

You are an FA battalion S3—or battalion or battery fire direction officer (FDO) or, maybe, work in a brigade or battalion fire support element (FSE)—at your rotation at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, California. You've done your homework, so fires will set the best conditions for the soldiers out front at "the point of the spear." Short of actual combat experience, you've done your best to become a subject matter expert in the art and science of fires.

In the rotation, your brigade combat team (BCT) is transitioning to live-fire operations. In this instance, the BCT is conducting a deliberate attack supported by close air support (CAS), Army attack aviation, your direct support (DS) battalion, a reinforcing (R) battalion and a light battery attached to the DS battalion. The BCT has inserted its brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) and combat observation lasing teams (COLTs) to observe target areas of interests (TAI) and identify enemy obstacles, high-value targets and infantry strongpoints. This allows the BCT to refine targets and finalize the scheme of fires.

The BCT is scheduled to cross the line of departure (LD) at 0500. The BCT and battalion task force (TF) FSEs have been working top-down/bottom-up target refinement all night and have updated the BCT target list, observer and TF responsibilities, and triggers and passed the information to the FA battalion fire direction center (FDC). The FDC worked to sort out the new target list and assign targets; re-check triggers, ammunition and positioning requirements; and, finally, pass a detailed scheme of fires to the reinforcing battalion and firing batteries.

It's now 0445. All the observers are trained on their targets and the guns are laid. Everyone else is leaning forward, waiting to cross the LD.

Suddenly, an NTC observer/controller (O/C) says, "You aren't fit to fight, and you're not authorized to go red indirect at this time." You wonder how this can *be*—all the work, all the preparation, and just when it matters most, you're told you're *not ready*. The O/C reports your BCT doesn't have 100 percent visibility on all fire support coordination measures (FSCMs). You realize the BCT will not cross the LD on time because it has to wait for its Field Artillerymen to get their act together.



SEVEN Steps to Managing FSCMs

by Major Patrick M. Manners

This is one of those opportunities in training where Field Artillerymen feel some pain that otherwise would come in a much larger dose in the form of indirect fire fratricide in combat. In all the FMs, TMs and published tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), there is not one word on how Field Artillerymen track, update, activate/deactivate or adjust FSCMs.

While on a rotation at the NTC, a unit can expect to track a fire support coordinating line (FSCL), coordinated fire line (CFL), 23 corps no-fire areas (NFAs), 11 corps restricted-fire areas (RFAs), three division airspace coordination areas (ACAs) and eight division air corridors. By the time the BCT develops its own FSCM requirements, artillery units usually track an additional seven to 25 brigade NFAs, two to five brigade ACAs, two to seven brigade air corridors, one restricted operating zone (ROZ) and, potentially, one to two restricted-fire lines (RFLs). If you take the worst-case scenario and

combine all echelons' FSCM requirements, an FA battalion at the NTC easily could end up tracking the following: one FSCL, one CFL, 48 NFAs, eight ACAs, 15 air corridors, one ROZ and two RFLs—76 FSCMs.

There are a number of reasons why there could be so many FSCMs: the location of the BCT CFL, which changes over the course of the fight; the BCT's use and positioning of its BRT and scouts; and the amount of fixed- or rotary-wing support available to the BCT, to name just a few. The bottom line is you must have a system to manage FSCMs, so when you clear fires at every echelon, you can use fires to leverage the BCT's maneuver operations with a reasonable expectation of a low risk of indirect fire fratricides.

So how *do* you track all of these FSCMs? You apply the seven steps to managing FSCMs. These steps should be tailored for your unit and incorporated into your FA battalion and maneuver tactical standing operating procedures (TACSOPs).

1. Define FSCM authority and responsibilities. FSCMs are a BCT responsibility, not just an FA responsibility. Situational awareness is only as good as a BCT's reporting system, regardless of whether it's automated or manual.

Timely and accurate reporting of all elements in the BCT's battlespace is paramount. For example, if a maneuver battalion TF scout section forward of the CFL is given an NFA and then proceeds to move outside the radius of its NFA, the section needs to report its new location to its battalion TF headquarters. From there, the TF headquarters reports it to the BCT that disseminates the new location and NFA adjustment to all other BCT elements. (See Figure 1 on Page 44.)

The BCT commander and his fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) are responsible for ensuring the BCT has an FSCM management system. The BCT S3 and fire support officer (FSO) must implement that system and ensure all echelons use it. Commanders and fire support officers at all echelons below the BCT must ensure their staffs know the BCT FSCM management system and are trained to execute it.

2. Describe the BCT's FSCM naming convention. You must have a naming convention or system that enables you to determine quickly who an FSCM

belongs to—in particular, NFAs, ACAs and RFAs. Each maneuver TF, the BCT headquarters and its rear area and artillery elements need their own block of names by which to name FSCMs. This enables each echelon in the brigade to identify who the FSCMs belong to.

