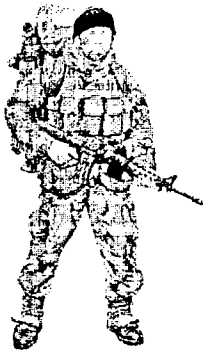

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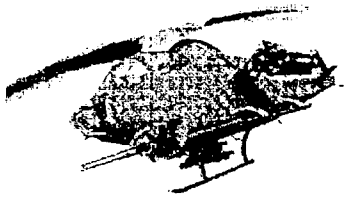

MANEUVER WARFARE IN A JOINT ENVIRONMENT

by
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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Maritime Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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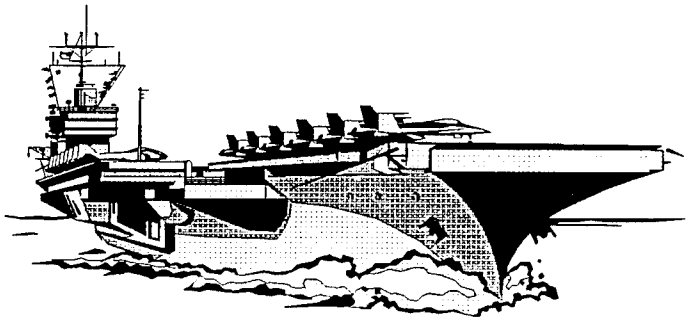

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15. Abstract: The Naval Service and the Army both use maneuver warfare as their doctrine. However, by looking at three terms--Center of Gravity, Critical Vulnerability, and Synchronization--which are instrumental to their respective versions of maneuver warfare, it can be seen that there are some major differences in the way maneuver warfare is viewed. These differences are highlighted when we view how each Service applies its version of maneuver warfare on the battlefield. A historical example demonstrates the disparity between the Services. What is critical and must be addressed is that when the Services operate in a Joint environment these differences can have, and have had a detrimental effect. The seemingly simple answer is to have all Services operate using one doctrine published by the JCS. However, that runs counter to the U.S. military organization, the way it is organized to train and fight in satisfaction of the roles, functions, and missions assigned to each service. Another answer would be for increased emphasis on Joint training at the operational and tactical level. This would allow each service to come to a better understanding on how each Service fights (techniques and procedures) and thinks about fighting (philosophy).

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Abstract of

MANEUVER WARFARE IN A JOINT ENVIRONMENT

The Naval Service and the Army both use maneuver warfare as their doctrine. However, by looking at three terms-- Center of Gravity, Critical Vulnerability, and Synchronization,-- which are instrumental to their respective versions of maneuver warfare, it can be seen that there are some major differences in the way maneuver warfare is viewed. These differences are highlighted when we view how each Service applies its version of maneuver warfare on the battlefield. A historical example demonstrates the disparity between the Services. What is critical and must be addressed it that when the Services operate in a joint environment these differences can have, and have had a detrimental effect. The seemingly simple answer is to have all Services operate using one doctrine published by the JCS. However, that runs counter to the U.S. military organization, the way it is organized to train and fight in satisfaction of the roles, functions and missions assigned to each Service. Another answer would be for an increased emphasis on joint training at the operational and tactical level. This would allow each Service to come to a better understanding on how each Service fights (techniques and procedures) and thinks about fighting (philosophy).

With the signing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the Armed Forces of the United States were required to operate together. Gone were the days when each Service operated independently of the other; from then on, the U.S. military would have to fight as one cohesive organization. The U.S. warfighting doctrine therefore calls for and requires Joint operations. Given the high cost of waging war in today's restrictive economic environment there is little argument that Joint operations make sense in terms of resource utilization.

But does it work? *Can* it work? Namely, can the military, in a Joint environment, effectively operate together using each of the Services' distinct warfighting doctrines? This question must be addressed and resolved, especially in terms of the effectiveness of today's Joint operations in the area of the maneuver warfare doctrine.

> "Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope."[1]

Maneuver warfare has become the doctrine of choice for both the Naval Services and the Army. At first glance this would seem to resolve the issue of a Joint doctrine encompassing each Service's doctrine. Unfortunately, maneuver warfare means different things to the different Services. The disparity in how

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[1] FMFM 1, Warfighting (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters USMC, March 1989), p. 59.

each Service defines salient terms like center of gravity, synchronization, and critical vulnerability, is relatively minor. However, these differences could lead to huge discrepancies in the *application* of those terms and in the way each service organizes, trains and ultimately fights, not to mention the effect on Joint operations in general. The armed forces must either develop a common application for maneuver warfare doctrine or--at a minimum--understand how each service plans to apply the concepts of maneuver warfare for the doctrine to be effective in the Joint environment.

