CHAPTER 6

OTHER OPERATIONS

This chapter Implements STANAG 2082, Edition 5, Amendment 3.

This chapter addresses the fire support considerations in the conduct of other corps and division operations. These operations may be conducted in combination, sequentially, or as a single operation. All of these operations are inherently difficult to plan and support. Actual methods for their planning and execution vary with the factors of METT-T as they apply to each corps and division. The following operations are discussed:

- *Retrograde operations.*
- *Passage of lines.*
- *Encircled forces.*
- *River-crossing operations.*
- *Heavy and light forces mix.*

Section I. RETROGRADE OPERATIONS

Description

A retrograde operation is an organized movement to the rear away from the enemy. It may be forced or voluntary. In either case, a retrograde operation must be executed according to a well-organized plan. A disorganized retrograde operation in the face of enemy strength invites disaster. The three types of retrograde operations are as follows:

- Delay — A unit gives up space to gain time.
- Withdrawal — All or part of a deployed force disengages from the enemy voluntarily to free itself for a new mission.
- Retirement — A force not in contact with the enemy conducts an administrative move to the rear.

Within a large command like a division or corps, a combination of retrograde operations is usually necessary. For example, a retirement may be preceded by a withdrawal from action or may be covered by a force executing a delaying action.

Retrograde movements are executed to do one or more of the following:

- Disengage from combat.
- Avoid combat under undesirable conditions.
- Draw the enemy into an unfavorable situation.
- Gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.

- Place forces involved in a more favorable position.
- Permit the use of a portion of the force elsewhere.

Delay

A delay is conducted when forces are insufficient to attack or to defend or when the defensive plan calls for drawing the attacker into an unfavorable situation. In delaying operations, units trade space for time in order to –

- Reestablish the defense.
- Cover a defending or withdrawing unit.
- Protect the flank of a friendly unit.
- Participate in an economy-of-force effort.

In ordering a delay, the corps or division commander specifies the following

- What must be done — the intent of the operation; that is, the length of the delaying operation – to delay the enemy forward of a line until a certain time.
- Mission, composition, and location of the corps or division covering force.
- Task organization.
- Control measures, to include phase lines, routes, and control points.
- Employment of nuclear or chemical fires when appropriate.
- Fire support,
- Combat service support.
- Hand-over of battle of covering force.

Fire Support Tasks

The fire support tasks for a delay are as follows:

- Attack enemy forces far forward.
- Assist maneuver in disengagement.
- Support limited counterattacks by fire.
- Cover obstacles, barriers, gaps, and flanks with fires and scatterable mines.
- Provide maximum continuous fire for maneuver forces as they displace to the rear.
- Mass fires to slow the enemy as he deploys to concentrate for attack of our delay positions.

Command and Control

Decentralized control is preferred. It may be necessary to attach field artillery units when operating on a broad front, Enough artillery units are provided to ensure one DS unit per committed battalion or squadron.

Fire Support Planning and Coordination

Initially, position fire support assets well forward to exploit range. Prepare a plan of interdiction fires covering main hostile avenues of approach. Later position assets in depth to provide maximum continuous fire.

Plan fires –

- On barriers and natural obstacles.
- To create obstacles with scatterable mines.
- To support strongpoints.
- To cover and screen withdrawals. Use smoke extensively.
- To support hasty counterattacks.

- On enemy forces congested behind obstacles and/or minefield and to slow breaching attempts.

Use immediate close air support to help disengage and to slow advancing enemy forces.

Withdrawal

Withdrawals are conducted when it is necessary to move away from the enemy to reposition forces on more favorable terrain, to conserve resources for future operations, to gain time, or to avoid combat under unfavorable conditions. Withdrawals may be conducted under or free of enemy pressure and with or without the assistance of friendly units. Regardless, they always begin under the threat of enemy interference and should be planned accordingly.

Corps and division commanders organize a covering force and a main body when conducting a withdrawal, The covering force prevents effective pursuit or interference with the withdrawal of the main body. The main body, prepared to defend itself, forms behind the covering force. It moves to the rear protected by advance, flank, and rear guards. The withdrawal plan should include a deception plan and provisions for the covering force or main body to defend or delay if necessay. Air and ground reserves should be made available to support the withdrawal. Whenever possible, withdrawals take place at night or in adverse weather to delay detection by the enemy. To avoid signaling intentions, deceptive efforts are also necessary for units considering withdrawals.

Units must anticipate withdrawing under enemy pressure. The covering force fights a delay to permit the withdrawal of the main body. Main body units reinforce the covering force as necessary and delay or defend themselves if the covering force fails. If the withdrawal is without enemy pressure, the covering force may remain in position to prolong the deception. The main body moves to the rear as fast as possible. The covering force moves when the main body has withdrawn a safe distance.

