The Army has a problem. As the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Mark Milley has pointed out on multiple occasions, the Army faces the prospect of fighting large scale force-on-force battles, and as an institution we have forgotten how to do that.1 A renewed emphasis by the CSA to try to recapture some of the capability that the Army had prior to the Global War on Terror and the transformation to a modular army has led to efforts across the force. Most visibly, the emphasis on the division warfighter exercise program, led by the Mission Command Training Program out of Fort Leavenworth, Kans., has forced Army divisions to engage large-scale enemy forces in a high tempo maneuver warfare against a thinking opponent.

As a member of the organization formerly known as the Joint and Combined Integration Directorate (now the Army

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The role of Fires at the senior tactical and operational levels is at the center of the effort to re-learn large-scale combat operations. Since division and higher level headquarters affect the battlefield through shaping efforts focused in the deep fight, Fires is the primary weapon of commanders to affect the battlefield from their level.

While Fires doctrine gives detailed guidance for operations at the BCT-level and below, details are lacking for division through theater levels. For division-level operations, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-09, “Fires,” provides few specifics for the employment of Fires, role of the Fires cell, or relationship of fire support personnel to the rest of the staff. ADRP 3-09 dedicates six pages to cover this topic, most of which is split between the duties and responsibilities of the primary personnel of the Fires cell and a description of air defense organizations by echelon.  

Field Manual (FM) 3-09, “Field Artillery Operations and Fire Support,” April 2014, adds a layer of complexity because it groups the Fires cells differently than in ADRP 3-09. Although it provides a bit more detailed guidance on the types of activities conducted at corps/division, its three and a half pages are far from sufficient to execute operations. Similarly, within the specific realm of targeting, doctrine covers detailed targeting procedures up through the BCT-level in Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-60, “Targeting,” then picks up back at the Joint Task Force level in Joint Publication 3-60, “Joint Targeting,” skipping division and corps echelons.

3 ADRP 3-09, 2-3; Field Manual (FM) 3-09, Field Artillery and Fire Support, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 2-3 through 2-7. ADRP 3-09 organizes the levels of Fires cells as Joint Force Land Component/Joint Force Command, and Division/Brigade while FM 3-09 organizes them as JTF/JLCC and Corps/Division.
ADRP 3-09 states that the Fires cell at division level, “Plans, prepares, executes and assesses Fires in support of current and future operations,” but this is only part of the role of Fires at the division level.5 Fires at the division level must shape the enemy in the division deep fight, provide Fires and fire support coordination for subordinate units, and on occasion provide Fires and fire support coordination for higher and adjacent units. A division Fires cell operating according to doctrine will find that they are forced by the requirements of the division commander, the subordinate brigades and the rest of the staff to perform far more roles than what doctrine prepared them for.

These roles are not captured in ADRP 3-09 (or ADP 3-09, or FM 3-09), but they were at the heart of the framework which was designed leading up to World War II and remained essentially unchanged until the beginning of the 21st Century. As per the 1941 FM 100-5, “Field Service Regulations,” the role of division artillery was to mass supporting Fires in direct support of the division’s subordinate maneuver units. The role of corps artillery was to destroy the enemy’s artillery and to interdict enemy forces not yet in contact with friendly forces.6 Additionally, division artillery had to be prepared to reinforce corps artillery Fires when needed, and corps artillery was prepared to reinforce division Fires.7 This framework still fits the role of Fires in the modern force if the specific tasks are moved down one echelon so that the modern division fills the role that was once performed by the corps and the BCT fills the role of the division.

Including these additional roles for Fires at the division level helps ensure that the fire support system across the whole theater is connected and responsive. If FC personnel understand their expanded role it will cut down confusion when requirements from subordinate, adjacent, or higher headquarters arise during the course of a battle (which they invariably do).

FIRE SUPPORT

All the activities of the division Fires cell can be broken down in to the category of either executing fire support or planning fire support. This delineation is important because if you are assigned to work in a division Fires cell you will generally end up in either role.

