

Fires solutions for the division targeting board

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Having served as both a Mission Command Training Program senior mentor and Fires warfighting function chief over the last three years with a focus on division-level targeting for over 17 Mission Command Training Center warfighter exercises, we often see units struggle to get their targeting processes up and running at the start of an exercise. The causes are many. The most common of which are that all members of the team are not grounded in the targeting methodology and, quite simply, have not worked together as a team.

The purpose of this article is to provide the division “targeteers” with a starting point from which they can adjust for their own particular operating environments. These recommendations on how to conduct a targeting board at the division level can be modified to apply at different echelons of command.

As one division commander told us, “The targeting board is the single most important hour of my day.”

That is exactly as it should be. The board does several important things for the division. First, it ensures the division is fulfilling its responsibility to set the conditions for subordinate units’ success in future fights specifically by influencing “when, where and in what condition enemy forces commit to the close area” (Field Manual 6-0). We have seen divisions where both the main and tactical command posts become mired in the close fight. Second, it helps us gain access to resources outside of the division which are available to assist us in delivering effects. And finally, when executed well, it gives the commanding general a great snapshot of the integration of all warfighting functions over the next 96 hours.

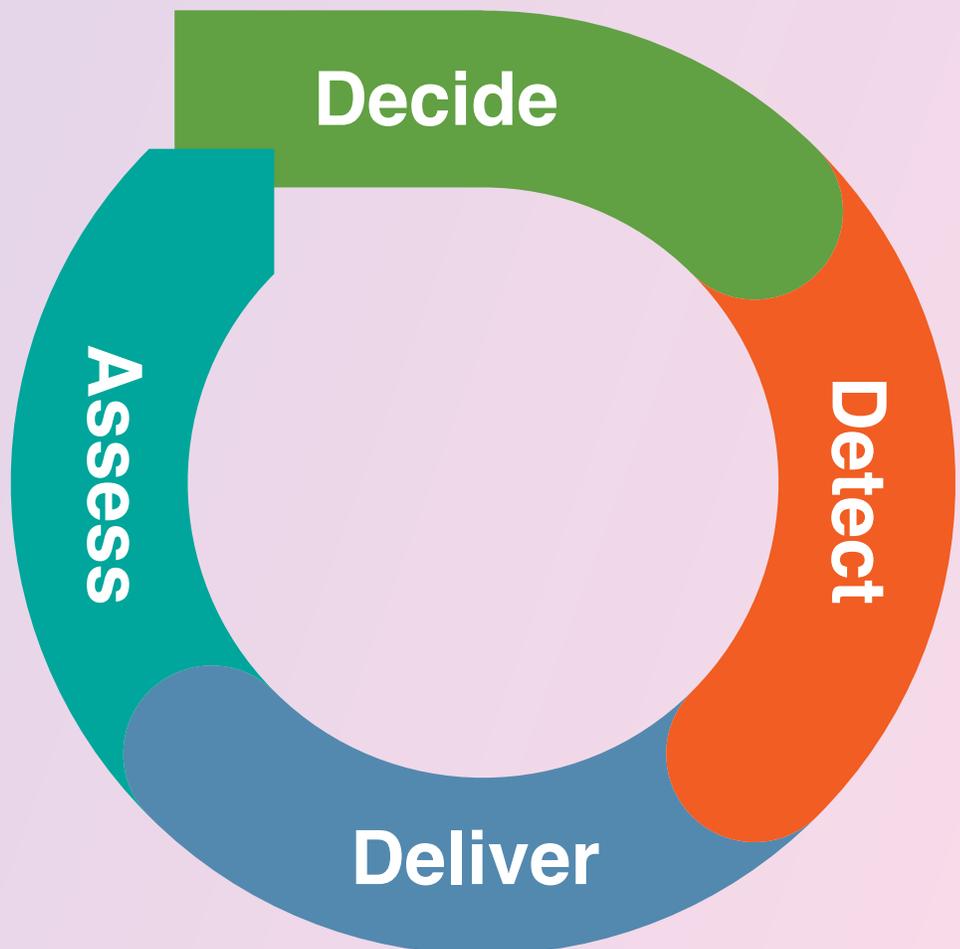
This article intentionally does not delve into the additional working groups and cells that support the targeting effort. Suf-

