

Fire Support in Bosnia-Herzegovina: An Overview

by Colonel Mark T. Kimmitt

Fire support operations in peacekeeping and peace enforcement, virtually unknown a few years ago, are undergoing a great deal of analysis due to operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia has proven to be a doctrinal greenhouse for the development of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) for military operations in what some call the “New World Disorder.”

The 1st Armored Division Artillery in Germany began this thought process in early 1993 when first given the mission to prepare to deploy to the former Yugoslavia. At that time, the plan was to embed artillery, radars and command and control capabilities into a force inserted onto the Sarajevo Airport. The mission was simple: Acquire hostile artillery shelling the city of Sarajevo and respond in accordance with the rules of



Giamoc Firing Range

engagement (ROE). This vanguard force would be followed by the remainder of the division, which would occupy key positions within the country to enforce the peace plan.

The 1st Armored Division actually entered Bosnia in 1995, crossing the Sava River in the dead of winter to enforce the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accord. Field Artillery M109 howitzers rolled across the Sava side-by-side with the M1 tanks, M2 Bradleys and the Apache helicopters of the 1st Armored Division’s Task Force Eagle in Operation Joint Endeavor. This force made history in executing the tough Implementation Force (IFOR) mission in 1995 and 1996.

The 1st Armored Division Artillery—joined by an ad hoc group of 2d Armored Cavalry separate batteries and National Guard radars, fire supporters and meteorological sections—returned to Bosnia in late 1997 to relieve elements of the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) then serving as Task Force Eagle. The 1st Armored Division returned to Bosnia to conduct stability operations under the Stability Force 2 (SFOR-2) mandate as part of Operation Joint Guard.

The fire support lessons learned continue, and the articles in the series to be published over the next several editions of *Field Artillery* are an attempt by experienced forces to add to the evolving body of doctrine for fire support in peacekeeping or stability operations.

Fire Support doctrine and TTP are taught and refined every day in Bosnia. Leaders at all levels learn through a comprehensive “Right-Seat Ride” program with their subordinates in the field, by reading existing literature and by participating in operations. As an overview of the articles in the series, let me offer a few observations about providing fire support for Task Force Eagle.

Heavy Artillery Presence. Heavy artillery provides the maneuver commander the ability to demonstrate a tangible presence of significant, far-reaching firepower to the former warring factions. Short of the (infrequent) use of M1 tanks and M2 Bradleys, there is no



better weapon system to demonstrate the potential penalty for any belligerent considering violating treaty provisions.

Artillery is a respected and valued weapon system in the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. Four-gun raids, two-gun raids and two-gun presence missions are flexible tools for the maneuver commander to extend his footprint and influence throughout his sector—well beyond the base camp or gun position occupied. Such missions are visible reminders to the former belligerents as to Task Force Eagle's determination and capability to enforce the peace accord.

These missions also provide a great deal of ambiguity in the minds of the potential belligerents. The artillery is flexible enough to shoot powders, low-impact training rounds (LITR), smoke, illumination, Copperhead, family of scatterable mines (FASCAM), high explosive (HE) or dual-purpose improved conventional munitions (DPICM). Such flexibility keeps potential aggressors "on their toes" as they are unable to pinpoint the "intentions" of an M109 rolling through the countryside on a raid, a presence mission or a potential live-fire mission.

Firefinder Force Protection. Firefinder radars have taken on a new importance in Bosnia—perhaps generating unreasonable expectations. The radars in Task Force Eagle and Sarajevo radiate continuously (less maintenance periods), providing the capability to acquire and document the firing of small arms, mortars, artillery and rockets within known parameters. The radars have received a lot of press remarking on their capabilities.

Firefinders radiate over most US base camps and significant hot spots in Bosnia, but they are not positioned to orient on potential origin of fire grids, which are virtually infinite in number. This inability to predict origin of fire zones and the few radar sites in country mean that the radars can't acquire or "tell all" about every round fired in country.

Unfortunately, some non-artillery commanders overestimate the capability of Firefinders and see the continuous radiation as a virtual guarantee that they will acquire any rounds fired. To many base camp commanders, the hum of the Firefinder generators promotes a false sense of security. They think the radars will deter any potential aggressor and are a fail-safe means of documenting the source and type of any round if one

is fired. The artillery community must ensure the commanders understand what Firefinder can do for them, which is a lot, but without overselling or overstating its capabilities.

Active-National Guard Integration. We've come a long way in our integration process since 1990. The Guard has been a critical force provider to Operation Joint Endeavor and Guard—including artillery. These units have demonstrated their ability to arrive in country at a high-level of combat readiness. This is a credit to their home-station training and Forces Command's (FORSCOM's) train-up program.

The Guard has provided fire support elements (FSEs), fire support teams (FISTs), target acquisition batteries (TABs) and meteorological sections to the 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions. The units have distinguished themselves by matching—often exceeding—the performance of active duty units.

Training. The use of *FM 25-100 Training the Force* and *FM 25-101 Training the Force: Battle Focused Training* and FM 6-series (Field Artillery) doctrine doesn't stop at the Sava River. The Army training management system and artillery doctrine for conventional operations has significant value in Bosnia. In fact, these systems are the glue that binds the ad hoc Active-Guard organizations together.

Bosnia is a tough mission that's made tougher if there is no goal beyond the next day's weapons storage site inspection. Unit commanders must aggressively develop a training vision that extends through and beyond the deployment to retain some measure of conventional combat readiness.