Fire Support Tasks

Fire support tasks in a withdrawal are as follows:

- Mask the movement of friendly forces with smoke.
- Use fires to slow the enemy. FASCAM is particularly useful.
- Cover obstacles with fire and observation.
- Jam enemy command nets to slow the enemy's reaction to a withdrawal once it is under way.
- Use deep ties to relieve pressure on units in contact.
- Provide final protective fires when necessary.
- Be prepared to support a delay.

Allocation of Fire Support

All available fire support assets must be responsive to the withdrawing force. Decentralized control of fire support, especially field artillery, is necessary to be adequately responsive. In fact, attachment of field artillery to maneuver maybe necessary to reduce the span of control. The maneuver covering force must be weighted with field artillery to increase combat power. One FA battalion in direct support of one maneuver battalion in the covering force is desired. Reserves of the withdrawing unit may remain well forward to assist by fire or to launch spoiling attacks. The priority of tactical Air Force missions in a withdrawal may be to maintain local air superiority over the main body. CAS and BAI over and beyond the covering force may be difficult because of the

danger of enemy air action and air defense during a withdrawal.

Fire Support Planning and Coordination

The fire support planning aspects of a withdrawal are very similar to those of a delay, as the FSCOORD must **plan** for a withdrawal under pressure. The enemy must be slowed down as he concentrates his forces. Because maneuver units are moving while this occurs, the use of terminally-guided munitions against high-payoff targets is essential. Deep fires also may be useful in relieving pressure on units in contact with the enemy. SEAD fires to support BAI missions must be planned.

Displacement of field artillery elements, as with all elements in a withdrawal, requires extensive movement control to preclude congestion on routes. Since movement may be rapid, coordination of routes and positions is a continuous effort.

Retirement

A retirement is a retrograde operation in which a force that is not engaged with the enemy conducts either a tactical or an administrative move to the rear. Artillery units are generally integrated with the maneuver units. They are given GS missions with on-order missions of direct support to their habitually supported units.

Security forces covering the retirement of other forces are given enough fire support to deal with guerrillas, air assaults, and long-range fires. (See Chapter 4 for a discussion of security force operations.)

Section II. PASSAGE OF LINES

Description

The procedures in a passage of lines for a corps or division are basically the same as those for a maneuver brigade. A passage of lines is conducted to allow a moving unit to pass through a stationary unit. It can be conducted in offensive or defensive operations. A passage of lines is usually an implied task, not a primary mission. However, detailed planning and coordination are essential during a passage. This is because two separate units are temporarily concentrated in the same area and are vulnerable to enemy action.

The FS cells of both the passing and stationary forces must consider the fire support factors discussed below.

Control Measures

Control measures for a passage of lines are as follows:

- Location of passage points.
- Location of contact points.
- Recognition signals.
- Attack positions or assembly area (forward passage).
- Release points (rearward passage).
- Location of CS and CSS (rearward passage).

Transfer of Control

The commanders of the two forces decide when the transfer of control will be implemented. The transfer may be triggered by an event, but a specific time (H-hour) also could be used to effect the transfer of control. Commanders must recognize that the transfer of control impacts on fire support. For example, the FA tactical mission may be DS

on order to GS or GSR or GS, GSR, or R on order to DS. Responsibility for fire support coordination passes from the FSCOORD of one force to the FSCOORD of the other force at the time the force commanders change command and control.

Forward Passage of Lines

Fire planning considerations for a forward passage of lines are as follows:

- Obscure the enemy's forward observation of the passage.
- Plan fire on high-payoff targets; for example, enemy direct-fire systems, C^2, enemy fire support assets, and air defense targets.
- Plan fires to support the deception plan.
- Plan smoke to screen friendly movement through passage points.
- Plan fires to interdict enemy counterattacks and reinforcements in the area of passage.
- Mass indirect fires.
- Ensure the stationary force supports the close operation while the passing force indirect-fire assets complete the passage.
- Ensure counterfire is planned and controlled by the stationary force.
- Plan appropriate fire support coordinating measures as follows:
  - o Plan on-order CFL.
  - o Consider RFAs on passage points.
- Use AFSOs to cover flanks and dead spaces.
- Ensure passing force plans fires to support operations after the passage of lines.

Rearward Passage of Lines

Fire planning considerations for a rearward passage are as follows:

- Plan smoke to conceal movement through passage points.
- Plan massed fires to disengage forces.
- Plan fires to support obstacle ardor barrier plans.
- Plan fires to support the deception plan.
- Plan fire support coordinating measures as follows:
  - o RFAs at passage points.
  - o On-call CFLs.
- Ensure the stationary force Supports the close operation while the passing force indirect-fire assets complete the passage.
- Ensure counterfire is planned and controlled by the stationary force.
- Plan fires on presage points to be fired after friendly units have passed through. Consider FASCAM to close passage lanes.
- Ensure the stationary force plans fires to support operations after the passage of lines.

