



U.S. Soldiers attached to 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division conduct calibration planning during Decisive Action Rotation 22-06 at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Dominic Acuna)

Integration of the Field Artillery Brigade

By CW2 Jonathan Forte, Lethal Effects Targeting Officer 41st FAB

The role of the field artillery brigade (FAB) is constantly evolving. The doctrinal role of the FAB is to conduct corps-level strikes and to augment division-level shaping operations according to ATP 3-09.24. While this role should remain its primary function, expanding the FAB's integration beyond its traditional scope should be considered. Two fundamental questions must be answered when challenging the traditional FAB role:

- 1) What can the FAB provide to the supported command?
- 2) What does the FAB require for executing corps-level strikes and augmenting supported commands?

The 41st FAB has answered these questions using the Force Field Artillery Planning Cell (FFAPC). The questions simplify a complex problem, and the FFAPC is tailored to integrating the in-depth capabilities of the FAB. FM 3-0 highlights the necessity for seamless transitions through competition, crisis and armed conflict, detailed integration, and synchronized planning with partnered, allied, and other unified action partners. These functions are where the FAB can increase the efficacy of combat power.

The 41st FAB has supported various exercises, each with unique requirements, including Dynamic Front (DF) 23 and 25, Avenger Triad 24 (AvT24), Austere Challenge V Corps War Fighter Exercise (WFX) 24, Romanian Command Post Exercise (CPX), Finnish 4th Army Corps CPX 1, and numerous other V Corps, allied, and partnered force exercises. These training events have been instrumental in exploring how the FAB can operate beyond traditional doctrinal limits through the incorporation of the FFAPC.

What does the FAB provide the supported command?

FABs are typically designated as the Force Field Artillery Headquarters (FFA HQ) and/or the Counterfire Headquarters

(CF HQ). According to FM 3-09, FABs serve as the execution arm of the supported command, advisors on command and support relationships for Field Artillery (FA), and orchestrators of counterfire operations. However, exercises show that there is often a lack of knowledge and resources to simultaneously meet the requirements of both the supported commands and the FAB. To address this gap, the 41st FAB has implemented the FFAPC construct into nearly every training exercise.

FFAPC Force Package

The FFAPC acts as the connective tissue between the supported command and the FAB's MCP. This is the 41st FAB's attempt at answering the first question, "What can the FAB provide to the supported command?" The FFAPC operates in an expanded capacity truck, M1087A1P2, or in the supported command's Main Command Post (MCP). The FFAPC's composition includes, but is not limited to, the Fire Support Coordinator (FSCOORD), Brigade Fire Control Officer (BDE FCO) from the Fires Lethal Element, Brigade Targeting Officer (BDE TO), Lethal Effects Targeting Officer (LETO), two Fires Support Operations NCOs (FSNCO), two Fire Support Specialists, Information Operations Coordinator (IOC), Intelligence Officer, Air Defense/Airspace Management and Brigade Aviation Element's (ADAM/BAE) Team Leader and Tactical Air Integration System (TAIS) operator, Support Operations (SPO) representative from the Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), two Field Artillery Intelligence Officers (FAIO), Targeting Officer from the Liaison Section (LNO), and two Command Post Node (CPN) teams. What is unique about this configuration is the ability to adapt to different supported command requirements and integrate into their staff, enhancing the capabilities of all organizations.

- **FSCOORD:** Guides the staff through the Target Working Group (TWG) and Target Coordination Board (TCB), ensuring commander's intent is met through in-person collaboration.



U.S. Army soldiers with Able Battery, 3rd Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment with Task Force Voit, prepare for fire missions for Exercise Hedgehog, the joint training exercise near Võru, Estonia. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rachel Hall)

- **BDE FCO:** Coordinates with the G35 to manage launcher movement, land allocation, associated support units, and prioritization of long-range fires.
- **BDE TO:** Supports the targeting process alongside the supported command's TOs.
- **LETO:** Leads the targeting process on behalf of the FAB, assigns delivery platforms, conducts weaponeering, and project calculated round expenditures.
- **FSNCO:** Manages FFAPC setup, maintenance, and battle rhythm.
- **ADAM/BAE:** Integrates and updates airspace plans and UAP.
- **FAIOs:** Typically embedded with the Analysis and Control Element (ACE) to support dynamic targeting and Target Refinement Boards.
- **Targeting LNO:** Coordinates with higher echelons (e.g., during AvT24, liaised with the Joint Force Command on behalf of the MCLCC).
- **SPO and CPN Teams:** Provide logistical and communications independence from both the supported command and the 41st FAB MCP.

The positions within the FFAPC are centered around FM 3-09's definition of Fire Support: rapid and continuous integration of lethal fires, target acquisition, and non-lethal effects across all domains in support of maneuver commander's concepts of operations. The FFAPC assists with the intangibles which requires representatives to be in person to assist the supported command's staff to meet the commander's intent. The co-location of the FFAPC and supported command facilitates communication that cannot be completed through virtual means.

