

# **Pursuit: Missing Component For A Quick Decisive Victory**

**A Monograph  
by  
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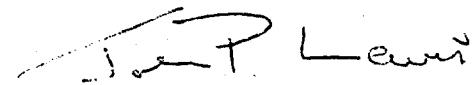
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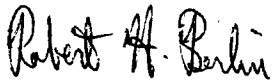
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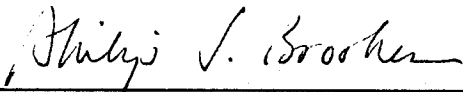
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## ABSTRACT

### **PURSUIT: MISSING COMPONENT FOR A QUICK, DECISIVE VICTORY** by MAJ Lawrence R. Snead III, USA, 49 pages.

The United States and the Army have entered a new era with a world consisting of a multitude of possible threats. The American people and military doctrine require any future conflicts to be resolved with a quick, decisive victory. This monograph discusses the concept of pursuit and the role it can play in gaining such a victory.

The role of pursuit is examined through an analysis of the theory of pursuit in **On War** by Carl Von Clausewitz and through modern historical examples of pursuit at the tactical level. It applies both theory and history to determine if there are certain key components of successful pursuits. US Army doctrine and the conduct of pursuit operations is used to answer two questions. Is the doctrine supported by theory and history and does the US Army currently conduct pursuit operations at the tactical level?

Finally, this monograph concludes that both theory and history provide for the utility of pursuit in seeking quick, decisive victory on the battlefield. However, the current US Army doctrine has some critical omissions in regards to pursuit and more importantly the US Army currently fails to conduct pursuit operations at the tactical level. Before the US Army is prepared to use pursuit to seek this decisive victory it must make changes with both its doctrine and training.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

"The scale and ruthlessness of the pursuit that followed the battles of Jena-Auerstadt have often been described, and it provides a classical instance of the way in which a victory can be exploited."<sup>1</sup> After inflicting devastating losses on the Prussians on 14 October 1806 Napoleon's forces relentlessly pursued the fleeing Prussian forces across the Prussian countryside and through Berlin to the Oder River seeking and gaining their complete defeat. Napoleon with this pursuit took only 33 days to destroy the armies of Prussia with over 25,000 killed and wounded, 140,000 prisoners captured and 2,000 cannons taken and with them the legend of Prussian invincibility.<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon's vigorous pursuit of the Prussians to their final and complete defeat demonstrates the vital role pursuit plays when seeking and achieving a rapid decisive victory in combat. By maintaining his relentless pursuit Napoleon never allowed the Prussians to recover and reorganize from the tremendous losses they suffered on the battlefields of Jena-Auerstadt. Through constant pressure and attacks he chased and destroyed the fleeing remnants of the Prussian army without giving them the opportunity to resist on equal terms until they could fight no more. Through his pursuit Napoleon brought his campaign against Prussia in 1806 to a rapid close.

Carl Von Clausewitz used his experiences and observations of Napoleonic warfare as he wrote **On War**, his monumental tome, describing and explaining war. He argues in Book Four as he described the engagement "that no victory will be effective without pursuit"<sup>3</sup>. However, even a brief and cursory analysis of history highlights the difficulty for the

commander of coupling pursuit with winning a battle. Though extremely effective when successfully applied, some commanders have found pursuits operations difficult to accomplish. Currently, given our new doctrine in **FM 100-5 Operations** with its emphasis on "achieving quick, decisive victory"<sup>4</sup> and our new requirement to fight and win simultaneously two major regional conflicts<sup>5</sup>, the US Army is not trained and prepared to conduct successful pursuits as part of tactical operations.

As the US Army transitions to the post cold war world it faces the dilemma of dealing with multiple unknown threats with ever shrinking levels of combat power. The world and the US Army are changing while the mission remains the same: defend the national interests of the United States. In this era of diminishing forces the concept of pursuit remains viable and one in which the US Army with the proper doctrine and training could effectively implement in the future against possible threats with quick decisive victory if the United States goes to war. Success on the battlefield coupled with a vigorous pursuit and the destruction of the fleeing enemy forces would result in the victory that the American people expect and require.

This study will first examine Clausewitz's theory of pursuit and then use historical examples to explore the nature and implications of pursuit at the tactical level in terms of victory. It will dissect the current US Army doctrine on pursuit and the role it can play. Pursuit will be analyzed further in the US Army at the tactical level to determine if the US Army currently conducts pursuit operations. This study will present recommendations to enhance the effectiveness on how the US Army must plan, train, and execute pursuits in the future as it confronts the uncertainty of simultaneous major regional conflicts requiring rapid resolvment. Finally, then, if in the future

it faces battle, the US Army, like Napoleon at Jena-Auerstadt, will be capable of defeating its enemy on the battlefield coupled with a relentless pursuit of its foe until it achieves decisive victory.

## **II. CLAUSEWITZ AND PURSUIT**

Clausewitz's conception of pursuit and its relationship to effective victory requires a greater understanding of four critical words: battle, fighting, victory, and pursuit. Clausewitz saw battle as "the basis of our concept of fighting."<sup>6</sup> When nations, armies, and men fought for whatever reason they met in an engagement or battle to resolve their differences through fighting to determine a victor. According to Clausewitz,

Battle is the bloodiest solution. While it should not simply be considered as mutual murder--its effect, , is rather a killing of the enemy's spirit than of its men--it is always true that the character of battle, like its name is slaughter(Schlacht), and its price is blood. As a human being the commander will recoil from it<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of the fighting is the killing, destruction or defeat of the enemy.<sup>8</sup> Through fighting opponents could determine the victor and the loser of the battle.

Fighting serves as a pivotal component of the battle. Fighting consists of a clash or contest of violence with a spilling of blood between two or more opponents. Furthermore Clausewitz observed that every engagement involves a bloody and destructive test of physical and moral strength.<sup>9</sup> The spilling of blood results in the loss of both physical and moral strengths. The relationship between both strengths is critical to success or failure on the battlefield. The relative value of both strengths is



closely intertwined. The successful commander tries to maintain a balance between the two strengths because to lose too much of one or the other could mean defeat. Too many losses in physical strength vis a vis to an opponent can have a corresponding negative effect on moral strength. For example excessive physical losses on the battlefield can result in a decline of the moral will to continue to fight. This clash requires the opponents to expend their physical and moral strengths against each other in an attempt to overcome and defeat the other. In this clash the opponents attempt to husband their strengths while they deplete those of their enemy in quest for victory.

Defeat of the enemy serves as the catalyst of victory. Clausewitz writes "What do we mean by the defeat of the enemy? Simply the destruction of his forces, whether by death, injury, or any other means-- either completely or enough to make him stop fighting."<sup>10</sup> Through violence and its resulting attrition of physical and moral strength, one side gains dominance over the other. Though normally both sides lose some of both strengths during the battle, whoever has the most left of the two at the end is the winner.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately a combatant gains victory over his opponent by possessing a greater sum of physical and moral strength after the violent clash and forcing him to quit fighting and leave the battle.

A key component of the value of a victory with Clausewitz rests in how long it took the victor to accomplish it. This remains true today with the emphasis on achieving a quick, decisive victory. The longer the fight normally means the greater expenditure of strength by both sides. The winner of a fight wants to gain the victory as soon as possible, while the loser wants to delay as long as possible. A quick victory possesses much greater value.<sup>12</sup> The victor wants to minimize the losses to his strength

while maximizing that of his enemy. A rapid defeat further demoralizes an enemy and can often result in a greater destruction of his physical strength thus compounding his overall losses. By defeating his opponent rapidly, the victor does not allow his opponent time to recover and possibly fight again on more equal terms.

Through a vigorous pursuit the victor can truly exploit his victory over his opponent. Pursuit involves the continued attack and destruction of the fleeing enemy force without allowing him time to recover and fight a coherent defense. It includes the key concepts of time, space, and relative mobility. The victor tries to cover more space with less time than his foe in order to maintain his advantage. Relative mobility of the pursuer over the pursued often proves to be the difference in a successful pursuit. The pursuer has to be faster to win. In Clausewitz's day during a pursuit cavalry proved key to victory as it provided a decisive mobility advantage over retreating dismounted and defeated enemy soldiers.

The critical moment of the pursuit occurs when the enemy decides to give up the battlefield. This fleeting moment offers a great opportunity to the victor. By rapidly following up and exploiting success on the battlefield with a vigorous pursuit of his beaten foe the commander greatly increases the value of his victory. A relentless pursuit overwhelms and completes the defeat and destruction of both the physical and moral strength of the enemy.

