

# Section 9



## OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

### Key Points

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- 1 The Purpose of Offensive Operations
- 2 Characteristics of the Offense
- 3 Types of Offensive Operations

**Audacity, audacity; always audacity!**

Attributed to Frederick the Great of Prussia,  
Cited by LTG Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson and GEN George S. Patton

## Introduction

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US Army doctrine emphasizes taking the offensive to destroy and defeat the enemy. The actions of squads and platoons are key to a unit's overall offensive success. These units usually operate offensively as part of a larger force but sometimes must operate independently at the small-unit level. To succeed in their missions, platoon and squad leaders must know how to maneuver offensively—movements that you will begin to learn in this section.

Many offensive operations are carefully planned, but others are not, due to time limitations. Successful operations take advantage of the situation at hand, including the deployment of each side's forces, the weaponry available to the unit leader, and the skill of Soldiers in implementing their training. For example, take the experience of the squads and platoons of Easy Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, just before dawn along the Rhine in the Netherlands, as they patrolled the front in autumn 1944.

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### Attack on the Would-Be Attackers

At 0330, October 5 [1944], [CPT Richard] Winters sent SGT Art Youman out on a patrol, with orders to occupy an outpost in a building near a windmill on the south bank of the dike. . . . The building was beside a north-south road that ran to a ferry crossing on the river to the north, back to the small village of Nijburg to the south.

When the patrol reached the road, Youman told [PVT Joe] Lesniewski to go to the top of the dike to look things over. When he reached the top, hugging the ground as he had been taught, Lesniewski saw an unexpected sight: the outline of a German machine-gun set up at the point where the road coming from the ferry crossed the dike. Behind it, in the dark, he could just make out a German preparing to throw a potato-masher grenade at Youman's patrol, down at the south base of the dike. . . .

They had run into a full company of SS troops. It had come across the river by ferry earlier that night and was attempting to infiltrate south of the dike, to make a diversionary assault in support of a major attack the 363rd Volksgrenadier Division was scheduled to launch at first light against the left flank of the 506th at Opheusden. Although the patrol did not know it, another SS company had crossed the dike and was loose behind the American lines. Although the division did not yet know it, the attack on 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 506th was much more than a local counterattack; the German objective was to clear the entire Island area of Allied troops. . . .

[The patrol fell back to Winters's command post (CP), where the captain organized a patrol of a squad and a half and moved out toward the Germans. He performed reconnaissance, took out a German machine gun, and moved out of range to await the rest of the platoon.]

While waiting for the remainder of the platoon to come forward, Winters went out into the field between the two lines to be alone and to think things through. Three facts struck him: the enemy was behind a good solid roadway embankment, while his men were in a shallow ditch with no safe route for withdrawal; the enemy was in a good position to outflank the patrol to the right and catch it in the open field; there was nothing south of the bank to stop the Germans from moving down the road unmolested to the 2nd Battalion CP at Hemmen. Under the circumstances, he decided he had no choice but to attack. It was now full daylight. . . .

Returning to the patrol, he found that the reinforcements had arrived. Now he had some thirty men. He called LTs Frank Reese and Thomas Peacock and SGT Floyd Talbert together and gave his orders: "Talbert, take the third squad to the right. Peacock, take the first squad to the left. I'll take the second squad right up the middle. Reese, put your machine-guns between our columns. I want good covering fire until we reach that roadway. Then lift your fire and move up and join us." He told Talbert and Peacock to have their men fix bayonets. . . .

At this point, Winters had no firm idea of how many Germans were on the other side of the road running from the dike to the ferry, which was just high enough to block his view. Nor did the Germans know that the Americans were coming; inexcusably, after losing their machine-gunners and riflemen in the first volley, they had failed to put an outpost on the road or up on the dike.

In the lead, Winters got to the road first. He leaped up on it. Right in front of him, only a few feet away, was a German sentry with his head down, ducking the incoming fire. . . . To his right, Winters could see a solid mass of men, more than 100, packed together, lying down at the juncture of the dike and the road. . . . Every single one of them was facing the dike; he was behind them. They were only 15 meters away. . . .

