

## Appendix B

# Tactical Mission Tasks

The tactical mission tasks in this appendix describe the results or effects the commander wants to achieve—the *what* and *why* of a mission statement not previously addressed in this publication. A mission statement contains the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* associated with a specific operation. The *what* and *why* of a mission statement are not the same thing and both are needed. The *what* is an effect that is normally measurable. The *why* of a mission statement provides the mission’s purpose. These tasks have specific military definitions that are different from those found in a dictionary. In some cases, the discussion includes more than just a definition; it includes results or effects in relation to the enemy, terrain, or friendly forces not associated with any specific type or form of an operation. Tasks that identify a friendly action rarely provide sufficient clarity for a mission statement.

B-1. A **tactical mission task** is the specific activity performed by a unit while executing a form of tactical operation or form of maneuver. It may be expressed in terms of either actions by a friendly force or effects on an enemy force. As shown in tables B-1, B-2, and B-3, there is no definitive list of words or terms to describe the *what* and the *why* of a mission statement. The commander is not limited to the tactical mission tasks listed in this appendix in specifying desired subordinate actions in an operations order or operations plan. Many of the words and terms used to describe the *what* and *why* of a mission statement do not have special connotations beyond their common English language meanings. However, both the commander and the subordinate must have a common understanding of the *what* and *why* of the operation. Tasks involving only actions by friendly forces rarely provide sufficient clarity for a mission statement, thus the addition of a solid purpose coupled with the task adds understanding and clarity. The commander ensures that the missions assigned to subordinate units are consistent with the scheme of maneuver and the resources allocated to those subordinates. For example, a defending unit requires far greater effort (resources) to destroy an enemy force than to defeat it. Likewise, an attacking unit requires more combat power to clear the enemy from a given area than to contain that enemy in that same area.

**Table B-1. Actions by friendly forces and effects on enemy forces**

<i>Actions by friendly forces</i>	<i>Effects on enemy forces</i>
Attack by fire	Block
Breach	Canalize
Bypass	Contain
Clear	Defeat
Control	Destroy
Counterreconnaissance	Disrupt
Disengagement	Fix
Exfiltrate	Isolate
Follow and assume	Neutralize
Follow and support	Suppress
Occupy	Turn
Retain	
Secure	
Seize	
Support by fire	

**Table B-2. Elements of operations and subordinate tasks**

<i>Elements of operations</i>	
<i>Offensive tasks</i>	<i>Defensive tasks</i>
Movement to contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search and attack</li> <li>• Cordon and search</li> </ul>	Area defense
Attack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambush</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> <li>• Feint</li> <li>• Raid</li> <li>• Spoiling attack</li> </ul>	Mobile defense
Exploitation	Retrograde operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Retirement</li> </ul>
Pursuit	
Forms of offensive maneuver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Envelopment</li> <li>• Frontal attack</li> <li>• Infiltration</li> <li>• Penetration</li> <li>• Turning movement</li> </ul>	

**Table B-3. Tactical shaping operations and tasks**

<i>Tactical shaping tasks</i>
Passage of lines
Reconnaissance operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zone</li> <li>• Area</li> <li>• Route</li> <li>• Reconnaissance in force</li> </ul>
Relief in place
Security operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen</li> <li>• Guard</li> <li>• Cover</li> <li>• Area (includes route and convoy)</li> <li>• Local</li> </ul>
Troop movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative movement</li> <li>• Approach march</li> <li>• Road march</li> </ul>

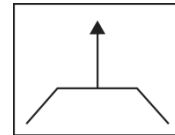
B-2. Many of the tactical mission tasks in this appendix or introduced previously in this publication have a tactical mission graphic associated with them. Commanders and staff officers use tactical mission graphics in conjunction with course of action development.

## ACTIONS BY FRIENDLY FORCES

B-3. The following tactical mission tasks address actions by friendly forces. They are the action, the *what*, the commander wants the friendly force to perform. Most of these actions have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in course of action development and sketches as part of the military decisionmaking process.

### ATTACK BY FIRE

B-4. **Attack by fire** is a tactical mission task in which a commander uses direct fires, supported by indirect fires, to engage an enemy force without closing with the enemy to destroy, suppress, fix, or deceive that enemy. A commander assigning this task to a subordinate must also state the desired effect on the enemy, such as neutralize, fix, or disrupt. A commander normally employs this task when the mission does not dictate or support close combat and occupation of a geographical objective by another friendly force. The commander may assign the force conducting an attack by fire a battle position with either a sector of fire or an engagement area (EA), or the commander may assign it an axis of advance and a force-oriented objective. The enemy may be stationary or moving. Figure B-1 shows the tactical mission graphic for attack by fire. The arrow points at the targeted force or objective, and the commander places the base of the arrow in the general area from which the commander wants to deliver the attack.



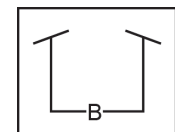
**Figure B-1.**  
**Attack by fire**  
**tactical**  
**mission**  
**graphic**

B-5. An attack by fire closely resembles the task of support by fire. The chief difference is that one unit conducts the support by fire task to support another unit so it can maneuver against the enemy. The attack by fire task includes—

- Assigning sectors of fire or EAs to each subordinate weapon system to include the enemy's defensive positions or avenues of approach.
- Designating control measures to allow massing, distributing, and shifting of direct and indirect fires.
- Designating battle positions, area of operations (AO), or axis of advance to allow the friendly force to engage the enemy.
- Providing for security and all-around defense, including control measures to ensure tie-in of subordinate elements and maximum use of hide positions.
- Using operations security (OPSEC) to deceive the enemy about movement, occupation, and intent of the operation.
- Reconnoitering, preparing, and securing movement routes and firing positions before the movement of the main body, and stocking Class V items.
- Providing movement instructions to the initial battle positions.