According to Clausewitz pursuit of a defeated enemy begins the moment he quits fighting and begins his retreat.<sup>13</sup> At this moment the commander faces a great dilemma. He can be happy with his modest victory and allow the enemy to escape or he can take risk and launch a pursuit in search of a much greater victory. His risk normally consists of the fact that his troops are exhausted from fighting all day and they may not

have any fight left in them in case they should run into determined resistance. Because of this risk, successful pursuits require aggressive leaders who are willing to take the risks in search of that greater victory.

If the commander decides to pursue, he faces the daunting task of rapidly getting his troops organized and sending them out after the enemy with an immediate pursuit, if he does not have fresh forces standing by ready for commitment. Then he must be prepared to sustain and support his forces as he sends them out. This decision and its successful execution can have widespread implications for the ultimate value of the victory. The vigor with which the commander launches immediate pursuit very often determines the ultimate value of the victory.<sup>14</sup> The first act of the victory takes place on the battlefield and it sets the conditions for the success of the pursuit. The pursuit serves as the second act of the victory and in many cases is more important than the first because with the pursuit, the victor achieves a greater destruction of his opponent.

Clausewitz identifies three variations of pursuit. With the first the victor merely follows his retreating foe applying very little pressure and gaining very little in additional value for his victory. In the second pursuit the victor keeps up a relentless pressure on his enemy attacking whenever possible to keep attriting his forces and destroying his morale. The third variation of pursuit involves maintaining pressure on the enemy while pursuing him on a parallel route threatening to cut off his means of retreat. This is normally the most effective pursuit as it cuts off his retreat and leaves him only the option to fight and die or surrender.<sup>15</sup>

The value of pursuit to the commander seeking effective victory on the battlefield lies with the crippling losses that the enemy suffers, while the pursuer faces little additional risk. The pursuer through his mobility

advantage and having already won on the battlefield is able to overcome and defeat the remnants of the enemy force already suffering from tremendous moral and physical casualties.. Thus the value of the victory gains weight only after the pursuit begins and the success of the pursuit determines the final weight.<sup>16</sup>

The commander starts the process for his victory in the first act played on the battlefield by setting the conditions. He has defeated his enemy and forced him to retreat. He also retains sufficient combat power remaining and the will to act to complete the destruction and defeat of the enemy during the second act or pursuit. By relentlessly pursuing, the successful commander is able to rapidly complete the destruction of his enemy under favorable conditions that minimize the costs to him.

Theory provides a number of basic fundamentals for the foundation of pursuit. The conditions for a pursuit first emerge from a battle or bloody fight between two or more foes. As the combatants struggle with their moral and physical strengths they fight to minimize their losses while maximizing those of their opponent. Exhaustion is the pivotal element as the pursuer attempts to preserve and sustain his forces while destroying that of his foe. Time serves as a critical element with the longer the time the greater the losses to both sides. Also the victor normally only has a short time to realize and take advantage of the opportunity to launch his pursuit while the loser retreats in disarray. To capitalize on this opportunity the pursuer needs to have a greater advantage in mobility in order to overtake the retreating enemy. Clausewitz describes three variations of pursuit following a battle: little direct pressure on the enemy, relentless direct pressure on the enemy, and relentless direct pressure coupled with encircling and cutting off the enemy. Finally, the victor needs to be a bold

and audacious leader willing to take risks in order to achieve a greater victory. With these ultimately according to theory the successful pursuit provides the opportunity for the commander to gain a quick, decisive victory over his foe.

### **III. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES**

History provides mixed and conflicting indicators of the value and use of pursuit as part of decisive victory. One finds in battles historical illustrations of both tactical and operational failures when a commander does not rapidly pursue the enemy. However, history also shows how pursuit, like that at the battle of Jena-Auerstadt in 1806, can greatly increase the value of a victory. A review of the history of successful pursuits with tactical size forces in the 20th century reveals few examples where pursuit proved critical in achieving a decisive victory. Two such rarities involving pursuit include the British victory at Beda Fomm in 1941 and the American victory with the breakout from the Pusan Pocket in 1950. In both battles a relentless pursuit of a retreating foe ultimately resulted in a decisive victory.

The pursuit of elements of the British XIII Corps into Beda Fomm on 5 February 1941 culminated the campaign against the Italian Tenth Army and resulted in their complete destruction. In a little over ten weeks of fighting General Richard O'Connor's force of 36,000 Commonwealth troops advanced over 500 miles across the desert in Libya and destroyed the Italian Army (Figure 1). In the process they captured over 130,000 prisoners, 480 tanks, 845 pieces of artillery and killed or destroyed countless more.<sup>17</sup>

## O'Conner's Pursuit Across the Western Desert

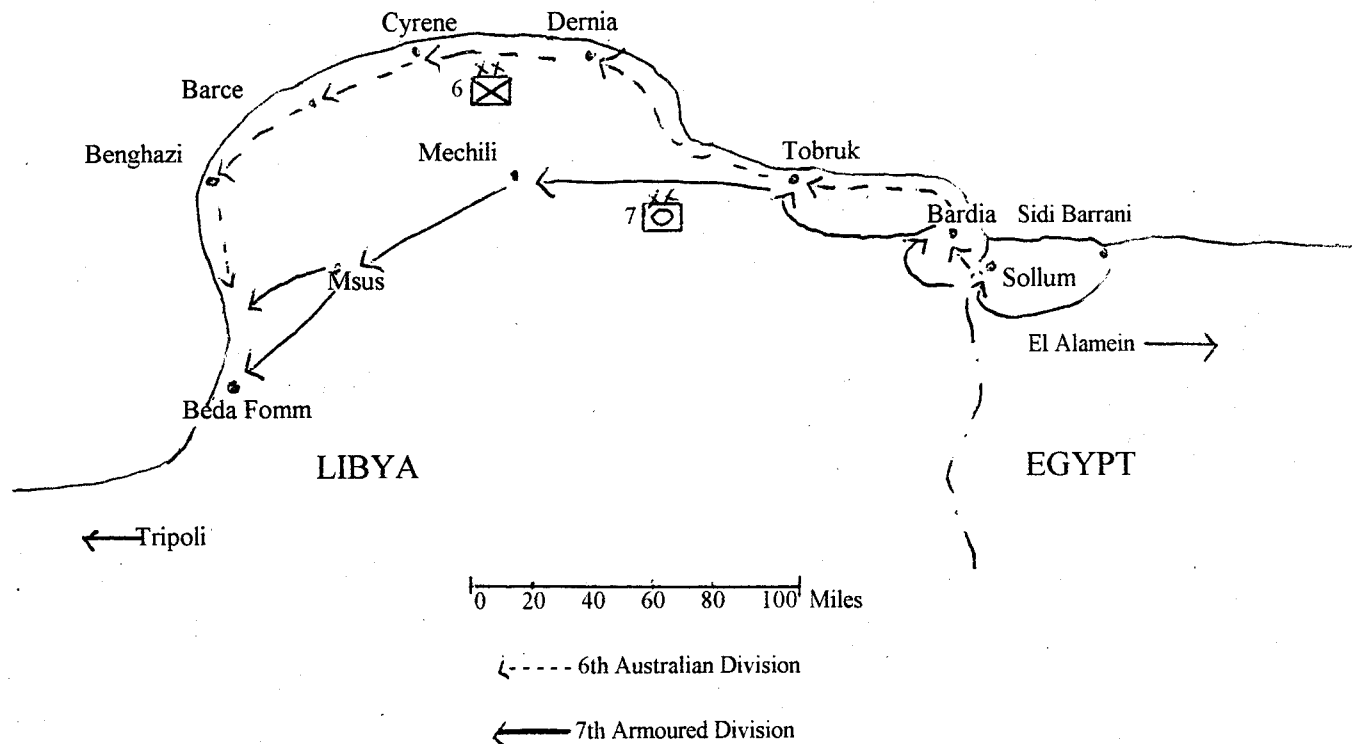


Figure 1.

At this stage in WW II after a series of losses the British, the last of the original Allies, faced the combined German and Italian military might in the West. The British desperately needed a victory to bolster morale at home and to counter Italian advances into Egypt and Greece. The Western Desert offered such an opportunity. This operation began on 9 December 1940 as the British XIII Corps began limited attacks against the Italians to force them out of Egypt and back into Libya.