fice it to say, the targeting board is the culmination of a myriad of different efforts captured in different working groups and cells. By describing what we consider a model targeting board, each of the feeder battle rhythm events that contribute to it should be optimized to make the targeting board the single point in which the commander can see the synchronization of intelligence, maneuver and Fires to shape the fight for the division. These battle rhythm

events include, but are not limited to, the targeting working group, assessment working group, cyber-electromagnetic activity working group, collection working group, intelligence synch and operations synch.

The fundamental organizing principle of a good targeting board is to use the framework of the Army’s targeting methodology of decide, detect, deliver and assess. We have not found a single operating environment in which this tool failed to provide the

Figure 1. The decide, detect, deliver and assess targeting process. (Rick Paape, courtesy information)



necessary structure to see ourselves, the environment and the enemy very well. When units stray from this organizational construct, it usually leads to a confusing flow and omission of key elements required to synchronize the division's shaping efforts.

Targeting decision board

As a short preface, it might be useful to briefly describe the timing of the targeting board – where it best fits in the battle rhythm. There are two primary considerations with respect to the timing. The outputs of the division board serve as the inputs to the higher headquarters' targeting board. Therefore, the principle consideration of timing is to ensure the nesting of battle rhythms. Secondly, since the first decision the commanding general must make during a board is whether to re-attack based on our assessment, the board must be held early enough in the day (or the air tasking order cycle) so a re-attack decision can have an immediate effect.

To begin the targeting decision board, it is helpful to lay out decisions we will be asking the commanding general over the course of the meeting. These range from re-attack decisions that must be made immediately, to adjusting and refining previously made decisions in the H+24, 48 and 72 hour timeframes; and finally, the focus of collection and Fires for submission into higher headquarters processes that ultimately result in air tasking order, airspace control orders and the joint integrated priority target list.

Assessment

Although we call the targeting process decide, detect, deliver, assess (D3A), we think it might be more accurate to call it A-D3-A because the cycle must start with a good assessment. We must start by asking the question, "What effect did we intend to have on the enemy by this time and did we have that effect?"

A common struggle with many training units is defining what they are trying to achieve with their shaping efforts. Too often, we hear "Sir, we intend to 'shape' the long-range artillery." The problem with this lack of specificity is that it is near impossible to assess our effectiveness at accomplishing that task. How do we know whether we really set the conditions for the future success of our subordinate units once the close fight is joined? We must provide much more detail in terms of enemy capabilities or combat strengths. We must have something we can measure so we can turn with confidence to the commander

and say, "We have had the necessary effects and have set the conditions."

An example of a better articulated targeting objective is, "We intend to reduce the capability of the enemy long-range artillery to mass on our forces at the wet gap crossing. We define that as destruction of 70 percent of his 9A52 Multiple Rocket Launchers (16 systems) that are within range and the disruption of command and control at the battalion and brigade level."

With that degree of specificity, we can measure the effects of our lethal and non-lethal efforts and make an informed recommendation to the commanding general. When we "assess" that we did not have the effects we intended, the commander must make one of three decisions: devote some of today's resources to meet the targeting objectives (re-attack), adjust the plan (e.g. delay the maneuver of ground forces) or finally, accept risk, which probably mandates a call to the subordinate commander who was counting on the promised effects.

Many units are not sure where they would get the specifics of the targeting objectives. For both deliberate and hasty planning, the best source is the discussions taking place during the wargame step of the military decision-making process. This is where we discuss details such as, "What do we need the correlation of forces to be at this point in the battle to ensure the success of our subordinate unit?"

A targeteer should be an intimate player in the larger wargaming process and then bring those detailed targeting objectives to the rest of the targeting team as they conduct their concurrent planning.