For example, if you are a battalion TF FSO and have four scout sections forward, you want NFAs around them. If one of the sections moves, how do you know which NFA was covering that particular section? It's not easy....you're not just tracking your four scout sections' NFAs, you're tracking (potentially) as many as 48 NFAs in the BCT's battlespace. However, using a naming convention similar to your target block system, you easily can identify the old NFA for that scout section, delete it and create a new NFA.

For example, the 1st Scout Section in TF 3-69 Armor goes to ground at Grid 12345678 and requires an NFA. From the BCT naming convention, the TF 3-69 FSO assigns NFA 369SC1A. "369" denotes this NFA belongs to 3-69 Armor. The first two letters "SC" identify the NFA as covering a scout section. The first number "1" denotes that this is the 1st Scout Section and the last letter "A" denotes this is its first NFA over its initial position. If the scout section moves, the FSO deletes NFA 369SC1A and creates a new NFA around the scout, labeling it NFA 369SC1B. The last letter is the only part of the NFA label that changes.

In this case, it changes to "B," denoting the 1st Scout Section's second position.

3. Outline procedures for activating/deactivating FSCMs. FSCMs are always in a state of flux. Mission, enemy, terrain, troops and time available (METT-T) drive our decisions to employ FSCMs. You need a central clearinghouse in the BCT to control FSCMs. The most likely place is in the BCT tactical operations center (TOC).

In the BCT TOC, the BCT S3, FSO and fire support NCO (FSNCO) coordinate FSCM tracking and execution. They work in concert with the maneuver battalion TFs, BCT rear area, supporting artillery battalions and BCT commander and his FSCCOORD to manage the overall BCT FSCM picture.

But the picture is just like a snapshot in time. As the battle progresses, the BCT commander or his FSCCOORD moves the CFL while the battalion TFs report changes in their NFA requirements. In turn, the BCT FSNCO captures the input, "paints the picture" and continuously disseminates it across the BCT.

4. Define the method to maintain a common FSCM picture. How do you ensure you have a common FSCM picture throughout the BCT? Our older tactical fire direction system (TAC-FIRE) and newer advanced Field Artillery tactical data system (AFATDS) have FSCM tracking tools, but currently they are either not robust enough or too vulnerable to hardware failure.

So, until the day arrives when you no longer need pencil or paper—can manage FSCMs digitally—it's best to be prepared.

Your BCT must have a system that enables you to track which FSCMs are in effect, who owns them and if they're plotted properly on a map. You must make sure FSCMs have visibility with others in the TOC, not just the FSNCO in the FSE or the battalion/battery FDO. A simple system to help each echelon uniformly track FSCMs might look like the matrix in Figure 2.

At the BCT, the battalion TFs, the supporting FA battalions and batteries, and the BCT rear area each should have a copy of the FSCM matrix. The BCT TOC simply runs down each column and covers the affected changes.

5. Define procedures for updating FSCMs. This is your biggest challenge. You have to update the matrix using a number of parameters. For example, when the BCT commander orders the CFL moved, the BCT TOC gets the word out as soon as possible. Probably the next FSCMs to change in the domino effect will be NFAs.

These changes will take some time to sort out, so you need to prioritize your efforts for the BCT sector most affected by indirect fires. This usually can be traced to which unit in the BCT has priority of fires (POF).

Once you have the NFA sorted out in that sector, the BCT TOC disseminates the changes and moves on to the next