### BREACH

B-6. **Breach** is a tactical mission task in which the unit employs all available means to break through or establish a passage through an enemy defense, obstacle, minefield, or fortification. A commander attempts to bypass and avoid obstacles and enemy defensive positions to the maximum extent possible to maintain tempo and momentum. Breaching enemy defenses and obstacle systems is normally the last choice. A breach is a synchronized combined arms operation under the control of the maneuver commander. (Figure B-2 shows the control graphic for a breach.) The area located between the arms of the graphic shows the general location for the breach. The length of the arms extend to include the entire depth of the area that must be breached. Breaching operations may be required to support an attack anywhere along the continuum from a deliberate to a hasty attack. Regardless of where the attack falls along the continuum, the breaching tenets—intelligence, breaching fundamentals, breaching organization, mass, and synchronization—apply when conducting breaching operations in support of an attack. (ATTP 3-90.4 gives detailed information concerning breaching operations.)



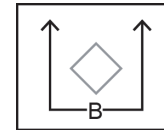
**Figure B-2.**  
**Breach**  
**tactical**  
**mission**  
**graphic**

**BYPASS**

B-7. *Bypass* is a tactical mission task in which the commander directs the unit to maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain the momentum of the operation while deliberately avoiding combat with an enemy force. A commander orders a bypass and directs combat power toward mission accomplishment. A bypass can take place in offensive or defensive actions. (Figure B-3 shows the tactical mission graphic for a bypass.) The arms of the graphic go on both sides of the location or unit that will be bypassed.

B-8. The commander bases the bypass decision on—

- The requirement to maintain momentum and aggressive action.
- Knowledge of enemy strength, intent, or mission.
- The degree to which the bypassed enemy can interfere with the advance.
- The general state of the enemy force; for example, if enemy resistance is crumbling, the friendly force can take greater risks.
- Any bypass criteria established by a higher headquarters.



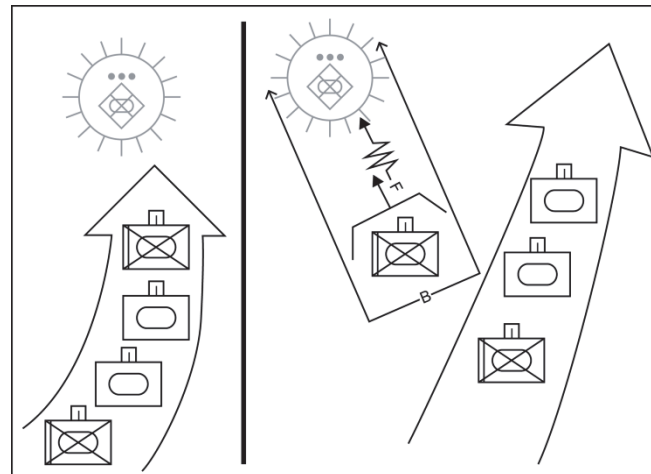
**Figure B-3.**  
**Bypass**  
**tactical**  
**mission**  
**graphic**

B-9. The force conducting the bypass immediately reports any bypassed obstacles and enemy forces to its higher headquarters. The force normally keeps the bypassed enemy under observation until relieved by another force, unless it is part of a raid. A senior commander does not normally delegate authority to bypass below the battalion task force level. Bypass criteria are established to limit the size of the enemy force that can be bypassed without the authority of the next higher commander. Before approving the bypass, the commander ensures that the bypassing force checks the bypass route for enemy presence and trafficability. The bypassing force prevents the bypassed enemy force from interfering with the moving friendly force.

B-10. The two bypass techniques that the force can employ are—

- Avoiding the enemy totally.
- Fixing the enemy in place with fires and then conducting the bypass.

B-11. If the force cannot avoid the enemy, the bypassing force must fix the enemy with part of its maneuver elements and bypass with the balance of the force. (See figure B-4.) Generally, a commander will not attempt to bypass an enemy force if more than a third of the unit's combat power is required to fix the enemy. The commander assigns one subordinate unit the mission of fixing the enemy in this situation, reinforcing the fixing force as required by the mission variables of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC.) The fixing force coordinates with the unit assigned to relieve the fixing force as soon as possible and provides the



**Figure B-4. Task force conducting a fix and bypass**

The relieving unit is normally another unit assigned a follow-and-support task. Once relieved, the force fixing the enemy either rejoins its parent organization or becomes part of the following element and comes under its control.

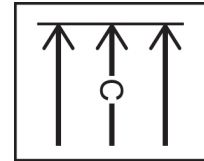
B-12. Occasionally the commander may direct the fixing force to break contact with the enemy after the bypassing force completes the bypass. This occurs when the bypassing force has no requirement to maintain an uninterrupted logistics flow, such as in a raid. In this case, the fixing force fixes the enemy by employing defensive and limited offensive actions in synchronization with all available fire support until ordered to rejoin the bypassing force.

## Clear

B-13. **Clear** is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area. The force does this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces, so they cannot interfere with the friendly unit's mission. In all cases, this task requires a thorough reconnaissance to discover the enemy's locations. After discovering the enemy's location, the clearing force maneuvers against the enemy force. (Figure B-5 shows the tactical mission graphic for clear.) The bar connecting the arrows designates the desired limit of advance for the clearing force. The bar also establishes the width of the area to clear.

B-14. This task requires significant time and other resources. In the mission statement, a commander can modify the objective associated with this task to destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of only enemy forces larger than a stated size. In this case, the clearing force keeps smaller enemy forces under observation, while the rest of the friendly force bypasses them.

