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**MANOEUVRE  
WARFARE THEORY  
AND THE TACTICAL  
LEVEL OF WAR**

**A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy  
(Humanities) in Defence and Strategic Studies at  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis will determine the degree to which contemporary Manoeuvre Warfare theory is appropriate at the tactical level of war. In order to arrive at a basic working definition of Manoeuvre Warfare, it will draw mainly on material from the US Marine Corps. Contemporary military doctrine acknowledges the existence of three levels of war, the strategic, operational, and tactical. This was not always the case, as the operational level is a very new construct. Manoeuvre Warfare emerged as a response to the need to link the tactical and strategic levels that resulted in the inception of the operational level. While conceived at the operational level, Manoeuvre Warfare has been applied to all three levels of war. This thesis examines the context of Manoeuvre Warfare, and looks at how the US Marine Corps defines this doctrine. It then defines the three levels of war and looks at the main examples used to support manoeuvre theory before investigating the application of manoeuvre theory at the tactical level of war. This thesis will show that some key aspects of Manoeuvre Warfare are not actually appropriate at the tactical level.

**The views expressed in this paper  
are the author's own and are not  
an indication of New Zealand  
Defence Force Policy**

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