[Winters's] shot [at the sentry] startled the entire company. The SS troops started to rise and turn toward Winters, en masse. Winters pivoted to his right side and fired into the solid mass. . . .

“Fire at will,” Winters called out.

It was a duck shoot. The Germans were fleeing. The Easy Company riflemen were shooting them unmolested. . . .

Winters could see more German soldiers about 100 yards away, pouring over the dike from the south side, the previously unnoticed SS company. They joined their retreating comrades in a dash to the east, away from the Easy Company fire. This made the target bigger. . . .

Winters got on the radio and called for artillery. British guns began pounding away at the main force of retreating Germans. . . .

With thirty-five men, a platoon of Easy Company had routed two German companies of about 300 men. American casualties (including those from Fox Company) were one dead, twenty-two wounded. German casualties were fifty killed, eleven captured, about 100 wounded.

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers*

## The Purpose of Offensive Operations

You have learned in previous lessons about how battle tactics and small-unit movement contribute to combat power. You know that your success as a small-unit leader depends on your knowledge and implementation of Army doctrine, standing operating procedures (SOPs), and tactical planning. You should also understand by now that the key to your success as a combat leader is how well you train your Soldiers in tactics.

In this section, you will learn about *offensive operations*, the basic methodology of battle. You’ve often heard that “the best defense is a strong offense.” No army ever wins by remaining on the defensive. Successful armies take the fight to the enemy through offensive operations. Good leaders always strive to move *forward*.

Offensive operations are chiefly designed to disrupt the enemy’s combat power—firepower, maneuvering, protection, and leadership. You plan and execute them to:

- destroy the enemy and his will to fight
- seize terrain
- learn enemy strength and disposition
- deceive, divert, or **fix** the enemy.

Offensive operations suppress enemy strengths and take advantage of weaknesses.

### fix

*a tactical task in which a unit undertakes actions to prevent the enemy from moving any part of his forces either from a specific location or for a specific period of time by holding or surrounding them to prevent their withdrawal or use elsewhere*

## Characteristics of the Offense

Characteristics of offensive operations include surprise, **concentration**, **tempo**, and **audacity**. These elements work in concert.

### Characteristics of Offensive Operations:

- Surprise
- Concentration
- Tempo
- Audacity.

### Surprise

Surprise is crucial because it delays enemy reactions, confounds and confuses enemy command and control, shocks enemy soldiers and leaders, and makes it difficult for the enemy to coordinate a defense. Tactical surprise is fleeting, so you must press your advantage before the enemy realizes what is happening.

It's often difficult to achieve surprise, given modern technology. You must achieve it by acting in ways the enemy doesn't expect. You can deceive the enemy regarding the nature, timing, objective, and force of an attack. You can use bad weather, poor terrain, feints, and false communications to mislead the enemy about what you plan to do.

### Concentration

Concentration is the massing of overwhelming force to achieve a single purpose. You must balance the need to concentrate your forces with the need to disperse them to avoid creating a large target for enemy gunners. Squads mass their weapons as well as forces to achieve concentration. Platoon leaders mass squads to overwhelm or hold the enemy in place. You must also understand and apply the concept of concentration to direct and indirect fire abilities.

### Tempo

To retain the initiative, you must control the tempo—the speed or timing—of your attack.

A faster tempo allows attackers to quickly penetrate obstacles and defenses to destroy enemy forces before the enemy can react or counterattack. It prevents the enemy from resting, regrouping, reorganizing, or refocusing. Squads and platoons support the larger force's tempo by rapidly executing their missions.

By increasing tempo, you also maintain momentum. Once combat begins, the attackers execute violently, quickly moving through gaps before defenders recover.

### Audacity

You display audacity by developing bold, innovative plans that achieve decisive results. You direct your squads and platoon to violently apply combat power. You understand when and where to take risks and do not hesitate to execute your plan. Audacity inspires Soldiers to overcome adversity and danger.

