Transformation in Contact (TiC) 2.0: Enablging DIVARTY to "Win with Fires"

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The U.S. Army is actively transforming

how divisions conduct operations under the TiC initiative. 1st Cavalry Division (1CD) Division Artillery (DIVARTY) is a designated TiC 2.0 unit. A key initiative of 1CD DIVARTY's transformation experimentation is the reactivation of a Target Acquisition Battery (TAB) directly under the DIVARTY control. Consolidating all Target Acquisition Platoon's (TAP) Weapon Locating Radars (WLR) from the direct support field artillery battalions to being under centralized DIVARTY control is already prescribed in US Army counterfire doctrine. While this first step streamlines and strengthens the DIVARTY as the division's counterfire headquarters (CFHQ), the critical question over the next two years is how to employ and optimize this unit for decisive proactive and reactive counterfire in any future Large Scale Ground Combat Operations (LSGCO) scenario.

Case Background

Historically, U.S. field artillery has relied on organic aerial observers, survey teams, and counterfire radars consolidated under the senior artillery headquarters, typically at the division level. This provided the senior tactical commander with centralized control of all long-range detection, analysis, and delivery assets, ensuring rapid massing of fires.

Most NATO partners, such as the British, French, and Polish, never stopped aligning their specialized Target Acquisition (TA) sensors directly under their artillery brigades, producing faster detection-to-counterfire-engagements and more efficient training, administration, and logistics.

In recent conflicts, especially Ukraine, the importance of rapid and proactive counterfire is apparent to everyone. Modern artillery and rocket systems displace within minutes, creating fleeting windows of opportunity. The modular brigade structures of the War on Terror, where radars are spread-wide and decentralized across brigade combat teams (BCTs), has struggled to match this tempo.

With the Army re-designating the division as the unit of action, their organic DIVARTYs require the ability to directly control and integrate sensors, execute timely and in-depth intelligence processes, and deliver fires at scale. The activation of the TAB in 1CD represents the first steps to bringing this concept and capability back into wider Army practice.

This was demonstrated during 1CD's Remagen Ready Command Post Exercise (CPX) in 2023, the Division routinely allocated multiple lines of MQ-1C Gray Eagles with Sensor Tasking Authority (STA) directly to DIVARTY. This allowed DIVARTY to conduct rapid proactive counterfires with relative freedom of action. The result was 1,400 enemy High Payoff Targets (HPTs) destroyed in six days.

Current Status & Actions

1CD DIVARTY's initial activities address the administrative and logistical necessities of standing up any new formation, such as building property books, arms rooms, motor pool space, and a unit identification code (UIC). It also orders the lateral transfers of all equipment from the Target Acquisition PLT HQ, radar section, FA survey team, and counterfire section to the TAB's Target Acquisition Platoon (TAP).

Most important is the transfer of counterfire officers, NCOs, and Soldiers, mechanics, supply NCOs, and actual 13R radar sections. This consolidation, at a minimum, ensures centralized control of counterfire assets to streamline and maximize training and maintenance.

However, without additional doctrinal development and resourcing, the TAB risks being a "hollow unit"—activated on paper but with limited multiplicative combat utility, "merely shuffling the deck chairs". Without growth in manning, integration, doctrine, and capabilities, the TAB risks becoming a property-holding headquarters for radars rather than a proactive counterfire enabler.

The 1CD TAB provides the initial force structure to validate how additional consolidation of sensors under DIVARTY could increase counterfire timeliness. By addressing these concerns and gaps early, the TAB can become a decisive contributor to the division's ability to win with fires.