Initially the British hoped for little more than a limited success based on a correlation of available forces to each side. The British opened the battle with a five day raid that expanded into a campaign with a little over 36,000 troops in two divisions against the Italian Tenth Army with over

250,000 troops organized into 12 divisions and a large number of fortified towns in western Libya.<sup>18</sup> With their action the British hoped to recapture all of the Egyptian territory and gain a moral victory against the Italians before confronting them in East Africa or Greece.

The British achieved a tremendous success with their initial attacks and expanded their plans for a limited operation into a campaign. The XIII Corps proved superior to the Italians in every category as they used a series of maneuvers with their armor forces to defeat the Italians in the vicinity of Sidi Barrani by 11 December and force the other Italian forces in Egypt to begin their retreat into Libya.<sup>19</sup> British armor doctrine, reflecting a regimental cavalry background, stressed going after the enemy and pushing him until he surrendered.<sup>20</sup> After a short pause to regroup and detach one of their divisions, 4th Indian Division, for operations in East Africa, O'Connor continued his attack westward into Libya. As the 6th Australian Division arrived in theater they reinforced the XIII Corps and provided sufficient forces to keep up the pressure on the Italians. By 30 January 1941 his forces had captured the Italian fortresses at Bardia, Tobruk, and Derna.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the British had almost reached a culminating point in the desert and they anticipated losing additional forces to other theaters.

As a result of heavy losses to relentless British pressure, Mussolini decided to withdraw the remaining Italian forces back to Tripoli to await reinforcement and possible German intervention.<sup>22</sup> This withdrawal soon turned into a full-fledged retreat as the Italians attempted to flee along the coastal road by way of Cyrene, Benghazi, and Beda Fomm to Tripoli to escape destruction at the hands of the British. As the Italians fled they left their left flank unsecured in the desert. Thus, the Italians presented the British with a classic opportunity to conduct a pursuit.

O'Conner quickly grasped the significance of the situation and requested permission from General Wavell and ultimately Churchill to continue his attack to finish off the Italians. While he awaited permission, he took advantage of the time to reorganize his forces and plan for a pursuit.<sup>23</sup> Once the British attack started again, O'Conner used the 6th Australian Division as his direct pressure force to keep the Italians occupied as they retreated down the coastal highway. The British engineers rapidly cleared countless obstacles set by the retreating Italians so that the Australians could maintain their relentless pressure.<sup>24</sup> He sent his reorganized 7th Armoured Division southwest across the desert as the encircling force to cut off and destroy the Italians vicinity of Beda Fomm. He took a tremendous risk as he sent all his remaining supplies across the desert behind the 7th Armoured Division and he hoped that he had enough to sustain the fight until he won.<sup>25</sup>

The British forces covered over 140 miles across rugged and tortuous terrain and beat the Italians to Beda Fomm. Enroute they lost numerous vehicles to the terrain and mechanical exhaustion. The British established a series of small blocking positions and began defeating and capturing the Italians as they arrived. The Italians had no idea that the British would be so bold as to cut them off with such a small force. If the Italians had coordinated and launched an organized attack against the British they would have broken through and defeated them. Instead they launched a series of piecemeal assaults that the British were able to defeat one at a time until reinforcements arrived. During the course of the battle most of the initial British armor units expended their basic loads and maneuvered using captured Italian fuel until resupplied. Fortunately,



O'Conner's bold pursuit achieved success. Within 48 hours the British completed their destruction of the Tenth Italian Army.<sup>26</sup>

The success of the British pursuit at Beda Fomm demonstrates how the use of pursuit can assist in gaining a quick decisive victory. The British succeeded for a number of reasons that have a direct connection to the previous discussion of theory and pursuit. O'Conner used his pursuit to defeat both the moral and the physical strength of the Italian Army. Over the course of the campaign this pressure on the Italian moral strength proved so successful that over 130,000 Italians surrendered and quit fighting. O'Conner quickly recognized the golden opportunity that the fleeing Italians presented, assessed the risks and benefits, and boldly took advantage of it. The current armor doctrine supported his aggressiveness. The British used both a direct pressure and an encircling force of combined arms, who possessed a mobility advantage, in concert to maintain the pressure and bring about the final destruction of the Italians. O'Conner planned how he could do the pursuit. He provided a clear intent to his subordinates and allocated his remaining supplies so his units could do their jobs prior to reaching a state of exhaustion. His aggressive leadership coupled with the training and professionalism of his XIII Corps resulted in the destruction the Italian Tenth Army.

In addition to the British victory at Beda Fomm in WW II, the Korean War in 1950 offers an example of another successful pursuit. The pursuit of the First Cavalry Division with Task Force (TF) 777 out of the Pusan Perimeter during the Korean War provides another example where a pursuit proved critical in a decisive victory at the tactical level. After three months of bloody defensive fighting against the invading North Korean forces, the Eighth Army finally went on the offense. By 20 September in

conjunction with the X Corps amphibious assault at Inchon, General Walker's Eighth Army prepared to break out of their defensive position along the perimeter around Pusan (Figure 2).

### TF 777's Pursuit in Korea

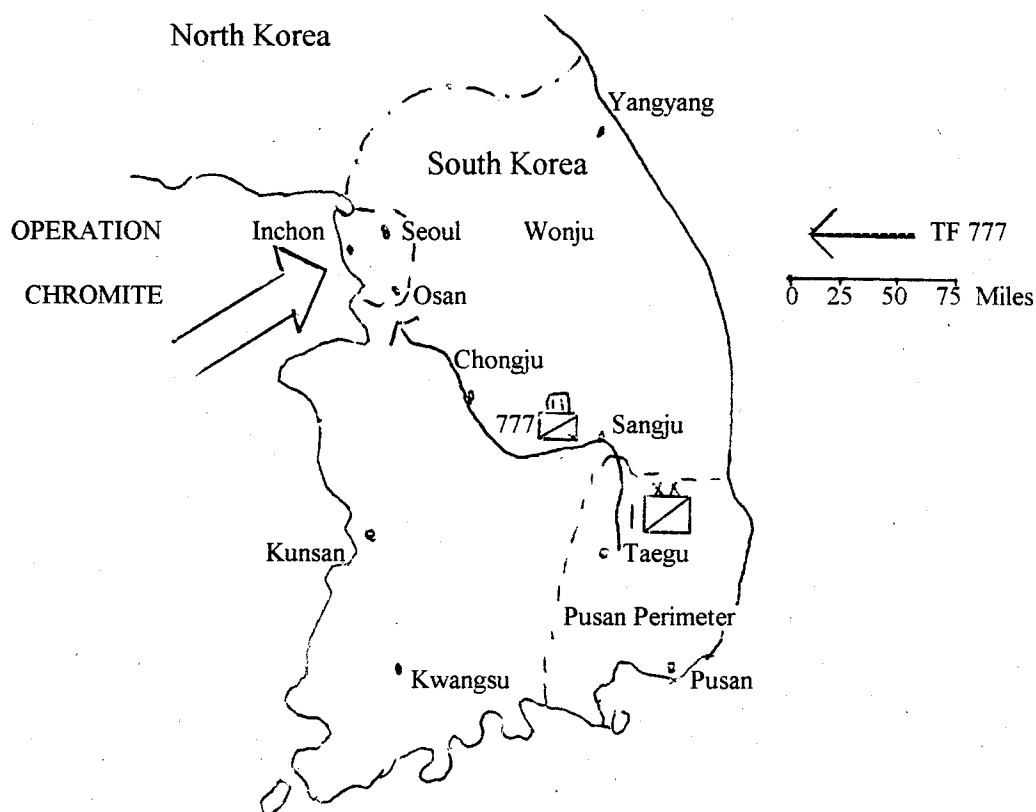


Figure 2.

By mid-September the North Koreans had reached a culminating point after a series attacks had failed to breach the Pusan Perimeter and defeat the United Nations' forces. General MacArthur launched Operation Chromite, the landings at Inchon, to cut the North Korean lines of communications and relieve the pressure on the perimeter.<sup>27</sup> The Eighth Army launched a series of attacks along the perimeter in order to gain a

penetration through the North Korean forces, breakout from the perimeter, and pursue the North Koreans north to complete their destruction.

As part of the breakout the First Cavalry Division planned and conducted a pursuit operation to maintain the pressure against the retreating North Koreans and eventually link up with the X Corps vicinity of Seoul.<sup>28</sup> The division organized the pursuit force, TF 777, around the 7th Cavalry Regiment consisting primarily of the 1/7 and 3/7 Cavalry Battalions, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion, C Company (-) 70th Tank Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Battalion (-), and the Regiment's I&R Platoon<sup>29</sup>. TF Lynch organized around the 3/7 Cavalry Squadron under the command of LTC James Lynch led the division's pursuit from the breakout until the linkup with the 31st Infantry Regiment pushing south out of Seoul vicinity of Osan.

