

## Chapter 5

# Other Tactical Operations

Other tactical operations cover a wide range of special-purpose operations undertaken routinely during offensive and defensive operations.

While these operations are not the main focus of the commander at the tactical level of war, smoke may support these operations as well.

These operations include—

- Retrograde operations.

- Relief-in-place operations.
- Passage of lines.
- Linkup operations.
- Breakout from encirclement.
- River crossings.
- Obstacle breaching.

In addition, there are special conditions and environments we must consider:

- Mountains.

- Jungles.
- Urban terrain.
- Deserts.
- Winter zones.
- Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) conditions.

Finally, because smoke draws attention, we must consider smoke support for tactical deception.

## Tactics

Smoke and obscurants integrated throughout the battlefield and operational continuum provide major contributions to combat power in deep, close, and rear operations. In other operations, the major contributions are the same as those in offensive smoke tactics. See Chapter 3.

Smoke and obscurant use in other tactical operations requires the same careful planning and execution as with the offense and defense. In addition to the general

techniques listed in Chapter 3, special techniques to minimize interference include—

- **Know the limitations of your delivery systems.** Smoke munitions do not behave the same in all conditions or environments (for example, the jungles of Central America versus the woodlands of Europe). Plan for differences in coverage. Some munitions combinations such as HE and WP are not effective under certain environments or conditions

such as winter zones with deep snow.

- **Use smoke to mask terrain from aerial observation.** With the exception of jungles, much of the terrain described in this chapter affords good aerial observation. By masking key terrain features you reduce your vulnerability as targets of opportunity for high-performance aircraft.

## Retrograde

A retrograde operation is a movement to the rear or away from the enemy.

Retrograde operations gain time, preserve forces, avoid combat under undesirable conditions, or draw the enemy into an unfavorable position. In retrograde operations—

- Use smoke to support maneuver by—
  - Concealing maneuvering forces from enemy observation.
  - Concealing disengaging and moving forces.

- Providing tactical surprise and allowing the commander to set the terms of combat.
- Allowing the commander to mass forces unobserved.
- Defeating enemy surveillance efforts.
- Supporting the deception story.
- Slowing and disrupting enemy movement.
- Isolating attacking echelons.
- Concealing engineer operations defensive preparations to the rear

- Use smoke to provide additional firepower by—
  - Defeating enemy counterreconnaissance efforts.
  - Disrupting enemy command and control.
  - Disrupting enemy maneuver and reinforcement.
  - Disrupting the enemy's ability to communicate.
  - Forcing the enemy to mass, thus providing a lucrative target.
  - Changing friendly to enemy force ratios by using thermal imagers and