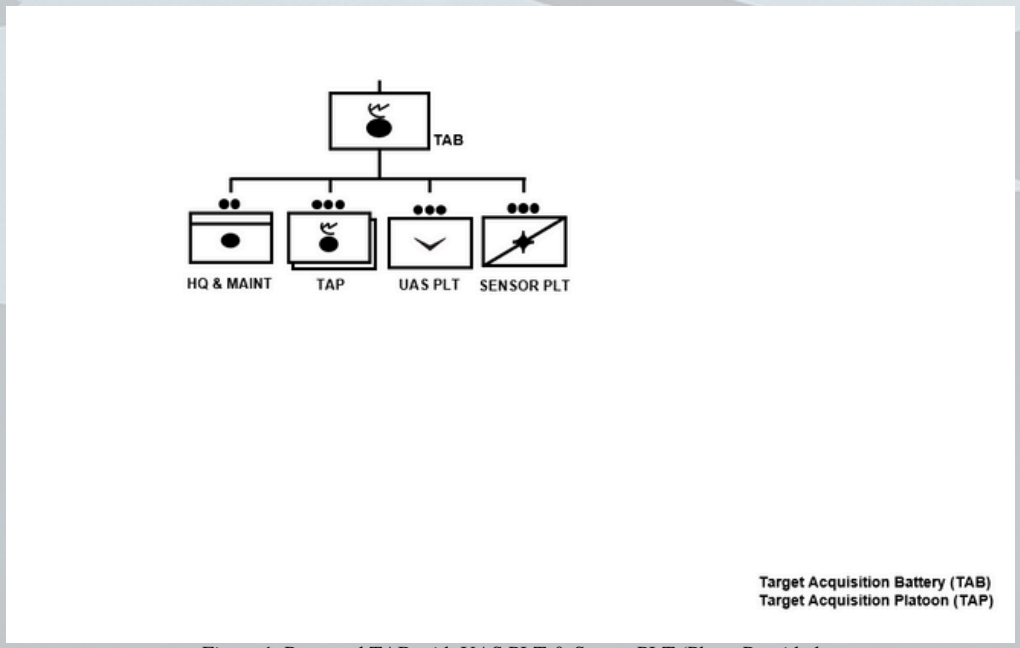

Figure 1. Proposed TAB with UAS PLT & Sensor PLT (Photo Provided by Authors)

Recommendations

The first augmentation the TAB needs is additional sensors beyond the existing WLRs. Principally, at least a platoon of medium to long-range UAS and loitering munitions. The importance of UAS in targeting is obvious by the battlefield reports from Ukraine and needs no further elaboration. Additional TAB equipment should include emerging technologies in passive acoustic, magnetic, seismic, and electromagnetic sensors. A passive sensor platoon would enable DIVARTY to expand its "sense and strike" ability and increase survivability by providing options to reduce its electromagnetic signature from enemy detection, targeting, and exploitation.

The second recommendation is to increase the DIVARTY's intelligence and targeting section's ability to provide intelligence support to situational understanding. Currently, the DIVARTY intelligence and targeting sections are undermanned to fully leverage the additional organic UAS and nascent sensors. DIVARTY also lacks full access to higher level assets at division, Corps, and the Intelligence Community's (IC) systems and reports. Finally, all formations need to be prepared to operate in a degraded electromagnetic environment, and survivability dictates that no collection plan can rely entirely on a higher headquarters control and management of collection assets.

DIVARTY's intelligence and targeting sections currently consists of; 2x 35A Intelligence Officers, 2x 131A Targeting Officers, 5x 13F, 3x 35F, 3x 35G, and a single 35T. Providing the ability to only monitor two lines of UAS for FMV (Full Motion Video) or GMTI (Ground Moving Target Indicator), no Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) capacity despite efforts to "own the electromagnetic spectrum", and offers no access to the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS). With the addition of 1x 35A, 2x 35Gs, 3x 35Ns, and 1x 35T (7x total), the DIVARTY could monitor two additional lines of FMV or GMTI, at least one line of SIGINT, and have access to JWICS. While the extra intelligence officer enables ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) Technical Control (ITC) and full integration of these assets into the division scheme of collection. By also adding an Airspace Manager and Senior Air Director to its ADAM cell, DIVARTY can maintain targeting capability when the Tactical Command Post (TAC) displaces from the Main Command Post (MCP).

Conclusion

To test the TAB concept, the Army needs to set clear Measures of Effectiveness (MOE), quantify its value, and create standard operating procedures that can be disseminated across the force. This should include several critical data points; first, record time from detection to effects. Second, note percentage of targets engaged proactively vs. reactively. Third, report the fires net uptime and survivability under dispersed operations. Fourth, document the average airspace clearance times. Fifth, improved visual display and analysis tools to create an improved counterfire heatmap. Sixth, make a holistic training outline on the effective and timely incorporation of a combined senor management plan to facilitate training, maintenance, and operational cueing.

While the administrative baseline for the TAB has already started, it will only increase in effectiveness as operational employment concepts are developed and iterated upon during experimentation. Property accountability, COMSEC, and arms room procedures are well-detailed and understood.

How the TAB integrates with targeting and intelligence to improve the counterfire fight will be a challenge. Without this additional doctrinal development and resourcing, the army will smother the TAB's full capability.

To dominate the counterfire fight during the next war, DIVARTYs must grow. To ensure the TAB delivers decisive effects, the Army should treat it as a TiC 3.0 prototype, with lessons captured and scaled Army-wide. Looking forward to FY27-28, TiC 3.0 can serve as an opportunity to enable the most lethal warfighting headquarters in a division. It is a battlefield necessity to augment the Army's DIVARTYs with rapidly fielded UAS and passive sensors to provide organic ISR, even in a degraded and hostile EW environment, to improve intelligence analysis, dissemination capacity, and overall lethality. On a future battlefield that is saturated with indirect fires, this is how the US Army can best wield the TAB to sense farther, fire faster, survive longer, and ultimately win with fires.

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