

As the Army moves forward with transformation, many changes are affecting the combined arms team. One area in which we, as Field Artillerymen, cannot afford any lapse is the ability to provide effective, continuous fire support to the maneuver commander in the close fight.

In the *Straight Arrow* 4th Battalion, 42d Field Artillery, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Hood, Texas, we developed close support battery operations that helped accomplish our brigade combat team (BCT) objectives.

Advances in technology have increased the ability of commanders at all levels to visualize the battlefield, while increases in lethality, accuracy and range have produced lethal combined arms teams that are more agile, responsive and able to deal the decisive blow to the enemy. Prior to the development of these technologies, the average brigade area of responsibility at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, California, involved two maneuver corridors. Due to the capabilities of the Army battle command system (ABCS) provided by such systems as the advanced FA tactical data system (AFATDS), Force XXI battle command brigade and below (FBCB²), maneuver control system (MCS), air and missile defense workstation (AMDWS), all-source analysis system (ASAS), combat service support control system (CSSCS) and the tactical unmanned aerial vehicle (TUAV), the average brigade area of responsibility has grown

more than 50 percent to include three NTC maneuver corridors.

We now can communicate over longer distances with the fielding of the enhanced position location reporting system (EPLRS) and FBCB², the streamlining of the flow of fire missions in AFATDS and the increase in our targeting capabilities with the TUAV.

The Close Support Battery in Task Force Operations on the 21st Century Battlefield

