

Part VII. OPERATIONS IN SPECIAL TERRAIN, ETC.

Chapter I. Summary

1. Meaning of operations in special terrain, etc.

Operations in special terrain, etc., means operations (battles) that must be given special consideration in implementation, dependent upon special operational conditions from the special nature of the operational terrain, operational time, etc. This Part VII discusses operations that require consideration because of the special nature of the zone of operations, such as operations (battles) in mountainous terrain, river areas, defiles, forests, and populated places and in cold and snowy areas, and operations that require consideration because of the special nature of the timing of the operations, such as operations that utilize nighttime darkness, etc.

2. Application of these principles of war

The principles of war discussed in this Part VII, in contrast to the items discussed in Parts II-VI, are those principles which should be additionally applied or modified under specified conditions.

In general, actual operations rarely occur in ordinary terrain or under ordinary conditions, but they occur in terrain that has mountains, rivers, forests, cities, or villages and in both daytime and nighttime, rain and snow, and hot and cold temperatures.

Hence, actual operations are measures best suited to the particular conditions, formulated on the basis of the estimate of the situation, coping with actual situations that include various conditions in varied aspects, with general principles of war modified or supplemented by principles under special conditions, depending upon the degree of mountainous terrain, rivers, etc.

In other words, it is necessary to aim at closely combining the principles of war of preceding Parts and this Part and at their complete application within their interacting relationships.

Chapter II. Operations (Combat) Based upon the Special Nature of the Terrain

1. Effect of the special nature of the terrain upon military actions

It goes without saying that there is a close relationship between terrain and military actions. Hence, the special nature of the terrain controls the nature of operations (engagements) that occur in that terrain.

The basic elements by which this special nature of the terrain affects military actions can be grouped in the following three categories:

- a. Obstructions to movement
- b. Obstructions to the field of view and field of fire

c. Obstructions to the effectiveness of firepower

In other words, by studying which of the above three are most notable on the basis of the special nature of the terrain and by further studying this situation, the correct nature of operations (combat) in special terrain can be understood.

2. Mountain operations

a. Characteristics of mountainous terrain

The topographic characteristics of mountainous terrain are topographic accidentedness, inclination of slope, nature of the ground, altitude, and weather, and it is rather extensive (width and depth).

The effect these exert on military operations may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The operations of a unit are limited to routes of communication. Cross-country movement is not impossible but requires considerable time. However, concealment of plans is easy.
- (2) Unit deployment is restricted but is easy in depth.
- (3) Inter-unit coordinated action and cooperation are difficult.
- (4) There is some degree of field of view and field of fire from commanding positions, but there are many dead spaces. Low terrain has absolutely no field of view or field of fire.
- (5) Use of firepower has little effectiveness except for high-angle weapons.
- (6) Since unit operations are restricted, concentration of fire on routes of communication, concentration areas, etc., is extremely effective.

In other words, the effect from these on military operations includes all three elements listed above, but the effect of "obstructions to movement" is particularly striking. For this reason, integrated application of combat power is restricted, and the speed of operations is extremely limited.

b. Characteristics of mountain operations

In mountain operations, the aim must be somehow to overcome the above-listed characteristics of mountainous terrain, particularly the obstructions to movement.

However, it must be noted that "mountainous terrain is not an absolute obstruction" and, on the other hand, "mountains swallow troops" and, from the above, it can be said that, in order to destroy the enemy overwhelmingly, "rather than press against mountainous terrain, press against the ocean."

Also, the characteristics of mountain operations may be described as follows:

(1) The value of routes of communication is extremely large. Hence, the focus in mountain warfare is on the struggle for routes of communication (including preventing [their] use by the enemy).

(2) Inter-unit coordination and cooperation are difficult, and independent engagements easily develop on each route of communication.

(3) Surprise attack by ground movement requires considerable time but is very effective.

(4) The situation is easily affected by the time of year and the weather, forests usually are present, and it is important to give consideration also to these.

c. Cautionary items in connection with offensive and defensive operations in mountainous terrain

(1) Attack

(a) Key terrain that secures routes of communication, particularly that controlling the line of communications, is selected as objective.

(b) A detailed and centrally controlled plan is prepared, but in implementation, authority is divided among the independent battle groups.