Once the division achieved a penetration along the Nakdong River vicinity Taegu on 22 September, it pushed TF Lynch forward to begin its pursuit and keep the pressure on the fleeing North Koreans.<sup>30</sup> Lynch aggressively pushed north with his tanks in the lead. Overhead flew friendly air to provide reconnaissance, close air support, and command and control with the division. Lynch slowed his force only to destroy enemy forces and to clear the obstacles they left behind.<sup>31</sup>

The First Cavalry Division commander realized the opportunity available to him to go on the offensive after several months of bloody defensive fighting and pushed the remainder of his division north as fast as possible behind TF Lynch. Enroute, Lynch encountered several river obstacles, but his engineers rapidly repaired the bridges and fords so that he could keep his forces moving with minimal disruptions.<sup>32</sup>

By late on 22 September, after only 14 hours on the road, TF Lynch had covered 35 miles and had reached its initial objectives. In the process Lynch's force had fought scattered units from parts of the North Korean 1st, 3rd, and 13th Divisions.<sup>33</sup> Soon it received orders to continue moving north to maintain pressure on the North Koreans and complete the link-up.<sup>34</sup>

Lynch had anticipated his logistic requirements and insured that he had sufficient logistic assets, in particular fuel, moving forward with his column. Unfortunately, the friction and fog of war intervened as his lead tanks ran out of fuel. Luckily his resourceful crews aggressively secured additional fuel from some accompanying wheel vehicles and captured North Korean trucks so his advance rapidly continued.<sup>35</sup>

As night fell Lynch boldly had his vehicles use their headlights so that they could continue the pace and not let up their pressure. Their audacious boldness surprised the North Koreans more than once. TF Lynch finally achieved the link-up with the 31st Infantry Regiment vicinity Osan on 26 September at 2226 hours. They had covered the last 106 miles of the pursuit in 11 hours.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of their rapid pursuit the 1st Cavalry Division cut off and completed the destruction of the North Korean 105th Armored Division and other miscellaneous units.<sup>37</sup> Their actions in conjunction with the other Eighth Army pursuits coupled with the MacArthur's landing at Inchon resulted in the destruction of the North Korean People's Army in South Korea.<sup>38</sup>

The 1st Cavalry Division's pursuit north from the Pusan Perimeter succeeded for a number of reasons. First, the division anticipated the mission and assembled the forces necessary to take advantage of the situation once the conditions presented themselves. Second, the division

used a command and control package consisting of intent, radio communications, and courier planes to keep the operation under control. Third, the combined arms nature of the force coupled with its advantage in mobility allowed it to deal with any possible threat with minimum disruption of its move to the north. Fourth, innovation and initiative overcame the fog of war, as the sustainment system bogged down, and kept the pursuit moving. Finally, Lynch's aggressive leadership pushed the task force so that they maintained continuous contact with the retreating North Koreans until they achieved the link-up at Osan.

Even though both Beda Fomm and the Breakout and Pursuit from the Pusan Perimeter clearly demonstrate the value that a commander can gain from pursuit, history demonstrates that pursuits rarely occur. Russell Weigly writes about the difficulty of conducting a pursuit during 18th and 19th century warfare, but the description could apply today with

Even the greatest generals have rarely followed up triumphant battles with devastating pursuit. Major battles have consistently damaged both contending armies so severely that the victor has not retained the ability to pursue the vanquished effectively. If he has taken a good mobile arm into the battle, its ability to exploit and pursue will almost certainly prove badly depleted by the time the battle ends.<sup>39</sup>

So often the difficulty of conducting pursuit operations preclude the commander from taking the chance and making the attempt. So often these missed opportunities do not make it to the history books.

However, one example of the difficulty of conducting a pursuit does appear in the recorded accounts. This example occurred with the advance of the American 88th Infantry Division on Rome in late May 1944. During the spring of 1944 the 88th Division as part of General Mark Clark's Fifth

Army participated in the Allied advance on Rome. After the breakout from Anzio and the retreat of the German forces north from the Gustav Line, the tempo of the advance quickened as the Allies pushed to rapidly seize Rome and prevent the Germans from reestablishing a defensive line.<sup>40</sup> The conditions for the possibility of a pursuit emerged on 19 May 1944.

The German forces fell back in disarray leaving an avenue of approach unguarded. The American II Corps gave the order to "Pursue" to the 88th Division.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, the difficulty of the operation unhinged its opportunity for success from the very beginning. The 88th was a standard infantry division with limited mobility assets. It lacked sufficient mobility with its foot bound infantry to overcome the retreating Germans. In an effort to gain a time/space advantage the division quickly attempted to put together an ad hoc transportation arrangement by mating the 350th Infantry Regiment into the Division's supply trucks. This attempt quickly failed with the difficulty of getting the vehicles and soldiers linked together in a timely manner to take advantage of the opportunity and the Division's lack of training on pursuit. Soon the pursuit collapsed as the truck mounted infantry got snarled in numerous traffic jams and were unable to continue.<sup>42</sup>

Though the retreating Germans helped set the conditions for a pursuit, the American pursuit failed for a number of reasons. The ad hoc nature of the transportation arrangement and the short time suspense for execution indicates a lack of planning and anticipation by the 88th's higher headquarters for the mission. A foot mobile unit requires additional transportation assets and time to incorporate those assets into its operation if it is going to gain a mobility advantage over its retreating foot bound foe. The II Corps failed to adequately calculate that requirement. In addition the

resulting traffic jams between the Division and other units once it got moving indicate a lack of synchronization and adequate command and control for the complicated operation. Finally, though this attempt at pursuit at the tactical level failed, the Allies did succeed in keeping enough pressure on the Germans that the Allies entered Rome on 4 June 1944.

Pursuits have occurred in history with mixed results, but the successful ones have greatly aided in achieving decisive victory. These historical pursuits illuminated some of the basic foundations of the theory of successful pursuit operations conducted in the past and their value in pursuit operations of the future.

Theory and history demonstrate that when commanders do launch pursuits under the right conditions at the tactical level, such as with Beda Fomm and Task Force Lynch, the commander stands to greatly increase the value of his victory. The pursuit allows him to complete the moral and physical destruction of his foe in a rapid manner. Some key lessons from theory confirmed by history include the role of exhaustion in a bloody fight, criticality of timing, need for greater mobility, variations of pursuits, and requirement for bold and audacious leadership.

In addition to the lessons from theory, both the successful and unsuccessful pursuits of history introduce some new critical factors for pursuit in the mechanized age. Planning the operation is key. The commander needs to look past the close battle and anticipate future actions. By anticipating and planning a pursuit, he is then better prepared to launch it when the conditions develop. Central to success is the concept of combined arms. The pursuer needs to have an integrated force of infantry, armor, field artillery, engineer, and aviation assets to gain the mobility advantage with sufficient combat power required by the pursuer. Through

the proper utilization and synchronization of engineer assets must the pursuer can reduce enemy obstacles to gain and maintain the needed mobility. The force must be mechanized so that it is as fast if not faster than the retreating enemy. To control his extended forces the commander must have a command and control structure so that he can insure that his plan for the pursuit succeeds. With modern, mechanized forces sustainment is critical as the commander must keep his forces supplied so that they do not reach a culminating point prior to completing the destruction of the enemy.

#### **IV. CURRENT US ARMY DOCTRINE**

**FM 100-5 Operations**, the Army's keystone document on doctrine, defines doctrine as the "fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of national objectives. Doctrine is authoritative but requires judgment in application."<sup>43</sup> Thus, normally doctrine explains how the military plans to fight. In addition the US Army doctrine serves as the authoritative guide to how Army forces think about fighting wars and conducting operations other than war.<sup>44</sup>

A key aspect of the current US Army doctrine rests with its emphasis on achieving quick, decisive victory once force is committed to combat.<sup>45</sup> This requirement for quick, decisive victory first appears in the current **National Military Strategy (NMS)** as one of its Strategic Principles, Decisive Force. An essential element of the national military strategy is for the country to rapidly deploy forces and overwhelm an enemy in order to quickly terminate the conflict with minimal casualties.<sup>46</sup> This requirement implies one must always achieve quick, decisive victory when US forces are



committed to combat and places strategic pressure on commanders to gain a successful resolution as soon as possible.