A recent example of the problems associated with different applications of doctrine on the battlefield is the ground combat portion of the Persian Gulf War. In the closing hours of the Gulf War, General Schwartzkopf (CINCCENT) was sure he had the Republican Guard cut off. This was not the case. Some believe this misperception occurred because of the different ways the Marine Corps and the Army execute maneuver warfare. Ground combat operations during Desert Storm thus highlight the two divergent paths taken in the application of the maneuver warfare doctrine.

This analysis will look at two units--the Army VII Corps commanded by Lieutenant General Franks and the USMC, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) commanded by Lieutenant General Boomer. General Schwartzkopf's plan during the ground offensive phase of Desert Storm, called for I MEF to conduct a supporting attack for

the VII Corps' "Hail Mary" main effort force--a three-division punch against Iraq's Republican Guard.

The MEF's mission as the supporting effort was to attack into the strength of the Iraqi defenses--the trench lines and minefields--consisting of "11 Iraqi Divisions"[2]. This mission's objective was Kuwait city. LtGen. Boomer determined *high tempo*, violence of action, decentralized control and a focus on the MEF's objective to be paramount. He willingly took some risks by placing units well forward prior to the start of the ground war (G-Day). He positioned several units of battalion and regimental size at least 15 kilometers inside Kuwait three days prior to G-Day. LtGen. Boomer also choose to bypass enemy units which had lost effectiveness or could be destroyed by follow-on units. The MEF commander, using the Marine concept of maneuver warfare:

> "sought out areas of least resistance, and slithered through the Iraqi forces in front of them like water flowing downhill. They quickly turned the southern front into a route."[3]

Because of the success I MEF achieved, General Schwartzkopf directed VII Corps to move into the attack 15 hours earlier than planned. LtGen Franks began his movement, gauging his tempo and attempting to synchronize his Corps for the three-division punch against the Republican Guard. LtGen Franks remained focused on the initial plan of attack--a plan that anticipated a determined

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[2] U.S. Dept. of Defense, Conduct of the Persian War (Washington, D.C.: April 1992), p. 316.

[3] James Burton, "Pushing Them Out the Backdoor," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1993, p. 39.

enemy. It soon became clear that in his effort to synchronize movement--coupled with the large distance VII Corps had to cover--LtGen Frank's VII Corps could not match the tempo of I MEF. In fact at one point, LtGen. Franks wanted to change his direction of attack to head south to take on Iraqis on his right flank.[4] (It took General Schwartzkopf explicitly directing him to continue toward his main objective to compel him forward. CINCCENT told him to task the British 1st Armored Division with protecting his southern right flank.[5]) VII Corps' slow progress frustrated CINCCENT and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Powell.[6]

The differences in the application of maneuver warfare can be clearly seen by how events unfolded and their impact on the plan as the ground war progressed. One main aggravating factor was the VII Corps' unwillingness to abandon a plan or timetable that was no longer relevant. The *tempo* of the operation had changed--it had sped up--but LtGen. Franks, in an effort to maintain *synchronization* and keep his three-division punch together was unable or unwilling to adapt to the chaotic faster *tempo* environment.[7]

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[4] H. Norman Schwartzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero (New York: Bantam, 1992), p. 456,457,463; Burton, pp. 37-42.

[5] Schwartzkopf, pp. 463-464.

[6] Ibid., p. 463.

[7] Much has been written about LtGen. Franks actions during the ground portion of the Gulf War. For an argument/counterargument account read U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings articles from September, 1993 to December, 1993.

This battlefield example gets directly to the heart of the challenge to conducting Joint operations, and demonstrates the potential for problems in the future. Both LtGen. Franks and LtGen. Boomer received their mission simultaneously and both understood what the other was doing in order to accomplish the operational objective. However, these commanders, each using *maneuver warfare doctrine,* conducted their mission significantly different with almost disastrous consequences. Indeed some would argue the consequences *were* indeed disastrous in that a large portion of the Republican Guard escaped and had the opportunity to re-establish itself as a potent force.

Neither this example--nor this entire analysis--is meant in anyway to cast dispersions upon the Army's application of maneuver warfare. Rather, it is meant to highlight the significant differences in the two approaches and point to out that these differences--unless resolved--can and will have a negative effect on operational warfighting in the Joint environment.

