

## Chapter 4

# Movement to Contact

*When armies approach each other, it makes all the difference which owns only the ground on which it stands or sleeps and which one owns all the rest.*

Winston Churchill: *Their Finest Hour*, 1949

*Movement to contact* is a type of offensive operation designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact (FM 3-0). A commander conducts this type of offensive operation when the tactical situation is not clear or when the enemy has broken contact. A properly executed movement to contact develops the combat situation and maintains the commander's freedom of action after contact is gained. This flexibility is essential in maintaining the initiative. All of the tactical concepts, control measures, and planning considerations introduced in [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#) apply to the conduct of a movement to contact. Many of the attack preparation consideration introduced in [Chapter 5](#) also apply.

4-1. Purposeful and aggressive movement, decentralized control, and the hasty deployment of combined arms formations from the march to attack or defend characterize the movement to contact. The fundamentals of a movement to contact are—

- Focus all efforts on finding the enemy.
- Make initial contact with the smallest force possible, consistent with protecting the force.
- Make initial contact with small, mobile, self-contained forces to avoid decisive engagement of the main body on ground chosen by the enemy. This allows the commander maximum flexibility to develop the situation.
- Task-organize the force and use movement formations to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.

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