

Appendix C

Airborne and Air Assault Operations

A landing against organized and highly trained opposition is probably the most difficult undertaking which military forces are called upon to face.

General of the Army George C. Marshall, 1943

Joint force commanders conduct entry operations at the operational level of war. Commanders operating at the tactical level conduct airborne or air assault operations to gain a positional advantage or to envelop or turn the enemy. Airborne and air assault operations are types of entry operations that use a vertical envelopment to insert a force into an area of operations (AO). An enemy may or may not be in a position to oppose the operation. While the commander should attempt to achieve an unopposed landing, he must prepare for the presence of opposition.

C-1. The capability to conduct airborne and air assault operations allows the commander to—

- Threaten enemy rear areas, causing the enemy to divert combat elements to protect vital installations and hold key terrain.
- Overcome distances quickly, overfly barriers, and bypass enemy defenses.
- Extend the area over which he can exert his influence.
- Disperse his reserve forces widely for force protection reasons while maintaining their capability for effective and rapid response.
- Exploit his combat power by increasing tactical mobility.

COMMON FACTORS

C-2. Factors common to airborne and air assault operations are the use of the reverse planning process, condition setting, and the impact of meteorological conditions (weather and light data).

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