Despite a lack of guidance from doctrine, the distribution of fire support personnel across the two functions has been similar among divisions observed during warfighter exercises. Even with that being the case, slight modifications can lead to the neglect of either the planning of Fires or their execution if critical positions are not filled. The following proposed division of labor could avoid this issue.

LEADERSHIP, INTEGRATION

- Fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) is located with the division command group.
- Deputy fire support coordinator (DFSCOORD) is located at the division main command post, synchronizes planning and executing efforts with FSCOORD guidance.
- Executing fire support:
  - Field artillery intelligence officer (FAIO) is located in the division analysis and control element (ACE).
  - Fire support officer (FSO) is located in the division JAGIC.
  - Fire support NCO (FSNCO) is located in the division JAGIC.
  - JAGIC targeting officer is located in the division JAGIC.
  - Assistant fire support coordinator (AFSCOORD) serves as the JAGIC chief.

PLANNING FIRE SUPPORT

- Assistant fire support coordinator is located in the division Fires cell or division G3-5.
- Division fire support sergeant major is located in the division Fires cell.
- Division targeting officer is located in the division Fires cell.
- The FSCOORD and the DFSCOORD provide leadership and integration between fire support plans, execution and the rest of the division. The FSCOORD is the division commander’s senior advisor for Fires, and is often located with the command group. The FSCOORD provides Fires input to the command group and is the conduit for the division commander’s intent for Fires to flow to the rest of the Fires cell. As the division artillery (DIVARTY) commander, the FSCOORD also integrates DIVARTY efforts into the larger division effort. The FSCOORD stands split between the division headquarters and the DIVARTY, leading through the DIVARTY staff on one hand and the DFSCOORD and the Fires cell on the other.

The DFSCOORD represents the FSCOORD to the rest of the division staff, and works as the integrator between planning fire support and executing fire support. Some doctrinal publications (for example ATP 3-91.1, “The Joint Air Ground Integration Center”) give specific duties to the DFSCOORD which would draw him or her deeper into full time activities such as clearing airspace or approving individual fire missions.8 Since pulling the DFSCOORD into this level of detail would prevent him or her from the key roles of leading and integrating the overall planning and execution, those duties must be delegated to an AFSCOORD.

EXECUTING FIRE SUPPORT

In the role of executing fire support, the Fires cell will take on division shaping Fires and manage the fire support structure throughout the division area of operations. Again, these two delineations are not specified in current doctrine, but are directly inferred by the role of the division in unified land operations and the requirements of the Fires systems available to the division.

To execute division shaping Fires, the division Fires cell will perform dynamic targeting and will coordinate Fires assets to strike targets once located. Dynamic targeting is conducted by the field artillery intelligence officer (FAIO) who resides in the division ACE and the targeting officer seated on the division JAGIC. The FAIO finds targets (with the help of all assets of the division G2 in the ACE) and forwards them to the targeting officer sitting on the JAGIC to prosecute. Between these two positions, targets must be identified via the high payoff target list (HPTL), commander’s priority intelligence requirements and the collection plan which should be synchronized, validated (via target selection standards) and then forwarded on to be prosecuted. Where these discrete activities of detecting, deciding and delivering occur is not designated in doctrine.9 In the last three years of observation, different U.S. divisions have varied greatly in where these activities are conducted and who specifically is responsible for executing these tasks.

The transfer of intelligence into actionable targets, the decision on which targets to strike, and the transmitting of those targets to specific Fires assets are all processes that must be completed in order for Fires to affect the battlefield. Doctrine lacks a detailed cohesive system for how to accomplish this. Some divisions lay all of these responsibilities on the FAIO, some on the targeting of-

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5 ADRP 3-09, 2-7.
7 FM 100-5, 53-54.
9 Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-60, Targeting, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015). The Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess (D3A) Methodology is the basis for army targeting. This article focuses on the first three steps of the D3A as they are the steps necessary during the staff battle drill that results in effects on targets.
ficer and some divisions skip steps in the process, desynchronizing the entire fire support system. In warfighter exercises, entire field artillery brigades of rocket artillery have sat idle because divisions failed to man a single FAIO position in their ACE.

