

Chapter 1

Army Aviation's Role in Unified Land Operations

SECTION I – UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

1-1. *Unified land operations* are simultaneous offensive, defensive, stability, or Defense Support of Civil Authorities' (DSCA) tasks to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to shape the OE; prevent conflict; consolidate gains; and win our nation's wars as part of unified action (ADP 3-0). Army Aviation integrates into unified land operations by conducting air-ground operations as the aviation maneuver force of the combined arms team. *Air-ground operations (AGO)* are the simultaneous or synchronized employment of ground forces with aviation maneuver and fires to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. Employing the combined and complimentary effects of air and ground maneuver and fires through AGO presents the enemy with multiple dilemmas: increasing combat power, mission effectiveness, agility, flexibility, and survivability of the entire combined arms team. AGO ensure that all members of the combined arms team, whether on the ground or in the air, work toward common and mutually supporting objectives to meet the higher commander's intent.

1-2. Effective AGO requires the full integration of aviation and ground maneuver as a combined arms team. As a key component of the ground scheme of maneuver, Army Aviation achieves interdependence with ground forces through shared understanding of the operational environment, an integrated or synchronized scheme of maneuver and fires, clearly defined triggers and conditions for employment, shared understanding of the commander's intent, clear command and support relationships, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities that maximize the capabilities of each element of the combined arms team, while offsetting the others' limitations. Although AGO demands integration of aviation tactical tasks into the ground scheme of maneuver, this does not mean that greater planning times are always required. More detailed planning and rehearsals are required when the combined arms team is newly formed. Agility, speed of action, and mission success are significantly enhanced when—

- Effective habitual relationships are established.
- Liaisons are embedded throughout the operations process.
- Procedures are standardized and practiced.
- A common operational picture is maintained.
- Mutual trust is built through effective relationships and shared understanding.

SECTION II – CHALLENGES FOR ARMY AVIATION

1-3. Army Aviation forces must be organized, trained, and equipped to meet worldwide challenges against a full range of threats; however, readiness to conduct LSCO against a peer threat is the greatest challenge to our force today. LSCO against a peer threat is incredibly demanding in terms of operational tempo and lethality. Every domain (air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace) may be contested by a capable adversary who has likely invested significant resources learning from recent United States operations. State and non-state actors threaten with conventional and unconventional weapons, potentially including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) weapons capabilities. The enemy also employs anti-access and area denial tactics which restrict freedom of maneuver through the use of advanced radar, infrared, and laser air defense systems. On the ground, support nodes and assembly areas are vulnerable to precession long range fires, threat aviation, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) alike.

1-4. Army Aviation must be lethal, survivable, and adaptable in order to provide combat power to the ground commander in LSCO. See FM 3-0 for more details.

Current Lethality Challenges: Russian Integrated Defense in Depth

Since Operation Barbarossa in 1941, Soviet and Russian military thinkers have prized area denial tactics. Emerging from World War II, Soviet Deep Battle doctrine required synchronization of precise ground and air fires with maneuver in order to mass on critical targets at a decisive moment. Deep Battle endured throughout the Cold War and continues to influence current Russian doctrine. Russia's current concept applies Deep Battle in a defensive nature to protect a critical asset in three dimensions.

In practice, however, Russia's current approach employs not a single protective layer, but multiple mutually-supporting capabilities which include man-portable-, short-, medium-, and long-range air defense systems; manned and unmanned aircraft; tube and rocket artillery; ballistic and cruise missiles; direct fire systems; and information warfare capabilities. The sum of these systems is an integrated network of combined arms capabilities designed to deter enemy attack or inhibit freedom of action from the tactical to the strategic levels.

At the tactical level, integrated air defenses attempt to deter or defeat low altitude rotary wing (RW) and unmanned systems operations. An integrated fires complex employs artillery systems for counter-fire and fire support, and electronic warfare (EW) assets seek to disrupt enemy communications and operations.

At the operational level, air defense systems employ a blend of short- and medium-range missiles alongside long-range precision fires. Attacks target deep critical assets such as aviation headquarters, tactical assembly areas, and sustainment sites. Russia's intent at the operational level is to prevent brigade-sized elements from effectively concentrating combat power, resupplying, or reorganizing.

