

The 24th Div Arty in Somalia



PFC Quezada

Indian Ocean

by Colonel William J. Lennox, Jr., and Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Allen

In October 1993, the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) Artillery (Div Arty), Fort Stewart, Georgia, had the opportunity to demonstrate the deployment operations described in the article, "Deploying for Victory" (June 1993). On 032300 October 1993, the division received an X-Hour notification that Task Force Rogue would deploy from Fort Stewart to Somalia. Four days later, the Div Arty received additional orders to send a firing battery with Task Force Rogue (see Figure 1). With its fire support teams (FISTs), the task force had been in the X-Hour sequence four days before the firing battery and was well along in planning vehicle deployment, pre-deployment training and air flow.

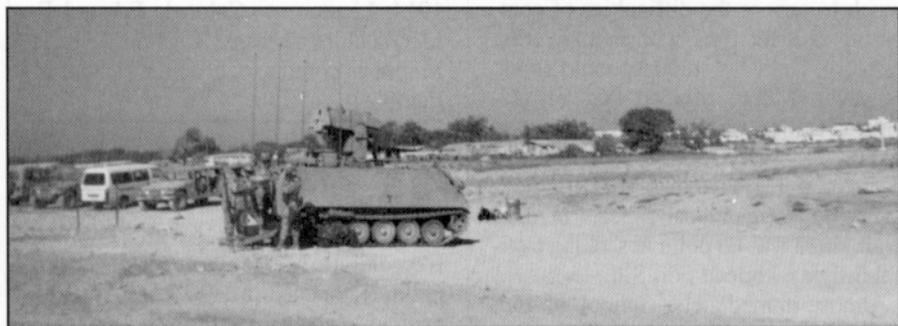
When notice came, the artillery units on division ready brigade 1 (DRB-1) status were from two different battalions. The firing battery was from "Glory's Guns," 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery (1-41 FA), and the FISTs came from the "Battlekings" of 3d Battalion, 41st Field Artillery (3-41 FA). The task organization reflected the one the units had worked with for a number of weeks. In fact, most FISTs had just returned from a four-week "Victory Focus" training exercise working with 1-41 FA. While the FISTs were loading and training with the task force, the firing battery moved into "first gear" to catch up with the earlier alerted force.

Ammunition. When the Div Arty received the order to deploy a firing battery to Somalia, the Div Arty commander assembled the battalion commander, battery commander and Div Arty battle staff. This group meticulously went through the military decision-making process, analyzing the mission, developing courses of action (COAs) and war-gaming. During this process, they thoroughly scrubbed the 155-mm basic load.

The normal unit basic load (UBL) for one firing battery is shown at Figure 2. This configuration was designed for combat operations against a heavy, mechanized force in a desert environment. Combat

operations in Mogadishu, a city with an urban guerrilla environment, presented an unusual requirement. Whereas the "desert UBL" had more dual-purpose improved conventional munitions (DPICM), the mission analysis determined DPICM

would be ineffective and would cause extensive collateral damage if employed in urban Mogadishu. Therefore, the battle staff developed the UBL for Somalia, making the most of precision munitions and reversing the ratio of DPICM to high-



SPC Paul Policahette

A FIST vehicle from 3-41 FA prepares to move from the airfield in Mogadishu.