#### concentration

*a degree of force in which firepower, personnel, or other combat resources are massed against an enemy at one point or in a narrow area to multiply the power of an offensive operation*

#### tempo

*the speed or timing of an attack*

#### audacity

*intrepid boldness marked by originality and verve with a disregard for normal restraints*

## Critical Thinking

How did CPT Winters's actions in the Netherlands exemplify each characteristic of offensive operations? Do you think CPT Winters's plan was audacious? Why? How did CPT Winters apply concentration if he was at a numeric disadvantage? What did CPT Winters do to increase the tempo of his hasty attack? Which offensive characteristic do you think was the primary reason for CPT Winters's successful rout of a force nearly 10 times the size of his own?

## Types of Offensive Operations

The four types of offensive operations are **movement to contact (MTC)**, **attack**, **exploitation**, and **pursuit**. Companies can execute movements to contact and attacks. Platoons generally conduct these forms of the offense as part of a company. Companies and platoons participate in an exploitation or pursuit as part of a larger force. The nature of these operations depends largely on the amount of time and enemy information available during the planning and preparation for the operation phases. All involve designating decisive points, maintaining mutual support, gaining fire superiority over the enemy, and seizing positions of advantage without the enemy's prohibitive interference.

### Movement to Contact

Movement to contact is a type of offensive operation designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact. Your platoon will likely conduct a movement to contact as part of a company when the enemy situation is vague or not specific enough to conduct an attack.

Usually in a movement to contact, you lack detailed information about the enemy. Upon making contact, leaders will quickly assess the enemy's strengths and weaknesses and determine the best course of action. Sometimes the best course of action is to immediately attack by fire and maneuver to destroy the enemy. Sometimes the unit in contact is not strong enough to destroy the enemy and will fix the enemy force in place until reinforcements can arrive and destroy it. Sometimes the enemy may flee and you must pursue them to maintain contact. And at times, the prudent thing to do may be to break contact if the enemy has the upper hand and engage the enemy later when you have the advantage of terrain or firepower.

During the movement to contact, you must plan to maintain 360-degree security around your forces at all times in order to prevent the enemy from attacking your main forces. Maintaining 360-degree security requires you to have elements forward, to the flanks, and to the rear of your main body of forces. It is this requirement of all-around security that usually prevents an MTC below company level—platoons and squads simply do not have the personnel to send out advance and rear guards and flank security.

#### Types of Offensive Operations:

- Movement to contact
- Attack
- Exploitation
- Pursuit.

#### movement to contact (MTC)

*a form of the offense designed to develop the situation and to establish or regain contact with the enemy*

#### attack

*an offensive operation that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both*

#### exploitation

*extending the destruction of the enemy force by maintaining constant offensive pressure*

#### pursuit

*an action designed to prevent a fleeing enemy from escaping and to destroy him*

## Attack

An attack is an offensive movement supported by fire. The Army uses two types of attacks, the *hasty attack* and the *deliberate attack*. The two types of attacks are distinguished, as their names indicate, by the time available for preparation. A successful attack depends on your ability to apply as many of the characteristics of the offense as possible with maximum possible shock and violence against the enemy force.

The objective of the attacker is to shatter the defenders' will to fight by defeating their attempts to achieve the goals of the defense: *preparation, disruption, concentration, and flexibility*.

### Hasty Attack

You conduct a *hasty attack* with the forces immediately at hand to maintain momentum or to take advantage of the situation and seize the initiative. Clearly, this type of attack does not normally allow for extensive preparation or planning. A *react to contact* battle drill that develops into a squad attack might be one form of a hasty attack. Hasty attacks usually take place during MTCs or during hasty defensive operations. (In a deliberate defense, you will plan counterattack routes to flank the enemy's attack.)

### Deliberate Attack

A *deliberate attack* is one you carefully plan and coordinate. Typically you have more time to conduct thorough troop leading procedures to include mission, reconnaissance, and a thorough analysis of how the terrain, weather, and light can affect you and the enemy. You typically conduct a deliberate attack against a known fixed enemy, or when a hasty attack is not possible or has failed.