Decisive victory from a doctrinal perspective occurs when the US Army produces the highest quality forces with the capability to deploy rapidly, fight, sustain themselves, and quickly win with minimum casualties.<sup>47</sup> Thus, US Army commanders and planners are required to think and consider all possible options as they plan and conduct operations in the future. One concept critical to their success in combat in the future as they seek quick, decisive victory is pursuit.

Doctrinally the US Army identifies the four forms of the tactical offense as movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Thus

A pursuit is an offensive operation against a retreating enemy force. It follows a successful attack or exploitation and is ordered when the enemy cannot conduct an organized defense and attempts to disengage. The object of the pursuit is destruction of the opposing force.<sup>48</sup>

The normal progression of a pursuit flows from a successful attack or exploitation where a commander wants to increase his victory by pushing for the complete destruction of an enemy force.

This definition corresponds with the Clausewitzian notion of pursuit. With both there exists the requirement to defeat the enemy, force him to retreat, and identify the opportunity that exists. Ultimately, commanders conduct operations to intercept, capture, kill, or destroy the enemy.<sup>49</sup> If taken advantage of, the pursuit then serves as a means to complete the enemy's destruction.

Theory and US Army doctrine identify the possible risks with conducting a pursuit at the end of a significant battle. Both sides will have

depleted their strengths and the margin of victory between the winner and loser may be slight.<sup>50</sup> Also the struggle may have disorganized both forces and disrupted the victors ability to pursue. The winner has much to gain from conducting a successful pursuit, but he also stands to lose forces and momentum if he fails in his attempt.

US Army doctrine identifies the difficulties of conducting a pursuit and the benefits such as completing the destruction of the enemy. However, it fails to identify one key advantage that can be gained from a pursuit: a quick, decisive victory. Pursuit gains the attacker time and minimizes his casualties by maintaining relentless pressure while he rapidly defeats a disorganized, retreating enemy. It is much quicker and efficient to defeat a retreating, disorganized enemy than have to engage that same enemy in a series of costly deliberate attacks against prepared positions. This omission is critical in light of the strategic and doctrinal requirements to achieve a quick, decisive victory.

Doctrinally pursuit needs to be viewed as the complete destruction of an enemy's physical and moral strengths. This is essential to understanding the success pursuit can gain for the attacker. As Clausewitz noted, the pressure of the successful pursuit dramatically increases the destruction of the enemy's moral strength. The enemy loses his will to resist and continue to fight. As his moral strength declines, it becomes easier for the attacker to complete the destruction of the enemy through capturing or killing him. Pursuits properly planned and executed can lead a commander to a quick, decisive victory.

The US Army recognizes the Corps as the highest level of tactical unit. The analysis of Corps doctrine, found in **FM 100-15 Corps Operations**, includes the discussion of pursuit, where, unlike the four

forms of tactical offense in **FM 100-5**, pursuit is one of the five major types of offensive operations. At the Corps level pursuit normally follows a successful exploitation and completes the destruction of an enemy force that has lost the means or will to fight and is attempting to retreat. The attacker focuses on destroying the fleeing enemy.<sup>51</sup>

Here doctrine recognizes the two distinct forces that take part in a pursuit. First is the direct pressure force which maintains pressure on the enemy. The second force is the encircling force. The manual does not clearly explain what the two forces are supposed to accomplish or how they work together. It does include a small diagram of the two forces in action.<sup>52</sup>

Corps level doctrine builds on the discussion previously reviewed in US Army operations concerning the type units that conduct the pursuit. **FM 100-5** refers to ground and air operations while **Corps Operations** gets more specific on type units and how a commander can best utilize them. Relative mobility of the pursuer over the pursued serves as a critical element of a successful pursuit. A number of type forces such as tank-heavy, motorized, attack helicopter, airborne, and air assault forces may be used as the encircling forces, with ground maneuver units serving in the direct pressure role.<sup>53</sup> Thus the pursuer wants to use those forces that give him that advantage in mobility and still retain sufficient combat power to destroy the enemy.

Corps level doctrine discusses the pivotal element for a predominately heavy mechanized force of pursuit: sustainment. **FM 100-5** briefly mentions it as a possible limiting factor. Modern heavy warfare with armored and mechanized forces require vast quantities of logistical support to accomplish their missions. For example a two division heavy corps with an Armored Cavalry Regiment conducting offensive operations requires

over 1,400,000 gallons of fuel a day.<sup>54</sup> To conduct a successful pursuit the corps needs to anticipate the increased need for fuel, ammo, and transportation requirements coupled with flexible sustainment arrangements that can respond rapidly to an uncertain situation.<sup>55</sup> The window of opportunity for launching a pursuit may be small and the logistical system must be able to support the commander. Though there is the discussion on sustainment as a possible limiting factor, corps doctrine fails to mention how these sustainment issues may limit the commander's tactical flexibility such as limiting the distance of the pursuit or the composition of the encircling force.

Command and control provides the means to plan, coordinate, supervise, lead, and execute an operation. Without command and control an operation can not take place. Yet we find in the corps level doctrine little emphasis on the major command and control functions necessary for the conduct of pursuit. Instead critical omissions exist. The doctrine fails to answer what conditions set the stage for a pursuit and the requirements for planning a pursuit. There is no discussion on task organization for a pursuit. These questions warrant discussion if doctrine is to provide us guidance on how to think about fighting.

The Army's capstone manual for division operations, **FM 71-100 Division Operations**, assists division commanders, their staffs, and subordinate commanders with planning and conducting combat operations.<sup>56</sup> Pursuit in the chapter on offensive operations includes the same five types of offensive operations found in the corps level doctrine with a similar definition of pursuit. At the division level the pursuit is a natural extension of the exploitation. Its primary function is to complete the destruction of the retreating enemy force. The enemy force itself is the

primary objective.<sup>57</sup> Thus from the corps to division level there begins a smooth transition with the definition of pursuit.

Divisional doctrine further develops the notion that the pursuit consists of direct pressure and encircling forces. It provides significant detail as to the mission of both forces. The direct pressure force attacks constantly in order to keep the enemy from breaking contact with its mission to prevent the enemy from disengaging and subsequently reconstituting its defense while inflicting maximum casualties.<sup>58</sup> As the direct pressure force maintains its contact with the enemy, the encircling force(s) use every available avenue and means to get to the rear of the enemy, block his escape, and then destroy him between the direct pressure and encircling forces.<sup>59</sup> During the conduct of the pursuit the division may employ multiple encircling forces, with all having the same goal of cutting off and then destroying the enemy.

Divisional doctrine also discusses how a division can conduct a local pursuit on its own or take part as the direct pressure or encircling force in conjunction with another unit. Normally if a division takes part in an operation with another unit they have a common corps headquarters. The corps doctrine did not address this. Divisional operations doctrine does have some critical omissions in its explanation of pursuit. It fails to adequately discuss the function of command and control. There is no explanation of how the commander is to control a pursuit given the difficulty of executing one. There is no discussion for planning a pursuit and determining correct task organization or force structure for the pursuit. Furthermore, the doctrine fails to address how these units come together into a coherent fighting force in a timely manner in order to take advantage of a golden opportunity. Another critical omission of the division level

doctrine deals with the limited discussion on sustainment. Pursuits like all offensive operations require substantial logistical support for success. The doctrine fails to address how logistical shortfalls can limit or even prevent the conduct of a pursuit.

The tactical level doctrine stated in **FM 71-3 Armored And Mechanized Infantry Brigade** and **FM 71-2 The Tank And Mechanized Battalion Task Force** both offer a conceptual context for pursuit as an offensive form of maneuver. Brigade level operations describe how the heavy brigade fights and provides the current thinking on how to employ the heavy brigade on the current AirLand battlefield.<sup>60</sup> Like the other manuals, it discusses pursuit in the chapter dealing with offensive operations. Pursuit remains one of the five types.