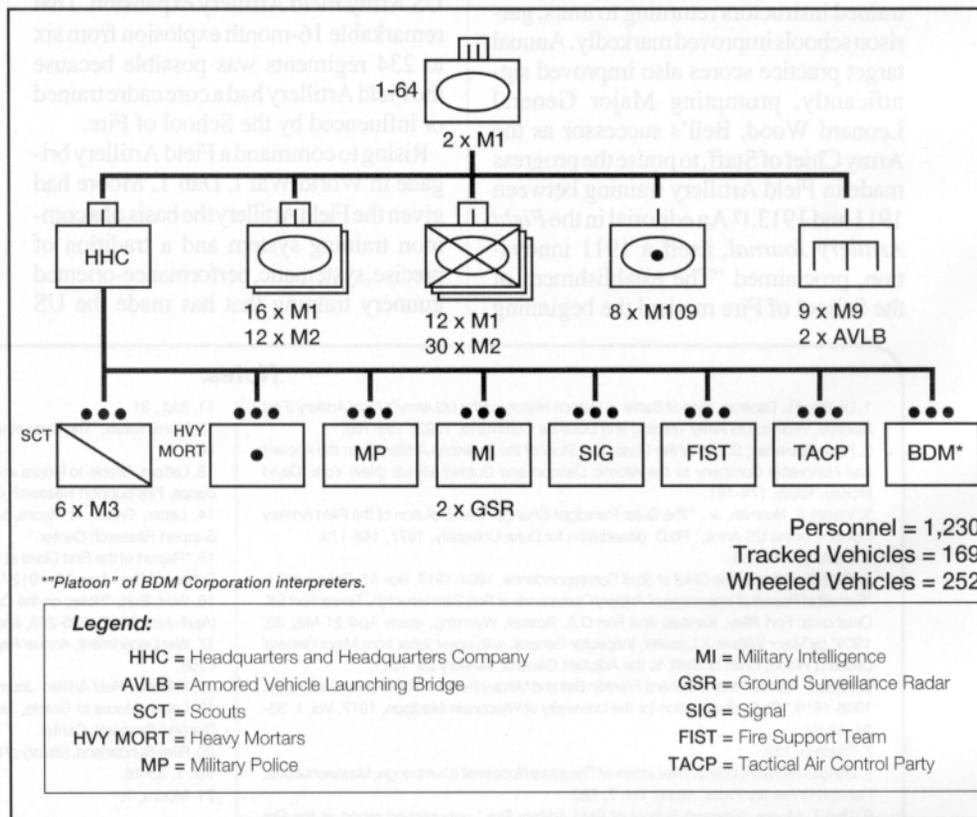


Figure 1: Task organization of the 24th Infantry Division's Task Force Rogue deployed to Somalia.

Description	DODIC	Quantity
DPICM, M483A1	D563	720
RAP, M549	D579	290
HE, M107	D544	160
SMC, M825	D528	56
DPICM, M864	D864	183
ILL, M485	D505	40
CPHD, M712	D510	40
ADAM-S, M731	D502	16
RAAM-S, M741	D509	64
		Total 1,569

Legend:
DODIC = Department of Defense Identification Code
DPICM = Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munition
RAP = Rocket-Assisted Projectile
HE = High Explosive
SMC = Smoke
ILL = Illumination
CPHD = Copperhead
ADAM = Area Denial Artillery Munition
RAAM = Remote Anti-Armor Mine

Figure 2: "Desert UBL." The battery unit basic load in place at N-Hour.

Description	DODIC	Quantity
DPICM, M483A1	D563	80
RAP, M549	D579	32
HE, M107	D544	1,096
SMC, M825	D528	64
WP, M110	D550	32
ILL, M485	D505	112
CPHD, M712	D510	64
ADAM-S, M731	D502	48
		Total 1,528
PROP CHG, RED BAG, M119A2	D533	16
PROP CHG, GREEN BAG, M3A1	D540	1,032
PROP CHG, WHITE BAG, M4A2	D541	640
FUZE, MTSQ, M577	N285	312
FUZE, PD, M557	N335	512
FUZE, PROXIMITY, M732	N464	400
FUZE, PD, M739	N340	256

Legend:
WP = White Phosphorous
PROP = Propellant
CHG = Charge
MTSQ = Mechanical Time, Superquick
PD = Point Detonating

Figure 3: Battery Deployment UBL

explosive (HE) rounds (see Figure 3). The division ammunition officer relayed it to the ammunition supply point for validation and assembly.