Here is a suggested breakdown of the roles and procedures for these critical positions:

**FAIO:** Selects potential targets identified in the ACE and after vetting and validating, forwards them to the JAGIC targeting officer. The FAIO should be the owner of the target selection standards (TSS) for the division. Target selection criteria should be defined and readily available for each of the targets on the HPTL and the FAIO should have the specifics of each of the division’s likely collection assets. As an example, if an SA20 Air Defense system is on the HPTL, the FAIO should know the acceptable target decay based on the mobility of the target. If it takes 60 minutes to tear down and move a deployed SA20 system, then a spot report within 60 minutes should indicate that it is still in place). The FAIO should also get the target location error, a standard factor based on the type of intelligence asset providing the location of the target. As a sidenote, a prophet system provides a more accurate target location than a spot report by a civilian informant calling from a cellphone in enemy territory.

The battle drill within the ACE between G2 personnel and the FAIO must be rehearsed and refined. G2 personnel receiving reports from collection assets must understand what targets the FAIO is looking for and when and how to provide located targets to the FAIO. The FAIO then needs a system to transmit the selected targets to the targeting officer on the JAGIC. In an ideal system, targets would be transmitted digitally from collection personnel using the Distributed Common Ground System-Army to the FAIO’s Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS), and then the FAIO would forward selected targets to the JAGIC targeting officer via AFATDS as fire missions. As logical as that sounds, I have yet to observe an AFATDS or DCGS operator who could make this connection work digitally.

**JAGIC targeting officer:** Receives targets from the FAIO and determines the appropriate asset to service the target. The attack guidance matrix (AGM) is the key document that the JAGIC targeting officer uses to determine which asset is the best fit for the target identified by the FAIO. The AGM is developed by the division targeting officer as a part of fire support planning, but the JAGIC targeting officer needs to be the owner of this document during execution and should be responsible for updating it to match the changing situation in the current fight.

As per ATP 3-91.1, “The Joint Air Ground Integration Center,” the role of the JAGIC targeting officer is to recommend options to the JAGIC chief, generally understood in the ATP to be the deputy fire support coordinator since that is who has the authority to direct a joint Fires asset (primarily field artillery or Air Force assets) to attack a target. In practice, however, some of this authority will be delegated to the JAGIC targeting officer. Especially as the tempo of a battle increases, the division will provide more authority to the JAGIC targeting officer to the point where they will be sending targets directly to supporting field artillery units and the division tactical air control party. In this case, the JAGIC chief will usually be too busy to make a decision on every target that the division will have the opportunity to strike, and will instead give left and right limits for the JAGIC targeting officer to work within. For instance, the JAGIC targeting officer may be told to send field artillery targets straight down to the DIVARTY, but to check with the JAGIC chief for approval before sending a target for close air support (CAS) or air interdiction.

**JAGIC fire support officer:** The only guidance FM 3-09, “Fire Support,” gives for the role of an FSO at division level is that they are, “responsible for advising the supported commander and assisting the senior Fires officer of the organization on Fires functions and fire support.” This is at once inadequate, and also inaccurate since at the division and higher level the FSO will not advise the supported commander (that is the role of the FSCOORD), nor are they directly involved with assisting the senior Fires officer (the FSCOORD) on Fires and Fires support (that is the DFSCOORD). ATP 3-91-1.1, “The Joint Air Ground Integration Center,” provides more accurate duties for the FSO as they relate to specific JAGIC battle drills to clear airspace and deliver Fires, but does not cover the majority of the duties for which the FSO at division level will be responsible.