B-15. Clear is also a mobility task that involves the total elimination of an obstacle that is usually performed by follow-on engineers and is not done under fire. Clearing operations are conducted to completely eliminate the enemy's obstacle effort or residual obstacles affecting the operational area. (See FM 3-34.210 for more information on mobility clearing operations.)



**Figure B-5. Clear tactical mission graphic**

## CONTROL

B-16. **Control** is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to maintain physical influence over a specified area to prevent its use by an enemy or to create conditions necessary for successful friendly operations. That influence can result from friendly forces occupying the specified area or dominating that area by their weapon systems. Control of an area does not require the complete clearance of all enemy soldiers from the specified area. The tactical mission task of control differs from that of secure because secure does not allow enemy fires to impact on the secured area. The enemy can engage targets within the controlled area but cannot move ground forces through that area.

B-17. Control may also mean a command relationship or a function commanders exercise through their mission command systems. (See ADRPs 3-0 and 6-0.)

## COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE

B-18. **Counterreconnaissance** is a tactical mission task that encompasses all measures taken by a commander to counter enemy reconnaissance and surveillance efforts. Counterreconnaissance is not a distinct mission, but a component of all forms of security operations. It prevents hostile observation of a force or area. Counterreconnaissance is an element of all security operations and most local security measures. It involves both active and passive elements and includes combat action to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance units and surveillance assets.

B-19. Destroying enemy ground reconnaissance assets while denying the enemy information through other collection systems allows friendly force commanders to operate against an enemy who is operating blindly. The enemy commander's inability to see the battlefield eventually desynchronizes the enemy commander's actions and renders that commander's force vulnerable to aggressive action by friendly forces. (See chapter 12 for additional information on counterreconnaissance.)

## DISENGAGE

B-20. **Disengage** is a tactical mission task where a commander has the unit break contact with the enemy to allow the conduct of another mission or to avoid decisive engagement. It involves moving to a location where the enemy cannot engage the friendly force with either direct fires or observed indirect fires. Disengaging from the enemy while displacing from one position to the next is a difficult procedure. A disengagement plan includes—

- The maneuver concept of operations for tactical elements after disengagement, along with the movement routes for each subordinate unit.
- Fires to suppress the enemy and cover the unit's movement.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement, as part of a military deception operation, or to cover passage points.
- Contact and passage points if moving through friendly lines. (See FM 3-90-2.)
- The time disengagement starts.
- The earliest time that functional and multifunctional support and sustainment elements move.

B-21. The senior headquarters conducts operations to support the disengaging forces and relieve pressure on units in contact with the enemy. For example, if a division is conducting a delay, the division commander uses attached aviation assets to help a brigade combat team (BCT) disengage from the close fight. Simultaneously, the division uses its long-range artillery, rocket, and electronic warfare (EW) systems to destroy or disrupt enemy follow-on echelons to prevent them from interfering with the disengagement. The intent is to create conditions that allow the unit to disengage while avoiding decisive combat.

B-22. To facilitate disengagement, the commander suppresses the enemy in contact by bombarding the enemy force with large volumes of both direct and indirect fires provided by forces other than the disengaging unit. In open terrain, the unit generally moves its short-range systems first. In close terrain, it generally moves its long-range systems first to support by fire positions. The time involved to move a system to its next position also affects when that system moves. Small-unit leaders usually direct this movement because of the limited range of combat net radios and the fact that the tactical situation varies across a unit's front. The process repeats as necessary. Once disengagement starts, units must complete it rapidly. The commander can employ supporting units or reserves to protect the disengaging unit's flanks and assist in freeing any closely engaged elements. The unit then moves to its next position using the appropriate movement techniques. (See FM 3-90-2.)

B-23. If enemy combat systems have not closed within direct-fire range of the friendly disengaging unit, all its elements may be able to move simultaneously under the cover of intense fires and smoke. Speed of execution and continued coordination are essential to the success of this task.

## EXFILTRATE

B-24. **Exfiltrate is a tactical mission task where a commander removes Soldiers or units from areas under enemy control by stealth, deception, surprise, or clandestine means.** Friendly forces exfiltrate when they have been encircled by enemy forces and cannot conduct a breakout or be relieved by other friendly forces. Forces returning from a raid, an infiltration, or a patrol behind enemy lines can also conduct an exfiltration. The commander exfiltrates an encircled force to preserve a portion of the force; it is preferable to the capture of the entire force. A force exfiltrates only after destroying or incapacitating all equipment, except medical, that it must leave behind. Only as a last resort, when the alternative is the capture of the entire force, does a force conducting an exfiltration leave its casualties in place with supplies, chaplain support, and medical personnel.

B-25. Exfiltration is most feasible through rough or difficult terrain in areas lightly covered by enemy observation and fire. These conditions often allow undetected movement of small elements, when movement of the entire force would present more risk. Exfiltration requires resourcefulness, a high degree of discipline, expert land navigation skills, and motivation. It is unlikely that the entire force will be able to exfiltrate, since part of it may have to create a diversion. Good, small-unit leadership is essential in this type of operation.