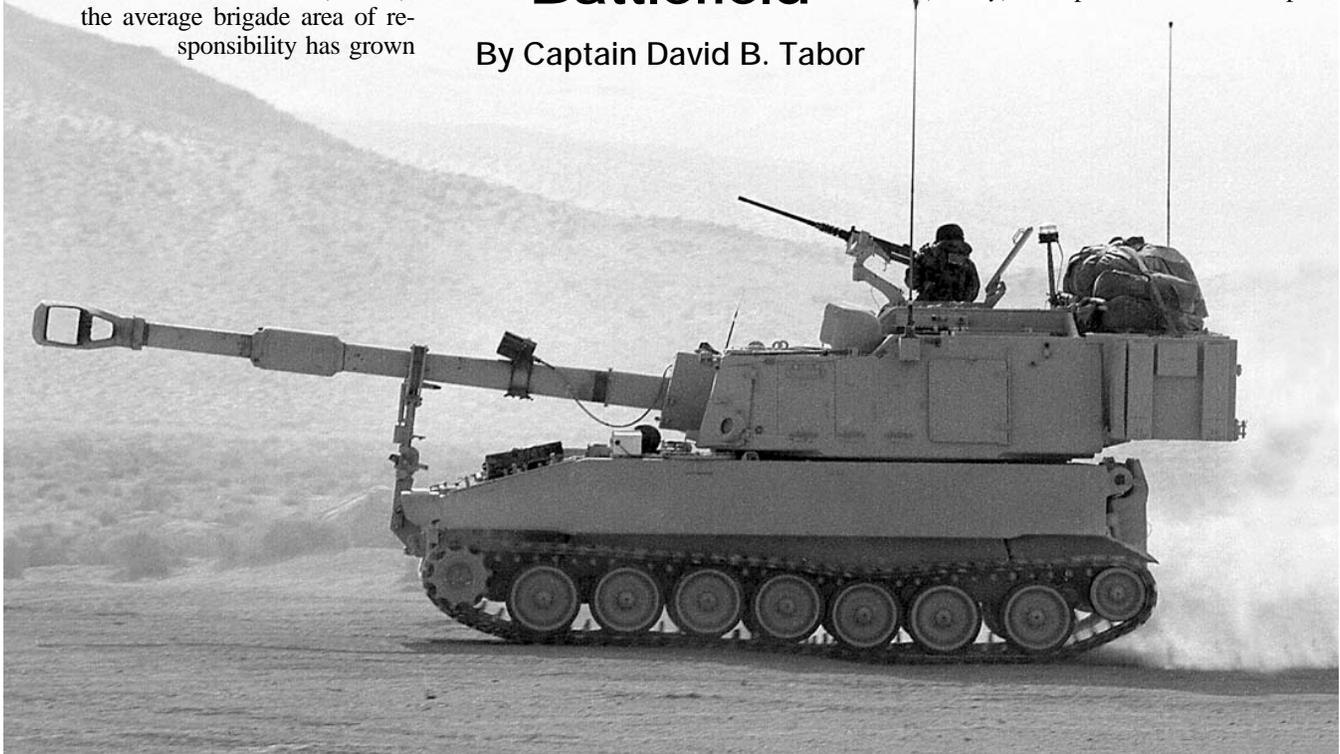
By Captain David B. Tabor

Yet, as these brigade areas of responsibility increase in size, so do the areas allocated to maneuver task force (TF) commanders and their fire support coordinators (FSCOORDs) with their direct support (DS) artillery. While the ranges of weapons have not changed, the artillery, more than ever, must take steps to ensure it can contribute to the close fight.

In 4-42 FA we have taken doctrinal concepts and added the capabilities provided by these new digital systems to create several close support tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for use in today's digital battlefield.

The "close support" battery concept is a modification of the doctrinal "dedicated" battery discussed in *FM 3-09.21 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for the Field Artillery Battalion*, Chapter 1. The purpose of the close support battery is to provide responsive fires to the supported TF commander when the immediate responsiveness of fires is required and (or) the operations of the maneuver TF are independent from the BCT.

The term "close support" battery describes not only the nonstandard tactical mission of the battery, but also a support relationship between a battery and a battalion TF. This builds upon the 13 principles of fire support planning and coordination found in *FM 6-20-40 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Fire Support for Brigade Operations (Heavy)*, Chapter 1. These are prin-



ciples the brigade FSCOORD, brigade fire support officer (FSO) and DS battalion S3 need to consider when determining if a battery should be in close support of a maneuver TF. (See Figure 1.)

As part of the brigade-level military decision-making process (MDMP), several other factors help the brigade FSCOORD, brigade FSO and DS battalion S3 determine when close support battery fires are required and best fit the tactical situation. Mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time available and civilians (METT-TC) are just a few of the factors to consider. The ability of the close support battery to provide synchronized fires to the TF while maintaining the capability to mass fires with the remainder of the DS battalion also must be considered.

During the battalion's train up and NTC Rotation 02-05, we discovered that tasking a battery with a close support mission was one way to help keep fires in the close fight. This method allowed the DS artillery battalion to support a maneuver brigade spread over three corridors at the NTC.

Receive the Mission. Once the brigade FSCOORD decides to assign a battery to a close support mission, the commander of the close support battery must have TTPs in place to facilitate early and continuous fire support to the maneuver commander. Upon receipt of this mission, usually in the form of a warning order (WARNO-1) from the DS battalion, the role of the battery commander immediately increases threefold. He remains the commander of the close support battery, but he also has to take on the additional roles of "TF FSCOORD" and "Battery S3."

Develop a Battery WARNO. The battery commander immediately develops a WARNO-1 and disseminates it along with any graphics via the FBCB². This technology not only benefits the battery commander, it also allows the platoon leader, fire direction officer (FDO) and platoon sergeants to begin their troop-leading procedures (TLPs) at the earliest possible moment, thereby increasing planning and preparation time.

Then the battery commander links up with the TF commander and FSO via the FBCB² and single-channel ground and airborne radio system (SINCGARS) to verify the timeline for the TF MDMP.

Participate in the TF MDMP. The battery commander's participation in the TF MDMP is absolutely critical.

