

The other element is firepower. Firepower has basically three functions. The first of these is **suppression**. You use both your organic and inorganic firepower to suppress the enemy in order to maneuver on him effectively. You want to suppress such things as enemy strongpoints, his supporting arms, his anti-air weapons, and his mobile reserves. In this case, **firepower** supports **maneuver**. However, this is exactly the opposite of Marine doctrine from the recent past. In the past, Marines maneuvered to place effective fire on the enemy. **Maneuver** supported **firepower**. In maneuver-style warfare, however, the relationship you want is exactly opposite.

The next function which firepower performs is **disruption**. You aim to disrupt the enemy's command and control, his resupply, and other centers of gravity that contribute to his combat power. Sometimes you can regain the initiative by disrupting something key to his success. Disruption may also have a significant effect on the enemy's morale.

**Attrition** is the third function of firepower.<sup>23</sup> Some might argue that this is firepower's primary function: to destroy equipment and create enemy casualties. It's true that you cannot engage an enemy on the battlefield and defeat him without casualties. War has always been bloody and always will be. But inflicting casualties is not your primary means to success. Out-maneuvering the enemy is. If you are fighting a maneuver-style warfare, a large percentage of the casualties which you cause will be enemy POWs.

For your purposes then, the definition of combined arms is *combining firepower and maneuver in such a way to put the enemy on the horns of a dilemma.*<sup>24</sup> To do this requires much tactical thought and creativity. As a Marine, you usually have a tremendous variety of organic and supporting arms to choose from. You have your organic T/O weapons such as rifles, grenade launchers, and machine guns. You might have mortar, assault, anti-armor, and machine gun support from the company and battalion. Also available are artillery, air, and naval gunfire as supporting arms assets. Combining arms to achieve the greatest effect on the enemy requires imagination and creative tactical thought. It also requires great skill in techniques. Your goal must always be to put your enemy on the spot--to force him to do something to your advantage.

Two other ideas surface with regard to combined arms. First is the concept that maneuver and firepower must always be integrated. Trying to do the job while relying on only one of them can prove disastrous. Let's return for a moment to the British example at the Somme in 1916 (see chapter 1). After an eight day bombardment on German defensive positions, the British attacked on the morning of 1 July under the protection of a rolling artillery barrage. The rolling barrage technique that the British used was to lead the infantry assault forces into the German trenches with a wall of artillery fire. This was an early example of combined arms. In theory, the artillery fire would keep the Germans pinned down while the British infantry advanced on the German positions. The fire would be lifted just as the British were about to enter the trenches with the idea that the Germans could not vacate their bunkers in time to repel the British assault. The British had some early success with this technique but overall it failed miserably. The rolling barrage was tied to a rigid time schedule. In most cases, the infantry was delayed and couldn't communicate with the artillery battery to adjust the schedule. The barrage still continued on according to the pre-arranged plan, and the infantry was left behind and forced to attack unsupported. British gains at the Somme were almost nonexistent while their casualties were

horrendous. Similarly, the artillery/cavalry charge example discussed earlier was combined arms **only** if the two happened simultaneously. If they didn't, the contribution from the artillery was classified only as supporting arms fire. For example, let's say that the artillery fired a preparatory bombardment lasting 10 minutes, and then the fire ceased and the cavalry attacked. If the infantry remained on line in the open during the preparatory bombardment, the artillery fire had some attritional effect. But if the fire ceased and the infantry had enough time to form square before the cavalry arrived, the cavalry charge probably failed. Although the artillery fire may have caused the same number of casualties in both cases, the effect from combining arms was much more significant.

To make combined arms effective, you must also **decentralize** control of them as much as possible. This does not mean that you allocate all your supporting arms to subordinates. Sometimes you will keep assets available for when you commit the reserve. If you are creative, you may also organize several supporting arms as a separate maneuver-type force. But to try to centrally control supporting arms that subordinates need costs you time. To put the enemy in a dilemma, your forces must be fast. When you centralize, you lose speed.

Let's take a look at an example of how you might use the concept of combined arms in one situation:

### Example 3-3

You are the platoon commander of the 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. Your company attacked this morning, and your platoon, as the exploitation force, was committed through a gap which a reconnaissance patrol from the 2d Platoon located. Your mission is to attack north, reference the Salado River Bridge, to cut off the enemy retreat from Duranzo. You are the main effort. You also know that the company's mission is to attack north as quickly as possible to prevent the enemy from escaping and reorganizing.