(c) Emphasis is placed on envelopment, the turning movement, and the surprise attack.

(2) Defense

(a) Use of obstructions extending in depth in mountainous terrain and securing of high ground and saddles that control routes of communication.

(b) Defeating in detail through independent engagements in each area.

(c) Devising countermeasures against envelopment, turning movements, infiltration, and airborne and heliborne attack by the enemy.

(3) In both attack and defense, along with adapting organization and equipment to the terrain, particular attention is given to ensuring logistic support.

3. Tactical river operations

a. Characteristics of rivers

Rivers are "obstructions to movement."

Note: The degree of obstruction differs depending upon the quality of equipment,

the width, depth, and speed of the stream, nature of the riverbed soil, topography of both river banks, traffic, and weather, etc. In recent years, the degree of obstruction by rivers has been decreasing greatly for units with excellent river-crossing equipment. The discussion below is for cases in which there is a deficiency in river-crossing equipment.

The characteristic of rivers is that, in comparison with mountainous obstructions that extend in depth (long defile), the river is only a single-line (short defile) obstacle.

In other words, the front is relatively strong, but depth is deficient and lacks flexibility.

b. Phase in which river obstructions impede military operations

c. Characteristics of tactical river operations.

On the basis of the characteristics of river obstructions and the phase in which river obstructions impede military operations, the weaknesses of the attacker and defender may be listed as follows:

(1) Attacker

- (a) In the initial period, posture is confused, and use of combat power is limited.
- (b) Tactical movement and support are limited.
- (c) Troops and equipment are divided between the two river banks.
- (d) Special equipment and supplies are required for the river-crossing.

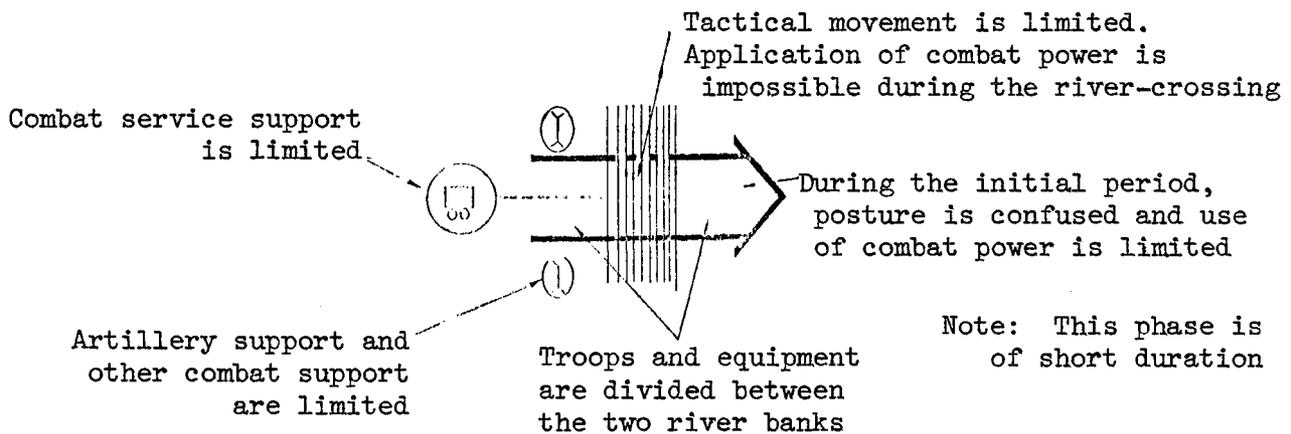


Figure 99

(2) Defender

(a) There is little opportunity to take advantage of weaknesses in the attack.

(b) There is a lack of flexibility in depth and laterally.

Hence, in a river engagement, there is a race to concentrate combat power at the river-crossing point. Also, it is necessary for both offense and defense to take advantage of weaknesses of the respective opponent, and "seizure of tactical opportunities and the surprise attack" are particularly important.

d. Cautionary items in connection with the river offensive and defensive

(1) Attack

(a) River-crossing as distant as possible from the enemy.
(Crossing the obstruction far from the enemy.)

(b) Keeping plans secret, for a surprise attack.

(c) Making preparations carefully, for a one-time effort.

(2) Defense

(a) Attempting to make direct use of the river as an obstruction.

