

# CHAPTER 4

## THE CONDUCT OF LAND WARFARE

### What is the Army's warfighting philosophy?

*Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.*

Sun Tzu

### INTRODUCTION

The Army's warfighting philosophy is derived from multiple sources, including its understanding of the national character, the nature and history of warfare, the utility of land forces and their role in national military strategy. It also takes account of the nature of future conflict, the resources likely to be assigned, and the expectations of the Australian people. This warfighting philosophy must ensure that the Army retains strategic relevance while maintaining tactical superiority.<sup>1</sup> To this end, the Army has embraced a warfighting philosophy termed the *manoeuvrist approach*. The manoeuvrist approach seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of actions orchestrated to a single purpose, creating a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope. The manoeuvrist approach focuses commanders at every level on exploiting enemy weaknesses, avoiding enemy strengths and protecting friendly vulnerabilities. At all times, the commander is seeking to undermine the enemy's centre of gravity.

1. *Tactical superiority* refers to the Army's ability to successfully conduct operations against numerically similar land forces.

## BASIS OF THE MANOEUVRIST APPROACH

The manoeuvrist approach is based on *manoeuvre theory*, which is a way of thinking about warfare rather than a particular set of tactics or techniques, and its essence is defeating the enemy's *will* to fight rather than his *ability* to fight. Manoeuvre theory emphasises the centrality of the human element in warfare. It relies on speed, deception, surprise, and the application of firepower and movement. The fundamental tenets of manoeuvre theory concentrate on applying strength against weakness; recognising and exploiting war's inherent characteristics of friction, danger, uncertainty and chaos; and focusing friendly planning on defeating the enemy plan rather than defeating the enemy forces.

Importantly, manoeuvre theory regards war as a competition based in time and space rather than on spatial position alone in which the ability to maintain a higher tempo of operations relative to the enemy's creates opportunities for defeating the enemy's centre of gravity. Manoeuvre theory is based on a profound understanding of the enemy, and particularly how the enemy's perceived strengths can be undermined. The theory also assumes a detailed knowledge of friendly forces, and the neutral or non-combatant parties within and outside the battlespace.

While the manoeuvrist approach seeks to conserve friendly resources wherever possible, this philosophy still accepts *close combat* as an essential characteristic of land warfare. Close combat involves the ability to find, close with and destroy an enemy. This ability is essential because posing or threatening to use force has little meaning without the capability to act.

The manoeuvrist approach is applicable at all levels of command:

- ***Strategic Level.*** Strategic manoeuvre incorporates the coordinated application of all elements of national power in support of national strategic objectives. Consequently, *military* strategic manoeuvre uses military forces as part of military strategy. Military strategic manoeuvre positions a nation's fighting forces for operational and tactical success and creates the strategic conditions for that success. For a country whose resources are limited, effective strategic manoeuvre is vital. Examples of successful military strategic manoeuvre include the Israeli strike against Iraqi nuclear capabilities in 1981; British military diplomacy to isolate Argentina during the Falklands conflict in 1982; and the United States mobilisation, deployment and sustainment of forces during the Gulf War in 1991.

- **Operational Level.** Operational manoeuvre places forces, including their administrative support, in a favourable position relative to the enemy. Operational manoeuvre occurs within a theatre of operations or campaign and is likely to require coordinated offensive, defensive and deception actions to position forces for decisive engagement. The use of information operations opens up new possibilities for the application of operational manoeuvre. When used pre-emptively, or with surprise, operational manoeuvre may lead to a decision without battle. Australia's geo-strategic characteristics dictate a heavy reliance by the Army on the Navy and Air Force for mobility, information, fire-power and logistic support. The Australian landings at Lae-Salamaua in World War II, [General Douglas MacArthur's](#) amphibious lodgement at Inchon during the Korean War, and the isolation of Communist guerillas from the local population by the Commonwealth Forces during the Malayan Emergency are examples of successful operational manoeuvre.
- **Tactical Level.** Tactical manoeuvre employs physical and non-physical means to achieve a position of relative advantage over the adversary in order to accomplish the assigned mission. The purpose of tactical manoeuvre is to destroy the enemy's cohesion and so cause his capitulation by the coordinated use of speed, shock action and lethal force. Sometimes tactical manoeuvre may have limited objectives, where its purpose is to reinforce the potential dislocation or disruption achieved through operational manoeuvre. Tactical manoeuvre involves engaging the enemy in battle and must assume that close combat will be required to achieve decision. Effective tactical manoeuvre maximises the integrated effects of joint and coalition force elements as well as land force combined arms teams. Australian and allied actions during the battles of Hamel in 1918, Kaiapit in 1943, Maryang San in 1951, Coral/Balmoral in 1968 and the deployment of troops to the intra-Timor border in 1999 are examples of successful tactical manoeuvre.<sup>2</sup>

2. For more detail see:

- \* Bean, C.E.W., *ANZAC to Amiens*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1946.
- \* Dexter, D., *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Volume VI, 'The New Guinea Offensives', Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961.
- \* Breen, B., *The Battle of Maryang San*, Headquarters Training Command, Sydney, 1991.

