

FMFM 13-7

MAGTF Breaching Operations



U.S. Marine Corps

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Headquarters United States Marine Corps
Washington, DC 20380-0001

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FOREWORD

Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 13-7, *MAGTF Breaching Operations*, provides guidance for commanders and their staffs who plan and conduct breaching operations in support of Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) operations. It focuses on breaching fundamentals, organization, planning, and types of breaching operations.

Obstacles which limit the MAGTF's ability to maneuver must be overcome. Obstacle breaching allows a force to have continued freedom of movement and restores the capability to wage maneuver warfare.

Recommendations for improving this manual are invited from commands as well as directly from individuals. Forward suggestions using the User Suggestion Form format to —

COMMANDING GENERAL
DOCTRINE DIVISION (C 42)
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
3300 RUSSELL ROAD SUITE 318A
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Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. E. Wilhelm".

C. E. WILHELM

Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General
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User Suggestion Form

From:

To: COMMANDING GENERAL, DOCTRINE DIVISION (C 42),
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND,
3300 RUSSELL ROAD SUITE 318A, QUANTICO, VA
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Subj: RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FMFM 13-7, *MAGTF
BREACHING OPERATIONS*

1. In accordance with the Foreword to FMFM 13-7, which invites individuals to submit suggestions concerning this FMFM directly to the above addressee, the following unclassified recommendation is forwarded:

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Challenge to Maneuver

Maneuver warfare is the warfighting philosophy of the Marine Corps. This philosophy seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions. Speed, surprise, and suppressive firepower are key. Maneuver warfare depends on freedom of movement and seeks to avoid enemy strengths in order to focus efforts on enemy weaknesses whenever possible. The enemy will use firepower, terrain, and manmade obstacles to strip our freedom to maneuver. Friendly forces will first attempt to bypass such obstacles; however, this may not always be an option. In this case, breaching operations restore the ability to wage maneuver warfare once again. Obstacles which limit maneuver, whether on land or at sea, must be overcome.

Overcoming Obstacles

An obstacle is any obstruction designed or employed to disrupt, fix, turn, or block the movement of an opposing force, and to impose additional losses in personnel, time, and equipment on the opposing force. Obstacles can exist naturally or can be manmade, or can be a combination of both (Joint Pub 1-02). The effectiveness of an obstacle is enhanced considerably when covered by observation and fire. As friendly forces breach or bypass obstacles they may be exposed to direct and indirect fire. Mines will typically be employed with other obstacle types, such as wire and tank ditches, to create complex obstacles. Complex obstacles are often used to reinforce a natural obstacle feature such as a river, dry gap, or surf zone.

Obstacles can include abatis, antitank ditches, blown bridges, built-up areas, minefields, rivers, road craters, terrain, and wire (FMFRP 0-14). Manmade obstacles can be either tactical or protective. Tactical obstacles limit the attacker's ability to maneuver, particularly mechanized forces, and may or may not be within small arms range. Tactical obstacles are integrated into the defense's scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. Protective obstacles provide close-in protection and are usually placed just outside of hand grenade range.

Obstacle breaching is the employment of a combination of tactics and techniques to project combat power to the far side of an obstacle. Understanding breaching theory is the first step to understanding breaching tactics. Breaching is conducted by rapidly applying concentrated force at a point to penetrate the obstacle and rupture the defense. This is a combined-arms operation. The commander's intent must be understood when planning breaching operations, and the main effort must be clearly designated and supported by other units. The commander should plan to shift personnel and equipment consistent with the main effort. The shift of breaching assets is particularly critical when successive breaching operations are anticipated. He should also plan for redundancy of breaching assets to allow for losses of personnel and equipment.

Breaching Actions

Breaching actions are the tactics that the unit will execute on contact with obstacles. Forces encountering obstacles either attempt to bypass or reduce the obstacles. A **bypass** is a route that avoids the obstacle. Bypassing obstacles must be done with caution to avoid killing zones. **Obstacle reduction** is the physical creation of a lane through or over obstacles. Attempting to force or "bull" through an obstacle is not a breaching operation. It is a desperate course of action undertaken only when a commander must extricate his force from an untenable position within an obstacle and when no other breaching options are available. Normally, engineers and specialized equipment are required to reduce an obstacle. Obstacle reduction is a primary task of ground combat element (GCE) engineers during offensive operations.