B-26. The exfiltrating force first establishes its rally points and exfiltration lanes. It coordinates its linkup plans with other friendly units. The commander designates exfiltration lanes as restrictive fire areas (RFAs) or no-fire areas (NFAs). The exfiltrating force uses preparatory fires to cover its movement and to expend stockpiled ammunition. Based on reconnaissance and available intelligence, the exfiltrating force subdivides into small groups and exfiltrates during periods of limited visibility, passing through or around enemy defensive positions. If detected, it tries to bypass the enemy. Exfiltration may be more difficult with

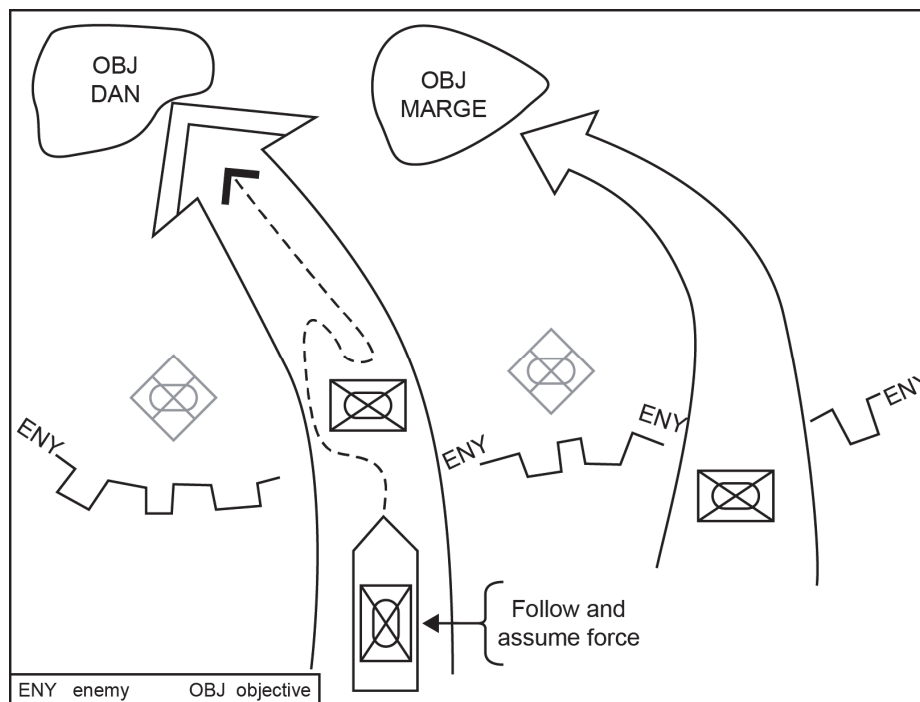
combat and tactical vehicles because the noise they make and the limitations they impose on exfiltration routes make detection more likely.

## FOLLOW AND ASSUME

B-27. *Follow and assume* is a tactical mission task in which a second committed force follows a force conducting an offensive task and is prepared to continue the mission if the lead force is fixed, attrited, or unable to continue. The follow-and-assume force is not a reserve but is committed to accomplish specific tasks. Figure B-6 shows the tactical mission graphic for follow and assume. The commander places the box part of the graphic around the symbol of the unit being assigned this task.

B-28. Tasks for a follow-and-assume force include—

- Preparing to execute all missions of the followed unit.
- Maintaining contact with the trail elements of the leading force.
- Preparing to conduct a forward passage of lines through the force it is following.
- Monitoring all combat information and intelligence being provided to and from the force it is following.
- Avoiding engaging enemy forces bypassed by the force it is following.



**Figure B-6. Follow and assume tactical mission graphic**

B-29. A commander assigns a follow-and-assume mission to ensure that the attacking force maintains the momentum of its offensive action. The follow-and-assume force ensures that it can immediately execute a forward passage of lines and assume the mission of the lead force.

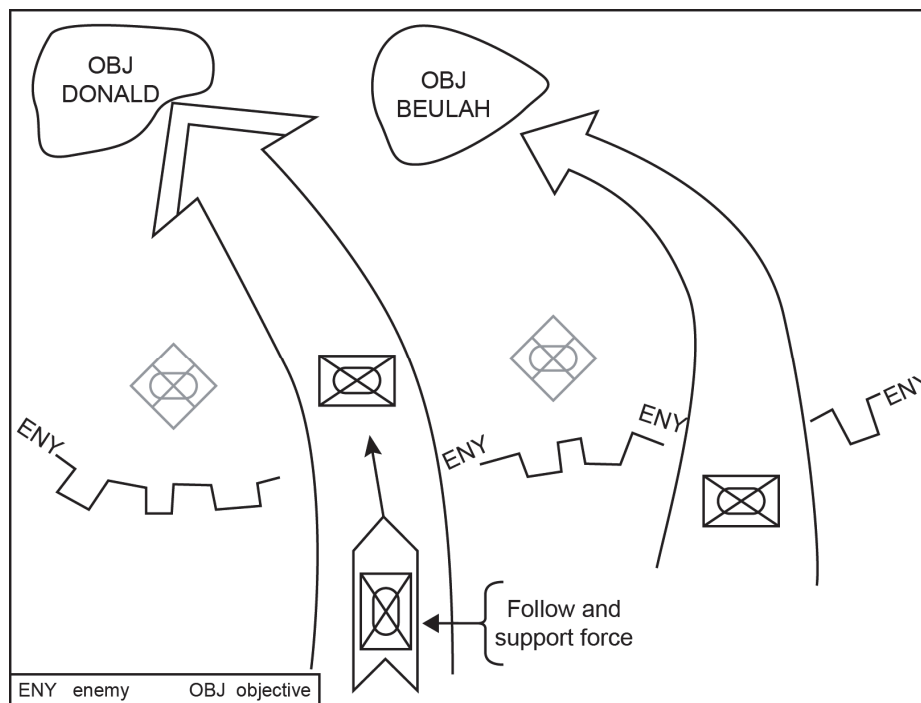
B-30. The commander assigning a unit the task of follow and assume has two options in establishing the relationship between the lead and trail units. The commander normally retains command of both units and requires that all requests for support from the supported unit to the supporting unit pass through the commander's headquarters. Alternatively, in situations where the commander will not be able to maintain control over both units, the supporting unit is placed in a standard command relationship with the supported unit, such as attached or operational control. An example of this occurs when both units are trying to encircle a retrograding enemy force and the commander remains with the direct-pressure force.