1. Provides early and continuous fire support.
2. Follows the commander's targeting guidance.
3. Exploits all targeting assets.
4. Considers all fire support means.
5. Uses the lowest echelon capable of providing effective fire support.
6. Uses the most effective means.
7. Furnishes the type of fire support appropriate for the mission.
8. Avoids unnecessary duplication of fires.
9. Considers airspace coordination.
10. Provides adequate fire support.
11. Provides rapid and effective coordination.
12. Remains flexible.
13. Provides for safeguarding and the survivability of the force.

Figure 1: 13 Principles of Fire Support Planning and Coordination (*FM 6-20-40 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Fire Support for Heavy Brigade Operations*, Chapter 1)

The close support battery commander acts as the TF FSCOORD and presents his battery's current status and capabilities to the TF commander and S3. He must understand the TF commander's guidance and intent for fires and be able to furnish the type of fire support appropriate to the upcoming mission.

It is at this time that the battery commander ensures the battery can support not only the TF fire support plan in the TF's zone of action, but also the brigade essential fire support tasks (EFSTs). To do this, the brigade FSCOORD determines which brigade-level EFSTs require the close support battery's fires in order to mass the battalion and achieve the desired effects. The brigade FSCOORD should minimize, if not eliminate, the close support battery's role in brigade-level EFSTs, whenever possible.

The TF FSO and battery commander integrate the brigade EFSTs into the TF fire support plan. The battery commander develops these EFSTs into essential FA tasks (EFATs) at the battery level.

While at the TF tactical operations center (TOC), the battery commander coordinates operations with the supported TF. Items such as positioning, movement, force protection and logistical support are coordinated directly with

the TF S3, the DS battalion S3 and the TF FSO. The battery commander plans to position his battery to accomplish the EFATs assigned from the DS artillery battalion and the TF fire support plan. Also, the battery commander manages the timeline for the mission and ensures the battalion EFATs do not conflict with the TF fire support plan.

Coordinate for Communications and Logistics. The close support role changes the normal or doctrinal communications structures, reporting procedures and logistical support. These changes require the attention of many key leaders as well as agreements between the DS artillery battalion and the maneuver TF.

Figure 2 on Page 30 shows the typical communications structure for battalion operations and the changes required for close support battery operations.

Additionally, the TF and the close support battery can establish text messaging via FBCB². Messages—such as operations orders (OPORDs), WARNOs, free-text messages (overlays of current and future operations plus obstacles and fire plans), and report formats (such as logistics; nuclear, biological and chemical report one, called NBC1; and spot reports) can be built and saved in the system during preparation. This helps overcome SINCGARS difficulties, such as the need to maintain line-of-sight, limits on long distance transmissions or enemy jamming, that could impede the flow of information throughout the BCT.

The changes in the communications structure should be part of the pre-combat checks and inspections (PCCs and PCIs) and the technical rehearsal that the maneuver TF fire support element (FSE) and the close support battery conduct as early as possible. This alerts the leadership to potential problems that could disrupt the battery's ability to support the TF fire plan.

In terms of logistics, considerations such as distance, terrain, travel time and location all help the DS artillery battalion staff determine how to keep classes of supply flowing to the battery in the close support mission.

In normal operations, the DS artillery battalion provides all logistical support. But based on logistical considerations, certain classes of supply may be provided by the supported maneuver TF. For example, Class III (petroleum, oil and lubricants) and VIII (medical supplies) must come from the TF, while the flow of other classes of supplies, most

notably Class V (ammunition), remains the responsibility of the artillery battalion.

The artillery battalion staff may determine it is more feasible to attach other elements to support the close support battery. These could include, but are not limited to, an extra palletized loading system (PLS) for Class V haul, survey capability, a battalion maintenance contact team and additional medical support.

The DS artillery battalion and maneuver TF coordination for the logistical support of the close support battery is critical and is done at an early stage of the MDMP. Coordination between the FSCoord, TF FSO, S3 and the battery commander helps to ensure the close support battery can provide early and continuous fire support.

Plan for Force Protection. As the TF commander, close support battery commander and TF FSO develop a TF fire support plan that integrates brigade EFSTs and requirements, they also determine the level of force protection needed to ensure the battery can meet its objectives. This is based on several factors: enemy capabilities, terrain and distance.