Another key ammunition consideration involved the range at which the firing battery was likely to engage targets. Information on this subject was sketchy, but

the battle staff queried division, corps, and 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) sources. The conclusion was that, from the expected battery locations to the north and west of Mogadishu, the battery would be able to range the majority of possible targets with M3 (Green Bag) propellant. However, to enhance the flexibility of the battery to accomplish its mission, the Div Arty commander sent 1,688 propellant charges for the 1,528 projectiles deployed (Figure 3). The assumption was that the logistics base in theater would be immature, causing a supply problem if range-to-target became a factor.

At 082230 October, the reconfigured ammunition was delivered to the rail marshaling area. The task force had loaded out earlier that day. The battery's tracks (M109A2s and M992s) moved through the marshaling area and loaded hundreds of rounds. The upload was completed at 090030 October, and the vehicles were uploaded for rail movement to the Port of Savannah by 090300.

Meanwhile, the battery's wheeled vehicles moved to the port. The battery's heavy expanded-mobility tactical trucks (HEMTTs), including one-third from the battalion ammunition section, loaded bulk ammunition for sea movement before moving to port. The division G4 coordinated for additional ammunition to be shipped to Somalia.

Pre-Deployment Training and Other Homework. While the deploying soldiers waited two weeks for air transportation, the battery completed soldier readiness processing, personal item inventories and storage, privately owned vehicle (POV) parking and training. The training focused on battery security, fire mission processing, crew drill and individual weapons firing.

Several individuals from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, assisted in the training. Instructors from the Fire Support and Combined Arms Operations Department and Gunners Department at the Field Artillery School reviewed M981 FIST vehicle (FISTV) maintenance and operations and passed on some important advice on FISTV maintenance in an austere environment. Two other individuals, along with a camera crew from White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, helped prepare the battery and FISTs to fire the Copperhead projectile.

Out of the 72 rounds of Copperhead in the Div Arty's war reserve ammunition, 64 were shipped to Somalia and eight were pulled for pre-deployment training.

With the help of experts from Fort Sill, each gun section fired a Copperhead and each FIST not yet deployed lased a target. The record was seven for eight target hits—but more importantly, battery and FIST confidence in their ability to fire this munition increased significantly.

While the FISTs and battery trained, the Div Arty staff, along with the battalion commanders and their staffs, war-gamed the tactical considerations. Members of the staff coordinated with individuals who had recently been in Mogadishu, including those from the 10th Division, which still had significant numbers of soldiers in Somalia; the staff was able to gather valuable information from members of the 10th Division fire support element (FSE) and AN/TPQ-36 Firefinder radar sections. Div Arty staff officers poured over maps and photographs, plotted enemy mortar locations, studied building heights and looked for potential positions for the battery.

Commanders and staff officers also brainstormed possible challenges involving rules of engagement (ROE) and chains of command. The ROE for indirect fire were not available to the Div Arty, and the battle staff had concerns. Chain of command and fire mission processing procedures also were examined. While the battery was part of the task force, it was the only battery in country and would possibly have to respond to Q-36 radar acquisitions from the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Somalia or from others under the UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM). These issues were not to be resolved at Fort Stewart but were issues facing leaders of the JTF and UNOSOM. The staff could only arm the battery commander with recommendations.

Ultimately, the Div Arty sent an additional major with an M577 and crew to act as liaison officer (LNO) and senior Div Arty representative. This field-grade officer represented battery concerns to superiors, acted as the heavy artillery expert and, when the battery split, stayed with one platoon as the senior artilleryman.

Positioning and Tactics. During the X-Hour sequence, the Div Arty commander and his battle staff, along with the direct support Field Artillery battalion commanders, war-gamed COAs dealing with the positioning of the firing battery. They heavily weighted the security of the battery and its ability to engage targets, particularly with Copperhead.

They examined several position areas,

selecting Victory Base, the airfield, and the oil refinery (see Figure 4) as the most likely areas to occupy. The Div Arty battle staff provided the battery commander and LNO a list of advantages and disadvantages for each position area and a similar list for split battery operations.