Positioning of Field Artillery

Considerations

The most critical positioning issue is obtaining positions for units short of the line of departure and the passage points. Land will be at a premium. Coordination must be done early with the in-place unit.

Forward Passage

The field artillery of the passing force should be infiltrated early from the rear assembly area to the designated primary positions to support the operation. These positions should be near the passage lanes but not so close that they interfere with the maneuver force movement. On a forward passage, position priority goes to the passing force. During the passage of lines, the passing force FS cell and CP collocate with

the stationary force FS cell and CP. Position areas forward of the passage points are selected on the basis of anticipated rate of movement of the maneuver forces and terrain availability. Also, they are selected away from passage points.

Rearward Passage

The field artillery of the stationary force should be positioned well forward to provide deep fires to support the withdrawal of the passing force. Again, these positions should be away from passage lanes. In the rearward passage, the stationary force has positioning priority. As the passing force artillery moves through, it should position behind the stationary artillery and move laterally away from the passage lanes.

Coordination

Close coordination of plans between the commanders and staffs of the involved forces is mandatory. Once the passage of lines is ordered, the FSCOORD of the passing force in a forward passage of lines should send a liaison section to the FSCOORD of the force in contact. In a rearward passage, the FSCOORD of the stationary force should send a liaison section to the FSCOORD of the passing force. FSCOORDs define and assign mutually agreed upon fire support responsibilities to facilitate the passing force. Information that the two FSCOORDs should share and areas that should be coordinated are shown below. The important point to remember is that each unit will be in the area of responsibility of another unit for a period of time and that detailed coordination is vital to ensure that each of the two units understands how the other operates. The units must do the following:

- Exchange unit SOPS and resolve differences in operating procedures.
- Exchange existing targets and fire plans.
- Provide status of unit target acquisition assets.
- Exchange attack guidance and casualty criteria.
- Exchange control measures in effect; for example, passage points, passage lanes, and contact points.
- Coordinate recognition signals.
- Provide information on obstacles and barriers.
- Coordinate position areas.
- Provide met information to passing force.
- Provide available survey control to passing force.
- Exchange SOIs and resolve communications differences; for example, frequencies, call signs, challenge and password, and secure settings.
- Coordinate security measures in effect.
- Exchange intelligence.
- Coordtiate subscriber table information.

Section III. ENCIRCLED FORCES

Description

Because of the nonlinear nature of today's modern battlefield, forward or rear forces may become encircled. Encirclement occurs when all the ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement for a unit are cut by the enemy. Forces face encirclement most often when enemy forces bypass defending units or when advancing units are cut off by an enemy counterattack.

It is important for the encircled force to continue its mission, establish communication

with higher headquarters, and act on its own initiative within the intent of the higher commander. The most likely course of action facing the encircled force is to try a breakout toward friendly forces and prepare for linkup operations.

Breakout Toward Friendly Forces

Breakout operations must be planned, organized, and executed before the enemy has time to react. Otherwise, the enemy force may be able to contain and destroy the encircled force. To achieve a breakout, the commander must do the following:

- Deceive the enemy as to the time and place of the breakout.
- Exploit gaps and weaknesses in the encircling force.
- Exploit darkness and limited visibility if possible.
- Organize the forces for breakout.
- Concentrate combat power at the breakout point.
- Coordinate supporting attacks.
- Provide for forces left behind.
- Prepare for linkup operations.

Fire Support Tasks

Fire support tasks in a breakout toward friendly forces are as follows:

- Reorganize available fire support.
- Concentrate firepower at the breakout point.
- Provide fires to support defense in other areas to delay or disrupt enemy attempts to attack.
- Consider the use of FASCAM in areas other than the breakout point or to help hold the shoulders of the breakout gap.
- Support the deception plan.
- Support forces left behind.

Allocation of Fire Support

Fire support must be extremely centralized for a breakout. This is to ensure the maximum amount of combat power is brought to bear at the breakout point. Commanders of encircled forces must seek to establish coordination with outside forces and gain allocations of their fire support.

Fire Support Planning and Coordination

The following must be considered in a breakout toward friendly troops:

- Plan fires to support the immediate defense and the breakout.
- Coordinate with fire support agencies outside the encircled force for additional fire support.
- Establish fire support coordinating measures. RFAs around encircled forces and RFLs between converging breakout and linkup forces should be considered. ACAs in the vicinity of the breakout point are necessary if CAS is used.
- Concentrate massed and continuous fires at the breakout point to open a gap for the rupture force.
- Ensure radar (Q-36 and Q-37) sectors of search and indirect fires cover 6,400 mils.
- Plan for the use of chemical or nuclear weapons if force attrition and the political situation favor their employment.
- Make use of EW to deceive the enemy as to the location of the breakout.
- Plane for linkup operations.