For example, if there is a high mounted threat from the flank and the battery

must be positioned on the flank to achieve the effects required for a TF or brigade EFST, then a hunter-killer team(s) may be positioned with the battery to protect it.

Develop Battery WARNO-2 and the FA Battalion Support Plan. Once the initial coordination is completed, the battery commander issues WARNO-2 via FBCB² or SINCGARS. This allows key battery leaders to continue their TLPs as well as updates them on the mission while the battery commander is en route to the battalion TOC to help develop the FA support plan (FASP).

During FASP development, the close support battery commander ensures the DS battalion and TF fire support plans are synchronized. The battery commander also keeps both the DS battalion and the TF S3s informed of any changes in the level of logistical, force protection and communications support required for the next mission.

Issue Battery Orders. The battery commander develops and briefs his battery order. He covers all assigned EFATs from both the artillery battalion FASP and the TF fire support plan. He pays special attention to the triggers for each event. Triggers to move, execute targets and resupply are briefed and rehearsed.

The close support battery commander also coordinates with any attachments (force protection assets, medical support, maintenance contact teams, additional ammunition sections, etc.) and ensures they attend the battery orders briefing. As part of the order, the battery timeline is based on the DS artillery battalion and maneuver TF timelines and includes PCC/PCI completion times, rehearsal times and the not-later-than time for the mission.

An additional process that is invaluable is the issuing of overlays down to each section chief via FBCB². This allows every FBCB²-equipped vehicle in the battery to know the routes of march, current and future position areas and the scheme of maneuver for the next fight. When tied in with the verbal information received in the battery orders briefing, these overlays provide the widest dissemination of information and ensure all subordinates know both the maneuver TF commander's and the FA battalion commander's intents and the TF and brigade operation plans.

Rehearse the Plan. The battery commander synchronizes his unit with the maneuver TF and the DS artillery battalion. To do this, he and the FDO participate in the TF mounted, TF fire support and TF digital rehearsals. This

Nets	Constants			Battalion Ops			Close Support Ops		
	Bde FSE	TF FSE	Bn FSE	Btry Cdr	FDC	Obs	Btry Cdr	FDC	Obs
FA Bn Command				X			+		
Ammunition/Logistics									
Bn Fire Direction (Voice)			X		X			+	
Bn Fire Direction (Digital)			X		X			+	+
Btry Command				X	X		+		
Btry Fire Direction (Voice)					X			+	
Btry Fire Direction (Digital)					X			+	
Bde Fire Support (Voice)	X	X	X			X			
Bde Fire Support (Digital)	X	X	X			X			
TF Command		X					+		
TF Fire Support (Voice)		X				X			+
Mortar Fire Direction									
CS Fires								+	+
Div Arty Counterfire			X						
Div Arty Fire Control			X						
Co Command						X			+

Legend: Btry = Battery Cdr = Commander Co = Company Div Arty = Division Artillery Obs = Observers

Figure 2: Typical Communications Structure for Battalion Operations (x) and Changes for Close Support Battery Operations (+). The communications structure remains constant for the brigade (Bde) and task force (TF) fire support elements (FSEs) and the battalion (Bn) fire direction center (FDC).

ensures the artillery battery, maneuver FSOs and observers all understand the task, purpose, method, effects and trigger for each target in the fire support plan.

The rehearsals help identify possible problems with movement, resupply or synchronization between the DS artillery battalion's EFATS (that support the brigade's EFSTs) and the TF fire support plan. Because the TF rehearsals usually coincide with the DS battalion rock drill, the battery executive officer attends the rock drill in place of the battery commander. This facilitates synchronization among the units.

The battery commander attends the brigade combined arms rehearsal. This is his final check on the synchronization of fires and allows him to hear any late changes to the brigade scheme of maneuver.