At the division level, the FSO is responsible for managing the fire support system for the division. The FSO maintains contact with the FSOS of the subordinate brigades as well as the fire direction center of the DIVARTY. They serve as the final arbiter of priority of fire, assignment of fire missions, and formal and informal fire support coordination measures. The FSO is the master of this system, speaking with the authority of the fire support coordinator and division commander.

The FSO manages the fire support system within the division, he or she must also participate in the larger corps (or equivalent) fire support system. The FSO needs to maintain communication with the FSO’s of adjacent divisions, as well as with the FSO at the corps level. The goal of this interconnected system is that divisions should be able to assist each other with Fires or ground clearance near and across the division boundaries, and reinforce Fires both vertically and laterally.

Within the JAGIC, the FSO is the field artillery input to the joint Fires options available to the division to strike targets. When the JAGIC receives a target and evaluates options, the FSO provides the field artillery options available. The FSO needs to have the locations of field artillery units within the division at hand as well as the types of ammunition available. Because of limitations of the computer simulation in division warfighter exercises, the location of munitions within the logistics system rarely becomes an issue, but in actual operations the location of special munitions within the area of responsibility is critically important to overall field artillery operations. For instance, the FSO should be able to inform the JAGIC chief on the location of extra stocks of guided multiple launch rockets and how long it would take to resupply a specific firing unit.

In addition to the responsibilities already detailed, the FSO often has to fill in as the JAGIC chief, making calls for airspace clearance and the decision to employ joint Fires since the JAGIC chief may be pulled into meetings, or other planning efforts.

**JAGIC fire support NCO:** The FSNCO assists the FSO, but more specifically the FSNCO should be doing the hands-on management of the active field artillery targets and fire support coordination measures (FSCMs) for the division. If there is one person in the Fires cell who knows ex-

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10 Conversation with Dr. William Rienner, Senior Consultant-Fire Support Subject Matter Expert with CGI. The importance of this battle drill was stressed by Dr. William Rienner, who stated, “Rehearsing this battle drill is probably one of the most repeated failures in the D3A and F2T2EA process for all the division’s I’ve seen (and I’ve seen them all).” Dr. Rienner is a subject matter expert on Mission Command Training Program during exercises since 2011.

11 ATP 3-91-1, 1-3.

12 FM 3-09, 2-11, 2-12. FM 3-09 provides some detailed guidance (2 paragraphs) for brigade and battalion fire support officers, as well as a paragraph for the duties of a company fire support officer, but no guidance for the role of the fire support officer at division and higher levels other than the quote provided.

actly which firing units are available, which targets have been sent down to execute, and which FSCMs are currently active across the division, that person should be the FSNCO. The FSO and FSNCO should form a team, the FSO communicating vertically and laterally, while the FSNCO communicates to the subordinate unit Fires cells.

Assistant fire support coordinator: The AFSCOORD working in the execution of Fires will serve as the JAGIC chief. ATP 3-91.1, The Joint Air Ground Integration Center, states that the DFSCOORD should be the JAGIC chief, but in execution the DFSCOORD usually has far too many responsibilities across the staff to be tied to current operations in the JAGIC. The AFSCOORD serves in place of the DFSCOORD, responsible for all duties laid out for the JAGIC chief in ATP 3-91.1. The use of the AFSCOORD in this role allows the DFSCOORD the freedom of movement to synchronize the plans and execution sections of the Fires cell, and provides top cover for the FSO so that he or she can focus efforts on managing surface-to-surface Fires.

In this role, the AFSCOORD is the senior representative of Fires and airspace control in the division current operations integrating cell, and as the JAGIC is the portion of the division staff focused on the division deep area, the AFSCOORD will find him or herself as the key manager of the deep fight for the division. With this in mind, the AFSCOORD must understand the future direction of the division as seen by the division plans and future operations, and must work closely with the division chief of operations and G3 since he or she will be executing the deep fight in accordance with overall division operations.