Brigade level operations is the first level to introduce the possible indicators of the enemy's collapse that could set the stage for a possible pursuit. Once the commander sees these indicators he should commit his forces to the pursuit and take advantage of the opportunity that is available to him. "The brigade may conduct the pursuit operation as part of a corps or division pursuit functioning as either the direct-pressure or encircling force."<sup>61</sup> It also introduces the role of fire support for the first time in pursuit operations by specifying two primary tasks in the pursuit: slowing the retreat of enemy forces and preventing resupply and reinforcements of enemy forces.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, with brigade operations, as with the other previously discussed levels, there exists a number of omissions with the discussion of pursuit. Once again there is no explanation of the issues surrounding the command and control function. First there is no discussion on how to plan or prepare for a pursuit. The doctrine offers no insight in to how the

commander is to control this operation against a fleeing enemy over possibly extended distances. Though the doctrine does address the issue of fire support, it fails to offer guidance on how the commander can integrate the fire support in with his maneuver forces. Again there is the same omission on the critical logistical requirements for sustaining a pursuit as found in the higher levels of doctrine. Pursuits like other offensive operations for a heavy force can require heavy expenditures of fuel and ammo. The doctrine fails to address how the commander is to sustain his force or how the limits on logistics could seriously hinder or curtail his operation.

Like the brigade, the battalion task force, as outlined in **FM 71-2 The Tank And Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force**, participates in the pursuit in conjunction with a larger force with the purpose to run down and complete the destruction of the enemy.<sup>63</sup> The task force can serve as the direct pressure force, the encircling force, or the follow-and-support force. The purposes of the direct pressure and the encircling forces remain the same as with the division and brigade description. The follow-and-support force makes its first appearance as part of a pursuit here. It has a number of possible purposes which include the destruction of bypassed enemy units, relief of direct-pressure force elements, securing of lines of communications and key terrain, or to guard enemy prisoners of war or key installations.<sup>64</sup>

Battalion level doctrine introduces for the first time in doctrine the importance of the role of engineers for mobility. As the enemy tries to retreat they will leave obstacles to delay the pursuer and gain a time advantage. These obstacles can greatly hinder the pursuer's advance if he is not prepared. The pursuer should have his engineers well forward to aid

the movement of his force as he encounters various types of obstacles.<sup>65</sup> They and their obstacle breaching capability can be crucial as they reduce the time necessary to cover a given piece of terrain and maintain the constant pressure on the enemy.

Battalion operations reintroduce the requirement and criticality of sustainment to a successful pursuit. It describes sustainment with significant detail and adds that the plan must ensure that adequate logistical stocks are initially available to the pursuit force. At no time should the momentum of the pursuit be slowed for the lack of logistical support.<sup>66</sup>

At battalion level there are some omissions in the doctrine. There is no mention of command and control. There is a shortfall in the planning requirements involved with preparing a task force to take part in a pursuit. At a minimum at task force level a fragmentary order would include the situation, mission, critical graphics, the tasks to subordinate units, how sustainment would work, and the plan for command and control.

This doctrinal examination does offer some insight into the current US Army doctrine on pursuit and its relationship with theory and critical historical foundations. The concept of pursuit does flow logically from the strategic military level down through the operational level to the battalion task force level. It does agree with the Clausewitzian notion of pursuit where the purpose of the pursuit is to complete the destruction of the enemy. The doctrine fails to include Clausewitz's concept of the moral and physical strength. This concept proves critical to understanding how pursuit with its focus on the destruction of both enemy strengths rapidly hastens the enemy's overall destruction.

The doctrine at both the military strategic and operational level states the requirement for quick decisive victory as a criterion for success in future



conflicts. The doctrine fails to emphasize how the conduct of a successful pursuit can gain time for the attacker at the expense of the defender. Thus the conduct of pursuit can shorten the amount of time required to bring about the defeat of the enemy.

The current US Army doctrine on pursuit requires more consistency at all levels to bring it in line with theory and historical evidence when it addresses some critical issues crucial to the success of a pursuit. These issues include planning, combined arms, mobility, sustainment, and command and control.

## **V. CURRENT US ARMY PRACTICE OF PURSUIT**

The reviews of Clausewitz, historical examples and the current US Army doctrine on pursuit in previous sections indicates that pursuit can serve as a valuable tool for the commander. However, the question remains. Does the US Army currently plan, train, and conduct pursuits as part of offensive operations? The answer lies in a review of the current US Army training philosophy of battle focused training through an examination of the current Mission Essential Tasks Lists (METL) at the US Army corps and heavy division level and an analysis of recent Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations.

According to **FM 25-100 Training The Force**, the US Army's current doctrine on training, "Battle focus guides the planning, execution, and assessment of each organization's training program to ensure its members train as they are going to fight."<sup>67</sup> This philosophy encompasses the recognition that the units in the Army operate in an era of limited

resources: time, men, equipment, training area, and money. Thus in order to maximize training proficiency in terms of the most efficient use of scarce resources Army units only train on those tasks that they expect to execute as part of accomplishing their war time missions.

To do this Army units develop their METL's as a way of focusing their training efforts. Units base their METL's on two basic sources: war plans and external directives. War plans and their inherent missions and tasks provide the most important and crucial input. External directives provide additional taskings for training that relate to a unit's war time mission. Commanders analyze these inputs and then determine those tasks that are crucial to the war time success of that unit. The unit then trains to standard on those tasks. Because of the limited resources units only train on their METL tasks. Thus if a unit does not identify a task, such as conduct a pursuit, and put it on its METL, that unit will not plan, train, and conduct that task because it does not intend to fight using that task.<sup>68</sup>

Within the current Army Training and Evaluation Program Mission Training Plans for both the corps and division, pursuit is one of the supporting missions for offensive operations.<sup>69</sup> However, though pursuit is listed as one of the possible METL tasks, none of the US Army Corps and heavy Divisions currently have pursuit as one of their METL tasks.<sup>70</sup> This omission of pursuit indicates that the US Army Corps and Divisions do not plan, train, and conduct pursuits as they prepare for their wartime mission.

Similarly, CTC rotations provide an indication of what tasks units train on and their battle focus. The CTC program provides training rotations for corps, divisions, brigades, and battalion task forces through four training centers: Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) in Germany, National Training Center (NTC) at Ft. Irwin, Joint Readiness

Training Center (JRTC) at Ft. Polk, and Battle Command Training Center (BCTP) at Ft. Leavenworth. CMTC, NTC, and JRTC train brigade and battalion task force size units. BCTP trains corps and divisions. These centers provide US Army units with hands-on training in a stressful, near-combat environment. The training focuses on all or portions of the unit's METL. The CTCs stress and teach combat doctrine against competitive, a well-trained Opposing Force (OPFOR).<sup>71</sup> The CTCs provide an outstanding opportunity for units to train against an OPFOR in a near combat environment on their war time missions. During its CTC rotation if a unit does not plan, train, and conduct a task, such as pursuit, that normally means the unit does not plan to execute that task to accomplish its war time mission.

The corps and divisions do their CTC training with BCTP. BCTP provides them the opportunity to develop their staffs and train on their wartime missions. The units in conjunction with their higher headquarters decide on the tasks and scenarios they want to train. Based on a study of recent BCTP rotations, none of the US Army Corps or heavy Divisions based in the United States conducted pursuits as one of their training tasks.<sup>72</sup> The units tend to focus on planning and executing the close fight rather than the events which will follow. Since pursuits happen after a unit transitions from the close battle, this further indicates that units fail to anticipate and plan for pursuits.

Heavy brigades and battalion task forces conduct their CTC rotations either at NTC or CMTC. Like their parent units, an analysis of the trends from recent CTC rotations indicate that no brigades or battalion task forces have conducted pursuits as part of their training exercises.<sup>73</sup> Again, like their parent units training with BCTP, these units too are focused solely on

the close fight. As the units plan for a particular operation their scheme of maneuver and operation graphics seldom go beyond the point of penetration or the initial actions on the objective.<sup>74</sup>

The US Army currently fails to plan, train, and conduct pursuits. There are a number of interrelated explanations as to why the US Army ignores pursuit and the advantages it can provide for mission accomplishment. The first problem is that pursuits are hard to do. Theory and history demonstrates this simply through the limited number of successful pursuits through the ages. Pursuits remain an extremely difficult and complex operation to conduct under the conditions of uncertainty in the heat of battle. In order to conduct a pursuit the commander needs to defeat his enemy on the battlefield and force him to retreat while retaining sufficient combat power to continue to attack. The commander must understand the situation and realize that he has a golden opportunity to rapidly complete the defeat his opponent if he can take advantage of the situation. To do this the commander must have sufficient forces and sustainment available to apply relentless offensive pressure while conducting the pursuit until his unit finally destroys the enemy. Like any other difficult and complex military operation a pursuit requires planning and synchronization for success.

