

Special Considerations

The fluidity of an AirLand Battle will require tactical forces to move throughout the width and depth of the battlefield faster and more frequently than in the past.

MP support to operations like passages of lines and river crossings will help ensure tactical forces can relocate quickly.

MP support to passage of lines and river crossings may require special considerations. Sometimes these operations involve a number of different command elements. If so, MP support must be coordinated with the commanders of all forces supporting the operation as well as with the commander of the supported force. Sometimes they require temporary changes in the command and control of MP elements supporting the operation.

Special considerations in MP employment are dictated by the type of operation being

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supported. They are also dictated by the amount and type of MP support required. And they are influenced by the battlefield situation where the operation is to take place.

MP SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE OF LINES

In an AirLand Battle, a passage of lines may be marked by great confusion, fast-paced activity, and the possibility of enemy and friendly units being mixed together. At all times a passage of lines requires close coordination between the passing unit, the stationary units, and the MP providing support. MP ensure circulation control, evacuation of EPWs, straggler control, and refugee control. They also coordinate exchange of communications-electronics operation instructions information and adjustments in areas of responsibilities.

MP help reduce confusion and congestion during passages of lines. They provide security in areas surrounding passage points and passage lanes to ensure that passing units have priority for use of routes to and through the area. Route priority is set by the headquarters directing the operation.

MP can support a forward, rearward, or lateral passage of lines. MP in the AO have conducted area/zone reconnaissance and will be familiar with the routes to, through and beyond the area of passage. Thus, MP can extend the commander's command and control by providing directions at passage points. They also may guide units through passage lanes. Maintaining unit integrity and reducing incidents of stragglers is vital to maintaining the passing unit's momentum in a forward passage of lines. To prevent possible infiltration of the enemy, MP perform aggressive straggler and refugee control operations.

The passage of lines usually is planned and coordinated by the headquarters directing the passage. A division passage of lines usually is planned and coordinated by corps headquarters. The detailed plans are made

and coordinated between the divisions involved. Close coordination between the division's PMs and the corps PM is essential.

MP may themselves be the unit involved in passing through lines. When conducting a

delay of a Level III threat, MP are likely to conduct a passage of lines with a TCF. To avoid firing on friendly units, close coordination between the MP response force commander and the TCF is imperative.

MP SUPPORT FOR RIVER CROSSING

On the AirLand battlefield, freedom to move in any direction is required for success. The US Army's ability to conduct river-crossing operations will significantly impact on the outcome of the battle. A river-crossing operation is undertaken to move a large force across a river obstacle with a minimum loss of momentum. MP play a vital role in the success of river-crossing operations. MP support assists that force in crossing the river as quickly and efficiently as possible.

MP support for river-crossing operations reduces crossing time and promotes efficient movement of vehicles. It reduces congestion, speeds the crossing, and enables the maneuver commander to continue his momentum toward his primary objective. In accordance with the traffic control plan, MP establish staging and holding areas and TCPs to control movement to and from these areas. And MP may be called upon to provide security for crossing forces at the crossing sites. MP are also positioned at engineer regulation points on both sides of the river, improving communications and coordination between units.

MP employment for river crossings is influenced by the battlefield situation where the crossing is to take place. The number and placement of MP assets supporting a river crossing vary with the size of the force crossing the river. They vary with the direction of the crossing (forward and retrograde). And they vary with the degree of enemy resistance expected or encountered.

River crossings occur most often in a division's AO where the battle's tempo and direction are most subject to change. To ease

control of large, fast-moving forces, the operation usually is apportioned one crossing area for each maneuver brigade. Each area is set by control lines on the left and right flanks, and begins and ends at the traffic regulation lines on the entrance and exit banks of the river. The lines are located along easily identifiable terrain features. Each crossing area has a crossing area commander, who has OPCON of all forces working within or passing through that crossing area. MP operating inside the crossing area are OPCON to the crossing area commander for the duration of the operation. MP operating outside the crossing area are under the command of their appropriate echelon commander.

The main thrust of MP support to river crossings is BCC within the river crossing AO. MP direct units to their proper location, such as holding and staging areas, and ensure units move through the area within the time listed on the movement schedule. This is a highly critical aspect of river crossings because the number of crossing sites is limited. MP assets are placed where they can stress BCC operations on MSRs leading into the crossing area as well as those inside the crossing area. MP also provide area security to allow the crossing force to cross the river without loss of momentum. MP are used to recon the crossing unit's flanks and rear. MP providing security for the division main CP will also provide in-transit security for the CP while displacing. All remaining MP assets are placed where they can best support the river crossing.

The division MP company provides support to the division assault forces on the entrance bank of the river, at the crossing

sites, and on the exit banks of the river. Due to the complex nature of a river crossing, the division MP company will require augmentation from a corps MP company. The corps MP company would be OPCON to the division PM and would be employed to best support the river crossing.

When planning to support a river-crossing operation, the division PM places particular emphasis on the traffic control plan. Planning considerations include-

- The selection and establishment of traffic regulating lines to include the number and location of TCPs.

- The selection and location of holding and staging areas to include TCP requirements.
- The coordination and enforcement of movement priorities.
- Ž Communication requirements, both wire and radio.
- Provisions for EPW collection and evacuation.
- Ž Provisions for refugee diversion or removal.
- Requirements for corps MP support.

See FM 19-4 for a detailed discussion of how MP support river crossings.
