Providing Assured Mobility in the Unit of Action

By Major Ted Read and Major Nelson "Glenn" Kerley, Jr.

"Convinced that the general advance in the weaponry of the world's armies was introducing a tactical revolution in land combat which rendered the organization of the ROAD [Reorganization Objective Army Divisions] …obsolete, the TRADOC commander, General DePuy, set in train in 1976 a restructuring study of the heavy division."[1] General DePuy was concerned that the Army would miss the opportunity to build organizations around the newest technology of the time. From this beginning, the Army of Excellence and its doctrine, AirLand Battle, were born.

Concept

The concept is not much different today. The Army is working hard to define success in the future battlefield with the technology and doctrine of the future. The Army is reaching for flatter organizations and processes with enduring doctrine, as U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-5, *Military Operations Force XXI Operations*,[2] described almost ten years ago. The Engineer Regiment has contributed heavily to the description of the future battlefield and its systems and doctrine by providing assured mobility within the maneuver support battlefield function.

Providing assured mobility is a critical imperative of the maneuver support battlefield functional area for Objective Force operations. Maneuver support is thoroughly discussed in *The United States Army Objective Force Maneuver Support Operational Concept, Coordinating Draft*, [3] and incorporated in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-90, *The United States Army Objective Force Operational and Organizational Plan Unit of Action*.[4] It concentrates on two interrelated components: freedom of maneuver and force protection. The figure on page 13 displays the seven maneuver support imperatives, although the dependencies are more complicated than the simple model depicts.

Evolving an assured mobility framework to meet the needs of the Objective Force begins with the definition: "Actions that guarantee the force commander the ability to deploy, move, and maneuver where and when he desires, without interruption or delay, to achieve his intent. This includes maneuver in all types of terrain and weather, including urban terrain."[5]

Assured mobility will create a mobility differential relative to the adversary, significantly contributing to the unit of actions's (UA's) greater empowerment in small-unit tactical operations.[6] When applied near the objective, the UA forces will avoid enemy kill zones, increasing their ability to close with and destroy the enemy.[7]

The most notable automation/technology change is our ability to move from focusing on the mobility perspective of the common operational picture (COP) as an imperative to a more holistic approach in developing the situation. The key is still a proactive-centric method that establishes predict-to-prevent linkages that will allow commanders to leverage analysis and collection capabilities, predict enemy actions to hinder his mobility, and then take proactive measures to prevent the enemy from impeding our maneuver. A commander may make or alter his maneuver plan to avoid known impediments. If required, he will neutralize, reduce, or overcome the impediments to his mobility that cannot be prevented or avoided. Through a structure of systems and improved processes, we will provide assured mobility to the future commander.

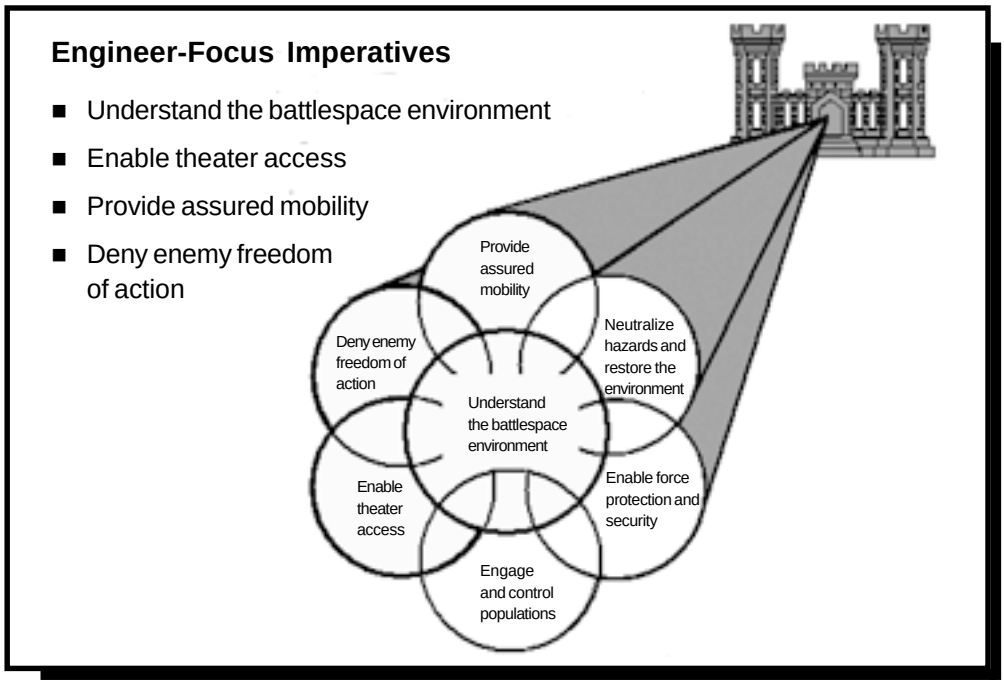
The imperatives—as defined in the article on page 15, "Operationalizing Assured Mobility"—change in scope and become four nested and overlapping tasks that require providing assured mobility: develop the situation; select, establish, and maintain operating areas; attack the enemy's ability to influence operating areas; and maintain mobility and momentum from standoff to greatly reduce the likelihood of traditional breaching or neutralization.