## Exploitation

All commanders are expected to exploit successful attacks. In the exploitation, the attacker extends the destruction of the defending force by maintaining constant offensive pressure. All command levels conduct exploitations, but divisions and brigades are the echelons that conduct major exploitation operations. The objective of exploitation is to disintegrate the enemy forces to the point where they have no alternative but surrender or fight following a successful attack. Indicators such as an increased number of enemy prisoners of war (EPW), lack of an organized defense, loss of enemy unit cohesion upon contact, and capture of enemy leaders indicate the opportunity to shift to an exploitation. Companies and platoons may conduct movements to contact or attacks as part of a higher unit's exploitation.

## Pursuit

Pursuits are conducted at the company level and higher. A pursuit typically follows a successful exploitation. The pursuit is designed to prevent a fleeing enemy from escaping and to destroy him. Companies and platoons may conduct pursuits as part of a higher unit's exploitation.

Consider the offensive movements of units of the 96th Division in the Pacific during World War II:

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### The 96th Division on Leyte

By the time we reached the beach, the smoke and dust created by the preparation fire had largely dissipated and we could see the terrain surrounding the landing area, which was flat and covered with some underbrush and palm trees. We were fortunate in that our sector of the beach was not heavily defended, and in going ashore there were few casualties in our platoon. Our company was engaged by small arms fire and a few mortar rounds, but we were able to move forward and secure the landing area in short order. Inland from the beach, however, the terrain turned into swamps, and as we moved ahead it was necessary to wade through muck and mud that was knee-deep at times. . . . Roads in this part of the island were almost nonexistent, with the area being served by dirt trails around the swamps, connecting the villages. . . . The Japanese had generally backed off the beaches and left them lightly defended, setting up their defense around certain villages which were at the junctions of the road system, as well as dug-in positions at points along the roads and trails. Our strategy was to . . . not use the roads and trails, but instead to move through the swamps and rice paddies and attack the enemy strong points from directions not as strongly defended. This was slow, dirty, and extremely fatiguing, but by this tactic we reduced our exposure to the enemy defensive plan, and to heavy fire from their strong points. It must be recognized that in combat the comfort of the front-line troops isn't part of the . . . planning process, but only what they can endure and still be effective. Conditions that seriously [affect] the combat efficiency of the troops then become a factor.

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### Special Purpose Attacks

When the company commander directs it, your platoon conducts a special attack. The commander bases his or her decision on the factors of METT-TC. Special purpose attacks are subordinate forms of an attack and they include:

- Ambush
- Raid
- Counterattack
- Spoiling attack
- Feint
- Demonstration.

As forms of the attack, they share many of the same planning, preparation, and execution considerations of the offense. Feints and demonstrations are also associated with military deception operations.

## Ambush

An ambush is a form of attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. It may be an assault to close with and destroy the enemy or an attack by fire only. In an ambush, you don't have to seize or hold ground. You generally conduct ambushes to reduce the enemy force's overall combat effectiveness. Destruction is the primary reason for conducting an ambush. Other reasons to conduct ambushes are to harass the enemy, capture the enemy, destroy or capture enemy equipment, and gain information about the enemy. Ambushes are classified by category (deliberate or hasty), formation (linear or L-shaped), and type (point, area, or antiarmor). You will use a combination of category, type, and formation for developing your ambush plan.

### *Operational Considerations*

The execution of an ambush is offensive in nature. However, your commanders may direct your platoon to conduct an ambush during offensive or defensive operations. You must take all necessary precautions to ensure that your platoon is not detected during movement to or preparation of the ambush site. The platoon also must have a secure route of withdrawal following the ambush. An ambush normally consists of the following actions:

- Tactical movement to the objective rally point (ORP)
- Reconnaissance of the ambush site
- Establishment of the ambush security site
- Preparation of the ambush site
- Execution of the ambush
- Withdrawal.

### *Task Organization*

The infantry platoon is normally task-organized into assault, support, and security elements for executing the ambush.

*Assault Element.* The assault element executes the ambush. It may employ an attack by fire, an assault, or a combination of those techniques to destroy the ambushed enemy force. The assault element generally consists of a rifle squad. As platoon leader, you normally accompany the assault element.