Intelligence/operations update

The next key part of the targeting board is intelligence. This should include weather and operations updates to ensure the longer-range targeting process is linked to the current situation. We do not want to get "bogged down" in this current situation, but it helps many leaders organize their minds to link the current with future operations. The intelligence officer briefs the enemy's current disposition, composition and intent. The weather officer, usually from the United States Air Force, then briefs weather only as it impacts our operations during this time frame. The operations officer then briefs the current friendly situation much the same as the intelligence officer. This is sometimes augmented by a fire supporter detailing assets available to the division based on release of the air tasking order

and strengths and locations of various delivery assets.

This information and more importantly, analysis, sets the conditions for a discussion about the next 24 hours. This is generally a review of previously made decisions and refinements and an update on the acquisition of necessary enablers from outside the division. This discussion is usually very short and can go something like this, "Sir, three days ago you approved this approach and we are still on plan based on what the enemy and friendly forces have accomplished in the interim. We don't have the air tasking order yet, but in my discussions with our higher headquarters at their targeting meeting, I am confident we will get the collection and delivery resources we have asked for."

What is more likely is that the enemy will NOT have done what we predicted 72 hours before and we will have to make adjustments based on emerging changes to mission, enemy, troops available and time. This is how the dynamic targeting process is embedded in the deliberate process. We refine and adjust as the battle evolves. This allows us to do what every single division commander has asked us to do: fight the enemy, not the plan. It also forces us to do what has become a lost art, and that is refining our targets over time.

Assess

After we receive the intelligence, weather and operations update, we look at H+24 through the lens of A-D3-A. First, we look at assessing whether our activities over time have had the effect we set out to achieve. "We have reduced the enemy long-range artillery's ability to impact the wet gap crossing by destroying 50 percent of his Multiple Rocket Launchers, but have not had any measurable effect on disrupting his C2 [command and control] capability. We are confident that with the air interdiction we have on station today and the electronic attack capability that we have requested for tomorrow, we will be able to meet our targeting objectives." A common shortcoming across the Army is failing to include the results of our higher headquarters' and adjacent units' shaping activity into our assessment. Many times, they are going after many of the same targets and capabilities. The best way to capture their efforts is through active participation in their targeting processes.

Decide

During this portion of the H+24 discussion, we review the key decisions our com-

mander has made such as determining the prioritization of effort through the use of the high payoff target list, attack guidance matrix, fire support coordination measures and recommending any changes based on the emerging operational environment. Just as a review, the high payoff target list is a prioritized list of targets whose loss to the enemy will significantly contribute to the success of the friendly course of action. (Field Manual 3-09) The attack guidance matrix is a targeting product approved by the commander which addresses how and when targets are to be attacked and the desired effects. (Army Techniques Publication 3-09)

Detect

During this portion of the H+24 discussion, we review our intelligence collection plan and determine if any adjustments need to be made. Often, our collection managers are new to the job as the warfighter training begins and they need coaching. Invariably, they will have broad swaths

and boxes all over the map linked to echelon-above-division collection assets with the thought process being “We will vacuum up everything and sort it out in the analysis control element.”

The much better approach is to focus specifically on the high payoff target list and describe in detail how they are going to find and track a specific target through detection, delivery and assessment. One division commander describes this as “putting a hook in him and never letting go.”

Another common shortcoming in the intelligence collection process is failing to adjust the plan when it is not working. There are two fundamental assumptions we must make. First, the enemy is there somewhere executing a plan. Second, with the totality of systems we have at our disposal, we can find the enemy if we are looking in the right place with the right asset. Too often we see no adjustment in the collection plan for several days even though we are not finding the things we have identified as

most important, the high payoff target list. Einstein’s definition of insanity may be too harsh, but we have to show some agility in adjusting our plans until we start to see some benefit.