(b) Taking advantage of the situation when the attacker has half his force across the river.

(c) Striving to retain flexibility.

Note:

1. Traversing minefields is generally similar to river-crossings.

2. In river engagements, a position of readiness (central position) is used.

As to the position of readiness (central position):

In cases of assignment of an extremely broad front relative to one's force, in the initial phase, the zone of action of the main force is not fixed, but, first, the main force is disposed in a posture of readiness, and after determining to some extent the enemy's course of action, a decisive battle is sought.

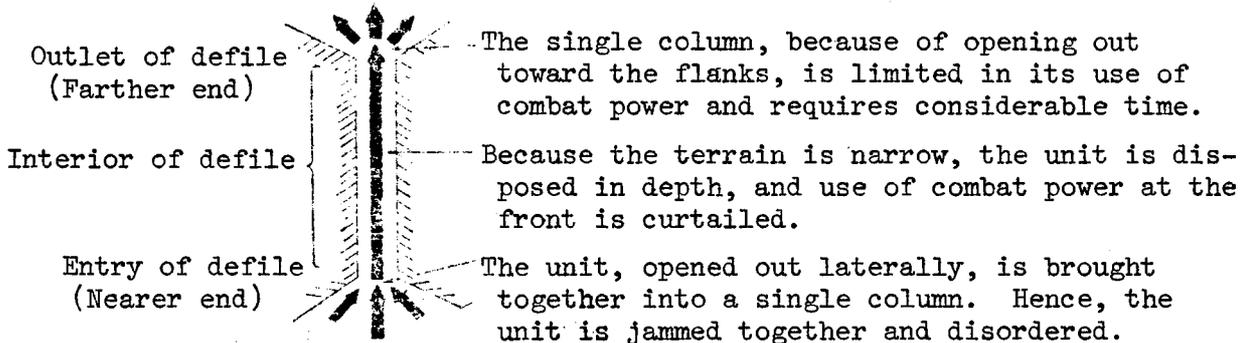
4. Defile engagement

a. Characteristics of the defile

Defiles are "obstructions to movement."

The defile-type obstruction is characterized by limiting evolution and deployment toward the flanks. Hence, movement in depth is confined within narrow limits.

- b. Unit condition produced by passing through the defile
- c. Characteristics of the defile engagement



Note: The condition of the unit differs with the size of the unit

Figure 100

On the basis of the characteristics of defiles and the conditions of defile engagements, the characteristics of the defile engagement may be listed as follows:

(1) The defile engagement is very advantageous for the defender and extremely disadvantageous for the attacker. (However, this disadvantage is alleviated by tactical air movement.)

(2) For passage through a defile, covering measures are absolutely necessary.

(3) In passage through a defile, it is necessary to use as many passages as possible and to pass through rapidly.

(4) The defile engagement differs in accordance with the situation, respectively, at the defile entrance, within the defile, and at the defile outlet.

d. Cautionary items in defile engagements

(1) Engagement near the defile entrance

The defender holds key positions near the entrance and obstructs the preparation and implementation of the passage through the defile by the attacker.

The attacker attempts to seize those key positions quickly, facilitating

avoidance of disorder and the preparation and implementation of the passage.

In other words, in engagements near the entrance of the defile, key positions ("gateposts") near the entry are the focus of the attacker and the defender.

(2) Engagements within the defile

The defender, utilizing the attacker's weakness of being limited in lateral deployment and movement, obstructs (defense or delaying action) in depth the advance of the attacker.

The attacker prepares to be able to use sufficient combat power in depth near the entry and strives to pass through in a single effort.

In other words, in the engagement within the defile, the focus is on the attacker's power to break through and charge forward.

(3) Engagement near the defile outlet

The defender, taking advantage of the fact that the attacker advancing out of the defile has not completed the concentration of his combat power, attempts to defeat in detail (by firepower or counterattack). At that time, by delaying the attacker in the in-depth situation as much as possible, [the defender] obstructs the attacker's concentration of combat power.

The attacker occupies key positions near the outlet and takes other measures to cover the concentration of fighting strength, prevents defeat in detail, and seeks to concentrate combat power as quickly as possible.

In other words, in engagements near the defile outlet, the focus is on active and bold action by the defender and on seizing tactical opportunities.