When the battery arrived in theater, the analysis provided by the battle staff proved to be extremely accurate. Employment of Copperhead was the determining factor in the JTF commander's decision to split the battery into two platoons and position them at Victory Base and the Boat Factory. These platoon locations provided optimal Copperhead delivery ranges and multiple lasing angles (to minimize Angle T) for the OH-58D helicopters.

In addition to Copperhead employment considerations, positioning the platoons at Victory Base and the Boat Factory enhanced the battery's security posture. A maneuver company (on a rotational basis) from Task Force Rogue secured Victory Base and the firing platoon located there. The platoon at the Boat Factory wasn't augmented with a maneuver unit for security; however, its location along the coast offered adequate protection when combined with the platoon's organic defensive weapons.

Eventually, the platoon at the Boat Factory was relocated to a firing location south of the airfield along the beach. Its movement was precipitated by an increase in potential targets on the eastern side of Mogadishu and by impending redeployment.

Fire Support Structure. The JTF provided an interesting fire support structure. JTF maneuver units were commanded by the 10th Mountain Division's aviation brigade commander. These units consisted of two light infantry battalions from the 10th Mountain, one attack helicopter battalion (AH-1) and a company of OH-58Ds. The 24th Division's Task Force Rogue with its artillery battery was attached as one of the maneuver units in the Falcon Brigade.

The UNOSOM commander, of course, made the final decisions on employing fire support assets; however, there was no FSE at the UNOSOM level. The rest of the fire support structure was relatively standard: company FIST, battalion/task force FSE, Falcon Brigade FSE and JTF FSE.

Due to personnel shortages, FISTs at Fort Stewart weren't fully manned with forward observers (FOs) at the platoon level. Because the battery would probably have to operate routinely in a decentralized, dismounted configuration, the Div Arty augmented the deploying FISTs with fully manned platoon FO teams. As it turned out, Task Force Rogue platoons conducted dismounted operations while in theater.

Clearance of Fires. It became apparent early in the deployment that the introduction of heavy artillery into the theater would be a deterrent to the enemy activity that had escalated in the preceding months. Several targets had been selected by the JTF commander to be engaged at his

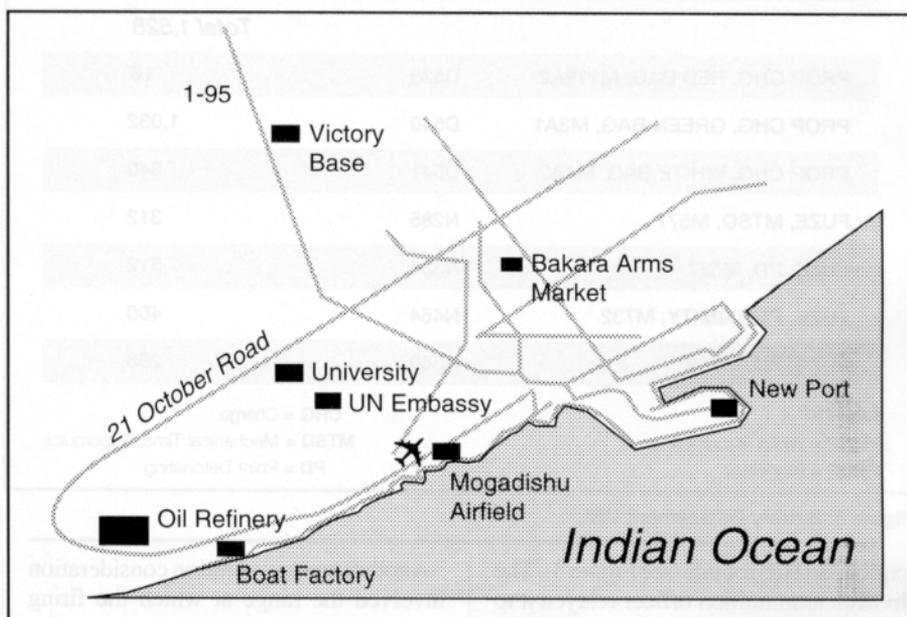


Figure 4: Mogadishu, Somalia



C Battery, 1-41 FA's firing position at the airfield next to the Indian Ocean.

direction in a preemptive or retaliatory strike against the enemy.