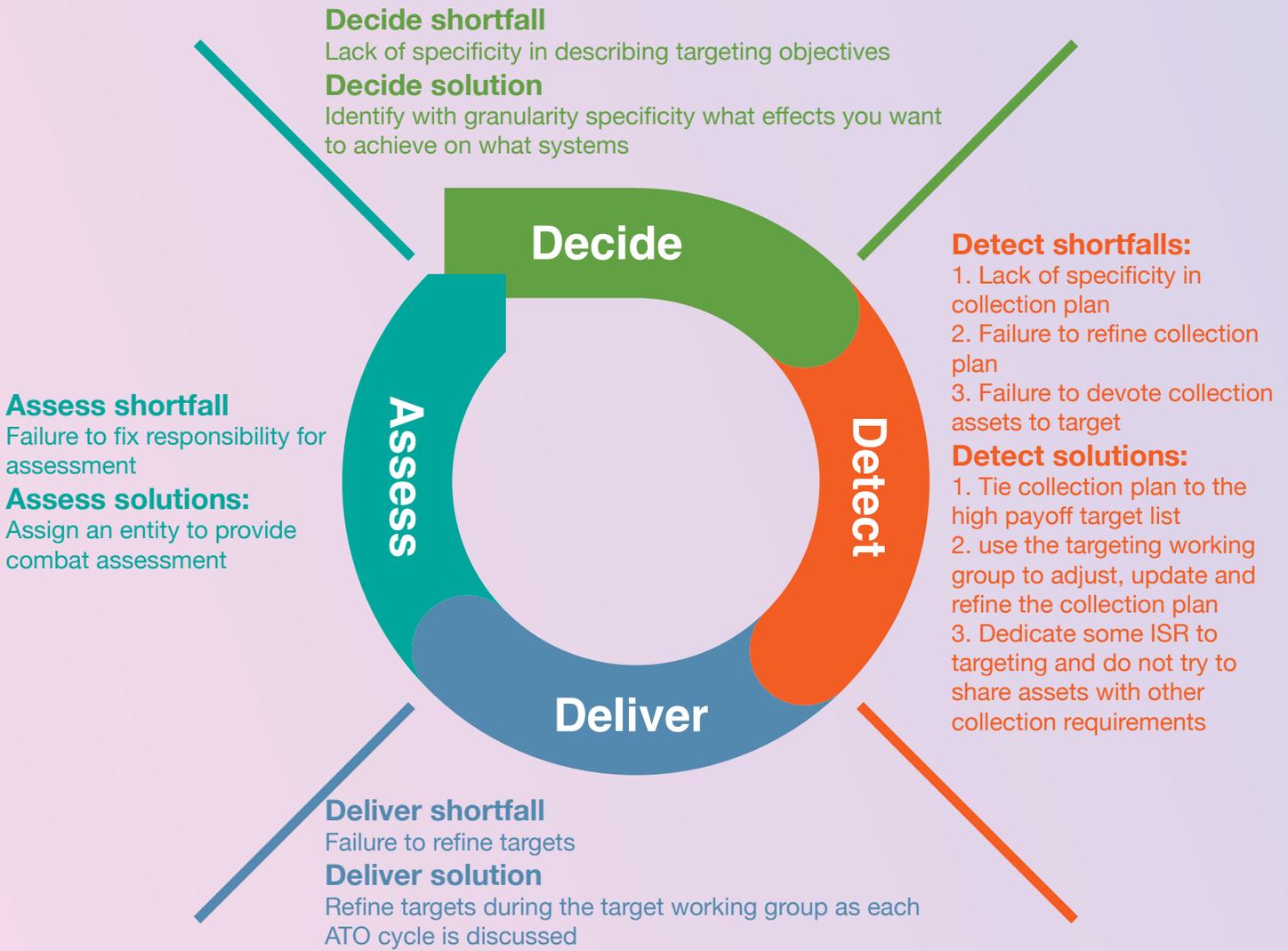
One last common shortcoming in our collection plan is when we task one line of division full motion video (FMV) in the form of a Grey Eagle to both try to answer the commander’s priority intelligence requirements AND be used by targeting for detection and assessment. We have not seen this work successfully a single time and strongly recommend some division collection capability be devoted to the targeting effort.