Linkup Operations

Linkup operations are conducted to join two friendly forces. The forces may be moving toward one another, or one may be stationary. Often, a linkup operation requires a passage of lines. When the linkup is made, the linkup force may join the stationary force or it may pass through or around and continue the attack.

The controlling headquarters of both forces establishes the command relationship between the two forces and the responsibilities for each. It also establishes the control measures to be used.

Forces that are linking up exchange as much information as is practical before an operation. They must consider the following:

- Fire support needed before, during, and after the linkup.
- Recognition signals and communications needs from both forces.
- Future operations following the linkup.

Fire support considerations in a linkup operation are as follows:

- Employ RFLs as required. Consider the use of on-order CFLs or RFAs.
- Ensure fire support personnel are continuously aware of the progress of the linkup forces.
- Ensure targets beyond the RFL are cleared by the controlling headquarters.
- Ensure smoke and illumination fires do not cause adverse effects on the other friendly forces.
- Ensure that fires keep the enemy force between the two friendly forces from escaping. Use of scatterable mines should be considered to block enemy withdrawal.
- Position indirect-fire weapons to allow them to mass fires at linkup points.
- Ensure positions afford easy access to routes to be used after the linkup.

Section IV. RIVER-CROSSING OPERATIONS

Description

Corps and divisions can be expected to conduct river crossings as part of offensive and defensive operations. Like the passage of lines, river crossings are usually implied tasks rather than primary missions. But large-unit river crossings involving corps and divisions present a number of challenges to be overcome, particularly in the area of fire support. The various phases of a river crossing are discussed below.

Advance to the River

This includes securing crossing sites and establishing control measures.

Assault Crossing

During this phase, forces develop crossing sites, emplace crossing means, and control unit movement into and away from the crossing area. Defensible terrain on the exit bank is secured. Follow-up forces provide overwatch and security and follow-and-support assistance to the assault force.

Advance From the Exit Bank

Assault forces continue to attack from the exit bank. Support forces help secure objectives. This may include a hasty or deliberate attack from the exit bank.

Securing the Bridgehead

During this phase, CSS elements must sustain the assault and the subsequent advance to the bridgehead.

Fire Support

Fire support considerations in a river crossing areas follows:

- Make fires immediately available to crossing forces. If necessary, have GS artillery fire while DS artillery is crossing.
- Assign priority of fires to assault forces.
- Assign nonstandard missions to GS units. Change the priority of calls for fire, fire planning, and other inherent responsibilities as necessary.
- Plan smoke and suppression fires in greater than normal amounts if necessary.
- Use smoke to screen both actual and dummy crossing sites.
- Use smoke to obscure enemy direct-fire positions in the bridgehead area until the crossing forces can engage them.
- Suppress enemy forces in the bridgehead area until the assault force can provide its own suppressive fires.
- Use all available targeting assets to develop targets in the bridgehead area.
- Have indirect-fire weapons cross the river with the forces they support.
- Plan to take advantage of the visibility conditions that will prevail during the crossing or that can be produced to help support the crossing.
- Consider that the width of the crossing area affects the planning. The amount of time necessary to cross a river, hence the vulnerability of the crossing force, affects the types and volume of fires requested.

Fire Planning

Fire planning considerations for a river-crossing operation are as follows:

- Plan fires to soften enemy defense and crossing sites and to seal- off exit bank positions.
- Plan fires to facilitate the assault force securing the exit bank.
- Plan preparations, groups, and/or series to support the operation as the assault force secures the bridgehead.
- Plan and use on-order fire support coordinating measures.
- Plan fires at depth to isolate the bridgehead area from enemy reinforcement.
- Plan smoke to obscure actual and dummy crossing sites and to screen friendly movements. Consider the use of smoke generators.
- Use CAS to expand the bridgehead.

Section V. HEAVY AND LIGHT FORCES MIX

Employment

Fire support principles of planning and coordination do not change for a heavy and light mix of forces in a mid- to high-intensity conflict.

Fire Support Planning and Consideration

Medium and heavy artillery and target acquisition assets may be required to enable the light division to engage deep targets and execute counterfire missions. Corps artillery units reinforcing a light division artillery is an option to be considered. For logistical reasons, attachment of FA units is not usually an option.

Medium and heavy artillery, support may be required to enable the light division to employ a greater array of ammunition; for example, DPICM, FASCAM, and nuclear munitions.

The relative lack of combat power in light divisions may require greater allocations of fire support assets. CAS, Army aviation, and naval gunfire should be considered for the light division before the heavy divisions in a heavy and light mix.

Operations against a technically sophisticated enemy may require additional intelligence assets. Therefore, corps IEW assets could be placed in direct support of the light division.