Clearance of fires for these targets was a simple process. The JTF commander approved their engagement and the order to fire one or more was to be transmitted from the JTF FSE to the firing battery.

Each target was to be engaged by a gun firing one Copperhead projectile while an OH-58D lased the target. (The OH-58Ds were airborne over Mogadishu 24 hours a day.) The Copperhead's precision and the OH-58D's ability to provide eyes on the target and verify it proved to be a reliable combination, one that could avoid causing collateral damage. To maintain that capability, OH-58D crews checked in with the firing battery at the start of every patrol to verify communications. They executed frequent "dry" fire missions throughout the duration of their patrols.

The JTF FSE was the control station for the JTF fire support net. The battery monitored this net 24 hours a day while the JTF monitored the battery's command net. Should a ground or mounted observer call for artillery fire, the JTF FSE would monitor the request and grant clearance to fire over the JTF fire support net.

The firing battery was the JTF/theater indirect fire asset, and in actuality, the general support (GS) battery for the JTF. The JTF commander's priorities for employing fire support assets were as follows: the AC-130 gunship, AH-1 attack helicopters (there were no AH-64s in theater) and the 155-mm howitzers.

Target Acquisition. Three 10th Mountain Division Q-36 radars were deployed to the theater. These radars were dispersed along the beach area to the south of the airfield (Figure 4). Because "the enemy" had no capability to acquire the radars, they cued continuously. With three radars available, the JTF commander ar-

rayed the sectors of search to cover the entire target area at all times.

The battery was in communication with the radars over the "Firefinder net." The Q-36s were also on the JTF fire support net. If a target was acquired, the radar would notify the JTF FSE and the JTF commander would decide whether or not to engage the target and how to engage it. If artillery were the weapon of choice, the JTF FSE would clear the mission and the battery would fire.

Rules of Engagement. When the task force arrived in theater, it received a packet that set the ROE for individual weapons, tanks, mechanized infantry and indirect fire weapons. The overriding consideration for all these systems was to avoid collateral damage to noncombatants and civilian property.

The three basic principles for applying the ROE were as follows:

1. Soldiers had the right to use deadly force, if necessary, to defend themselves, their unit or other US and UN forces or persons and areas under their protection.
2. They were to use the *minimum* force necessary under the circumstances.
3. They were to use force only when the *military benefit* of using force outweighed the risk of injury or damage to nonmilitary persons or objects (collateral damage).

Further guidance in the ROE packet provided by the JTF gave examples of the potential employment of indirect fire systems against hostile targets. Firing artillery against targets acquired by Q-36s was authorized so long as it was the minimum force necessary under the circumstances and it was proportional to the threat. Unobserved fires were to be employed only as a last resort. Units were to take all reasonable steps to avoid causing collateral damage.

If the enemy were to attack from a

residential neighborhood, he assumed responsibility for any collateral damage that resulted from the lawful use of force in self defense.

Firing artillery in the immediate suppression of enemy air defense was authorized. Here again, soldiers had to positively identify the origin of the enemy fire and determine that lesser force was not available or would not suffice.

As has always been the case in implementing ROE, executing the rules requires quick decisions by well-trained, disciplined soldiers. Although not required to deliver indirect fires under combat conditions, American soldiers in Somalia were up to this challenge.

Conclusion. The Victory Division's deployment for Operation Continue Hope validated its rapid deployment, worldwide contingency capability. The process worked well. The initial ready company (IRC) was airborne, en route to Mogadishu, within 18 hours of notification. The DRF-1 (Task Force Rogue) made all its time lines and projected power into a hostile, volatile area when it was needed most. The firing battery deployed smoothly and was prepared.

But the true legacy of this deployment lies in the fact that, after the introduction of 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) units into the theater, not another American soldier lost his life.



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