At the strategic level, the Russian integrated defense in depth combines lethal and non-lethal capabilities to target major air and seaports, assembly areas, high-level headquarters, regional networks and communications, high-performance aircraft, and surface ships. Cyber and other information warfare elements attempt to disrupt operations or deny access to information anywhere in the theater through targeted or mass attacks. This multi-layered network seeks to deter enemy attack by presenting a prohibitively costly theater of operations; if deterrence fails, it seeks to impede an enemy force from ever organizing to challenge Russian actions.

SECTION III – CORE COMPETENCIES OF ARMY AVIATION

1-5. As a fully-integrated component of the combined arms team, Army Aviation forces are organized, trained, and equipped to defeat a full range of threats. Army Aviation forces provide an asymmetric maneuver advantage through amplified reach, protection, lethality, and situational understanding. Army Aviation's inherent mobility, speed, range, flexibility, lethality, precision, and persistent reconnaissance capabilities provide the combined arms team with multiple options to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage through the following competencies executed individually, simultaneously, or sequentially across multiple domains. Army Aviation is unique in that, in addition to its ability to maneuver in the third dimension, it is able to operate in all six warfighting functions in support of commanders' missions and objectives.

PROVIDE ACCURATE AND TIMELY INFORMATION COLLECTION

1-6. The Army executes intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance through the operations and intelligence process and information collection. *Information collection* is an activity that synchronizes and integrates the planning and employment of sensors and assets as well as the processing, exploitation, and dissemination of systems in direct support (DS) of current and future operations (FM 3-55). A successful information collection effort results in the timely collection and reporting of relevant and accurate information, which either supports the production of intelligence or is disseminated as combat information.

1-7. Army Aviation should be utilized in every step of the information collection planning and execution process. Effective planning for aviation capabilities may enable the combined arms team to determine the enemy's intent and answer the commander's critical information requirements by observation or fighting for information as required. This enables the commander to confirm or deny an enemy course of action (COA) and concentrate combat power at the time and place of the maneuver commander's choice to seize or retain the initiative.

1-8. Through the conduct of zone, route, and/or area reconnaissance; movement to contact; or reconnaissance in force (when task-organized), Army Aviation provides the commander with accurate and timely information on enemy force disposition, composition, strengths, and weaknesses. Army Aviation also provides information on population patterns of life, ground routes and mobility corridors, dense urban terrain and infrastructure, and man-made or natural obstacles in order to answer a commander's priority intelligence requirements (PIR). In addition to answering PIR, Army Aviation's speed and flexibility provide a unique ability to answer friendly force information requirements for forces that are geographically dispersed increasing shared understanding.

1-9. Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units conduct reconnaissance as a maneuver force with manned and unmanned systems maneuvering interdependently. ***Manned unmanned teaming (MUM-T) is the integrated maneuver of Army Aviation RW and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to conduct movement to contact, attack, reconnaissance, and security tasks.*** MUM-T enables increased depth and breadth of aviation reconnaissance and maneuver, increased persistence over the reconnaissance objective, increased ability to gain and maintain enemy contact, increased survivability, and more options to develop the situation with enhanced maneuver, fires, and command and control (C2).

1-10. Army Aviation assault units may conduct infiltration and extraction of dismounted reconnaissance elements conducting detailed reconnaissance of designated reconnaissance objectives. They may also emplace remote sensors on key avenues of approach and terrain features; conduct route, area, and limited zone reconnaissance; evacuate captured enemy personnel for intelligence exploitation; or conduct continuous resupply of ground reconnaissance elements to enable continuous maximum reconnaissance forward.

1-11. The commander can task Army Aviation units and assets with the mission to provide multi-intelligence sensor data and information from manned and unmanned systems to the Army intelligence enterprise. Some examples of sensor data include full-motion video, synthetic aperture radar/moving target indications, and signals intelligence. To meet these requirements, Army Aviation units must be augmented with the appropriate communications capabilities in order to connect to the larger intelligence architecture. Signal and military intelligence units coordinate and augment Army Aviation units in order to establish the necessary communication connections and implement reporting procedures. Together, these units position the communication systems and processing, exploitation, and dissemination capabilities at the most effective locations to ensure sensor data and information are effectively analyzed across the Army intelligence enterprise.

PROVIDE REACTION TIME AND MANEUVER SPACE

1-12. Army Aviation security operations provide the combined arms team early and accurate warning of enemy activities, reaction time, and maneuver space to prevent surprise, and the ability to rapidly develop the situation upon gaining enemy contact.