*Support Element.* The support element fixes the enemy force to prevent it from moving out of the kill zone, which allows the assault element to conduct the ambush. The support element generally uses direct fires in this role, but it may be responsible for calling indirect fires to further fix the ambushed enemy force. The support element generally consists of the weapons squad. The platoon sergeant normally accompanies the support element.

*Security Element.* The security element provides protection and early warning to the assault and support elements, and secures the ORP. It isolates the ambush site both to prevent the ambushed enemy force from moving out of the ambush site and to prevent enemy rescue elements from reaching the ambush site. The security element may also be responsible for securing the platoon's withdrawal route. The security element generally consists of a rifle squad.

## Planning

Your key planning considerations for any ambush include the following:

- Cover the entire kill zone (engagement area) by fire
- Use existing terrain features (rocks or fallen trees, for example) or reinforcing obstacles (Claymores or other mines) that guide into the kill zone to keep the enemy in the kill zone
- Determine how to emplace reinforcing obstacles on the far side of the kill zone
- Protect the assault and support elements with mines, Claymores, or explosives
- Use the security element to isolate the kill zone
- Establish rear security behind the assault element
- Assault into the kill zone to search dead and wounded, to assemble prisoners, and to collect equipment—the assault element must be able to move quickly on its own through the ambush site’s protective obstacles
- Time the actions of all elements of the platoon to prevent the loss of surprise.

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**Note:** When manning an ambush for long periods of time, you may use only one squad to conduct the entire ambush, rotating squads over time. You must consider the factors of METT-TC and especially the company commander’s intent and guidance.

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## Category

You determine the category of ambush—deliberate or hasty—through an analysis of the factors of METT-TC. Typically, the two most important factors are *time* and *enemy*.

*Deliberate.* A *deliberate ambush* is a planned offensive action against a specific target for a specific purpose at a predetermined location. When planning a deliberate ambush, you will need detailed information on the:

- targeted enemy unit’s size and composition
- enemy’s available weapons and equipment
- enemy’s route and direction of movement
- times that the targeted enemy unit will reach or pass specified points along the route.

*Hasty.* The platoon (or squad) conducts a *hasty ambush* when it makes visual contact with an enemy force and has time to establish an ambush without the enemy detecting it. Your conduct of the hasty ambush should represent the execution of disciplined initiative in line with the commander’s intent. The actions for a hasty ambush should be established in a unit SOP and rehearsed so Soldiers know what to do on your signal.

### **Formations**

You must consider the factors of METT-TC to determine the required formation.

*Linear.* In an ambush using a linear formation, the assault and support elements deploy parallel to the enemy's route. This position forces the enemy on the long axis of the kill zone, and subjects the enemy to flanking fire. You use the linear formation in close terrain that restricts the enemy's ability to maneuver against your platoon, or in open terrain (provided you can come up with a means of keeping the enemy in the kill zone).

*L-Shaped.* In an L-shaped ambush the assault element forms the long leg parallel to the enemy's direction of movement along the kill zone. The support element forms the short leg at one end of and at a right angle to the assault element. This provides both flanking (long leg) and enfilading (short leg) fires against the enemy. Use the L-shaped ambush at a sharp bend in a road, trail, or stream. You should not use it where the short leg would have to cross a straight road or trail. Consider the other factors of METT-TC before opting for the L-shaped formation. When conducting an L-shaped ambush, you must give special attention to sectors of fire and your weapons' danger zone because of the risk of fratricide.

*V-Shaped Ambush.* In this ambush, you place the V-shaped ambush assault elements along both sides of the enemy route so they form a V. Take extreme care to ensure neither of your groups fires into the other. This formation subjects the enemy to both enfilading and interlocking fire.

### **Type**

Your company commander, following an analysis of the factors of METT-TC, determines the type of ambush your platoon will employ.

### **Conducting an Area Ambush**

Units smaller than platoons do not conduct an *area ambush*—an ambush of more than one point. This ambush works best where enemy movement is restricted. Once you have prepared the platoon, you conduct the area ambush the same as a point ambush. The dominating feature of an area ambush is how you synchronize the separate point ambushes.