In light of the Desert Storm example, some basic questions arise concerning Joint operations. Specifically, what is the purpose of Joint doctrine and where does it come from?

Joint doctrine provides "military guidance for the exercise of authority by combatant commanders and other joint force commanders and prescribe(s) doctrine for joint operations and training."[8] Joint doctrine should enhance the warfighting

capability for the country's Armed Forces. It "is authoritative in nature and will be followed."[9] During a recent lecture at the Naval War College, Colonel Tackaberry, USA, of the J-7 Operational Plans and Interoperability Directorate said in reference to doctrine: "It is the play-book by which our team develops the game plan and practices--commanders can audible at the line of scrimmage if/as necessary." He also said, "It must define the way we train and fight, and must be universally practiced."

A brief, simplified look at the doctrine development process will help clarify how the military develops doctrine. Currently, the Chairman of the JCS tasks each Service with producing the Joint doctrinal publications pertaining to its primary role and function. The Marine Corps writes Joint doctrine concerning amphibious operations, while the Army produces Joint doctrine for land operations. These doctrinal publications are not written in a vacuum but are in fact routed at least twice to each Service for its input before being signed by the Chairman. It is understood, however, that when a particular Service writes a doctrinal publication, it relies on its own institutional experience in the development process. Service culture, history, and tradition become part of this process in an intangible way.

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[8] Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations. (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 September 1993), p. v.

[9] DJS Memo to chiefs and CINCs, 25 November 1994.

The Marine Corps, being expeditionary in nature, prefers a dynamic, flexible, decentralized approach. Its doctrine is more of a philosophical approach to how to *think* about fighting a war. This can be seen in the way the Corps operates and the type of units it deploys. The Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF), is *task organized* to accomplish the mission assigned, and may vary in size from a Special Purpose MAGTF, to a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and ultimately to a MEF. Since the Marine Corps is expeditionary, it is closely linked with its sister Service the Navy and her ships. The Corps' traditional amphibious role dictates the equipment used be light enough to be brought ashore with relative ease. The Marine Corps' small size and the need to establish itself ashore quickly and redeploy on board ship rapidly is one of the primary requirements driving the type of doctrine developed.

On the other hand, the Army focuses on fighting a protracted land war. The soldier's battleground is inland and in fact the Army is "the only national contingency force capable of achieving land dominance"[10]. Therefore, the Army is much heavier in terms of equipment and size because of the role it plays. As a result, the doctrine the Army develops is more of *"authoritative guide to how Army forces fight."*[11] It is based on five tenets: initiative, agility, depth, synchronization, and versatility.

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[10] FM 100-5, Operations. (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, June 1993), p. vi.

[11] Ibid. p. v.

Bringing the Services' distinct approaches to warfighting into one cohesive doctrine becomes even more challenging if the Services are using the same terms to mean different things. A look at several of what the Services consider *foundational terms* reveals this is the case in regards to maneuver warfare. The three terms in question are Center of Gravity, Synchronization, and Critical Vulnerability. (It should be noted that the Army does not use Critical Vulnerability in terms of Center of Gravity, while the Marine Corps does not use the term Synchronization in its doctrine.)

- Center of Gravity:

  - **Joint:** "Those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight."[12]

  - **Army:** "The hub of all power and movement upon which everything depends; that characteristic, capability, or location from which enemy and friendly forces derive their freedom of action, physical strength, or the will to fight."[13]

  - **USMC**[14]: "Applying the term to modern warfare, we must make it clear that by the enemy's center of gravity we do not mean a source of strength but rather a critical vulnerability."[15]

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[12] Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (Washington, D.C.: Joints Chiefs of Staff, 23 March 1994), p. 63.

[13] FM 100-5, p. Glossary-1.

[14] Although the Marine Corps' and Navy's definitions seem incongruent, they are similar in the way they are applied. The Navy looks for a Critical Vulnerability to attack.

[15] FMFM 1, p. 85.

- **Navy:** "That characteristic, capability, or location from which enemy and friendly forces derive their freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight."[16]

It is understood in operational studies that the main effort is directed against the enemy's Center of Gravity (COG). However, in a Joint environment the COG may be identified differently by the Naval Service and the Army. Additionally, the manner in which the COG is attacked may also be different depending on the Service. In a Joint environment, the main effort may well be directed at a critical vulnerability which will expose the COG and allowing an attack on the COG. This method of attack views a critical vulnerability as a means to an end. The Naval Service, on the other hand, sees attacking the critical vulnerability as an end in itself. If the critical vulnerability is destroyed, the enemy will no longer be able to fight in an organized manner which will ultimately lead to his defeat.