1-13. Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units perform security tasks as part of the combined arms team. They may operate as a sub-element of a larger combined arms security force conducting screen, guard, cover, or area security tasks. When properly task-organized, they may conduct screen or guard tasks as a separate maneuver force in an assigned area of operations (AO). Employing MUM-T enables the security force to expand the breadth and depth of the screen to maintain continuous surveillance of avenues of approach, locate lead enemy elements, and maintain enemy contact to enable increased early warning, reaction time, and space for the main body to develop the situation while preventing early deployment of friendly forces.

1-14. As the situation develops, Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units can quickly transition from the screen to conduct attacks to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance, and/or lead security elements with the necessary agility, long range acquisition and fires without becoming decisively engaged. Army Aviation units also support the consolidation of gains by conducting area security tasks for the supported commander.

DESTROY, DEFEAT, DISRUPT, DIVERT, OR DELAY ENEMY FORCES

1-15. Army Aviation conducts attacks during the execution of offensive, defensive, and stability operations in support of the combined arms team throughout the depth and breadth of the AO. Army Aviation attacks to destroy, defeat, disrupt, divert, or delay the enemy, who may be either in contact or out of contact with friendly ground forces. Regardless of whether the enemy is in contact with friendly ground forces or not, attacks are executed as deliberate or hasty operations.

1-16. Through the integration of MUM-T to support attacks, Army Aviation extends the reach of the combined arms team through increased acquisition ranges, persistent reconnaissance, enhanced positive identification, greater capability to maintain enemy contact, greater lethality, precision targeting of high-value enemy capabilities, extended communications, and real-time battle damage assessment (BDA).

1-17. When enemy forces are in close contact with friendly ground maneuver forces, Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units attack to destroy, defeat, disrupt, divert, or delay enemy forces to enable the combined arms team to seize, retain, or exploit the initiative. The ground maneuver commander in contact is responsible for the detailed integration and synchronization of Army Aviation in the overall scheme of maneuver, and controls the distribution and synchronization of Army Aviation maneuver and fires. Airspace coordination is required with the appropriate airspace control authority.

1-18. When enemy forces are not in close contact with friendly ground maneuver forces, Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units maneuver independently from ground maneuver forces to attack to destroy, defeat, disrupt, divert, or delay enemy capabilities before they can be brought to bear effectively against friendly forces. The Army Aviation maneuver commander controls Army Aviation maneuver and fires within an assigned AO, but the attack is still synchronized and/or integrated with the overall higher ground scheme of maneuver. Based on the complexity of the targeted enemy force and OE, Army Aviation attacks against enemy forces out of friendly contact are frequently higher risk operations that require detailed planning by the supported ground maneuver headquarters for the proper allocation, synchronization and integration of joint fires, collection assets, and other enabling capabilities.

1-19. When task-organized with adequate ground maneuver forces and fires, Army Aviation can operate as the tactical combat force (TCF) in the support area to defeat Level I, II, and III threats.

1-20. Army Aviation attacks against enemy forces in or out of contact with friendly ground forces can be the decisive or shaping operation at the tactical or operational level, and may enable the combined arms team to maintain initiative or consolidate gains while presenting multiple dilemmas to the enemy.

AIR ASSAULT GROUND MANEUVER FORCES

1-21. Army Aviation conducts air assaults during offensive, defensive, and stability operations throughout the depth and breadth of the AO. Air assaults are combined arms operations conducted to gain a positional advantage, envelop, or turn enemy forces that may or may not be in a position to oppose the operation. At

the tactical level, air assault operations emphasize seizing terrain, destroying enemy forces, and interdicting enemy withdrawal routes.

1-22. Army Aviation assault and heavy lift units, supported by attack and reconnaissance units, rapidly reposition personnel and equipment to enable the combined arms team to strike over extended distances and terrain to attack the enemy where and when it is most vulnerable. Air assaults extend the tactical and operational reach of the combined arms team by overcoming the effects of terrain, achieving surprise, and isolating, dislocating, or destroying enemy forces by rapidly massing combat power at the maneuver commander's time and place of choice.