Area ambushes require more planning and control to execute successfully. Surprise is more difficult to achieve simply because of your unit's dispersion in the area of operations (AO). Having more than one ambush site increases the likelihood of the enemy or civilians detecting you. This major disadvantage is offset by the increased flexibility and sophistication available to you, the platoon leader.

### **Conducting a Point Ambush**

Point ambushes are set at the most ideal location to inflict damage on the enemy. Such ambushes must be able to handle being hit by the enemy force from more than one direction. The ambush site should enable the unit to execute an ambush in two or three main directions. The other directions must be covered by security that gives early warning of enemy attack.

## Raid

A raid is a limited-objective form of an attack, usually small-scale, involving swift penetration of hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or destroy installations. A raid always ends with a planned withdrawal to a friendly location upon completion of the mission. Your platoon can conduct an independent raid in support of the battalion or higher headquarters operation, or it can participate as part of the company in a series of raids. Rifle squads do not execute raids; they participate in platoon raids.

### *Operational Considerations*

Your platoon may conduct a raid to accomplish a number of missions, including the following:

- Capture prisoners
- Destroy specific command, control, and communications locations
- Destroy logistical areas
- Obtain information concerning enemy locations, dispositions, strengths, intentions, or methods of operation
- Confuse the enemy or disrupt his plans
- Seize contraband.

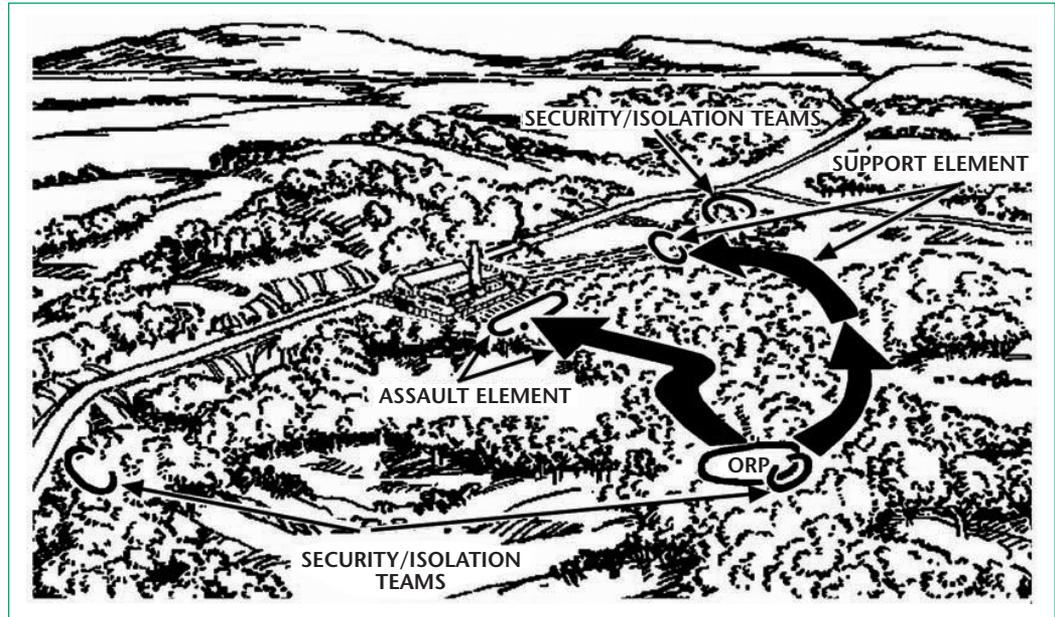
### *Task Organization*

The operation's purpose determines the task organization of the raiding element. However, the raiding force normally consists of the following elements:

- Support element (support by fire)
- Assault element (with the essential task of the mission)
- Breach element (if required to reduce enemy obstacles)
- Isolation/security element.

