the enemy cannot be outdistanced, he is attacked on the flank. Speed is paramount. Hasty attack and hasty defense frequently occur.

The armored cavalry regiment is an ideal pursuit force. Ground squadrons can operate as the direct pressure force or encircling force, performing these missions without any task organization. Squadrons perform these tasks as movement to contact, culminating in successive hasty attacks. The aviation squadron gives the regiment a high-speed force that is an ideal encircling force, or as the air element of a larger encircling force. It can move rapidly to cut off enemy routes and fix the enemy force until ground units can close with it. The aviation squadron may also be used as part of the direct pressure force, but using it in this manner does not take complete advantage of its speed and maneuverability.

The division cavalry squadron normally performs pursuit as part of a larger force. The squadron may be part of or form the direct pressure or encircling force. It may be required to perform reconnaissance, security, movement to contact, hasty attack, and hasty defense in the conduct of pursuit operations.

Section IV. Other Offensive Operations

Cavalry units may perform, or participate as part of a larger force, in other operations such as raids, spoiling attacks, and search and attacks.

RAID

A raid is a small scale operation involving a swift penetration of hostile terrain to secure information, to confuse the enemy, or to destroy his installations. It ends with a planned withdrawal to friendly lines upon completion of the assigned mission. It is not intended to hold ground. The armored cavalry regiment is uniquely

organized and equipped to conduct raids. Its combined arms nature makes it an effective force to conduct raid operations with little or no reinforcement. The division cavalry squadron may perform a raid as organized, be reinforced. or participate as part of another force. Armored cavalry troops may also be designated to conduct the raids. Air cavalry can increase the speed of the raid by performing reconnaissance in advance of the raiding force. The regimental aviation squadron may be designated to conduct a raid if the target is not emplaced in prepared positions. Raids may be conducted to—

- Capture prisoners.

- Capture or destroy specific command and control installations.

- Destroy logistical installations.

- Obtain information concerning enemy locations, dispositions, strength, intentions, or methods of operation.

- Disrupt enemy plans.

An objective is normally assigned to orient the unit during the raid. It should be very specific in nature. It should define the target and the desired effects upon the target. Other enemy forces are avoided en route to the objective to maintain surprise (See Figure 5-5.)
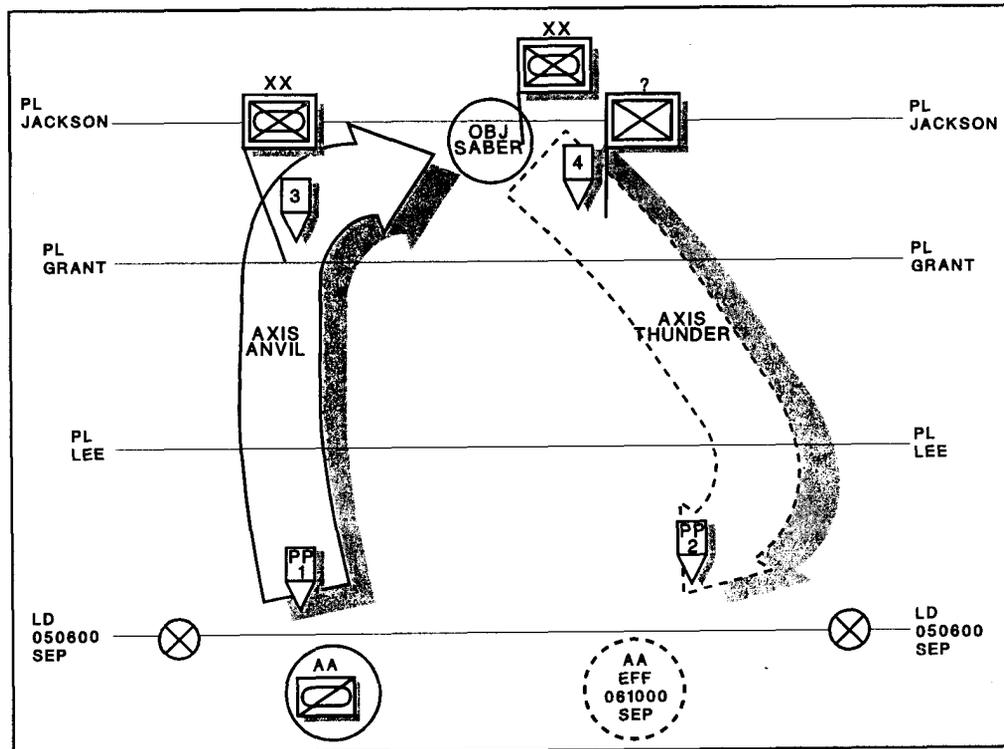

Figure 5-5. Raid.

Raids may be conducted in daylight or darkness, within or beyond supporting distance of the parent unit. When the area to be raided is beyond supporting distance of friendly lines, the raiding party operates as a separate force.

Security is vital because the raiding force is vulnerable to attack from all directions. Speed, stealth, limited visibility, and gaps in enemy lines are capitalized upon during the raid. During movement in daylight, the raiding force uses covered routes of approach. During reduced visibility, reconnaissance precedes the force to prevent premature discovery of the raid by locating enemy forces and directing the raiding force around them. Raids are timed so the raiding force arrives at the objective area at dawn, twilight, or during other low-visibility conditions.

The raiding force conducts the attack on the objective like a hasty attack.

The withdrawal is usually made over a different route from the one used to approach the objective. Reconnaissance ensures that the routes of withdrawal are open. Protective fires are planned along the axes of advance and withdrawal.

Rally points are planned for units to assemble to prepare for the attack on the objective or to reassemble after they have completed the mission and are ready to withdraw.

Logistical considerations in raids include the type and number of vehicles and weapons that the raiding force will have, movement distance, length of time the raiding party will operate in enemy territory, and expected enemy resistance. Usually, the raiding force carries everything required to sustain itself during the operation. Resupply of the raiding force, if required, is by aircraft.

SPOILING ATTACK

A spoiling attack is a limited objective attack made to delay, disrupt, or destroy the enemy's capability to launch an attack. The spoiling attack is normally associated with defensive operations and attempts to strike the enemy when he is most vulnerable during preparations in an assembly area or moving to his line of departure. Usually, circumstances preclude full exploitation, and the attacking force halts on its objective or withdraws to its original position.

SEARCH AND ATTACK

Search and attack operations may be conducted by air cavalry units. They may be conducted by an individual air troop or as a squadron-level operation. The purpose of these operations should be to destroy enemy forces, protect the force, or deny an area to the enemy.

Commanders use search and attack when the enemy is dispersed in an area of close terrain that is unsuited to heavy forces, when they cannot find enemy weaknesses, or when they want to deny enemy movement in an area.

Search and attack missions are performed much like area security missions. The difference is the commander's intent for the operation and the aggressive execution of the mission.