In addition to being hard to do, pursuits involve risks. Clausewitz identified the role that fatigue and exhaustion play as the commander determines whether his forces are up to the task. O'Conner faced this same risk at Beda Fomm. He also has to decide if the enemy really is retreating and the conditions are right for a pursuit. The commander also faces the dilemma of whether to risk the victory that he has already gained by taking a chance on gaining a greater victory. Due to the risk and the uncertainty

involved with the operation it takes an audacious and aggressive leader to assess his chances and take the risk to go for the greater victory.

The third problem lies with the current US Army doctrine. Though the doctrine explains pursuit and how it is to fit into the forms of the tactical offense, it fails to demonstrate how pursuit can aid a commander in achieving a quick decisive victory outlined by the National Military Strategy and expected by the American people. Currently pursuit is not part of the US Army's philosophy of how to achieve decisive victory on the battlefield during offensive operations.

Furthermore, our doctrine implies that commanders do not plan for pursuit because they rarely can anticipate using it in search of victory. **FM 100-5** argues that "commanders must be agile enough to react when the situation presents itself."<sup>75</sup> Because of this implication commanders and planners assume that they will recognize the opportunity when the situation presents itself and that they and their forces will be in a position to conduct an effective pursuit. This is a flawed assumption because history and theory demonstrate that commanders must anticipate and plan for the possibility of pursuit. Pursuits do not just happen. Like any other military operation they require planning.

The US Army does not teach pursuit with any detail in its education system. Normally instruction only briefly covers pursuit as one of the forms of tactical offense and what the difference is between an exploitation and a pursuit. For example, students spent less than five minutes in both the Tactics and Advanced Tactics courses during the 1992-93 Class of the Command and General Staff College discussing pursuit operations. They devoted no time examining pursuit and what it entails in terms of planning and execution. Pursuits do not currently receive attention as to the value

they can provide in military operations. This is caused by a lack of understanding of theory and history and how pursuit can successfully be applied by a commander to gain quick, decisive victory.<sup>76</sup>

Though pursuit is a task, none of the US corps or divisions currently see it as a Mission Essential Task. Pursuit is not seen as critical to their success on the battlefield in accomplishing their wartime mission. Based on the analysis of numerous BCTP and NTC rotations over the past few years, US Army units continue to experience the same problems of the past: successfully completing basic offensive and defensive missions. Due to personnel turbulence and unit turnover, units must focus their training efforts on the basics. Units simply are not required in training to execute pursuit missions nor do they plan for their execution.

A related factor to the failure to plan for future operations like pursuits, is found in the conduct of training exercises. When units go through a CTC rotation they develop a set of training objectives based on certain tasks. They only train on those tasks. In addition a training exercise normally only last for a set amount of time. Units know when the exercise is scheduled to end. They only plan until the end of the exercise, not to the end of the war. Finally, because of the NTC experience and the focus on the After Action Review (AAR), the battle stops at the end of the close fight so the participants can learn from their mistakes. This tendency to artificially stop the fight normally at the moment when pursuit would become a possible option, conditions the US Army to think AAR at the end of a fight, instead of continuing the fight with a pursuit in search of a greater victory. Units know that they will receive a change of mission and then conduct an AAR.<sup>77</sup>

## **VI. CHANGES TO DOCTRINE AND TRAINING**

Pursuit can be a crucial tool for the commander in his repertoire as he searches for a means to achieve the expected and required quick decisive victory stated by our National Military Strategy. To accomplish this the US Army must first rethink and rewrite its doctrine on pursuit. This requires a modification of how the US Army thinks about offensive operations. The doctrine needs to recognize how the incorporation of pursuit into offensive operations can increase the value of victory as discussed in theory. The value of the victory gained through pursuit needs to include Clausewitz's argument of moral and physical strength. Pursuit focuses on the destruction of both these strengths. The losses in one directly if not exponentially increases the losses in the other during a pursuit. During a pursuit the attacker keeps relentless pressure on his enemy to hasten his losses. From the pressure and compounding losses the attacker soon completes the destruction of his enemy. Ultimately the attacker rapidly gains a more complete victory against his foe in much less time and expense than a methodical deliberate attack.

US Army doctrine lacks emphasis on how one achieves and maintains tempo with its examination of pursuit. Tempo is created by controlling or altering the rate of military action through the use of initiative.<sup>78</sup> This involves acquiring and maintaining the initiative from the enemy. By doing this US forces then control the tempo of the battles by forcing the enemy to react. In turn this keeps the enemy off balance and allows the US force to dictate and take advantage of the conditions of battle. Pursuit serves this purpose as it can keep a relentless pressure on the enemy.

With a pursuit properly executed, normally within a short period of time, the pursuer can complete the destruction of the enemy.

The rewritten doctrine also needs to include a coherent discussion on how to conduct a successful pursuit. This discussion needs to become more detailed as it flows from the conceptual level at the operational level of FM 100-5 to the units who actually would conduct the pursuit. Details that need to be examined at all levels include how to plan the pursuit; how to synchronize the components of the pursuit to maintain a mobility advantage; how the commander commands and controls; what is required with sustainment; and how the other elements of the BOS interact for a successful pursuit.

Pursuit is a difficult operation, but it can provide a great benefit in certain situations. Though a difficult operation, some of the difficulty can be overcome through training. A key aspect of the training equation involves planning. Commanders and planners need to start the planning process from the desired end state and then backwards plan. With this planners should start with the end state and then work back through the pursuit stage, back to the attack, and so forth until the start point. Through this process the commander and planners can anticipate and develop tentative plans with branches and sequels. These could then include pursuits and the conditions necessary for their success. They should use the BOS standards outlined in the Corps and Division MTP's as planning guides. By doing this commanders would have a plan for pursuit to use when the conditions are right.

Most operations at battalion task force and even at the brigade level follow standard procedures with little variation. By developing a standard pursuit plan units can make these operations even easier to execute when



there is not sufficient time for the deliberate planning process, but the opportunity for a pursuit presents itself. A plan for a pursuit at the very least should include how the unit intends to conduct the operation and the basic tasks for subordinate units. The BOS provides a format to work through and address the various issues.

Three critical components of the plan would involve the task organization, command and control and sustainment. Determining the proper task organization is a crucial part of developing a course of action. It must answer what is the proper mix of forces necessary to maintain the mobility advantage and destroy the enemy. With today's technology and equipment a unit conducting a pursuit can rapidly cover a large distance. The unit must think through how it will control this operation over vast distances. Perhaps even more critical for the success of a pursuit is sustainment. Current heavy units require a large logistical tail to provide the needed support. The fuel requirements will be immense if the pursuit involves M1A1 tanks. Currently, each tank carries enough fuel for eight to ten hours of combat operations. After that they must be refueled. The pursuit can rapidly grind to a halt if there is not a plan and aggressive action taken to maintain logistical support.

A real strength of training in the US Army is its extensive officer education system. As the Army's senior tactical level school the Command and General Staff College should include pursuit in its curriculum. The school could use theory and history as a tool to show successful and unsuccessful pursuits from the past and then discuss how pursuit can aid future operations. Also the schools can incorporate the revised doctrine and provide a low threat forum for students to plan and execute pursuits as part of their tactics instruction. By implementing these changes the officer has

another tool in his inventory when he goes out to a unit to plan and conduct tactical operations.

Once units understand the importance of pursuit to accomplishing their war time mission, they should include pursuit as a task on their METL. By having it on their METL the units will then allocate the required resources to train and practice on pursuit during their training exercises to include CTC rotations.

At the CTC's units should execute tactical pursuits. By doing this they can then work through the difficulties of planning and then executing a pursuit. Theory and history both show the opportunities for launching a pursuit are fleeting and time sensitive. Thus units need to work through and practice the time distance factors necessary to launch and sustain a pursuit.

Furthermore, units can develop training with the proper task organization combination to conduct and succeed with a pursuit. Does their current task organization support pursuit operations? Theory and history reveal that successful pursuits require forces that have and maintain a mobility advantage over their retreating foe. If the unit's task organization does not work as well as it should, modifications need to be made to conduct pursuits. The commander must arrange the proper mix of forces to achieve the synergistic effect required for victory. Three critical issues involve combined arms, command and control, and sustainment. He should position his engineer assets forward to overcome obstacles and keep the force moving. The unit needs to have the proper assets and equipment for the commander to control and sustain a pursuit. For a commander to control a pursuit he needs a communication package that allows him to talk with both his subordinate elements and his commander. Also, based on his

force composition he needs sufficient logistical assets to provide uninterrupted support to his forces until he has accomplished his mission.