- Critical Vulnerability:

  - **Joint:** Not defined specifically. Vulnerability: "The susceptibility of a nation or military force to any action by any means through which its war potential or combat effectiveness may be reduce or its will to fight diminished"[17] or "The characteristics of a system which cause it to suffer a definite degradation (incapability to perform the designated mission) as a result of having been subjected to a certain level of effects in an unnatural (manmade) hostile environment."[18]

  - **Army:** Not defined.

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[16] NDP 1, Naval Warfare, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 28 March 1994), p. 72.
[17] JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, p. 408.
[18] Ibid.

- **Naval:** "We define critical vulnerabilities by the central role they play in maintaining or supporting the enemy's center of gravity and, ultimately, his ability to resist."[19]

For the Naval Service this *is* the COG; this is what it looks for in defeating the enemy. The Critical Vulnerability may be any number of things, e.g. C3 nodes, logistics bases, lines of communication, supporting establishments or the enemy force. It is what will cause the greatest damage to the enemy's ability to fight in a cohesive manner.

- Synchronization:

  - **Joint:** "The arrangement of military action in time, space, and purpose to productive relative combat power at a decisive place and time" or "In the intelligence context, application of intelligence sources and methods in concert with the operational plan."[20]

  - **Army:** "The ability to focus resources and activities in time and space to produce the maximum relative combat power at the decisive point.[21]

  - **Naval:** Not defined specifically. Sequencing: "Given a strategic aim not attainable by a single tactical action in a single place and time, we design a campaign comprising several related phases sequenced over time to achieve that aim.[22]

The Army emphasizes synchronization as one of its tenets (along with initiative, agility, depth, and versatility) and places great importance on its impact on the battlefield. In addition to the definition already cited, synchronization is further defined as "arranging activities in time and space to

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[19] NDP 1, p.37.
[20] JCS, Joint Pub 1-02. p 371.
[21] FM 100-5, p. Glossary-8.
[22] FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, (Washington, D.C. Headquarters USMC, 25 January 1990), p. 41.

mass at the decisive point."[23] The implication here is that in order to bring all forces to bear on the enemy at one time, the commander must control all units at all times so that he knows what they are doing and can direct them as desired. The Army's doctrine also calls for initiative, but is put in the context of synchronization as a solution to inaction. "At the same time, decentralization risks some loss of synchronization. Commanders constantly balance these competing risks, recognizing that loss of immediate control is preferable to inaction."[24] Synchronization, then, becomes the Army's approach to bringing its strength to bear on the enemy's COG.

Joint doctrine's application of maneuver warfare is similar to Army doctrine in many respects, which--as previously explained--is not surprising since the Army wrote it. The emphasis is on control, and in fact it tries to achieve this control through the commander's application of synchronization. Specifically:

> "overarching operational concept in Joint Pub 1 is that Joint Force Commanders synchronize the action of air, land, sea, space, and special operations forces to achieve strategic and operational objectives through integrated, Joint campaigns."[25]

In other words, the commander decides when to bring forces into theater and how, when and where to use those forces to

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[23] FM 100-5, p. 2-8.
[24] Ibid., p. 2-6.
[25] CM-1502-92, A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts, (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chief of Staff 23 November 1992), p. 2.

achieve a decision. However, it emphasizes control when it explains what he should do with those forces: "The Joint Force Commander's task is to integrate the available capabilities and synchronize their application to achieve the assigned objective."[26] This appears to mean that the Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander will carefully synchronize the forces he is responsible for in order to strike the enemy, and that this orchestrated movement needs to be controlled and timed in order to have maximum effect.

A cursory review of these definitions shows that although both the Naval Services and the Army espouse maneuver warfare, what that agreement means in terms of application of doctrine to each service is very different. Indeed, the difference in focus between the Army and Joint doctrine and the Naval Services in terms of how maneuver warfare is carried out on the battlefield is a contrast between a dogma and a philosophy.

The Naval Service's view of maneuver warfare is a philosophy. This philosophy emphasizes that the commander--particularly at the tactical and operational level--must be able to operate in a rapidly changing environment if he is to be successful. It also believes initiative at the lowest level is required, and is not just as a solution for inaction. The USMC view of maneuver warfare is aligned with this philosophy. The Marine Corps further amplifies that the

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[26] Ibid., p. 3.