Note: Multiple defile

This is a situation created by several defiles and is frequent in mountainous regions. Multiple-defile engagements apply mountain operations.

5. Engagements in forests and populated places

a. Characteristics of forests and populated places

Forests and populated places, on the basis of their topographic characteristics, all include three essential elements (obstruction to movement, obstruction to field of view and field of fire, and obstruction to effectiveness of firepower), "obstruction to field of view and field of fire" being particularly marked.

For this reason, the tactical characteristics, in general, include the following:

- (1) The effectiveness of concealment and cover is great
- (2) Obstruction to fire and movement

(3) Difficulty of command and liaison

b. Characteristics of forest and urban combat

Combat in forests and populated places, by its nature, creates difficulty of collecting intelligence information and of security and facilitates surprise attack. Also, there is a tendency for units easily to become dispersed and be thrown into disorder, and concentration and use of combat power become difficult.

Hence, combat in forests and populated places requires a large force; and yet, piecemeal commitment occurs easily, because "forests and populated places swallow troops."

From this fact, in forest and urban combat, "fighting outside" (seeking the decisive engagement outside the forest or populated place) is the essence of the operation.

c. Cautionary items concerning forest and urban combat

(1) Attack

In attacking the enemy through a forest or populated place, attacking him directly from the front is avoided as much as possible, and by envelopment, a turning movement, etc., a change is effected in the surrounding general posture, and a resolution is effected by neutralizing the enemy.

In cases where it is necessary to attack those [areas] directly and in combat directed toward their interior, it is necessary to strengthen intelligence, security, and control measures and to stress close combat and the surprise attack.

(2) Defense

In the defense, forests and populated places also are used as strong points, but it is better to use them as obstructions.

In defense directly using them or in defense within them, it is necessary, as much as possible, to harass the attacker, throw him into confusion, and engage in combat with emphasis on quick-reaction firepower and local counterattack.

6. Operations in snowy and cold areas

a. Characteristics of snowy and cold areas

(1) In our country [Japan], with its relationship between snowy and cold areas and the latitude, the degree of coldness is relatively moderate, but there are many areas where the quantity of accumulated snow is large.

(2) Their most important characteristics are deep snow, snow storms, severe cold, sudden changes of weather, long nights, etc., but, within Japan, these do not make troop movement impossible.

(3) In general, the transportation network is greatly restricted.

(4) The snowy and cold area is "an obstruction to movement." Also, similarly, the formation of deep mud from the season of thawing of ice and melting of snow exerts a great effect on the conduct of military operations.

b. Effect on the application of combat power

(1) Energy of personnel

Energy of personnel, because of the cold and snow, generally becomes sluggish.

For this reason, countermeasures such as heating, keeping warm, equipment, and training are necessary, but when these are inappropriate, it is necessary to be careful not to sustain serious damage from the weather before combat with the enemy.

(2) Application of firepower

The movement of artillery, etc., is restricted and sluggish. Also, reliability of the supply of ammunition, etc., is particularly important. However, the weapons' range can be used, where the target is clear.

In regard to the performance of artillery, etc., if cold-weather materials are available, there are no special problems.

(3) Application of tactical mobility

In terrain where the degree of obstruction is low during periods when there is no accumulated snow or cold weather, the degree of obstruction increases with the accumulation of snow. Conversely, with rivers, mountainous districts, etc., where the degree of obstruction generally is great, the degree of obstruction is decreased by freezing and snow accumulation.

Also, units that are equipped with snow-crossing equipment and are thoroughly trained, have relatively unrestricted tactical mobility, whereas a unit lacking those qualities is greatly restricted in tactical mobility even on flat terrain.

Also, the degree of obstruction differs with heavily equipped units, lightly equipped units, etc., and for heavy-vehicle units, etc., it is necessary to clear snow from roads continuously and uninterruptedly.

(4) Logistics

The requirement for cold-resistant rations, materials, fuel, etc., increases, and exhausting them directly weakens combat power, doing this to a greater extent than in ordinary operations.

For routes of communication, in general, great effort is required to open and maintain them, and use is restricted by the weather, etc.

Hence, securing the line of communications is extremely important but extremely fragile.

c. Characteristics of operations in snowy and cold regions

(1) The success of operations is governed by the quality of preparations. In particular, secure availability of special equipment and cold-resistant materials and thorough training are extremely important.

