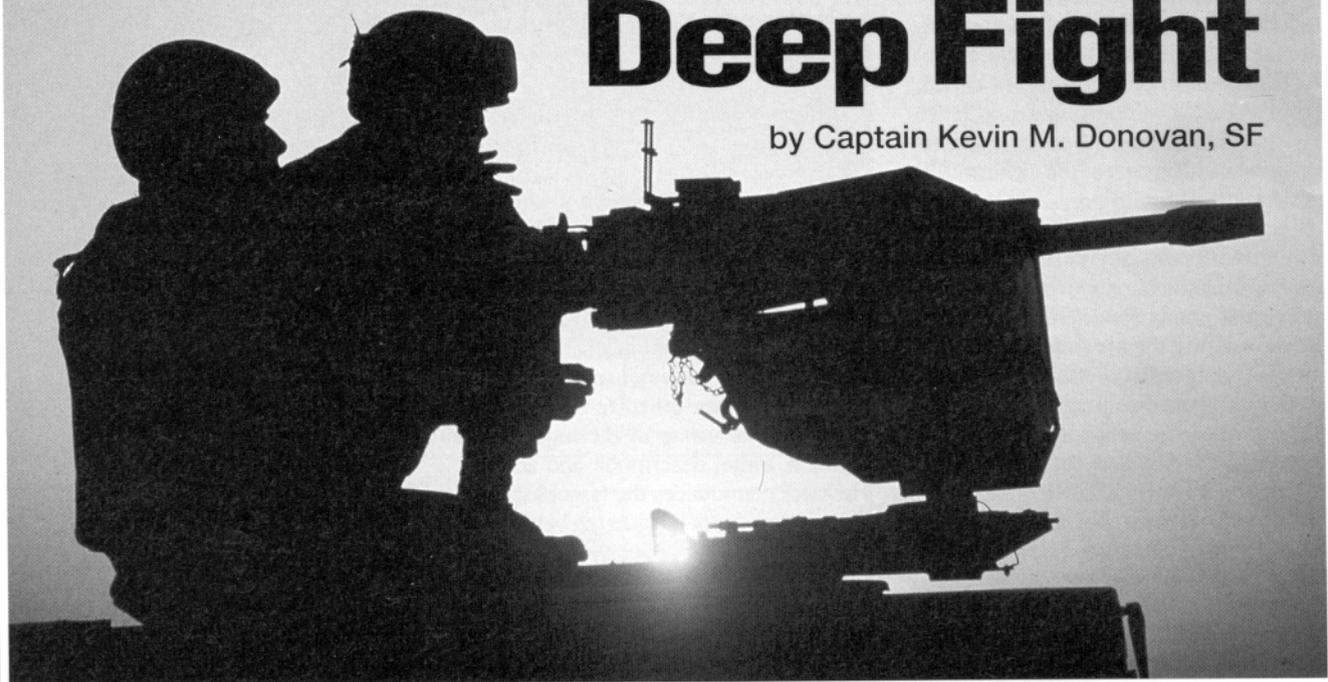


# Protecting SF Teams in the Deep Fight

by Captain Kevin M. Donovan, SF



Deep within enemy territory, two special forces operational detachments alpha (SFODAs) conducted overland infiltrations using desert mobility vehicles (modified high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles, or HMMWVs, with .50-caliber machineguns and Mk-19 grenade launchers mounted on them). Upon arriving at their respective operating areas, the SFODAs conducted split-team, special reconnaissance (SR) activities along threat road networks. From their hide sites, the teams began reporting activities in the objective areas.

Their primary mission was to find, report and target the elusive, nuclear- and chemical-capable SS-1B/C Scud transporter erector launchers (TELS). These short-dwell, mobile launchers are the same systems that plagued the Coalition Forces during Operation Desert Storm in the Gulf War. Designated by the theater Commander-in-Chief (CINC) as his Number-One high-pay-off target (HPT), special forces teams were inserted to identify and target the Scuds and coordinate attacks by Army tactical missile system (ATACMS) Block I and IA missiles and USAF "Scud CAP" F-15E attack aircraft.

Located some 300 kilometers from the teams, the Commander of the Special Operations Command (SOC) rec-

ommended the joint force commander (JFC) approve restrictive fire support coordinating measures (FSCM) to protect his special operations forces (SOF) in the "JSOA." The recommendation came from nominations from the special forces group commander whose SFODAs planned the missions. Once approved by the JFC, the FSCMs were transmitted to the theater components: air, land and marine. In the land component, the Army's operations and fire support element (FSE) personnel were confused—"What's a JSOA?"

## Joint Special Operations Area (JSOA)

During the recent Roving Sands 97 exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas, the two "live" SFODAs were unprotected from Army attack systems used during the deep fight against the threat theater ballistic missile (TBM) force. As part of Joint Project Optic Cobra—a Central Command theater missile defense (TMD) exercise—Army elements participated in this joint exercise to train on the challenging aspects of TMD attack operations.