The 1st Armored Division Artillery runs a strong training program alongside ongoing operations in Bosnia, programs designed specifically around the cannon artillery firing tables and fire direction center (FDC) and FIST operations. Our common doctrinal foundation and training management systems enable us to integrate new units—an ongoing requirement—in a relatively routine process.

Fire Support. Fire support coordination in peacekeeping and peace enforce-



C-36 Firefinder in Bosnia

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ment operations is fundamentally identical to conventional operations with some additional requirements.

Fire Support Planning and Coordination. Planning and coordinating fire support in Bosnia within a multinational context using significantly restrictive ROE is a manual in itself. But the fire support fundamentals and principles hold true, although following the justifiably cautious ROE often makes the process seem more like nuclear than conventional fire planning. The decision to "go lethal," not completely unlike the decision to "go nuclear" in a conventional context, is one fraught with high-level clearance, significant implications and a clear understanding that the context of the mission from the original peace support or enforcement operation has changed dramatically.

Therefore, fire support planning and coordination in Bosnia requires far more steps, involves a "graduated response matrix" of available options and authorizations and has far more checks and rechecks than one encounters in a conventional operation. These steps are similar to those used by our light forces in conventional operations to avoid fratricide.

Fire Support and Information Operations. A second area of interest in fire support is targeting for peace enforcement operations. Decide, detect, deliver and assess (D³A), the functions of the targeting process, still apply. But one must recognize that the "hard,"



The 1st Armored Division has frequent exchange opportunities with colleagues in Bosnia.

typically materiel-oriented conventional targets such as the army group of rocket artillery (AGRA), multiple rocket launchers (MRLs), air defense artillery (ADA) sites and motorized rifle divisions (MRDs) are not the high-payoff targets (HPTs) and high-value targets (HVTs) of the peace enforcement commander. Rather, he targets the “soft” intentions and behaviors of the former belligerents. D³A, then, includes targeting behaviors, not systems.

In peace enforcement, the goal is not to defeat, destroy or delay things (except *in extremis*). The goal is to persuade, compel or moderate behaviors. While this may be hard for targeting teams to grasp initially, the information operations (IO) community understands this. The fire support community must join the IO community in active dialogue regarding emerging IO doctrine and the part the targeting process plays in identifying and integrating the “attack” of IO targets into all operations.

Multinational Fire Support. A third area of note is fire support in a multinational environment. Simply stated, relationships (and rank) mean more than position or task organization. I am often reminded of former Commander of Task Force Eagle and the 1st Armored Division Major General William L. Nash’s response when asked why the unique US-Russian task organization worked. His answer was simple: “We are paid to make it work.”

The same can be said of the artillery organization for combat in Bosnia. If one were to examine the direct support (DS), tactical control (TACON), national and logistical arrangements, one might misinterpret the organizational structure as exhibiting the worst aspects of coalition warfare—and, at some level, the criticism might be valid.

Such a structure imposes on all commanders, especially artillery commanders, the need to build professional and personal relationships with fellow coalition cohorts to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the arrangements. Many multinational problems of the past few months—some of substance, some of form, some of pettiness—have been solved in person or with a phone call between artillery colleagues.

For example, one can only wonder how the generator problem at Camp Valhalla, the radar coverage in Bijelina or the survey problem in Teslaj would have been solved if leaders had not built relationships during the Nordic-Polish Saint Barbara’s Day festival, or at the Turkish National Day ceremony or at the Russian-US exchange. These activities built friendships that neither want to risk or see suffer. Building personal relationships is one of the most critical—and certainly the most enjoyable—fire support tasks that commanders must undertake in combined operations.

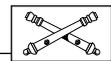
Despite appearances to the contrary, successful fire support coordination

doesn’t dramatically change in the peace support and enforcing environment. The artillery community should take great pride in its ability to provide quality fire support for NATO’s Multinational Division (North). The frequent exchange opportunities with our Russian, Turkish, Nordic and Polish colleagues reinforces the primacy of our equipment, the professionalism of our NCOs and the quality of our individual soldiers.

The future force structure in Bosnia is sure to include less and less artillery. With that in mind, several officers of the 1st Armored Division Artillery have taken on a project to record their experiences and document their observations in what could be the waning months of DS artillery support in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The articles in this series reflect the great accomplishments of our Redlegs in Bosnia since that fate-

ful day America crossed the Sava and augment the growing body of doctrinal literature in peace enforcement operations. The hope is that each article will serve as a “job aid” for those who will follow in Bosnia or other peace support or enforcement operations in the future. *Steel Forward!*



Colonel Mark T. Kimmitt commands the 1st Armored Division Artillery and “Steel Forward,” the artillery component of Task Force Eagle in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Among other elements, Steel Forward includes 22 Fire Support Teams, 15 Fire Support Elements (division, brigades and battalions), eight radar sections and three firing batteries from eight active and Guard units. It provides fire support coverage for NATO’s Multinational Division (North) and radar coverage for Sarajevo. Colonel Kimmitt also commanded the 2d Battalion, 320th Field Artillery in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and a 105-mm battery in the 9th Infantry Division (Motorized), Fort Lewis, Washington. Also in the 1st Armored Division, he served as Executive Officer for the Division Artillery. Prior to taking his current command, Colonel Kimmitt was Special Assistant to the Director for Strategy, Plans and Policy, J5 on the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. He holds three master’s degrees, including one from Harvard University.