BEST PRACTICES

A division collection asset observing a targeted area of interest locates an enemy system on the HPTL and G2 personnel give the spot report to the FAIO. The FAIO evaluates the report according to the TSS and the HPTL. If the report meets TSS and is on the HPTL, the FAIO forwards the target as a fire mission to the JAGIC targeting officer via AFATDS. The JAGIC targeting officer consults the AGM to determine the best method of engagement, and makes a recommendation to the JAGIC chief to strike.

Second Lt. Robin Brooks, a fire support officer assigned to G Troop, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, places his Soldiers into defensive firing positions. Capt. Petteri Ilvonen, a Finnish Army observer controller trainer, watches as the unit conducts tactical operations during Exercise Allied Spirit IV, held at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. (Sgt. William A. Tanner/U.S. Army)
The JAGIC chief directs either the Air Force senior air director (SAD) seated at the JAG-IC or the FSO to strike the target. If using Air Force assets, the SAD directs CAS or AI sorties to the target location. If using field artillery assets, the FSO sends the fire mission to DIVARTY. The JAGIC simultaneously clears airspace for the strike asset.

High-volume of targets: If the volume of targets acquired by the division G2 exceeds what this ideal system can handle (and it will, logically, at the point in the battle where delivery of Fires is most critical), then steps in the system will have to be abbreviated. An effective tactic, technique and procedure in this case is to authorize direct links between intelligence and strike assets. For instance, when the volume of targets starts creating a backlog at the JAG-IC, the JAGIC chief might direct that the FAIO send selected target types targets identified in a certain area directly to the DIVARTY, skipping the JAGIC for select individual fire missions. To facilitate this, the JAGIC should also create an airspace coordination measure to keep aircraft out of the area through which these fire missions will travel.  

**PLANNING FIRE SUPPORT**

Fire support planning includes deliberate targeting. The two should come together to provide the Fires execution team tools to find and engage targets with minimal additional coordination. The critical leaders for these two efforts are the division targeting officer and one of the AFSCOORD that can be designated as the division fire support planner. These two positions have areas with responsibilities that overlap, but it is important to keep some separation between them otherwise the tendency will be to neglect one or the other components of planning. Based on observations from warfighter exercises, divisions where the AFSCOORD manages the target decision board are often lacking fire support planning. Likewise, divisions where the targeting officer is submitting FSCMs or coordinating with the battlefield coordination detachment for CAS allocation will not have a useable target synchronization matrix (TSM).

Fire support planning at the division level consists of detailed planning to support the engagement of targets. With proper inputs to the planning process, sensors will be in place, sufficient Fires assets will be available when needed, positioned to engage targets, with the right ammunition on hand, and sufficiently protected from threats. The fire support planner should interface with both the division G3-5 future ops, and the division G5 plans sections to make sure the needed details are present in division plans to support target engagement.

Inputs to the G5 plans focus on making sure sufficient Fires assets are available to the division, and that field artillery assets have land and ammunition. Fires assets planning should be based on the requirements of planned operations and detailed relative combat power analysis. For Air Force delivered Fires, this portion of planning will result in a close air support allocations to the division and in prioritization of targets for air interdiction by the air component commander. This will also need to be synchronized with the battlefield coordination detachment.

For Army field artillery delivered Fires, planning involves making sure enough FA units are available for direct support, general support and reinforcing missions. Ensure enough land is available to operate and that ammunition is available (especially special munitions) with logistics assets tasked to support the movement of munitions. Also confirm forces are tasked to provide local security for field artillery units. These details need to be coordinated with the DIVARTY.

Inputs to G3-5 future operations focus on ensuring that Fires units are in place to engage specific targets and that coordination measures are in place to enable responsive engagement. CAS sorties must be coordinated so they arrive on station when division operations are projected to need them, rather than during lulls in the battle. The division air liaison officer should also be involved in this coordination. Position areas for field artillery units that are in range of expected targets must be planned at the time when the division expects to identify them. Movement of field artillery units between position areas should be coordinated through the division movement and maneuver cell to make sure routes are open and available to allow field artillery units to reposition and receive resupply of ammunition.