It is 1100, and you are moving north as indicated on figure 3-7. Suddenly, a patrol you assigned to screen your right flank reports that an enemy mechanized column of at least 10 tanks and armored vehicles is advancing rapidly down Route 6 towards your flank. As the main effort, you know of the following fire support assets available to you:

1. Two sections of AV-8B Harriers are on 5 minute strip alert. You have the forward air controller (FAC) collocated with you, and your unit has the highest priority if you request them.
2. One battery of M198 Howitzers is in direct support of your battalion. You also have a battery of 105s that is attached to your battalion. Both batteries are in place and ready to answer your call for fire. You also have an artillery forward observer (FO) with you, and he has good communication with both artillery fire direction centers (FDCs).
3. You are out of range of naval gunfire. You also know that the battalion's 81mm mortar platoon was recently hit and put out of action.
4. One section each of Dragons and TOWs is attached to your company. Both are in general support of the company, located about 3 kilometers to your rear.
5. You don't know the status of the company's 60mm mortars, or the battalion's heavy machine gun platoon.

What do you do?

From the diagram, you know that you cannot ignore the enemy threat on your right flank. You must deal with it. Should you try to ambush his column in the vicinity of hill 455? Should you report the threat back to your company commander and continue on, assuming he will take care of it? Or should you try to pin down the column and continue with your mission?