## APPLYING THE MANOEUVRIST APPROACH

The manoeuvrist approach is applied by maintaining a focus on actions that ultimately result in the defeat of the enemy's will to fight. These actions may occur through both physical and non-physical means. Choosing where and how to apply the available means requires an understanding of the complex interaction of friendly, neutral and enemy forces within the battlespace, and how each element can contribute to undermining the enemy's centre of gravity. The actions taken to defeat the enemy's centre of gravity form the basis of the friendly commander's scheme of manoeuvre.

Commanders should expect to confront a clever and creative enemy who will also attempt to apply manoeuvre theory. Superior tempo and security are essential to developing a winning advantage.

### Defeating the Enemy's Will to Fight

The primary objective of the manoeuvrist approach is to defeat the enemy's will to fight. To this end a commander will apply available *means* to produce *effects* that in turn create an expectation of defeat in an enemy's mind. Means will be physical (fire and manoeuvre) and non-physical (such as information operations); in both cases the aim will be to exploit surprise and create a sense of *shock*.

The physical destruction of military capability and the support infrastructure on which it depends is clearly not the only path to the destruction of an enemy's will. Effects that obscure the real situation, interfere with rational decision-making or raise stress to intolerable levels can also attack the will to fight by sapping intellectual, moral and physical energies.

Perception management contributes to defeating the enemy's will by purposefully manipulating human perceptions to obscure the real situation from the enemy, and clarify that situation for the friendly force. In the context of the manoeuvrist approach, perception management is the key to defeating the will to fight. The object is always to affect the way an enemy perceives his situation with a view to convincing him of the futility of further resistance, to take actions contrary to his interests, or to reassess the cost of action that sustains his will to fight. At the tactical level, killing or threatening to kill parts of the enemy's force will be a direct way of influencing the enemy's perception. At other levels, commanders may be able to find other ways of achieving a similar effect, such as severing lines of communication, or separating allies—physically or morally—from one another. Knowing the enemy, and the vulnerabilities that concern him most, is therefore a building block towards perception management and victory.

Perception management must also be applied to friendly forces and non-combatants. Without direct efforts to represent the friendly side's actions accurately, enemy propaganda can undermine the will to fight and erode neutral support. For example, leaders must provide their forces with accurate information about the situation and the reasons for taking action. Such information not only allows soldiers to understand what they should do in the absence of orders, but helps to build trust and confidence in their leaders. In relation to non-combatants, integrity, consultation and good information flows will have a positive impact on their perceptions and influence their support in a conflict situation.

## Approaches to Defeating the Enemy's Centre of Gravity

Manoeuvre at all levels relies on a thorough assessment of the enemy's *centre of gravity* and *critical vulnerabilities*. By successfully attacking or neutralising an enemy's critical vulnerabilities, *decisive points* are created that are a precondition to defeating the enemy's centre of gravity. Attacking the enemy's centre of gravity is the most likely path to success, but it is seldom the easiest. The approaches to defeating the enemy's centre of gravity are described as *dislocation* and *disruption*. Any plan should seek to incorporate actions to achieve both effects.

**Dislocation.** Dislocation involves action to render the enemy's strength irrelevant by not allowing it to be employed at the critical time or place. In effect, dislocation separates the enemy's centre of gravity from the key capabilities that support or protect it. Dislocation may be:

- **Physical.** Focusing the enemy's strength in the wrong place constitutes physical dislocation. Such dislocation could be achieved by attacking the enemy at an unexpected place, or by using deception to draw the enemy's main effort or reserve into a position where it cannot be used effectively.
- **Functional.** Functional dislocation involves shaping the battlespace, thus making the enemy's strength irrelevant or inappropriate. For example, difficult terrain functionally dislocates mobility.
- **Temporal.** Temporal dislocation is achieved by preventing an enemy from employing his strength at a time of his choosing, for example by acting pre-emptively.
- **Moral.** Moral dislocation is the undermining of the enemy's legitimacy. It occurs when the bonds between the enemy's leadership, people and military forces – the sources of moral strength – are broken.