Develop the Situation

"This is the collection and integration of imagery and geospatial, cultural, and enemy information—aided by automated mobility planning tools—to establish the mobility COP for the operating area."[8] Automated terrain products and dissemination will allow commanders at all levels to understand the total implications of the terrain and how to leverage it to a tactical advantage. Potential capabilities include a tool that quickly produces a modified combined-obstacle overlay and publishes mobility courses of action. The overlay would be dynamically updated as refinement and alterations of the terrain are reported.

Select, Establish, and Maintain Operating Areas

"With the aid of automated tools, critical mobility choke points, operating areas, and airspace are identified, and a



shaping plan is developed en route to the area of operation (AO). Operating areas are designated portions within the AOs that the maneuver commander has identified as relevant to the scheme of the maneuver. This plan includes prediction of enemy actions and required sensor coverage to fill any information voids within the operating area. Through this proactive process, sensors 'stare' at critical areas to fill the voids or improve our situational awareness. In coordination with sensor-effects packages, the ability to predict, detect, prevent, avoid, and neutralize the enemy's ability to emplace or use mines and booby traps from stand-off positions sets the conditions for mobility situational understanding. For critical choke points such as bridges, sensor packages linked with brilliant munitions form an active protective system to eliminate the enemy's attempt to influence or degrade these critical points. The ability to control and monitor critical mobility areas are essential to coordinating a mobility plan in conjunction with the scheme of maneuver."[9]

Attack the Enemy's Ability to Influence Operating Areas

"This task includes the specific actions to be taken to preclude, deny, or prevent enemy maneuver and facilitate the UA's movement. The commander proactively attacks those enemy systems capable of directly or indirectly impeding friendly maneuver, thus destroying route interdiction capability before it occurs. This includes precision fires and munitions, obstacles, and attack by aircraft. Precision munitions (all types) and dynamic obstacles (Intelligent Munitions Systems [IMS]) are effective and important methods of hindering the enemy's freedom of movement. Sensor suites tied to point munitions and networked fires are also employed to protect freedom of maneuver once it is established in key operating areas or along key routes."[10]

The operational employment and utility of the IMS is discussed in the *IMS Operational Employment Concept*[11] and the *UA O&O Plan*.[12] The IMS operational requirements are outlined in the *Future Combat System (FCS) Operational Requirements Document*,[13] and the IMS is being developed within the FCS. More information on the IMS is provided at the TRADOC System Manager–Engineer Combat Systems Web site at *http://www.wood.army.mil/TSM/*.

Maintain Mobility and Momentum

"Most mobility impediments will be mitigated through prediction, detection, and prevention. Obviously, if operationally feasible, impediments to maneuver will simply be avoided. There will be situations in which operational requirements dictate negotiation of impeded routes. Based on FCS survivability to antipersonnel mines and some chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) hazards, the commander may choose to simply detect and move through the area."[14]

Summary

As a doctrinal framework, assured mobility truly achieves General Sullivan's vision of "a doctrine today and tomorrow"[15] that he had while the Army's leadership was laying the post-Cold War foundations for doctrine we are using today. The proof of the product is that doctrine as written in FM 3-34, *Engineer Operations*, (see article on page 20) has been accepted throughout the Army as a standard for constructing operational thought. And as an imperative to the future maneuver support battlefield functional area, it has been accepted as hard requirements for tomorrow's Objective Force.