In a joint and combined environment such as Roving Sands, it's easy to confuse terms and acronyms. Consequently,

the "JSOA" was not identified as needing a FSCM and the battlefield geometries were not transmitted to the battlefield coordination detachment (BCD), the Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC), III Corps Deep Operations Coordination Cell (DOCC) and the 214th Field Artillery Brigade via the advanced Field Artillery tactical data system (AFATDS).

From the definition found in *Joint Pub 3-05.3 Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, a JSOA is "A restricted area of land, sea and airspace assigned by a joint force commander to the commander of a joint special operations force to conduct special operations activities." The key word is "restricted." In Field Artillery speak, a JSOA is a no-fire area (NFA).

JSOAs come in all sizes. They are selected based on the criteria for each mission, and the size of the JSOA is determined by the mission requirements. For an unconventional warfare mission, the JSOA must be large enough to protect the SFODA and its resistance force (guerrilla force) and resistance infrastructure. Similarly, a TMD special reconnaissance mission where mobile recon over a large desert area is required (such as in Roving Sands), the JSOA must be large—some 25 to 100 square kilometers.

On the other hand, a direct action (DA) mission against a point target or a line of communication (LOC) special reconnaissance mission requires a relatively small JSOA, perhaps one square kilometer.

A JSOA can have more than one SFODA. The JSOA can be divided into sectors for each SFODA to operate in.

## Clearing Fires in a JSOA

The Army soon will have an organic weapon that can reach out to approximately 300 kilometers (ATACMS Block IA). Couple the capabilities of this developmental missile with USAF aircraft and Army aviation that has greater attack ranges, and the Army's area of interest will undoubtedly encompass areas where SOF operate. Clearing fires in those areas is not only essential to protect the SOF, but also to ensure critical targets are attacked in a timely manner.

When the area of interest of a conventional force commander encompasses a JSOA, coordination must occur to identify SOF mission requirements and synchronize supporting special operations with conventional combat operations. Coordination with the establishing FSCM authority is achieved via liaisons.

The SOC uses two types of liaisons to coordinate with conventional forces of the other components. For the USAF, the SOC forms the special operations

liaison element (SOLE) located inside the joint air operations center (JAOC). For the Army, the special operations command and control element (SOCCE) supplied from the special forces group is with the ARFOR (Army or corps headquarters). In lieu of a SOCCE, the corps special operations coordinator (SOCOORD), an organic staff element in the corps G3, can provide a link to SOF operations. These elements deconflict SOF operations with the operations of the conventional force.

With the speed required to attack the time-sensitive Scuds, knowing exactly where the SOF are located in near-real-time speeds the clearance of deep fires. With mobile forces in a JSOA, keeping track of them deep in threat territory is a constant, resource-intensive endeavor. To aide in tracking SOF activities during Roving Sands 97, the SOF teams carried a system called Grenadier Brat.

## SOF Grenadier Brat

During Roving Sands, the Army tested the Grenadier Brat, a visualization system for beyond the forward-line of own troops (FLOT) that helps SOF commanders visualize the deep battle and track SOF teams. Grenadier Brat is an eight-inch "box" that is a beyond-the-line-of-sight reporting and targeting system that leverages national, theater and tactical systems. It provides near-real-time tracking and removes the burden of voice reporting. Special forces, rangers, long-range surveillance units (LRSUs), Army aviation and air assault units are potential users. During Roving Sands 97, the two live SFODAs from the 5th Special Forces Group and Army AH-64s Apache helicopters from the 101st Airborne Division were equipped with Grenadier Brats.

The Grenadier Brat transmitter is the heart of the system. It broadcasts at preset intervals in spread spectrum, low-power digital bursts. This ensures a low probability of interception or detection.

The broadcast of the prototype Grenadier Brat transmitter tested in Roving

Sands has various components. The transmitter receives global positioning system (GPS) time and location and incorporates it with unit identification and an operations code (OPCODE). The transmitter has 1024 OPCODEs that can be pre-programmed before a mission is performed. The OPCODEs are messages sent back to commanders monitoring the mission. For example, OPCODE 37 might mean: "Request Resupply."

The broadcast is packaged into a digital burst and transmitted via satellite to a ground processing station. From there it is injected into the Tactical Receive Applications Program/Theater Intelligence Broadcast System (TRAP/TIBS) network for worldwide broadcasts. Any unit with a tactical exploitation of national capabilities (TENCAP) receiver can track the equipped unit.

The Grenadier Brat broadcast can be displayed on an Army Battle Command System (ABCS) screen, accessible to Field Artillery units via AFATDS. This capability provides the commander worldwide coverage to track his deep assets without fear of compromising them.

As evident by the initial insights coming out of Roving Sands, SOF detection of TELs resulted in successful attacks by Army ATACMS and USAF aircraft. SOF teams provide the Army timely, accurate targeting information in an area where deep-looking, reliable sensors are at a premium.

To ensure SOF teams can continue to provide this valuable targeting information, FSCMs need to be correctly emplaced to protect them from fratricide.



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