**Disruption.** Disruption is a direct attack that neutralises or selectively destroys key elements of the enemy's capabilities. The aim of disruption is to reduce the enemy's cohesion and will to fight by neutralising or destroying parts of his force in a manner that prevents the force from acting as a coordinated whole. Selecting targets for disruption should always be considered in terms of the effect on the enemy's centre of gravity. The identification and targeting of critical vulnerabilities will also guide the commander in choosing the best course of action. Pitting friendly strength against enemy strength should not be pursued unless this option will lead to the immediate collapse of the enemy's will.

The successful application of the manoeuvrist approach requires the ability to control and vary tempo. Tempo is the rhythm or rate of activity relative to the enemy, within tactical engagements and battles, and between operations. Control of tempo is required to conserve the fighting power of friendly forces, until the enemy's critical vulnerabilities and the centre of gravity can be decisively attacked. It is derived from three elements: speed of decision, speed of execution, and speed of transition from one activity to the next.

## Imperatives

The application of the manoeuvrist approach requires a framework that encourages individual initiative, boldness and decisive action within the scope of the higher commander's intent. Developing this framework requires people to have particular qualities that are unique to armies and other uniformed services. The framework required to employ the manoeuvrist approach is described by three imperatives that allow the Army to exploit its fighting power effectively: *mission command*, *orchestration* and *close combat*.

- **Mission Command.** Mission command provides the framework within which a manoeuvrist approach can be effectively applied. While mission command is a decentralised philosophy, it provides commanders with the flexibility to apply centralised control when appropriate. Regardless, mission command is based on the clear expression of the commander's intent. Once this intent is understood, subordinate commanders are given the freedom of action to achieve that intent with the resources allocated. Mission command aims to allow faster, more relevant decision-making. *Initiative*, *trust* and strong *leadership* underpin mission command. Initiative instils in commanders and their subordinates the desire for responsibility, and leadership the willingness to take decisive action. Trust, supported by experience and training, enables commanders and subordinates to understand the thought processes of others, and so provide a guide for unified action.

Initiative, trust and leadership must be based on sound professional judgement.

- **Orchestration.** Orchestration is the coordination of effects across space and time. It requires commanders to visualise the conditions that will create a rapidly deteriorating situation for the enemy, and then to express how those conditions will be created in the *commander's intent*. Where the enemy's weakness is not readily apparent, the commander should act to create an advantageous situation, communicating his intentions clearly so as to allow subordinate commanders to use their own creativity. Orchestration requires effective *synchronisation*, which is the coordination of the means to deliver effects at a particular time and place.
- **Close Combat.** The ability to engage in *close combat* is imperative to the application of the manoeuvrist approach. Close combat or the threat of close combat creates dilemmas for the enemy commander and can lead to the deteriorating situation that shatters the enemy's cohesion. The ability to engage in close combat may also provide superior commanders with options to apply other means to target the centre of gravity. Close combat skills are the result of an ethos and training regime that emphasises the importance of the fighting soldier, a willingness to endure hardship, and an ability to function as a team in dangerous circumstances. The Army's ethos, coupled with intellectual, moral and physical exertion, provides the Army with the foundation for engaging in close combat.

## ENABLING CONCEPTS

The manoeuvrist approach depends for its effective application on a number of enabling concepts. They include *joint warfighting*, the employment of *combined arms teams*, and the capability to generate the effects described in the *combat functions*. The concept of a *knowledge edge* and the principles of *command* and *training* are also essential.

## Joint Warfighting

The techniques and capabilities of each service in *campaigns* are used in joint warfighting to achieve effects that will be greater than the sum of the parts. Campaigning refers to a controlled series of simultaneous or sequential operations designed to achieve an operational commander's objective, normally within a given time and space. The joint perspective must pervade mission planning and execution in order to allow the force to maximise its strength, while protecting vulnerabilities. Campaigning is described in [ADFP 6, Operations and Decisive Manoeuvre](#) and [Australian Warfighting Concepts to Guide Campaign Planning](#).

[Chapter 3](#) covers the Army's contribution to joint warfighting: command and control, manoeuvre, offensive fire, intelligence, force protection, and logistics.