The brigade combined arms rehearsal sets the final "contract" among the brigade commander, TF commander and DS battalion commander in regards to the close support battery. This contract establishes when the close support battery will provide fires for the critical TF EFSTs and when it will provide massing fires for the brigade EFSTs. With this knowledge, the close support battery commander can finalize his planning for the upcoming fight.

Based on the amount of time allocated before the brigade operation, the battery commander takes part in any battery rehearsals that are key to accomplishing the close support mission.

The platoon leaders and platoon sergeants usually rehearse routine battle drills, such as casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), react to NBC attack and direct fire drills. However, for mission-critical events, such as firing Copperhead targets using the Copperhead standing operating procedures (SOP) or firing family of scatterable mines (FASCAM) in the defense, the battery commander and FDO need to be present.

These rehearsals should be mounted, if possible, and early enough in the preparation phase to fix any difficulties. For example, if the battery must fire FASCAM from an alternate location and then move back to its primary position area at near zero percent illumination, several challenges could arise. A mounted rehearsal helps the battery leadership identify movement triggers and times, ammunition requirements, the time required to fire FASCAM and the best route to take during the fight. It

An Artillery Battery with a Mission of-	Close Support
1. Answers calls for fire in priority from	1. The direct support (DS) artillery battalion. 2. The supported task force. 3. Own observers (radar, aerial observers, scouts, etc.).
2. Has as its zone of fire	The zone of action of the supported task force and supported brigade combat team (BCT).
3. Furnishes the fire support team (FIST) or fire support element (FSE)	And the battery commander as the fire support officer (FSO), if none in the supported task force.
4. Furnishes a liaison officer	No formal requirement.
5. Establishes communications with	The FSOs and supported task force headquarters.
6. Is positioned by	The DS FA S3 and supported task force S3.
7. Has its fires planned by	The DS FA battalion and supported task force.

Figure 3: The Seven Inherent Responsibilities of the Close Support Battery. This matrix is modeled after Table 1-1 in *FM 6-20-20 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Battalion Task Force and Below*.

also helps the individual vehicle commanders and drivers to visualize their portion of the close support fight.

Fighting the Battle. During the fight, the battery commander positions himself at the key point of the battlefield. There are several locations from which he can fight, but his primary responsibility during the close support fight is to keep both the TF commander and DS artillery battalion S3 informed as to the status of the battery.

While the battery commander works to achieve the goals of the TF fire support plan, he also understands he is not in a DS role to the TF commander. As such, the close support battery continues to answer calls-for-fire from the DS artillery battalion first and then from the supported maneuver TF. This ensures the DS artillery battalion can mass the battalion on key brigade EFSTs.

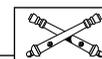
Figure 3 shows the seven inherent responsibilities of the close support battery. Following this matrix, the battery can support the maneuver TF fire support plan while ensuring it can mass with the DS artillery battalion on brigade EFSTs. The close support battery commander, brigade FSO and TF FSO play key roles during this phase of the fight as they execute all brigade EFSTs and meet the TF commander's intent for the close support battery.

As the fight progresses, the TF FSO ensures battery reports are maintained and forwarded to the TF and DS artillery battalion. The TFFSO, battery commander and battery operations center (BOC) update the DS artillery battalion on the firing unit status during execution, to include the status of fire missions, movement, maintenance and personnel.

Reporting is a continuous process throughout the fight and is simplified through the use of the FBCB². Pre-configured reports allow the firing battery to rapidly update both the DS battalion and the TF on the status of all classes of supply, battery location, personnel, obstacles and spot reports.

Thus, the BOC keeps two separate command and control nodes informed, allowing both command posts to incorporate the near real-time status of the close support battery concurrently into their planning. Both nodes can facilitate the rapid resupply of the close support battery and prepare it for follow-on missions.

As the modern battlefield expands, the Field Artillery must support close fires at both the brigade and TF levels. The close support battery is one initiative to ensure our maneuver brethren have the fires they need to defeat any enemy on today's or tomorrow's battlefield.



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