## FOLLOW AND SUPPORT

B-31. **Follow and support is a tactical mission task in which a committed force follows and supports a lead force conducting an offensive task.** The follow-and-support force is not a reserve but is a force committed to specific tasks. (Figure B-7 shows the tactical mission graphic for follow and support.) The commander places the box part of the graphic around the symbol of the unit being assigned this task.

B-32. Tasks for a follow-and-support force include—

- Destroying bypassed enemy units when the lead unit does not clear the AO as it advances.
- Blocking movement of enemy reinforcements.
- Relieving in place any direct-pressure or encircling force halted to contain the enemy.
- Securing lines of communication.
- Clearing obstacles.
- Guarding prisoners, key areas, and installations.
- Recovering friendly battle losses.
- Securing key terrain.
- Controlling dislocated civilians.



**Figure B-7. Follow and support tactical mission graphic**

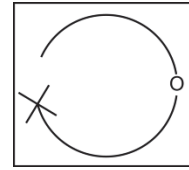
B-33. A commander assigns a unit the task of follow and support to keep the supported force from having to commit its combat power to tasks other than the decisive operation, which would slow the offensive operation's momentum and tempo. The follow-and-support force accomplishes its tasks to prevent the enemy, obstacles, and other factors from interfering with offensive actions, especially along the lines of communications.

B-34. The commander assigning the follow-and-support task has two options in establishing the relationship between the supported and the supporting units. The commander can place the follow-and-support unit in a standard command relationship with the supported unit, such as attached or operational control. Alternatively, the commander can retain command of the follow-and-support force and require that all tasking requests from the supported unit go through the commander's headquarters.



## OCCUPY

B-35. *Occupy* is a tactical mission task that involves moving a friendly force into an area so that it can control that area. Both the force's movement to and occupation of the area occur without enemy opposition. A unit can control an area without occupying it, but not vice versa. That is the difference between the tactical mission tasks of occupy and control. (Figure B-8 shows the occupy tactical mission graphic. The X on the tactical mission graphic has no significance, but the graphic should encompass the entire area that the commander desires to occupy.) Units typically occupy assembly areas, objectives, and defensive positions.



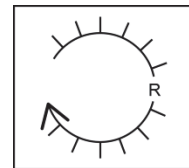
**Figure B-8.**  
Occupy tactical mission graphic

## REDUCE

B-36. *Reduce* is a tactical mission task that involves the destruction of an encircled or bypassed enemy force. There is no tactical mission graphic for this task. This task can occur at any location on the battlefield. (FM 3-90-2 discusses the reduction of an encircled enemy.) *Reduce* is also a mobility task that involves creating and marking sufficient lanes through, over, or around an obstacle to negate its intended effect (ATTP 3-90.4).

## RETAIN

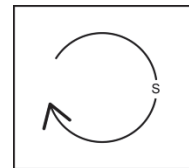
B-37. *Retain* is a tactical mission task in which the commander ensures that a terrain feature controlled by a friendly force remains free of enemy occupation or use. The commander assigning this task specifies the area to retain and the duration of the retention, which is time- or event-driven. While a unit is conducting this task, it expects the enemy to attack and prepares to become decisively engaged. A unit tasked to retain a specific piece of terrain does not necessarily have to occupy it. (Figure B-9 shows the tactical mission graphic for retain. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to retain.)



**Figure B-9.**  
Retain tactical mission graphic

## SECURE

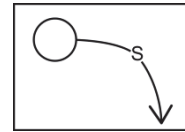
B-38. *Secure* is a tactical mission task that involves preventing a unit, facility, or geographical location from being damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action. This task normally involves conducting area security operations. (See FM 3-90 Volume 2.) A force given the mission of securing a unit, facility, or geographical location, such as a route or base, not only prevents enemy forces from over-running or occupying the secured location, but also prevents enemy direct fires and observed indirect fires from impacting the secured location, unit, or facility. This is the primary difference between control and secure. The control tactical mission task allows enemy direct and indirect fires to affect the location being controlled. A unit does not have to physically occupy the area immediately around the unit, facility, or geographical location it is securing, if it can prevent the enemy from occupying or firing at that location by other means. The commander states the mission duration in terms of time or event when assigning a mission to secure a given unit, facility, or geographical location. (Figure B-10 shows the tactical mission graphic for secure. The direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic includes the entire area the commander wants to secure.)



**Figure B-10.**  
Secure tactical mission graphic

## SEIZE

B-39. **Seize** is a tactical mission task that involves taking possession of a designated area by using overwhelming force. (Figure B-11 shows the tactical mission graphic for seize.) An enemy force can no longer place direct fire on an objective that has been seized. The arrow points to the location or objective to seize. This task differs from secure because it requires offensive action to obtain control of the designated area or objective. It differs from the task of occupy because it involves overcoming anticipated enemy opposition. Once a force seizes a physical objective, it clears the terrain within that objective by killing, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of all enemy forces.

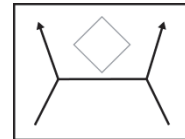


**Figure B-11.**  
Seize tactical mission graphic

## SUPPORT BY FIRE

B-40. **Support by fire** is a tactical mission task in which a maneuver force moves to a position where it can engage the enemy by direct fire in support of another maneuvering force. The primary objective of the support force is normally to fix and suppress the enemy so that the enemy cannot effectively fire on the maneuvering force. The secondary objective is to destroy the enemy if the enemy tries to reposition. The commander specifies the desired effect on the enemy when assigning this task.

B-41. A unit conducting the task of support by fire does not maneuver to capture enemy forces or terrain. The commander gives this task to another unit as part of a larger maneuver. When assigning a support by fire mission, the commander designates the enemy, when to attack, the general location from which to operate, the friendly force to support, and the purpose of the task, such as fix or suppress. (Figure B-12 shows the tactical mission graphic for support by fire.) The ends of the arrows point in the general direction of the targeted unit or location. The base of the area indicates the general area from which to deliver fires.