(2) Securing the line of communications is absolutely decisive for this operation.

Chapter III. Combat Using Nighttime Darkness, etc.

1. Purpose of using nighttime darkness in combat

Nighttime darkness, that is, darkness, by its nature, permits the surprise attack, and it limits the application of combat power by both sides. Hence, the purpose of using nighttime darkness in combat is to make relative combat power advantageous by a surprise attack and reducing losses.

By developments in science and technology, it has become possible to change nighttime darkness into daytime, and there is a tendency to make daytime use of nighttime, but it still is difficult to change the entire battlefield for the entire time period into daytime, and combat using nighttime darkness still has its former importance.

Note: Difference between nighttime darkness and dense fog, etc.

With nighttime darkness, illumination is possible, and it clearly has a limit timewise, but with fog, etc., illumination is impossible, and there is great uncertainty in a situation that cannot be delimited in time or space.

In combat, depending upon the [operation's] stage in which the night darkness is utilized, there is a division into evening-dusk attack, predawn attack, dawn attack, night attack, etc.

2. Evening-dusk attack

The evening-dusk attack is an "assault ([use of] force)" applying integrated combat power of artillery, tanks, etc., and, in many cases, is an attack in a limited area.

In other words, close-combat units, applying ample firepower from the first, approach under cover of a curtain of darkness in the latter part of the period and with reduced losses from enemy firepower, and they have the advantage of being able to penetrate, the attack ending with nightfall.

In the evening-dusk attack, it is necessary to be careful to attack with the sun at one's back.

3. Predawn attack

The predawn attack, at first, is a night attack (stragem) and, thereafter,

shifts to a daytime attack (force).

This attack aims at effecting a "surprise attack" (strategem) and "using daytime for the longest possible time." It has the advantages of approach by using night and twilight to avoid observed fire from superior artillery firepower and infantry heavy weapons, gradual deployment as light increases, and being able to attack while avoiding losses, but in combat after dawn, attention must be given to enemy artillery that has not been neutralized.

4. Dawn attack

This type of attack uses night darkness for attack preparation, and the combat phase of the attack attempts to crush the enemy with force after the dawn.

In this attack the aim is to conceal the attack preparations by means of nighttime darkness and to use daytime to the maximum length.

In the dawn attack, insofar as possible, a direction of attack that faces the sun must be avoided.

5. Night attack

a. The aim of the night attack is, by secret movement using the special character of nighttime darkness, to make a "surprise attack."

Hence, planning and implementation must be directed toward a surprise attack.

In other words, the plan naturally must be kept secret and is thought out on the premise that the attack time, direction, and plan of execution all permit the surprise attack (strategem).

b. The night attack involves some disadvantages, and an effort is made to minimize these. Training and equipment can compensate considerably for these disadvantages, but the following, inter alia, are important for the implementation:

Thoroughness of preparations

Clearness of the plan

Measures for required control

c. It must be realized that the tactical gains from a night attack generally are limited. Generally, it is a limited attack of shallow depth.

Examples:

Night attack by the [Japanese] 2d Division at Gong-zhang-ling [Kung-chang-ling][in the Battle of Liaoyang, 23 August-5 September 1904]

Night attack by the [Japanese] 2d Division on Guadalcanal [Oct 1942?]

Postscript

"Skill in application resides solely in the individual."

This book attempted to explain the most important principles of war, but merely because of having read about the principles of war, one cannot, the next day, be immediately proficient in military strategy. Simply studying the theory and academic subject alone definitely is not effective, and only by assimilating it does it have value.

Just as it is said that "all theories are gray," the principles of war also are not very clear-cut. There are not a few inconsistencies among the principles of war. (For example, mutual inconsistencies such as the principles of concentration and security in the nine principles of combat.)

The great Moltke stated as follows: "Warfare, like other arts, cannot be learned by reasoning methods. It can be learned only by the process of experience."

You will increasingly be pursuing diligent self-help study hereafter, and, with the results of study of this book as a base, you must be diligent in the study of military history, increase your understanding of the principles of war, experience an infinite variety of difficult situations, and improve your judgment in order to be able to accomplish your mission.

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