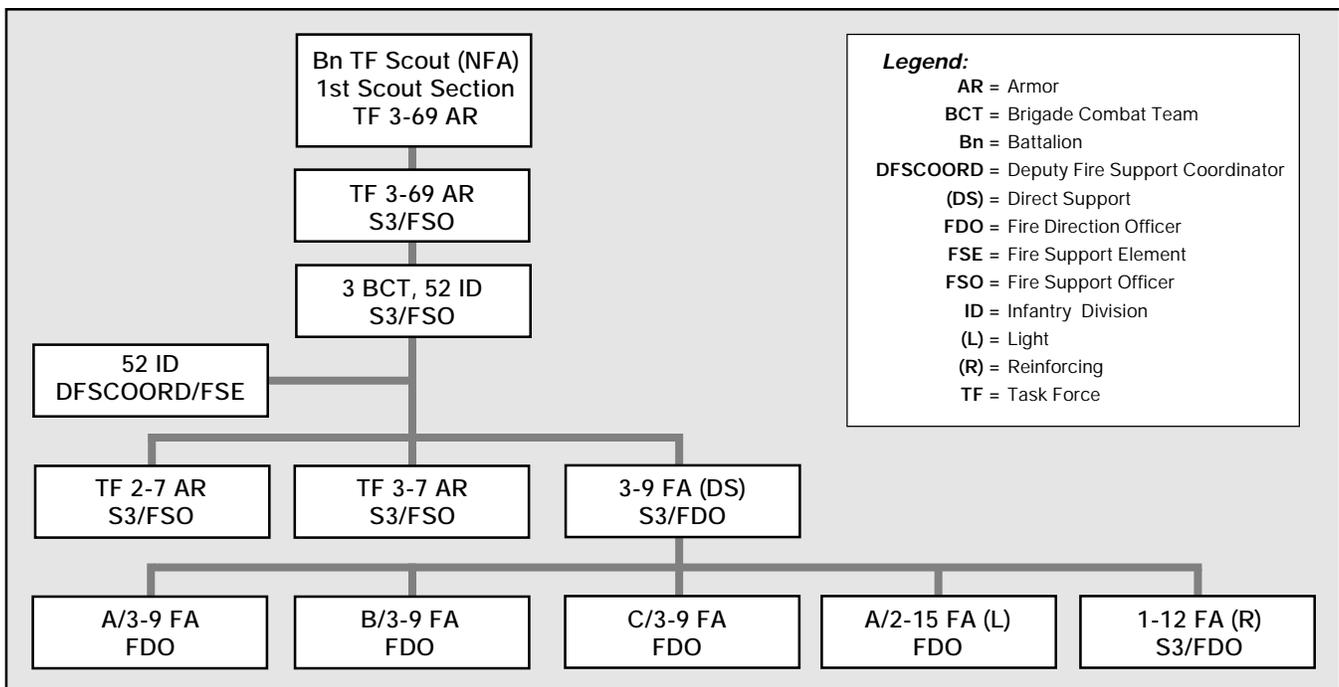


Figure 1: The Trail of a Task Force No Fire Area (NFA)- Who Needs to Know?

FSCM	X Corps	52d Division	3 BCT	TF 3-69	TF 3-7	TF2-7																					
FSCL	PL Jack																										
CFL		PL Tom																									
RFLs			RFL 3BCTRFL01		RFL 37RFL20																						
ACAs	MRRs 10XXXBrazil 10XXXChina ROZ 10XXXTurtle 10XXXFrog	ACAs 52XXAlaska 52XXTexas 52XXNevada Air Corridors 52XXEagle 52XXHawk 52XXFalcon UAV 52XXHummingbird	ACAs 3BCTDallas 3BCTOgdon 3BCTAtlanta 3BCTPhoenix Air Corridors 3BCTBee 3BCTWasp 3BCTHorsefly 3BCTMosquito 3BCTGnat SAAFR 3BCTAnt 3BCTTermite																								
RFAs	RFAs 10XXX01Church 10XXX02Power 10XXX03Water 10XXX04Cemetery																										
NFAs	NFAs 10XXXLRSD1A 10XXXLRSD2A 10XXXLRSD3A 10XXXLRSD4A 10XXXSOF1 10XXXSOF2 10XXXSOF3 10XXXSOF4	NFAs 52XXLRSD1A 52XXLRSD2A 52XXLRSD3A 52XXLRSD4A 52XXGBCS1A 52XXGBCS2A 52XXPP551A 52XXPP552A 52XXT-321A	NFAs 3BCTBRT1A 3BCTBRT2A 3BCTBRT3A 3BCTBRT4A 3BCTCOLT1A 3BCTCOLT2A 3BCTCOLT3A 3BCTCOLT4A 3BCTFAC1A	NFAs 369SC1A 369SC2A 369SC3A 369SC4A 369AFISTA 369BFISTA 369CFISTA 369DFISTA 369FAC2A	NFAs 37SC1A 37SC2A 37SC3A 37SC4A 37AFISTA 37BFISTA 37CFISTA 37DFISTA 37FAC3A	NFAs 27SC1A 27SC2A 27SC3A 27SC4A 27AFISTA 27BFISTA 27CFISTA 27DFISTA 27FAC4A																					
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Figure 2: FSCM Management Matrix

supported sector. If the BCT isn't in the middle of a meeting engagement, the update probably will work well if conducted every hour on the hour.

6. Ensure quality control of FSCM information. The quality and reliability of the FSCM information passed, received and translated is critical. The BCT trusts its subordinates will have the right FSCM data, but it periodically needs to verify the FSCM message was received, understood and plotted on the map.

Using the FSCM tracking matrix in Figure 2, each TF periodically reviews its column of FSCMs and scrubs it with the BCT TOC. The timing is METT-T-dependent, but "often" is better than "once in awhile."

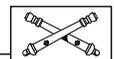
For the FA battalion and firing batteries, the task is a little tougher. In this case, the FA battalion TOC interfaces with the BCT TOC and then works with

the batteries or even the reinforcing battalion TOC to make sure all echelons have the same picture.

7. Define procedures for straightening out the FSCM picture. The last step deals with getting an element straight if its picture is lost or hopelessly corrupted. Once again, if you use something similar to the FSCM matrix in Figure 2, you can walk through each column with a naming convention that keeps you straight as to which FSCM belongs in which column. Then you quickly can reproduce another FSCM picture for the unit.

If you, as the FDO, FSO or S3, take on FSCM management alone, you soon will find yourself overwhelmed and unfocused. Use the seven steps of FSCM management as a framework for your operations and ensure your BCT crosses the LD on time. But even more impor-

tantly, apply the seven steps so the soldiers at the point of the spear will have confidence in the control and effectiveness of your fires.



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