1-23. The air assault task force (AATF) is the entire combined arms team conducting the air assault. The AATF commander (normally the ground maneuver brigade or battalion commander whose subordinate echelon constitutes the main combat force [FM 3-99]) commands the combined arms team through all phases of the air assault. When task-organized with ground maneuver forces and fires, an Army Aviation battalion or brigade commander can operate as the AATF commander. The aviation task force commander (or a designated subordinate leader for air assaults below battalion level) serves as the air mission commander and commands the aviation forces through all phases of the air assault and follow-on ground tactical plan. The ground tactical commander is the commander of the largest ground maneuver force inserted during the air assault and assumes command of the ground tactical force in the landing zone (LZ) and upon initiation of the ground tactical plan.

1-24. Army Aviation attack and reconnaissance units utilizing MUM-T conduct reconnaissance, security, and hasty or deliberate attacks against enemy forces in and out of friendly contact under the control of the air mission commander during the assault and may transition to the control of the ground tactical commander upon initiation of the ground tactical plan. When task-organized with ground maneuver forces and fires, Army Aviation battalions, squadrons, or brigades can operate as the AATF.

1-25. Army Aviation provides the combined arms team with the agility, mobility, lethality, and the element of surprise to rapidly mass combat forces and equipment, regardless of terrain, to seize the initiative by attacking enemy forces or seizing objectives to exploit tactical and operational opportunities and enemy forces when most vulnerable.

AIR MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES

1-26. Army Aviation assault, general support (GS), heavy lift, and fixed-wing (FW) units conduct air movement of personnel, leaders, critical supplies, equipment, and systems during the conduct of offensive, defensive, stability, and DSCA operations throughout the depth and breadth of the AO.

1-27. Army Aviation RW aircraft conduct air movement using both internal and external (sling) loads. The supported unit provides pickup zone (PZ) and LZ control, load rigging, ground movement, and certification. Army Aviation FW aircraft conduct air movement with internal loads between improved airfields to move limited critical personnel and supplies in the AO or area of interest. The loading and ground movement of critical supplies and personnel for FW operations is typically controlled and executed through the arrival/departure airfield control group.

1-28. Air movement operations can be conducted in support of a variety of operations, to include—

- Foreign humanitarian assistance.
- Foreign disaster relief.
- Homeland defense.
- Non-combatant evacuation.
- Routine and emergency resupply of combat units.
- Movement of barrier materials and munitions in the defense.
- Movement of fuel, ammunition, and personnel over extended lines of communications (LOCs) to support the offense.
- Battlefield circulation of key leaders.

1-29. Air movement operations reduce risk to ground logistics units through economy of force, enable operations in areas with limited ground LOCs, allow faster repair and sustainment of combat power, and support forward positioning of key leaders to exercise mission command.

EVACUATE WOUNDED OR RECOVER ISOLATED PERSONNEL

1-30. As a vital component of the overall health service support (HSS) mission, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) provides the linkage between roles of medical care. MEDEVAC is performed by dedicated platforms (ground or air) with medical professionals capable of providing timely, efficient movement and en-route care of the wounded, injured, or ill. DA is the sole component directed to provide intra-theater aeromedical evacuation (AE) in the patient movement system within the Department of Defense. Intra-theater AE is conducted by Army air ambulance units in support of the joint force while conducting offensive, defensive, stability, and DSCA operations throughout the depth and breadth of the AO. Army Aviation brigades and battalions provide oversight of Army medical air ambulance units conducting intra-theater AE according to combatant commander priorities, theater evacuation policies, and Department of Defense directives.

1-31. The speed, flexibility, and en-route care capabilities of Army AE provides HSS more options in the allocation of medical treatment facilities (MTFs) by mitigating the effects of extended distances between points-of-injury and MTFs, or between MTFs while maintaining a continuum of care. AE is a non-combatant, humanitarian mission and is provided special protections under the Law of War and the Geneva Conventions.