**Figure B-12.**  
Support by fire tactical mission graphic

B-42. Once the commander gives an element the task of support by fire, it should occupy support by fire positions that have cover and concealment, good observation, and clear fields of fire. Elements occupying support by fire positions should—

- Check the security of the position.
- Search for targets.
- Orient weapons on likely or suspected enemy positions.
- Assume fighting positions that provide some degree of protection. Armored and Stryker equipped forces occupy hull-down firing positions, while infantry forces use trees, natural berms, buildings, and similar existing terrain features.
- Assign observation sectors to each Soldier or weapon system in the support by fire element.
- Use available thermal sights to locate heat sources not visible to the naked eye, such as vehicles concealed in tree lines or other wooded areas or personnel serving at observation posts (OPs).

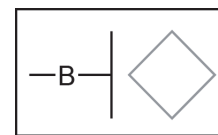
B-43. Support by fire closely resembles the task of attack by fire. The difference is that support by fire supports another force so that it can maneuver against the enemy, while an attack by fire does not support the maneuver of another friendly force.

## EFFECTS ON ENEMY FORCE

B-44. The following tactical mission tasks address effects on enemy forces. They are the *what* or *why* of a mission statement. Most of these effects have associated tactical mission graphics that are used in course of action development and sketches as part of the military decisionmaking process.

## BLOCK

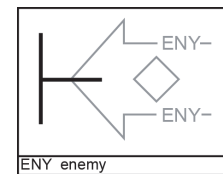
B-45. **Block** is a tactical mission task that denies the enemy access to an area or prevents the enemy's advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. A blocking task normally requires the friendly force to block the enemy force for a certain



**Figure B-13. Block**  
tactical mission graphic

time, or until a specific event has occurred. The line perpendicular to the enemy's line of advance indicates the limit of enemy advance. A blocking unit may have to hold terrain and become decisively engaged. (Figure B-13 illustrates the tactical mission graphic for a blocking task.)

B-46. **Block** is also an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle efforts to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or prevent the attacking force from passing through an engagement area. The vertical line in the obstacle effect graphic indicates the limit of enemy advance. It also indicates where the obstacle ties in to restricted terrain. (Figure B-14 illustrates the block obstacle effect graphic.) A force may employ blocking obstacles to assist in the task. Blocking obstacles are complex, employed in depth, and integrated with fires to prevent the enemy from proceeding along an avenue of approach, or to proceed only at unacceptable cost. When employed, blocking obstacles serve as a limit, not allowing the enemy beyond that point. Obstacles alone cannot accomplish a blocking task. (FM 90-7 describes the block engineer obstacle effect.)

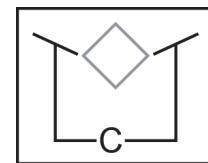


**Figure B-14. Block obstacle effect graphic**

B-47. Block as a tactical mission task differs from the tactical mission task of fix because a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the obstructed one, while a fixed enemy force cannot move in any direction.

## CANALIZE

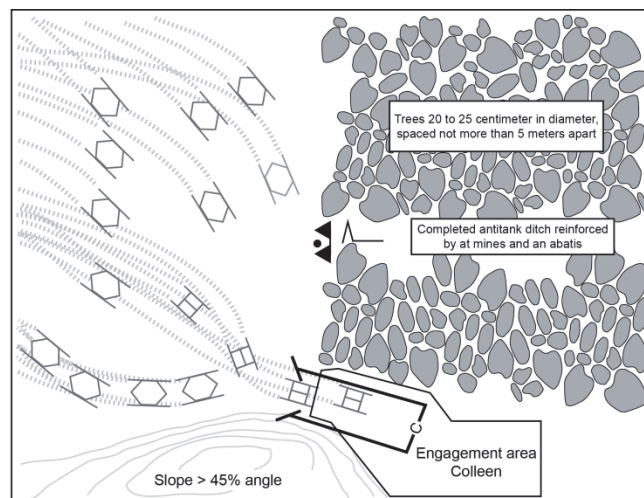
B-48. **Canalize** is a tactical mission task in which the commander restricts enemy movement to a narrow zone by exploiting terrain coupled with the use of obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver. (See figure B-15.) Figure B-16 shows how successful canalization results in moving the enemy formation or individual Soldiers and weapon systems into a predetermined position where they are vulnerable to piecemeal destruction.



**Figure B-15. Canalize tactical mission graphic**

## CONTAIN

B-49. **Contain** is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause them to center their activity on a given front and prevent them from withdrawing any part of their forces for use elsewhere. Containment allows an enemy force to reposition itself within the designated geographical area, while fixing an enemy does not. Geographic terms or time may express the limits of the containment. The contain graphic encompasses the entire area in which the commander desires to contain the enemy during the development of alternative courses of action. (Figure B-17 on page B-12 shows the tactical control graphic for contain.)



**Figure B-16. Canalizing terrain enhanced by obstacles used with an engagement area**

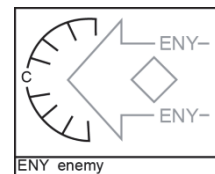
## DEFEAT

B-50. **Defeat** is a tactical mission task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue that individual's adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use.

B-51. A commander can generate different effects against an enemy to defeat that force:

- Physical. The enemy loses the physical means to continue fighting. The enemy force no longer has the personnel, weapon systems, equipment, or supplies to carry out its mission.
- Psychological. The enemy loses the will to fight. Enemy commanders and their soldiers become mentally exhausted, and their morale is so low that they can no longer accomplish their missions.