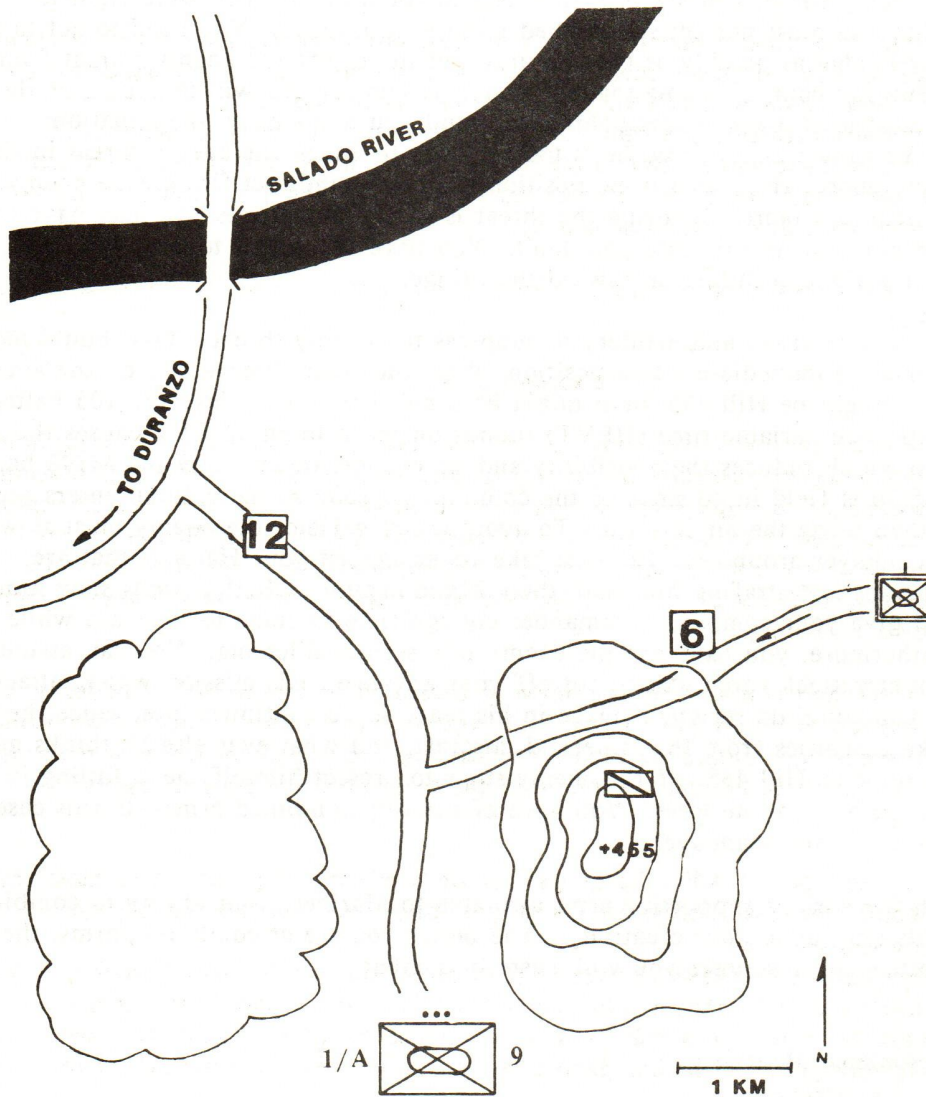


Fig 3-7.

If you decide to attack the enemy column by setting up an ambush, then you are forgetting your mission and your commander's intent. Your mission is to attack north, reference the Salado River Bridge. You know you are attacking to cut off the enemy retreat from Duranzo. If you can reach the bridge before most of the enemy forces, then you may be able to trap him south of the bridge. Speed is essential. However, if you stop and set up an ambush, you are slowing down. You may destroy an estimated company-size unit, but you are forgetting your senior's intent--prevent the enemy retreat from Duranzo.

If instead, you choose to continue on, assuming the company commander would take care of the enemy force, you are probably headed for trouble. You were right to recognize that you must not get sidetracked from your mission. You need to get to the Salado River Bridge as quickly as possible in order to cut off the enemy retreat from Duranzo. But you cannot assume that the company commander will take care of the threat. He is at least 3 kilometers behind you, and you don't know the situation elsewhere. You must assume that he is too far back to attack the enemy threat in time to do you any good. He is also in no position to observe indirect fire on the enemy, so he can't help you there. Ignoring the threat is risky. Sometimes you may have to assume such risks but in this case you don't. You have the means to deal with the enemy threat while continuing on toward the bridge.

Use your Harriers and artillery to suppress the enemy threat. You should move your FAC and FO immediately to a position where they can observe fire on the enemy. That position might be Hill 455, or it might be somewhere else. Have the 105 battery fire high explosive variable time (HEVT) rounds on the column. HEVT causes the armor to button up which reduces their visibility and slows them down. Use the M198 battery to lay a FASCAM field in advance of the column. As soon as the column enters the minefield, then bring the air in on it. To avoid the minefield, the enemy must slow down and maneuver around it. He must take cover against your Harriers that are dropping bombs and strafing him with their 20mm cannons. Both actions slow him down. They should give your company commander enough time to come to your aid while you push on by. Furthermore, you have put the enemy in a serious dilemma. You can assume that he was a counterattack force sent to cut off your advance. His mission was to attack you before you could do serious damage in his rear. If he continues to advance, he is going to take casualties from the minefield, aircraft, and what ever else he thinks may be over the crest of Hill 455. If the enemy stops to protect himself, he is failing in his mission. Either way he loses. You have effectively combined arms--in this case using indirect fire and maneuver.

With the various supporting arms available to Marines, your ability to combine arms depends only upon your creativity. The better you are at combining arms, the fewer casualties and resources you will waste in combat.

### **VIII. The Ambush Mentality**

Marines are familiar with the ambush as a technique. You are taught that it is a type of combat patrol. You know that in some combat situations, you will set up ambushes to destroy enemy patrols or capture prisoners. You are also warned that the enemy is likely to ambush you if you don't take proper precautions.

In maneuver warfare, ambush takes on a much broader meaning. One Army general, an expert in training, was asked how he would explain maneuver warfare at the small unit level. He answered, "In one word: ambush." What he meant was that the kind of thinking ambushes represent runs all through maneuver warfare.

You may remember this way of thinking from your own experience. If you think about how you played Cowboys and Indians when you were young, what did you try to do? You always tried to surprise the other side, to sneak up behind him or jump out from behind a tree when he didn't expect it. You stayed hidden and sucked him into a trap. Suddenly, you sprang on him! That is the ambush mentality.

You may also know it from football, in the trap block. To trap block a defensive player, you pull the offensive lineman across from him out of the line, leaving a hole. When the defender comes through it, another of your linemen suddenly blocks him from the side, usually knocking him on his rear end. You blind-side him. Again, that is the ambush mentality.