Finally, training exercises could focus on setting the conditions for the pursuit and then conducting the pursuit. Within these training exercises, play should not automatically stop at the end of the close fight for an AAR and then a change of mission. Instead units should train to continue the fight, anticipate follow-on operations, and take advantage of the conditions for a pursuit. For example at the NTC a brigade could attack a disorganized, retreating enemy and then transition into a pursuit as the conditions emerge. Through training experiences such as this, units can learn both the inherent difficulties in conducting a pursuit and the tremendous advantages that a pursuit can bring to achieving a greater victory. AAR's still must take place, but they must not interrupt the flow of the operation or teach bad lessons.

The last aspect of training involves the development of the US Army's leaders. Theory and history both repeatedly demonstrate that successful pursuits require bold, aggressive leaders who are willing to take risks and look to the future in search of that greater victory. Audacious leaders such as O'Conner, Patton, and Rommel looked past the current battle to the future to lead successful pursuits to decisive victories, while others such as Meade and Montgomery let the opportunity and their enemy slip through their fingers to fight again. Both in the school house and in the field the US Army needs to train, develop, and support those leaders who are willing to take the initiative and go after the enemy. The US Army needs to recognize at times, because of the risks they take, aggressive leaders will make occasional mistakes. These mistakes must be tolerated in

peacetime training if the Army wants to continue having audacious, risk taking leaders as it confronts the uncertainty of the current world.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

Today the United States confronts an uncertain world. It no longer has one main enemy and a military force structured to confront that foe. Instead, the United States must be prepared to deal with a multitude of possible threats as its military continues to downsize. As a result of its success with Operations Just Cause in Panama and Desert Shield/Storm in Southwest Asia the American people expect that the US military will quickly win any future conflict with minimal casualties. The current strategic military and US Army operational level doctrine recognizes this and sets the requirement for a quick, decisive victory.

Clauseswitz in his examination of pursuit in **On War** offers a theoretical foundation which demonstrates how pursuits provide a means to achieve a greater and more timely victory. History provides support for the validity of this theory of pursuit and builds on the foundation. General O'Conner with his XIII Corps in the Western Desert in WW II and Task Force 777 in the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter during the Korean War both demonstrate how a relentless pursuit can greatly hasten and increase the value of a victory. In addition to the components brought out in theory, history offers some additional critical attributes to a successful pursuit. Current US Army doctrine recognizes some of these theoretical and historical foundations. However, there still exists some critical omissions in the tactical level doctrine. Finally, the current failure of the US Army to

conduct pursuit operations at the tactical level impacts even more negatively than the doctrinal deficiencies on the ability of the US Army to conduct pursuits in the near future.

Thus, this study shows that both theory and history provide for the utility of pursuit for the US Army in seeking a quick, decisive victory on the battlefield of the future. However, before the US Army will be able to gain quick, decisive victories in the future through executing pursuit operations, changes will have to take place with both doctrine and training. Doctrine needs to be rewritten to recognize the benefits that can be gained through pursuit. The US Army then will have to execute the new doctrine in training so that leaders and units can truly understand its value. Only then will pursuit be accepted as a viable means to achieving quick, decisive victory on the battlefield.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>David G. Chandler, **The Campaigns of Napoleon** (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1966), 497.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 502.

<sup>3</sup>Carl Von Clausewitz, **ON WAR**, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 263.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Army, **FM 100-5, OPERATIONS** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1993), iv.

<sup>5</sup>Katherine McIntire, "Cuts called too deep" **Army Times**, 8 November 1993: 3&10. This article discusses the personnel cuts and possible implications for the US Army in light of the Defense Department's Bottom-Up Review.

<sup>6</sup>Clausewitz, 225.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 259.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 227.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, 231.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 227.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 231.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 238.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 263.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 267.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, 268.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 230-231.

<sup>17</sup>Barrie Pitt, **The Crucible of War, Western Desert 1941** (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 190.

<sup>18</sup>Kenneth Macksey, **Beda Fomm the Classic Victory** (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 59.

<sup>19</sup>George Forty, **THE FIRST VICTORY General O'Conner's Desert Triumph** (Kent: The Nutshell Publishing Co Ltd, 1990), 116.

<sup>20</sup>Williamson Murray, "British Military Effectiveness in the Second World War", **Military Effectiveness, Volume III, The Second World War** edited by Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray (Winchester, Mass.: UNWIN HYMAN, Inc., 1988), 111.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, 151-168.

<sup>22</sup>Correlli Barnett, **The Desert Generals** (London: Pan Books, 1960), 53.

<sup>23</sup>John Baynes, **The Forgotten Victor** (London: Brassey' (UK) Ltd, 1989), 113-114.

<sup>24</sup>Pitt, 184-85.

<sup>25</sup>Barnett, 53.

<sup>26</sup>Macksey, 142+148 and Pitt 172-193.

<sup>27</sup>Robert Deds Heinl, Jr. **Victory At High Tide** (New York: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1968), 19.

<sup>28</sup>Clay Blair, **THE FORGOTTEN WAR America in Korea 1950-1953** (New York: Times Books, 1987), 309.

<sup>29</sup>Roy E. Appleman, **South To The Naktong, North To The Yalu** (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1961), 590.

<sup>30</sup>US Army, **The 1st Cavalry Division in Korea** (Atlanta, Ga: Albert Love Enterprises), 53.

<sup>31</sup>Appleman, 591

<sup>32</sup>Blair, 313.

<sup>33</sup>Appleman, 592.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>US Army, **The 1st Cavalry Division in Korea**, 59.

<sup>36</sup>Blair, 315-6.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, 598.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, 604.

<sup>39</sup>Russel F. Weigley, **THE AGE OF BATTLES The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo** (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), xv.

<sup>40</sup>John Sloan Brown, **DRAFTEE DIVISION The 88th Infantry Division in World War II** (Lexington Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 124.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, 111.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid, 127.

<sup>43</sup>US Army, **FM 100-5 Operations** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1993), Glossary-3

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, v.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid, iv. This concept of quick, decisive victory occurs at least four times in **FM 100-5** before the end of the first chapter(iv, 1-1,1-3, and 1-5).

<sup>46</sup>Colin L. Powell, **The National Military Strategy of the United States** (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1992), 10. The NMS raises the importance of this concept on both page 10 and 15.

<sup>47</sup>US Army, **FM 100-5**, 1-5.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid, 7-9.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Clausewitz, 263 and **FM 100-5**, 7-9.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, 5-8.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid, 5-8.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.



<sup>54</sup>US Army, **G1/G4 Battle Book** (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 2-3.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>US Army, **FM 71-100 Division Operations** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), i.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid, 4-28.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, 4-29.

<sup>60</sup>US Army, **FM 71-3 Armored And Mechanized Infantry Brigade** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1988), ii.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, 3-27.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid, 3-63.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid, 3-63.

<sup>67</sup>US Army, **FM 25-100 Training The Force** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1988), 1-7.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid, 2-1 through 2-3.

<sup>69</sup>US Army, **ARTEP 100-15 Mission Training Plan Corps Command Group and Staff** (Final Draft)(Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), 3-2. and **ARTEP 71-100 Mission Training Plan Division Command Group and Staff**(Final Draft)(Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), 3-3.

<sup>70</sup>Author conducted a series of phone conversations with the G-3 Shops of the US Corps and heavy Divisions to check if pursuit was one of their METL tasks. None of the CONUS based Corps or heavy Divisions have pursuit as one of their METL tasks.

<sup>71</sup>US Army, **FM 25-101 Battle Focused Training** (Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), D-2.

<sup>72</sup>US Army, **1993 BCTP Perceptions** (Ft Leavenworth: Department of the Army, 1993). Author also conducted interview with LTC Wolfe, BCTP Team B Chief, on 27 September 1993 regarding the recent conduct of pursuit during BCTP rotations. LTC Wolfe said that pursuit was not planned or conducted.

<sup>73</sup>US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, **NTC 1st, 2nd, and 3d Quarter Trends, FY 93** (Ft Leavenworth: Department of the Army, 1993). Author also discussed the issue of pursuit at NTC with CPT Jucks and other analysts at CALL on 28 September 1993.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid, 12.

<sup>75</sup>**FM 100-5**, 7-9.

<sup>76</sup>The author's experience while attending the US Army's Command and General Staff College during 1992-93.

<sup>77</sup>Robert R. Leonhard, **THE ART OF MANEUVER Maneuver-Warfare Theory and AirLand Battle** (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1991), 282.

<sup>78</sup>**FM 100-5**, Glossary-9.

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