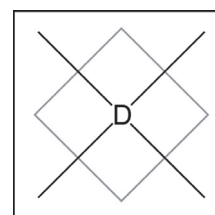
These effects typically occur because of catastrophic losses inflicted over a very short time or from sustained attrition. An opponent who is not ideologically motivated may be defeated psychologically on observing preparations for the delivery of clearly overwhelming combat power on the position that opponent occupies. Defeat manifests itself in some sort of physical action, such as mass surrenders, abandonment of significant quantities of equipment and supplies, or retrograde operations.



**Figure B-17.**  
Contain tactical mission graphic

**+DESTROY**

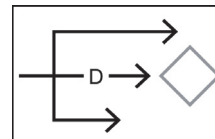
B-52. *Destroy* is a tactical mission task that physically renders an enemy force combat-ineffective until it is reconstituted. Alternatively, to destroy a combat system is to damage it so badly that it cannot perform any function or be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt. The amount of damage needed to render a unit combat-ineffective depends on the unit's type, discipline, and morale. Destroying armored or dug-in targets with area fire weapons requires considerable ammunition and time, so forces do not normally attempt it unless they have terminally guided munitions. (Figure B-18 shows the tactical mission graphic for destroy.)



**Figure B-18.**  
Destroy tactical mission graphic

**DISRUPT**

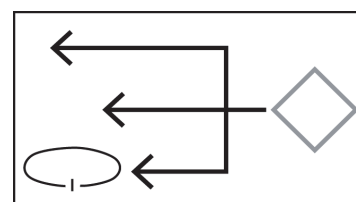
B-53. *Disrupt* is a tactical mission task in which a commander integrates direct and indirect fires, terrain, and obstacles to upset an enemy's formation or tempo, interrupt the enemy's timetable, or cause enemy forces to commit prematurely or attack in a piecemeal fashion. This increases the enemy's vulnerability to friendly fires. It may temporarily knock a unit out of the battle. Disruption is never an end; it is the means to an end. (Figure B-19 shows the tactical mission graphic for disrupt. The center arrow points toward the targeted enemy unit.)



**Figure B-19.**  
Disrupt tactical mission graphic

B-54. The maneuver force attempting to disrupt an enemy must attack the defending enemy with enough combat power to achieve the desired results with one mass attack or sustain the attack until it achieves the desired results. It may involve attacking the enemy force while it is still in its assembly areas or in an approach march before it can deploy into a combat formation. The commander determines the degree of acceptable risk based on anticipated friendly losses, the location of the attack, the number of attacks, and other risk management factors.

B-55. *Disrupt* is also an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy force to break up its formation and tempo, interrupt its timetable, commit breaching assets prematurely, and attack in a piecemeal effort. It also helps to deceive the enemy concerning the location of friendly defensive positions, to separate combat echelons, or to separate combat forces from their logistic support. As shown in figure B-20, the short arrow(s) in the obstacle-effect graphic indicates where obstacles impact the enemy's ability to maneuver. The longer arrow(s) indicate where the commander allows the enemy to bypass the obstacle

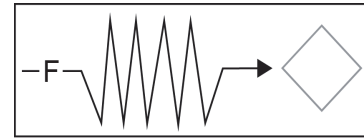


**Figure B-20.** Disrupt obstacle intent graphic

effect, so the defending force can attack the enemy with fires. The arrows indicate the direction of enemy attack. A defending commander normally uses the disrupt obstacle effect forward of EAs. Obstacles alone cannot disrupt an enemy unit. (FM 90-7 describes the disrupt engineer obstacle effect.)

## FIX

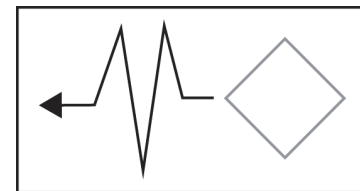
B-56. **Fix is a tactical mission task where a commander prevents the enemy force from moving any part of that force from a specific location for a specific period.** This may occur by engaging the enemy force to prevent its withdrawal for use elsewhere, or by using military deception, such as transmitting false orders. The commander uses fix in offensive and defensive actions; it is always a shaping operation. (Figure B-21 shows the tactical mission graphic for fix.) The commander points the arrow toward the desired enemy unit to fix. The broken part of the arrow indicates the desired location for that event to occur.



**Figure B-21. Fix tactical mission graphic**

B-57. Fixing an enemy force does not mean destroying it. The friendly force has to prevent the enemy from moving in any direction. This task usually has a time constraint, such as “fix the enemy reserve force until OBJECTIVE FALON, the decisive operation, is secured.” The tactical mission task of fix differs from that of block in that a fixed enemy force cannot move from a given location, but a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the one obstructed.

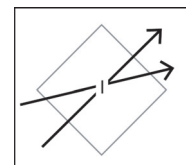
B-58. **Fix is also an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker’s movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area.** The primary use of this effect is to give the friendly unit time to acquire, target, and destroy the attacking enemy with direct and indirect fires throughout the depth of an EA or avenue of approach. The irregular part of the arrow in the obstacle-intent graphic indicates the location where the enemy’s rate of advance will be slowed by complex obstacles. The arrow indicates the direction of enemy advance. (See Figure B-22.) (FM 90-7 describes the fix engineer obstacle effect.)



**Figure B-22. Fix obstacle intent graphic**

## INTERDICTION

B-59. **Interdict is a tactical mission task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy’s use of an area or route.** Interdiction is a shaping operation conducted to complement and reinforce other ongoing offensive or defensive tasks. (Figure B-23 shows the tactical mission graphic for interdict.) The two arrows should cross on the unit or location targeted for interdiction. An interdiction tasking must specify how long to interdict, defined as a length of time or some event that must occur before the interdiction is lifted, or the exact effect desired from the interdiction.