## Combined Arms Teams

The Army contributes to joint warfighting through combined arms teams, which include combat, combat support and combat service support elements, grouped to achieve a mission. Each team aims to:

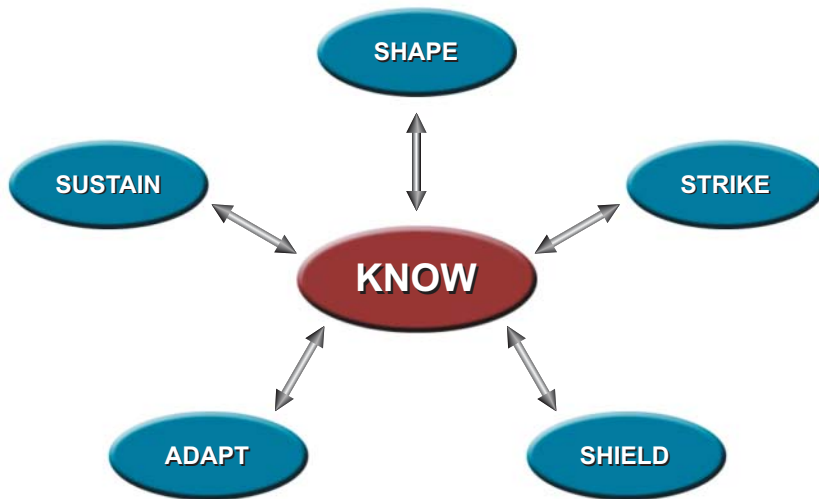
- cover the vulnerability of one part of the force with the strength of another, and
- present a dilemma for an enemy by causing actions to protect against one threat that increase vulnerability to another threat.

When grouped, the combined arms team will usually represent a balance of BOSs (see [chapter 5](#)). Consequently, combined arms teams provide the Army with a flexible means of warfighting and with the ability to operate in a broad range of situations.

## Combat Functions

The combat functions describe the range of actions that land forces must be able to undertake to apply land power. They are fundamental to the manoeuvrist approach and are generated through the synergies created by the combined arms team and joint task forces. The combat functions allow a force to react positively to a changing situation by seizing the initiative, and defeating the enemy. The combat functions are illustrated in [figure 6](#) and described below.





**Figure 6: Combat Functions**

**Know.** To *know* is to possess the capacity to predict, detect, recognise and understand the strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities available within the battlespace. Knowledge links the other combat functions, and is derived from *information* and *understanding*. Information is gained from Army, joint, coalition and civilian C4ISR<sup>3</sup> assets. Fully integrated C4ISR systems with real-time or near real-time links provide forces with a crucial advantage. When information is analysed, interpreted and understood, it becomes knowledge. Understanding is a cognitive process that is enhanced by professional mastery. The use of knowledge and the achievement of a *knowledge edge* provide forces with a distinct advantage over the enemy.

**Shape.** To *shape* is to engage in actions that enhance the friendly force's position, delay the enemy's response, or lead the enemy into an inadequate or inappropriate response in order to set the conditions for decisive action. Shaping can take the form of disruption or dislocation, by preventing the enemy from using terrain or key capabilities, or by constraining the enemy's freedom of action. Shaping can also include measures to prepare the friendly force so that consequent action can be more effective, such as enhancing mobility corridors. Actions to shape the battlespace may include movement and physical strikes.

3. C4ISR is the acronym for command, control, computers and communications; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

**Strike.** To *strike* is to apply tailored effects in a timely fashion. Striking requires the precise integration and application of force at selected points in the battlespace to achieve specific outcomes. It depends on the capacity of the force to orient, organise, move and apply physical and non-physical effects. Since the strike function can involve moving units through the battlespace and applying effects, it forms a substantial portion of the Army's application and procedural-level doctrine.

**Shield.** To *shield* is to protect friendly forces and infrastructure. Shielding is achieved by measures that include avoiding detection, and protection against physical or electronic attack. A wide variety of activities contribute to shielding, including signature management, movement, fire, physical protection, information operations, counter-reconnaissance operations, operational security procedures, active and passive air defence, and deception. As the combat component of force protection, shielding is most effective when it is supported by a continuous and accurate assessment of threats and risks, and early warning. Force protection is described in [chapter 6](#).

**Adapt.** To *adapt* is to respond effectively to a change in situation or task. The chaotic nature of war results partially from actions by two forces that are constantly trying to dislocate or disrupt each other. This constant search for asymmetry leads to a dynamic and chaotic battlespace. The presence of non-combatants adds to this dynamism. Success in this environment requires rapid and continual adaptation of procedures and plans. Adaptation rests on professional mastery, mental agility and flexible organisations.

**Sustain.** To *sustain* is to provide appropriate and timely support to all forces from deployment, through the completion of assigned missions, to redeployment. It includes the provision of stocks, replacement of weapon systems and reinforcement. Sustainment of own forces is a joint responsibility that will be challenged by the enemy. The dispersion of units throughout the battlespace exacerbates the problem. Resupply and maintenance systems that exploit situational awareness and incorporate modular replacement allow anticipatory planning that enhances freedom of action.