Deliver

Again, at H+24, we are reviewing the delivery decisions we made three days ago and comparing them to the anticipated enemy and friendly situation during this time-frame to see what refinements need to be made. A couple of examples of things that could impact these adjustment decisions

Figure 2. An example agenda for a targeting board meeting. (Rick Paape, courtesy information)

<p>Purpose Approve targeting priorities, collection assets and planning efforts IOT anticipate emerging requirements, make recommendations to the commander and ensure continued execution of both lethal and non-lethal targets</p> <p>Frequency Daily</p> <p>Duration One hour</p> <p>Location Briefing tent</p>	<p>Chair Commanding general or designated representative</p> <p>OPR FSCoord</p> <p>Attendees G2, SWO, G2 CM, CUOPS, G2 BDA, FUOPS, FUPLANS, G3 AVN, ENG, IO, CEMA, CMO, MISO, PAO, SJA, AMD, CBRN, ALO/TACP, Targeting officer, G4, LNOs</p>
<p>Inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather update (G2) • Operational timeline (G3) • G2 Assessment/BDA (G2) • Collection asset/delivery system status (CM) • Target nominations, 24-hour blocks (Fires) • Current HPTL/AGM, collection priorities (Fires) • Targeting Guidance <p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated HPTL/TSS/AGM • Targeting priorities • Target nominations • Synchronized IC plan • CG Guidance for future targeting 	<p>Agenda</p> <p>Assess previous ATO (last 24-48 hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review operational timeline • SIGACT assessments • Tasks to effect review • Commander's guidance • OE updates • HPTL update <p>Review next 24-48 hours and decisive operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather impacts to operations • Enemy situation update • Lethal and non-lethal • Friendly situation update • Info collection emphasis <p>Validate next ATO 48-72 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather impacts to operations • Enemy situation update • Lethal and non-lethal • Friendly situation update • Info collection emphasis • Initial consequence management <p>Recommend/Approve ATO Cycle > 96 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly situation • Enemy situation (Predictive analysis) • Recommended AI, EW, IO nominations • Recommended priorities for 48-72 HPTL



could be interim assessment from our higher or adjacent units that tell us they have met our targeting objectives with activity of their own, or we may have lost a resource we were counting such as destruction of a friendly artillery unit.

Assessment

During this final phase of the H+24 discussion, we need to describe our plan for assessing our effectiveness. Divisions infrequently dedicate collection resources to assessment efforts and we therefore lose the ability to understand the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of our efforts. This leads us to redundant Fires with scarce resources, or worse, to not fully appreciate an enemy capability that still exists. We cannot have FMV everywhere. We need to broaden our scope of collection capability to include use of our subordinate units, other division "ints," special operations forces in the area, allied militaries, national assets, local resources such as civilians on the battlefield and non-governmental organizations, and when necessary, predictive analysis based

on acceptable models. A common problem in our "plan to assess" is that the responsibility is not fixed on any single entity, though we acknowledge the collaborative nature of the requirement. Some units use their Organizational Research and System Analyst to do this. Others place it in the G2 and still others put it in a subordinate unit, most often the division artillery. Wherever this responsibility is placed, the "Chief of Assessments" needs to be a part of the targeting process so he, or she understands what needs to be assessed, when and in what level of detail.

H+48, H+72

This same format carries through in the discussion of H+48 and H+72, the plan for tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Start with an intelligence assessment of likely enemy disposition, location, strengths and intentions. Follow with anticipated weather as it applies to our operations. Then have the G3 planner give a best guess of friendly disposition, strengths and missions. With that information as a

starting point, as flawed as it might be in a dynamic environment, then go through the same A-D3-A format. In many cases, there will be no change at this time. That is OK. Go through that part quickly. But again, remember that we should be making refinements to the requests for resources that we made previously.

H+96

Finally, we get to the portion of the board where we need to extract the commanding general's guidance for our submission of requests to external organizations such as those described in the air tasking order (including detection and delivery assets), the full range of non-lethal capabilities, permission to use airspace and permission to shoot the Army Tactical Missile System. In most theaters, these requests must be submitted between 72 and 96 hour before execution. Some theaters may have more lengthy requirements and that is usually based on the number of intervening headquarters between the division and the joint force commander.

Most units find it useful to follow the structure we have described in chronological order detailing the 24, 48 and 72 hour efforts prior to asking for the necessary decisions in the 96 hour timeframe. The targeting team needs to protect against unnecessarily “re-wargaming” every time period.