Endnotes

[1] Romjue, John L. (1997) *The Army of Excellence: The Development of the 1980s Army,* Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, p. 8.

[2] TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, *Military Operations Force XXI Operations,* August 1994.

[3] *The United States Army Objective Force Maneuver Support Operational Concept, Coordinating Draft,* Volume 3, 6 November 2002, Chapter 6, p. 32.

[4] TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-90, *O&O Change 1, The United States Army Objective Force Operational and Organizational Plan Unit of Action,* 25 November 2002, p. 4-68.

[5] *Maneuver Support Operational Concept,* p. 32.

[6] TRADOC Pamplet 525-3-90, p. 4-2.

[7] TRADOC Pamplet 525-3-90, p. 4-5.

[8] *Maneuver Support Operational Concept,* p. 33.

[9] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[10] Ibid., p. 34.

[11] *Intelligent Munitions System Operational Employment Concept Paper and Briefing,* Final Draft, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri 65473, 23 October 2002.

[12] TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-90, pp. 4-15, 4-38, 4-68, 4-73, 4-74, F-8, F-32, F-37, F-43, F-62.

[13] *Operational Requirements Document for the Future Combat Systems, Change 2 (Army Requirements Oversight Council Approved),* Unit of Action Maneuver Battle Lab, Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121, 22 January 2003, p. 39.

[14] *Maneuver Support Operational Concept,* p. 34.

[15] John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War,* Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997, p. 35.

Major Read is an instructor/writer in the Department of Instruction, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was previously an engineer observer/controller at the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany, and commanded C Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, in Schweinfurt, Germany. He has deployed to operations in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, and Afghanistan.

Major Kerley is chief of the Munitions Systems Branch, TRADOC System Manager–Engineer Combat Systems, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He is the lead combat developer and project officer for the Intelligent Munitions Systems Requirements Integrated Product Team, which drafted the IMS Appendix to the Future Combat System Operational Requirements Document. Previous assignments include commander, C/299th Engineer Battalion, and Engineer Brigade Assistant S3, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

("Stryker Brigade," continued from page 11)

focused on attacking the enemy—not reacting to the enemy's impediments.

The SBCT provides a window for us to see the future of organizations and mobility. Its design is a balance between responsiveness and capability.[6] The focus of balance and mobility on the design is evident in the embedded engineer company. While smaller than the current mechanized formation, the embedded engineer company has significant mobility enablers. In some missions, the SBCT—like any organization—will need engineer augmentation. The challenge is to design scalable augmentation forces that can precisely meet the unit's need for those specific missions. A doctrinal approach that recognizes situational understanding as a fundamental enabler will help define those packages. This approach will leverage the design and doctrine of the SBCT and augmenting forces to successfully shape future organizations.

The SBCT is an organization that is preparing for tomorrow's operations, which provides us with insight to the tools that will be used in future organizations. The Engineer School will use the lessons and emerging doctrine of the Stryker Brigades to help shape the dialogue of the future, while capitalizing on their presence to improve our Regiment today and in the days and years to come.

Endnotes

[1] FM 3-0, *Operations,* 14 June 2001, Chapter 7.

[2] *Organizational and Operational [O&O] Concept for the Interim Brigade Combat Team [IBCT],* 30 June 2000, Chapter 1.6.

[3] Ibid., Chapter 9.1.

[4] Major Anthony O. Wright, C*oncept and Organization of the IBCT Engineer Company,* Engineer, May 2001, pp. 6-9.

[5] *O&O Concept for the IBCT,* Chapter 9.1, 1.

[6] Ibid., Chapter 1.8.

Lieutenant Colonel Selk is chief of the Combat Support Division, Brigade Coordination Cell, Fort Lewis, Washington. Previous assignments include executive officer, 299th Engineer Battalion, 4th Infantry Division; company command with 536th Engineer Battalion, Panama; and platoon leader, 15th Engineer Battalion, 9th Infantry Division. LTC Selk is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and holds a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Major Read is an instructor/writer in the Department of Instruction, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was previously an engineer observer/controller at the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany, and commanded C Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, in Schweinfurt, Germany. He has deployed to operations in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, and Afghanistan.