## The Knowledge Edge

The centrality of knowledge to the combat functions makes achieving a *knowledge edge* essential to operations. Achieving a knowledge edge requires predictive processes and data collection, the rapid analysis and dissemination of intelligence, and superior decisions governing the employment of force. The knowledge edge allows a commander the opportunity to conduct decisive operations.

The knowledge edge is effected through reliable and secure linkages between information collection (sensors), decision-makers, and BOSs (actors) through command and control systems. Information technology provides the potential for real-time or near real-time linkages between these functions throughout the battlespace. Improved sensor-actor links permit more rapid and responsive decision-making, thus increasing the effectiveness of land forces.

The Army will acquire a knowledge edge by:

- developing all individuals so that they understand the relevance of the intelligence provided to them, comprehend its implications, and effectively translate that knowledge into action;
- investing in knowledge management and communication systems that enable the passage of a recognised picture between all elements in the battlespace and between the various levels of command;
- developing the doctrine that underpins the effective integration of data from all ADF, government, coalition and some civilian assets to create intelligence.<sup>4</sup>

## Command and Training

The manoeuvrist approach relies on effective command at all levels and thorough preparation for operations. Effective command relies on career-long education and professional development, while thorough preparation for operations relies on realistic training.

4. The use of intelligence and knowledge is addressed in [Land Warfare Doctrine 2-0, Intelligence](#).

**Command.** Command is the authority, responsibility and accountability vested in an individual for the direction, coordination, control and administration of military forces. The exercise of command relies on professional mastery, which is built on ability gained through training, education and the experience of command. Commanders need to be highly effective leaders and managers to achieve their mission. Command, leadership and management are discussed in [chapter 5](#).

The manoeuvrist approach relies on adaptive, decisive and independently minded commanders supported by professional and versatile staffs. The effective use of their staff gives commanders freedom of action to focus on the key issues rather than be distracted or overwhelmed by detail. Commanders rely on staff for frank advice to ensure that plans are robust. For this reason commanders who cultivate 'yes men' are unable to apply a manoeuvrist approach effectively.

Mission command enables commanders to use initiative and empowers subordinates to capitalise on opportunities. It precludes the use of prescriptive plans and rigid orders that attempt to predict enemy actions. Commanders are therefore required to train their subordinates in an environment that fosters initiative and mission command. Mission command does not preclude centralised control where circumstances warrant such an approach.

Commanders should maintain regular personal contact with their subordinate commanders during all stages of an operation. This contact allows a commander to confirm progress, issue orders and develop first-hand knowledge of the enemy, terrain and any local intelligence that might be useful in future planning. During battle, commanders should locate themselves where they can best get a 'feel' for the situation in order to influence the outcome through timely decision-making. Commanders and their subordinates must understand that command presence and personal contact are not meant to undermine trust and initiative. In particular, commanders will have to manage the temptation to interfere in their subordinates' actions, given the growth of situational awareness that has been created by the increased availability of information.

**Preparing for Combat.** Training that simulates battle conditions as closely as possible is more likely to prepare individuals and teams for the stress of combat. The training environment is also the place to develop mutual trust between leaders and subordinates. Two-sided free-play exercises allow commanders to use their understanding of the manoeuvrist approach against a thinking opponent. Evaluation and objective feedback are essential elements of training, and every training activity should be used to identify faults and ways of enhancing individual and group performance. Training will be discussed further in [annex C](#). Preparation for combat is built on concepts inherent within professional mastery.

## CONCLUSION

The manoeuvrist approach is a warfighting philosophy that is well suited to Australia's experience of war, geo-strategic circumstances and the nature of its soldiers. It is not a detailed prescription of what to do in battle. Instead, the manoeuvrist approach aims to develop a state of mind that focuses the Australian soldier's courage, initiative and teamwork against a creative and thinking enemy. Its aim is always to undermine enemy cohesion and therefore his will to fight. Shattering the enemy's will to fight requires the application of the right means to produce coherent effects in a way that makes the situation appear lost to the enemy. Dislocation and disruption aim to trigger this collapse by converting the Army's fighting power into effects on the enemy.

The successful application of the manoeuvrist approach depends on the imperatives of mission command, orchestration and close combat. Most importantly, the manoeuvrist approach is built on joint warfighting, a knowledge edge, boldness and rigorous training. *Fighting power*, which is explained in [chapter 5](#), describes how the Army generates forces to win the land battle.