Once again, the intelligence and operations officer must lead us off with a best guess of what the enemy and friendly dispositions, compositions and intentions are at this stage of the fight. Many are hesitant to make this prediction because of the very small likelihood of it actually playing out as predicted. There is some merit to this because, in effect, we are trying to predict what the enemy is going to do even before he decides using his very effective decision point tactics. However, we must use our best professional military judgement and make the prediction. Doctrinally, an event template, or EVENTEMP, (Army Techniques Publication 2-19.3) is the best tool for the intelligence officer to use. Without doing so, we will not be able to submit justifiable requests for external resources from which we can adjust as the picture becomes clearer.

We also must articulate to the commanding general what our higher headquarters and adjacent units are trying to accomplish during this timeframe. This information gives him a better overall context for operations.

Decide

Next, we will walk the commanding general through the A-D3-A process and make recommendations on the necessary focus, guidance and decisions. During the decide phase of the briefing, we must provide a recommended and updated high payoff target list and attack guidance matrix based on the anticipated evolving operational environment. This is informed by all of our assessments to date as well as our understanding of emerging plans and operations. This must be tied to the intelligence and operations officers’ discussion of what the future fight will look like.

Detect

Then we must describe with some specificity how we are going to find (detect) those high payoff targets, put a “hook” in them and track them through detection to assessment. We must talk specific targets, sensors, cuing of secondary sensors, likely named and targeted areas of interest and what specifically we are looking for. The commander must approve the focus of key

collection assets and have an understanding of the echelon-above-division capabilities available.

Deliver

At this point, we need the commander to approve the general focus of lethal and non-lethal Fires. We don’t need him approving specific targets or even the method of engagement. We just need a general approval of the focus given the assets expected to be available. Our recommendation should sound something like “Sir, we intend to focus air interdiction on the enemy reserve tank brigade. We will focus Army Tactical Missile System on SA-20s and long-range shooters. We will use our Army attack aviation capability to destroy the remaining multiple rocket launcher systems associated with the committed division tactical group and we will suppress all remaining indirect Fires capability with our rocket systems.”

As we have discussed earlier, we will add specifics of our targeting objectives as we continue to conduct our analysis. We know that we will need to refine those targets from submission through execution. One common mistake we see is that the non-lethal subset of the team will be working a completely different set of priorities off a completely different high payoff target list. Emphatically, we want to say there is one priority list and it is the combination of all these capabilities that gives us the best effects.

Assessment

As stated earlier, there must be a plan to assess and some of the assessments require a long lead time. The most common long lead time is when we need a special forces team to reposition in order to be where they can provide an assessment and that is not something that can be done without significant planning and time to execute. Another division commander said, “If it is important enough to do, it is important enough to assess.”

Our recent history has told us that lethal assessment, though not easy, is usually easier and timelier than non-lethal assessment. That must be accounted for in the targeting plan. Finally, we must acknowledge that the assessment plan must be continually refined through execution just like the detection and delivery plan.

Once the commanding general approves the focus of Fires and the refinement decisions presented throughout the meeting, the decision board is concluded, but the

work is not done. It is critical that the results of the targeting board be promulgated to the division staff, the subordinate units and the higher and adjacent units. The intra-divisional communication is usually a specific targeting fragmentary order (FRAGO), or the inclusion of the results into a division daily FRAGO. At the minimum, the FRAGO must include refinement decisions, the high payoff target list, the attack guidance matrix and a target synchronization matrix. The redundant yet very necessary back-up method of sharing this information is the work of the brigade liaison officers who participate in all phases of the targeting process and keep their units informed on a regular basis.

Targeting

A good targeting process is essential to keeping the division focused at the proper depth in time, space and purpose. It also enables the aligning of resources with priorities in a constrained environment. The targeting board is fundamental to making the appropriate decisions and the organizing principle is D3A, or as we have suggested, A-D3-A. There are many common shortfalls that we have described throughout, however each of these is surmountable if addressed and understood by the key contributors to the targeting process. By using the recommendations included in this article, we are confident that divisions can overcome these easily fixed shortfalls and truly set the conditions for their subordinate units’ future fights.

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