To ensure responsive engagement of targets by Fires assets, the fire support planning must inject FSCMs and airspace coordination measures (ACMs) into the maneuver plan. Often division staffs will stovepipe the creation of maneuver graphics in the hands of future operations and the creation of ACMs in the hands of the G3 air section. This practice creates significant conflicts with the ability to employ Fires. The fire support planner should make sure division maneuver graphics are drawn to allow the division to employ Fires, especially the location of unit boundaries, which double as FSCMs, and brigade limits of advance, which can be tied in to a division coordinated fire line. For ACMs, the fire support planner must ensure that airspace is organized to allow Fires to engage targets with little or no additional coordination. The ideal output of the ACMs should be a system where field artillery units are pre-cleared to fire in any area where targets are expected.

Deliberate targeting is a process detailed in significant depth in Army and joint doctrine, and consists in a general sense of selecting targets, and then assigning sensors to find the target and Fires assets to strike the target once found. Of all the processes coordinated by the Fires cell, deliberate targeting is the one that has the most supporting doctrine and often receives the most command focus. In many divisions, the targeting decision board becomes the key battle rhythm event used by commanding generals to fight the division and synchronize the staff. The high amount of emphasis placed on deliberate targeting and the way its requirements cut across war fighting functions can lead to situations where everything done by the division is conceived as targeting (i.e. the division may target a key enemy unit and then engage this target with an armored brigade combat team). Given this broad range of activities looked at by targeting, the actual hands-on work of detailed synchronization of targets, sensors and shooters can fall by the wayside. Someone needs to do the detailed planning. Even the best targeting guidance from the division commander will not help defeat the enemy if it never leaves the division command post in an executable order.

Generally, deliberate targeting will occur in conjunction with the air tasking order (ATO) cycle managed by the Combined Force Air Component Commander (CFACC). Most divisions have systems in place to manage the nomination of targets from subordinate brigades, and to vet and forward target nominations for approval from the commanding general. This is an established system from counterinsurgency

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14 Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-52.1, Airspace Control, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 33. JAGIC coordinates implementing ACMs to facilitate efficient use of airspace to accomplish operations and simultaneously provide safeguards for friendly forces and FSCMs to facilitate rapid target engagement and, simultaneously, provide safeguards for friendly forces.

15 FM 3-09, 4-13, 1-24. Unit boundaries can be considered permissive FSCMs for the use of Fires within a maneuver commander’s boundaries, and as restrictive FSCMs requiring coordination with adjacent units to fire outside a unit’s boundaries.

16 Rierson, “This is a key point. One that we’ve seen repeatedly not accomplished. There is a tendency for Fires cells to publish an initial TSM in the base order, then not update it either at all, or not until a phase change, vice in a daily FRAGORD for each ATO cycle.”
(COIN) operations during the past 16 years and is appropriate for the pace of operations in a COIN setting. However, many divisions fail to change this process for large-scale combat in a decisive action scenario.

There are several adjustments that must be made to a COIN-based deliberate targeting system to allow the division to defeat the enemy through Fires in a decisive action scenario. The practice of expecting the commanding general, or one of his deputies, to approve all targets is unworkable. When the division is confronted by an enemy force of hundreds, or even thousands of potential enemy targets, either a commanding general is presented with a target list containing hundreds of targets — which they certainly will not have the time (or inclination) to review — or the targeting decision board will present a generalized HPTL that gives little guidance to the division and does nothing to assist the process of prioritizing and synchronizing target engagements from the actual division target list. Defining what guidance is needed from the commanding general, rather than treating the target decision board as mandatory authorization can help this process. Focusing on specific targets at the proper echelons will help as well.