**Figure B-23. Interdict tactical mission graphic**

B-60. The depth at which the attacking force conducts the interdiction generally determines the friendly force’s freedom of action. Increasing the depth of operations reduces the danger of fratricide to air and surface forces, reduces the coordination required, and allows increasingly flexible operations. Aerial forces, such as attack helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, can attack the enemy to interdict the enemy’s movement throughout the AO.

B-61. The depth at which interdiction takes place also determines the speed with which its effects are observed. Normally, ground maneuver units first focus on targets close to the forward of line own troops (FLOT). Interdiction efforts there have immediate impact on enemy forces near the interdiction target but do not affect the enemy’s ability to mass force effects. Attacks at greater distances from the FLOT have a delayed impact on close combat but eventually degrade the enemy’s ability to mass effects.

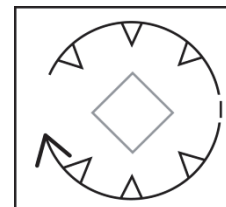
B-62. The friendly force’s capability to interdict may have a devastating impact on the enemy’s plans and ability to respond to friendly actions. For example, interdiction efforts that result in the enemy’s maneuver

being delayed or disrupted enhance the friendly force’s ability to achieve tactical advantages. Delaying or disrupting enemy resupply efforts limits the enemy’s ability to sustain intense, high-tempo offensive or defensive actions and restricts enemy mobility.

B-63. Interdicting the movement of enemy units can be extremely effective in assisting their encirclement and eventual destruction. Fixed enemy ground forces—or those trapped by the loss of their mobility—provide lucrative targets. The commander plans to interdict withdrawing enemy forces to enhance the pursuit. While interdiction can contribute to success by hampering reinforcement and resupply, it can also contribute by trapping enemy forces or canalizing their maneuvers, leading to their destruction in detail.

**ISOLATE**

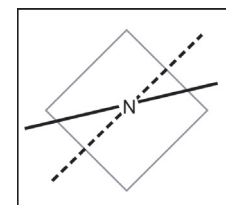
B-64. *Isolate* is a tactical mission task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from sources of support, deny the enemy freedom of movement, and prevent the isolated enemy force from having contact with other enemy forces. A commander does not allow an isolated enemy force sanctuary within its present position but continues to conduct offensive actions against the enemy force. (Figure B-24 shows the tactical mission graphic for isolate. The position or direction of the arrow has no significance, but the graphic surrounds the targeted enemy unit.)



**Figure B-24.**  
Isolate tactical mission graphic

**NEUTRALIZE**

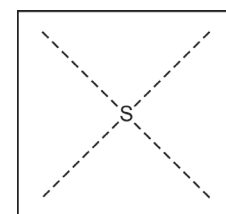
B-65. *Neutralize* is a tactical mission task that results in rendering enemy personnel or materiel incapable of interfering with a particular operation. (Figure B-25 shows the neutralize tactical mission graphic.) The two lines cross over the symbol of the unit or facility targeted for neutralization. When assigning a task to neutralize, the commander specifies the enemy force or materiel to neutralize and the duration, which is time- or event-driven. The neutralized target may become effective again when casualties are replaced, damage is repaired, or effort resulting in the neutralization is lifted. The commander normally uses a combination of lethal and nonlethal effects to neutralize enemy personnel or materiel. The assets required to neutralize a target vary according to the type and size of the target and the weapon and munitions combination used.



**Figure B-25.**  
Neutralize tactical mission graphic

**SUPPRESS**

B-66. *Suppress* is a tactical mission task that results in the temporary degradation of the performance of a force or weapon system below the level needed to accomplish its mission. It occurs when a commander employs direct or indirect lethal and nonlethal effects, such as artillery, electronic warfare, or smoke on enemy personnel, weapons, and equipment to prevent or degrade enemy fires, sensors, and visual observation of friendly forces. Unlike the neutralization task, the original target regains its effectiveness without needing to reconstitute, once the effects of the systems involved in the suppression effort lift or shift to another target. (Figure B-26 shows the suppress tactical mission task graphic.)



**Figure B-26.**  
Suppress tactical mission task graphic

## TURN

B-67. **Turn** is a tactical mission task that involves forcing an enemy element from one avenue of approach or mobility corridor to another. The commander relates obstacles, fires, and terrain to improve the friendly tactical situation while degrading the enemy's situation. For example, in the offense, a commander might want to turn an enemy force being pursued to place it in a position where the enemy force can be destroyed. In the defense, a commander might want to turn an attacking enemy force to allow the friendly force to conduct a counterattack into the enemy's flank. (Figure B-27 shows the turn tactical mission graphic. The place where the arrow breaks indicates the general location of the obstacle complex that will force the enemy to move from one avenue of approach to another.)

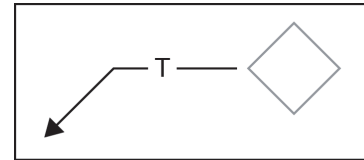


Figure B-27. Turn tactical mission graphic

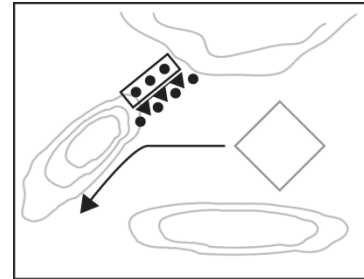


Figure B-28. Turn obstacle effect

B-68. **Turn** is also a tactical obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to divert an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area. Its development requires well-defined mobility corridors and avenues of approach. To achieve this effect, the obstacles have a subtle orientation relative to the enemy's approach as shown in figure B-28. The obstacles and their associated fires allow bypasses in the direction desired by the friendly scheme of maneuver. Finally, the obstacles tie into restrictive terrain at the initial point of the turn. A commander normally uses the turn effect on the flanks of an EA. The direction of the arrow indicates the desired direction of turn. (See FM 90-7 for more information on tactical obstacle effects.)

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