The ambush mentality tries to turn every situation into an ambush, not in the sense of a narrow technique, but tactically. In this broader sense, an ambush has five main qualities:

First, you try to surprise the enemy. Think of how a patrol ambush does this. You are walking through the woods, when suddenly, out of nowhere, you are under fire from every direction. You are surprised! The ambush mentality means you always try to surprise the enemy, to do the unexpected.

Second, you want to suck your enemy in. Often, you will try to deceive him to do this. You will make a certain avenue of approach look inviting, perhaps by seeming to leave it uncovered. But in fact, that is just where you want him to come, and you are waiting for him.

Third, an ambush is invisible. This is especially important. *In modern war, virtually all defenses are invisible.* Too often, when you go to the field, you see defenses out in the open: maybe a tank ditch, some wire, and some Marines behind the ditch or in flanking positions at its ends. What will happen to such a defense when spotted by the enemy? It will immediately be smashed by artillery fire.

The ambush mentality **always** seeks invisibility. If you are defending, the enemy must not see you until it is too late, until he is falling to your fire. A good example (discussed later in this chapter) is a reverse slope defense. The enemy does not know you are there until he comes over the slope and is hit by your fire. His tanks are blowing up from shots into their bellies. And because he cannot see you until it is too late, he cannot plaster you with artillery fire. The reverse slope not only protects you from his fire; it protects you from his observation. That is the ambush mentality: do not let yourself be seen!

Fourth, in an ambush, you want to shock your enemy. Instead of taking him under fire with just a few weapons at long range, you wait until he is in easy range of every weapon. Then, suddenly, you open up all at once with everything. What happens? He is paralyzed, at least for a time, by the shock. He cannot react. Everything was going fine for him, no enemy seemed to be anywhere around, and suddenly he is in a fire storm with people falling all around him. Often, he panics, which just makes his problem worse.

Finally, in the ambush mentality, you always focus on the enemy. Although this is important in all aspects of maneuver warfare, it is especially true here. The purpose of an ambush is not to hold a piece of terrain. It is to destroy the enemy, to wipe him out. You use terrain, but it is not what you are fighting for. You are fighting for his utter destruction.

The ambush mentality means you think about these five things--surprise, suckering the other guy, being invisible, shock effect, and focusing on destroying the enemy--in every combat action. Every thing you do becomes an ambush in some way. Especially in small unit actions, this must be your goal. It is a way of thinking to you.

#### *Ambush in the defense*

In maneuver warfare, every defense has the nature of an ambush. For example, in what is called the "elastic defense" (see chapter two), you let the enemy penetrate. As he does so, he encounters more and more strongpoints that take him under machine gun and rifle fire, usually from the flanks. These are often concealed and they open up suddenly. He may cross a ridge line and run into a reverse slope defense. Just when he is having the most problems from your positions, you throw in a strong counterattack that encircles him and cuts his whole unit off. You have ambushed him in three ways: with your strong points, with a reverse slope defense, and with an enveloping counterattack.

Another example of the ambush mentality in the defense is the "Motti" defense. The word is Finnish, and it comes from the Winter War of 1940, when the Soviet Union attacked Finland. In the Motti defense, you let the enemy penetrate deeply on one or several axes. Then, instead of blocking **across** his penetrations, you work up and down the **length** of them. You defend **parallel** to his penetrations. Along each penetration, you come in from the flank in many spots, making breaks and dividing his column into segments. You divide each segment further into little enclaves with no mutual support, no logistics, no hope. In the Winter War, many of these segments ended with the Russian troops starved or frozen to death. That is also the ambush mentality.

A third example is the pocket, or horseshoe defense (see figure 3-8). Like the Motti defense, the horseshoe defense allows the enemy to penetrate on an avenue of approach. The enemy's progress is halted by a physical obstacle requiring engineering effort to clear. He is then ambushed from the side or rear.

In all these examples, you can see the ideas that lie behind the ambush mentality: surprise, sucking him in, invisibility, shock, and focus on the enemy. Defenses vary according to the situation, and these three examples are only a few. You will be able to invent many more. But always *think ambush!*

#### *Ambush in the attack*

The ambush applies as much to the attack as to the defense. You may have used the ambush in the attack in your own training. During an attack or advance to contact, did you ever come across an enemy patrol? If so, and you spotted the enemy before he spotted you, you probably set up a hasty ambush. That was using the ambush in the attack.