### *Conduct of the Raid*

The main differences between a raid and other special purpose attacks are the raid's limited objectives and the associated withdrawal following completion. The sequence of platoon actions for a raid is very similar to those for an ambush, however. Additionally, the platoon's assault element may need to conduct a breach of a protective obstacle (if you have not designated a breach element). You may conduct raids in daylight or darkness, within or beyond the parent unit's supporting distances. When the enemy location to be raided is beyond supporting distances of friendly lines, the raiding party operates as a separate element. An objective, usually very specific in nature, is assigned to orient the raiding unit (Figure 9.1). During the withdrawal, the attacking element should use a route different from that it used to conduct the raid.



**Figure 9.1** Platoon Raid

### Counterattack

The counterattack is a form of attack by part or all of a friendly defending element against an enemy attacking force. The general objective of a counterattack is to deny the enemy his goal of attacking. This attack by defensive elements regains the initiative or denies the enemy success with his attack. Your platoon may conduct a counterattack as a lightly committed element within a company or as the battalion reserve. Counterattacks afford the friendly defender the opportunity to create favorable conditions for the commitment of combat power. The platoon counterattacks after the enemy begins his attack, reveals his main effort, or creates an assailable flank. As part of a higher headquarters, your platoon conducts the counterattack much like other attacks. However, you must synchronize the execution of your counterattack within the overall defensive effort. Your platoon should rehearse the counterattack and prepare the ground it will cross, paying close attention to friendly unit locations, obstacles, and engagement areas.

### Spoiling Attack

A spoiling attack is a form of attack that preempts or seriously impairs an enemy attack while the enemy is in the process of planning or preparing to attack. The purpose of a spoiling attack is to disrupt the enemy's offensive capabilities and timelines, destroy his personnel and equipment, and gain additional time for the defending element to prepare positions. The purpose is not to secure terrain or other physical objectives. Your battalion or company commander may direct your platoon to conduct a spoiling attack during friendly defensive preparations to strike the enemy while he is in assembly areas or attack positions where he is preparing offensive operations. You plan for a spoiling attack as you do for other attacks.

### Feint

A feint is a form of attack used to deceive the enemy as to the location and time of the actual operation. Feints attempt to induce the enemy to move reserves and shift his fire support to locations where they cannot immediately affect the actual operation. When directed to conduct a feint, your platoon seeks direct fire or contact with the enemy, but avoids decisive engagement. The battalion or company commander will assign your platoon an objective limited in size or scope. Your planning, preparation, and execution considerations are the same as for other forms of attack. You must convince the enemy that the feint is the actual attack.

### Demonstration

A demonstration is a form of attack designed to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the actual operation by a display of force. Demonstrations attempt to deceive the enemy and induce him to move reserves and shift his fire support to locations where they cannot immediately affect the actual operation. When directed to conduct a demonstration, your platoon does not seek to make contact with the enemy. Your planning, preparation, and execution considerations are the same as for other forms of attack. It must appear to be an actual impending attack.



### Critical Thinking

In the opening vignette, what kind of offensive operation(s) did CPT Winters employ?



# CONCLUSION

Great military leaders throughout history—such as Julius Caesar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Jackson, Lee, Grant, Patton, Bradley, Eisenhower, Schwarzkopf, and Powell—consistently express a clear understanding of strong, effective offensive operations. You read again and again in their writings that they deeply valued the power of the strong *offense*. The US Army is an offense-oriented army and only goes on the defensive long enough to consolidate its forces in order to quickly resume the offense.

The purpose of offensive operations is to destroy the enemy, impose US will, and achieve decisive victory. No matter what kind of attack your squad or platoon must undertake, you seek to employ the four characteristics of the offensive: *surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity*. Your goal is to seize and hold the initiative, maintain momentum, and force the enemy to fight at the time and place of your choosing. An important part of your role as a junior officer will be to train your Soldiers in the skills they need to accomplish that goal.

## Key Words

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**fix**

**concentration**

**tempo**

**audacity**

**movement to contact (MTC)**

**attack**

**exploitation**

**pursuit**

## Learning Assessment

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1. Describe the four characteristics of offensive operations.
2. Compare and contrast these types of offensive operations:
  - Movement to Contact
  - Attack
  - Exploitation
  - Pursuit
3. Identify and describe the intent of the six subordinate forms of an attack.

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