> "aim in maneuver warfare is to render the enemy incapable of resisting by shattering his moral and physical cohesion--his ability to fight as an effective, coordinated whole--rather than to destroy him physically through incremental attrition."[27]

The Marine Corps' command philosophy that "war is a human enterprise and no amount of technology can reduce the human dimension." It is "based on human characteristic rather than on equipment or procedures."[28]

The USMC sees the battlefield as chaotic and uses the commander's statement of intent as the way to work through the chaos to keep the effort focused and working toward the objective. "Effective commanders at all levels neither expect nor attempt to control every action of their subordinates. Nor do they profess to foresee or attempt to plan for each contingency."[29] In the Naval Service, commanders give subordinates direction--communicating to them, through the use of the commander's intent, what the commander is trying to do to the enemy and what he wants the battlefield to look like when the fight is over:

> "To shape the battle, we must project our thoughts forward in time and apace. This does not mean that we establish a detailed timetable of events...and we cannot expect to shape its terms with any sort of precision. We must not become slaves to a plan."[30]

It becomes clear that although both the Naval Service and the Army espouse maneuver warfare as doctrine, the way each

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[27] FMFM-1, p. 65.
[28] FMFM-1, p. 62.
[29] NDP 1, p. 39.
[30] FMFM-1, p. 66.

defines foundational terms and applies them on the battlefield is different. In a Joint environment, these differences greatly inhibit the success of Joint military operations.

A difference then clearly exists. The question then becomes: Is the difference really that important? Does it really matter? Although the forces operate in a Joint command, the Services are still distinct and each has its own capabilities and mission, so why not let each service operate the way they want to and accomplish their mission according to their own doctrine?

The escalation in the importance of the Joint Command itself answers this question loud and clear. Each service has become but one part of the military body; each part must work in concert with the others for the body to be healthy, strong, and competent--able to exert its force on others. An examination of any recent military action (e.g. Haiti and Somalia) attests to this fact. There can be no doubt, then, that--given the Joint environment--a common understanding of warfighting doctrine and its application among the Services is nothing short of critical to the success of Joint operations.

What must be done about the different approaches to maneuver warfare doctrine? Given the complexity of the problem, there are no "quick and easy" solutions; however, three courses of action may be taken in response to the problem:

1. Direct each service to adhere to the specifics of Joint doctrine as defined in the Joint publications. (This is in fact

what the Chairman has done with his 25 November 1994 memorandum.) This approach tends to disregard aspects, both tangible (in terms of roles, functions, and missions) and intangible (i.e. service culture), that have driven the doctrine development process in each of the Services. As we have seen, each Service interprets maneuver warfare doctrine based upon its function, its role, its composition, and its culture. By forcing either generic doctrine on each Service or using one of the other Service's as the basis tends to ignore how and why the doctrine was originally developed.

2. Allow each of the Services to continue with its own doctrinal development but--in the interest of jointness and interoperability--require the Services to conduct Joint training exercises even more than at present. These exercises would be mandated to take place not just at the operational level but also at the tactical level. A perfect example of this type of Joint training is conducted at the Jungle Operations Training Center in Panama. There, U.S. Army instructors train visiting units in jungle operations. Following a prescribed training syllabus, there is a force-on-force free play exercise between a U.S. Army unit stationed in Panama and the visiting unit. In this manner, not only is instruction given, but each organization sees how the other fights. This allows an understanding of how each other operates and more importantly it provides insight into how the other *thinks* about operating and fighting.

3. Maintain the status quo. This is a course of action but definitely not a solution to the problem of the different applications of maneuver warfare doctrine.

Joint is "in." But does it work? *Can* it work? The answer is: not effectively, as the situation exists today. Today when a soldier attacks the center of gravity, he will attack it differently than a Marine or a Sailor. Today, if the JTF Commander starts talking about utilizing synchronization, the soldier will start controlling his forces in order to bring them to bear at a specific point and time for a decisive battle. The Marine or the Sailor, on the other hand, will use his commander's intent with decentralized operations--emphasizing proactive initiative at the lowest level--and fight at a *high tempo* in such a manner as to shatter the enemy's cohesion.

It simply is no longer enough--as seen with the Desert Storm example--that each Service know the other Services' capabilities. They must know how they operate, how they *think* about fighting and have a solid understanding of the other Services' application of terms. The Joint Command must be able to bring the distinct Service doctrines into one cohesive application on the battlefield to achieve true success in Joint operations.

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