Understanding the targeting echelon is key to allowing the division to aim specific enemy systems in a way that is executable and has an impact on the division fight. The division should look at what they can affect from their echelon that either cannot or will not be addressed by their higher or lower echelons. For instance, the BCTs under the division should have no problem handling enemy armor and infantry units on their own, but may have no way to engage enemy long-range artillery firing from outside the range of their own reconnaissance and Fires assets. Likewise, the CFACC usually has aircraft that can effectively attack those same enemy long-range artillery units, but will not target them because they pose no risk to aircraft or the objectives of the CFACC’s air campaign. So an echeloned targeting plan would have the division targeting the enemy systems that fall in the gap between the BCT and higher headquarters.

A division that has not targeted the correct echelon specifically will usually have products that are too vague to effectively focus division efforts. One symptom of this problem is a high payoff target list that includes the division commander’s priorities only by type of weapon system i.e., listing “air defense” as a high priority target. This results in a division target list filled with Man-Portable Air Defense Systems which the division will try in vain to find, and country-level integrated air defense systems (if the division can locate) will lack any assets able to strike. At the same time the division is flailing to find and engage air defense systems that are already targeted by echelons above and below the division (and which have the appropriate assets to locate and engage these targets), there will be enemy air defense systems that are beyond the capabilities of subordinate units to engage, yet beneath the level that would draw attention from the CFACC or the Joint Force Command level.

The other problem that division deliberate targeting runs into in a decisive action scenario is with the expectation that target nomination will be a bottom-up process. ATP 3-60 describes a targeting system where target nominations are submitted to the division which uses these target nominations to populate its own target list. Since the deliberate targeting process is timed by the ATO cycle and lead time is necessary to input targets into the CFACC master air attack plan, this requires brigade and lower targeting officers to forecast days in advance of division to ensure nominations are accepted.

This system was appropriate for the environment of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom where brigades and battalions were generally static, but is absolutely unworkable in a large-scale maneuver conflict. Brigades do not often know where they will be moving, or what their mission will be several days in advance because the division is in the process of adjusting to the enemy. In this type of conflict, the division is looking further ahead than the brigades, and is in a much better position to conduct targeting and submit target nominations for upcoming operations. Successful divisions forecast requirements for their brigades and plan targets in support of their operations and only later (after the assignment of a mission to a specific brigade) pass the targets down to the brigade for refinement. These “placeholder” nominations serve an important role in the division planning process.

THE FIRE SUPPORT PLANNER

The division fire support planner is a part of an operational planning team (OPT) led by the division G5 to defeat enemy forces on a division-level objective. He or she assists the lead planner with input about available field artillery and air support for the attack, and this input is included in friendly and enemy-relative combat strength assessments to determine proper force ratios for the attack. The fire support planner details requirements for DIVARTY and air support, and creates FSCMs and ACMs to facilitate Fires engagement. Input is also provided to the division targeting officer, who plans targets in support of the attack, creates a division-echeloned HPTL and submits “placeholder” target nominations in support of the close fight of the brigades involved in the attack per G5’s determined force ratios. The division commander sees these updated targeting efforts in the next target decision board, notes that the targeting effort supports the course of action produced through G5 and provides any needed refinement to the plan. The brigades receive an allocation of targets based on the “placeholder” nominations and the execution branch of the division Fires cell receives target lists, Fires assets and battlefield geometries already coordinated and ready to put into action.

This article has been formulaic and prescriptive for a reason. The lack of detailed guidance for how to operate within a division Fires cell has immediate impact on the ability of a division to employ Fires and integrate combined arms in general. Unlike other elements of the division staff which can “muddle through” problems while subordinate maneuver units engage the enemy, if the Fires cell does not operate effectively then Fires may shut down entirely. Multiple Launch Rocket System battalions assigned to support a division, for instance, have no way to engage enemy targets if the division Fires cell is not finding those targets and passing them to the firing unit.

The processes to plan and execute Fires at the division level described in this article are not meant to replace division standard operating procedures, but rather provide a framework for what should happen within the division Fires cell. The Army has a long road ahead of it. Regaining proficiency in fighting large-scale maneuver warfare and nailing down the specifics of the fire support system at division level is a key step on that road.

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