

Increasing multi-domain capability

Joint force training approach to third offset strategy

By Maj. Rich Farnell, Maj. Shane Williams and Capt. Chandler Rochelle

One of the unique characteristics of Joint Base Lewis-McChord is that a major airlift wing is stationed alongside several combat brigades, including an expeditionary sustainment command. Given all these forces are geographically co-located, exclusive training opportunities present themselves which set conditions for joint force utilization and overlap of training objectives.

One such instance is the 62nd Airlift Wing's Rainier War Exercise. This event includes joint planning between 62nd Air Wing and 17th Field Artillery Brigade, which prepares them to rapidly deploy and provide deep-strike capabilities through HIRAIN operations. The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) Rapid Infiltration (HIRAIN) is a forcible entry capability that extends the operational reach of a combatant commander. Soldiers in 17th FAB strive to synergize this capability in a joint manner leveraging the tenants of multi-domain operation to sustain efficient joint training.

Early in the process, planners from the 62nd Airlift Wing Ground Liaison Detachment recognized the opportunity to extend invitations to units that could also benefit from United States Air Force lift assets. Further perpetuating the impetus of sustained readiness, multiple units on JBLM were able to turn the 62nd Airlift Wing's Rapid Mobility Exercise into a joint base-wide operation that reaped tremendous benefits to all who participated.

The focus for the 62nd Airlift Wing was

the facilitation of Joint Full Spectrum Readiness Training. This involved a methodical move forward with scenario-based training to enhance joint deployment readiness for the entirety of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The 62nd Airlift Wing planners developed a complex scenario in which multi-domain capabilities were needed for mission success. Within this context, air and ground assets would have to coordinate hand-in-hand to fuse their tactics, techniques and procedures. The overall objective for the 62nd Airlift Wing was for this integration to occur within the training environment.

The overarching training objective for 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment during Rainer War was to execute the HIRAIN. Nesting the employment of the HIMARS within the tactical scenario so that all joint partners could see the HIRAIN firsthand was another step in increasing multi-domain capability. The Joint Precision Air Drop System (JPADS) facilitated constant GPS coverage for the fire control panel while it was in flight. This capability on the C-17 allowed the launcher to expeditiously egress the aircraft and deliver precision Fires while minimizing the time the launcher spent at the raid location. Long-range communications were tested as well, further demonstrating that a fire control node offset of the launcher location could in fact pass fire mission data via high frequency (HF). The HIMARS off-loaded the C-17 aircraft at Schoonover Air Strip at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif., and the battalion

fire direction center (FDC) passed fire mission data via HF from JBLM, Wash., within minutes of the launcher being in position ready to fire. The rapid loading, offloading and firing of a six-round fire mission in a matter of minutes demonstrated the ability to provide a unique capability to exploit windows of opportunity to open access for friendly forces with precision Fires.

The platoon involved employed a medium HIMARS package of two HIMARS, one FDC and a HUMVEE carrying maintenance support. Two C-17s were allocated to the battalion. One aircraft carried a launcher and FDC while the second aircraft was loaded with a launcher and a HUMVEE. This tandem package allowed for redundancy in the case of maintenance issues and technical difficulties in the launchers.

To meet mobility requirements, both packages underwent inspections at the base Installation Transportation Division, followed by a joint inspection (JI) by the 62nd Air Wing load masters. Concurrent to the JI, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant gave a mission brief to the launchers inside the troop holding area. Per standard operating procedure, a three-day window was allocated to meet these mobility requirements.

Overall, the exercise highlighted the importance of joint training and a common operational picture. By utilizing local unit training, 17th FAB capitalized on locked-in resourced that was mutually beneficial training for all involved. Multilateral plan-

ning and integration is essential in ensuring the success of any joint training event. By following the Rainier War model, plenty of installations can leverage host units to further enhance individual readiness, and when tied into a nested common operational picture, significant gains can be made in increasing multi-domain capability across the services.

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A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) crew from A Battery, 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Field Artillery Brigade fires a rocket off of the Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. dirt landing strip, June 7, 2017. The 62nd Airlift Wing flew a HIMARS from Joint Base Lewis-McChord to Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., to off-load and fire a six-round mission. (Sgt. Jacob Kohrs/U.S. Army)