1-32. Army Aviation utility, heavy lift, and FW units may conduct casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) when required in support of the joint force during offensive, defensive, stability, and DSCA operations. CASEVAC, as a secondary component to the patient movement system, is the unregulated movement of wounded, injured, or ill personnel using non-medical assets that are dedicated to or designated in support of CASEVAC operations. Opportune use of non-dedicated platforms is the lowest level of CASEVAC operations. In contrast to MEDEVAC assets, CASEVAC assets may or may not include the provision of en-route care, depending on the availability of medical augmentation personnel and equipment. CASEVAC may include carry-on medical equipment to accompany medical personnel, but the equipment and supplies are dependent upon availability at the time of the mission. As a non-medical platform, CASEVAC aircraft retain their legal combatant status in an AO; therefore, use of these assets includes the acceptance of additional risk to the patient (who is a non-combatant). Without standardized equipment or en-route medical care, CASEVAC generally lacks the assurance of continuity of care when moving a patient to a MTF. Even with these limitations, CASEVAC is an essential part of the overall patient movement system, and may be the first step in moving an injured Soldier from the point of injury. MEDEVAC and CASEVAC support requires detailed assessment and planning in order to achieve an effective patient movement plan.

1-33. Army commanders designate, train, and posture their units to effect recovery of isolated personnel. Personnel recovery (PR) missions are joint operations and may require the employment of the full range of unified action partner capabilities prior to and during execution. Aviation units are often tasked to support the recovery of isolated personnel by transporting PR security elements or recovery forces during immediate, deliberate, or external supported recoveries. This support may also include AE, attack, reconnaissance, UAS, and C2 support assets to support the PR methods of unassisted, immediate, deliberate, and external supported recovery.

1-34. Evacuation missions can be conducted in support of a variety of operations, to include foreign humanitarian assistance, foreign disaster relief, DSCA, non-combatant evacuation, and all combat operations across the range of military operations and conflict continuum. Evacuation and recovery operations reduce risk and increase survivability of the combined arms team while enabling greater freedom of action.

ENABLE COMMAND AND CONTROL OVER EXTENDED RANGES AND COMPLEX TERRAIN

1-35. Army Aviation enhances C2 by enabling the maneuver commander to better understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, and assess operations over extended ranges and in complex terrain. Army Aviation enhances shared understanding of the OE through—

- Execution of movement to contact, attack, reconnaissance and security operations.
- Accurate and timely reporting via long range communications.
- Dedicated C2 support platforms.
- UAS communications relay packages.
- Distribution of full motion video sensor information.
- Management of controlled airspace through air traffic services (ATS).
- Employment of aviation liaisons.
- Embedded aviation staff elements at brigade and above headquarters.
- Battlefield circulation of key leaders.

1-36. Attack and reconnaissance units conducting movement to contact, attack, reconnaissance, and security operations reporting via long-range communications and full motion video provide the maneuver commander with timely and accurate information to enable the commander to understand and visualize the terrain, friendly and enemy forces. Army Aviation liaisons and embedded staffs assist the maneuver commander with visualizing and describing how best to employ Army Aviation as a member of the combined arms team. Use of Army Aviation dedicated C2 support aircraft enables the maneuver commander to position forward to visualize, direct, lead, and assess ongoing operations. MUM-T enables the maneuver commander to visualize and assess operations through timely BDA and detailed reconnaissance throughout the depth of the AO, and across multiple domains.

SECTION IV – ARMY AVIATION IN THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

1-37. To clearly visualize and articulate Army Aviation operations, commanders apply the four components of the operational framework. This framework is a cognitive tool to develop shared understanding and describe the commander's visualization of how Army Aviation operates in time, space, purpose, and resources while considering the physical, temporal, virtual, and cognitive aspects in an AO, area of influence, and area of interest. The following four components of the operational framework do not limit any of the seven core competencies of Army Aviation:

- Commanders assign subordinate units an AO for the conduct of operations.
- Commanders designate close, deep, support, and consolidation areas.
- Commanders establish decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations to articulate an operation in terms of purpose.
- Commanders designate main and supporting efforts to designate shifting and prioritization of resources.

AREA OF OPERATIONS

1-38. The AO is a designated area that commanders are assigned to conduct operations. From this designated area, they assign subordinate units smaller AOs based on the commander's visualization of the operation. Smaller unit AOs are established with regard to the unit's ability to influence what happens within the area. Within the AO, commanders use control measures to coordinate fires and maneuver and organize operations.

1-39. When task-organized appropriately, Army Aviation battalions or brigades can be assigned an AO and serve as the maneuver task force headquarters conducting reconnaissance and security operations, or during offensive or defensive operations in an economy of force. Assigning an AO to an aviation unit streamlines aviation maneuver and enables detailed integration with supporting assets such as joint fires or FW