Adapting to the Supported Command

Ultimately, the configuration of the FFAPC is flexible and focuses on increasing the supported command's lethality. It provides additional expertise at points of friction, particularly the in-person construct facilitates discourse that is not as robust virtually. The ability to increase the lethality of the supported command through in-person communication was highlighted through the Romanian and Finnish CPX1, DF23, and DF25. In-person communication with the appropriate resident knowledge base undoubtedly facilitated the

development of our allied and partnered forces. Well-executed multinational exercises have proved that the U.S., allied, and partner forces know and understand the targeting process. However, the FFAPC bridges gaps that are challenging to understand through written orders and virtual meetings. These challenges include transitioning from defensive operations to offensive operations, shaping operations, deep attacks, and precision strikes. The requirements to deliver fires incorporating the interdisciplinary aspects of targeting—such as the synchronization of sustainment, intelligence collection, communication architectures, and airspace management—are not taught in depth during military academia. These areas are where the FFAPC's experience and knowledge assist the supported commands. Most importantly for the FAB, the FFAPC increases the effectiveness in which the supported command's orders process is translated and disseminated to 41st FAB's subordinate units.

What does the FAB require for the execution?

The 41st FAB has requirements for its subordinate units that need to be transposed rapidly to maximize planning time for the appropriate allocation, prioritization, and positioning of its delivery and collection platforms. Communication is a critical aspect of this timeline and communication through written orders alone takes time to adequately staff and disseminate. The process delves into the 1/3, 2/3 planning considerations. The location of the FFAPC allows the FAB to metaphorically seize targets of opportunity, consolidate gains, and exploit its capabilities. With clear direction and intent from the higher command, and the in-person presence to clarify the guidance, the FAB can focus on the products that it requires for execution. The primary products are the Target List Worksheet (TLWS), Field Artillery Support Matrix (FASM), and input into the Target Synchronization Matrix (TSM). Additionally, targeting and FA Operations require the synchronization of land management, airspace management, and ammunition management. The FFAPC assists in managing these times and



U.S. Army Capt. Troy Dimick, left, observes 41st FAB soldiers plotting a route during "Orange Gauntlet", a field exercise to certify 41st FAB retransmission and Command Post Node teams at the 7th Army Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany. (U.S. Army photo by Markus Rauchenberger)

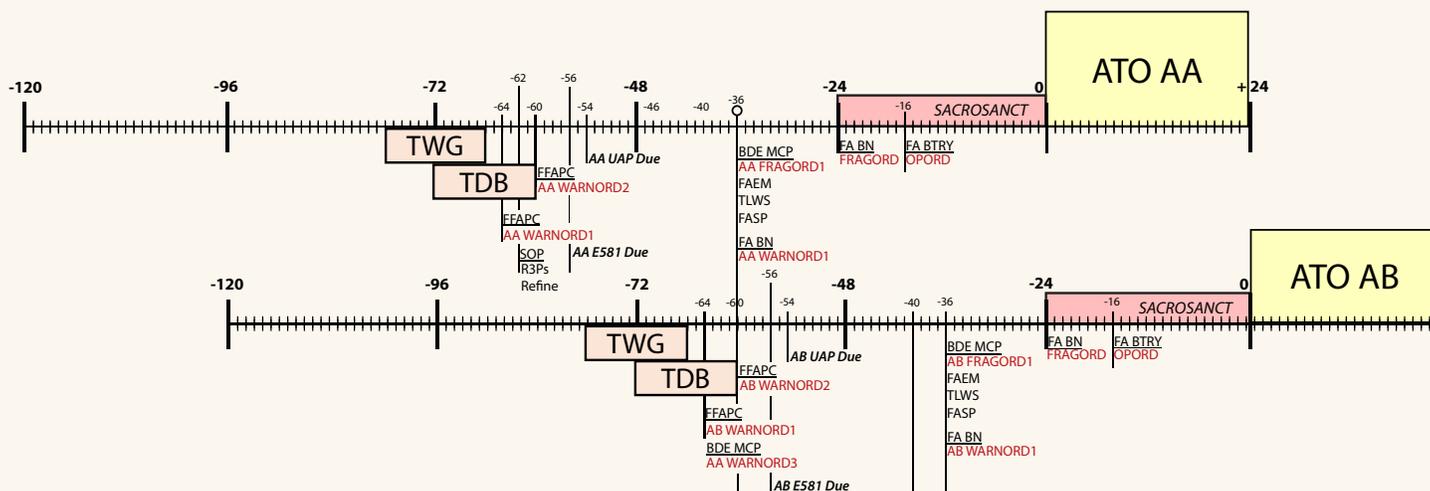


Figure 1: Planning Timeline and Orders Process from FFAPC to FA Battalion

integrating the timeline into the Army's 96-hour targeting cycle. The ability to center the FFAPC at the source of information allows the 41st FAB's MCP to fully digest and execute the supported commander's intent throughout the targeting cycle.

The FAB's primary fighting products' (the TLWS, initial FASM, and TSM) inputs are developed directly in the FFAPC after the TWG. The key to integrating and linking the FAB's staff is to initiate the planning process in the -72 hours window or the approval day in the Targeting Cycle. The outputs start with the development of the initial TSM drafted by the Corps' TO and the FAB's TO during the TWG, where targeting focuses on -72 hours approval day, refining, and validating subsequent days. Immediately following the TWG, 41st FAB's LETO develops the TLWS and FASM.

Through the TLWS, the LETO identifies the anticipated number of projectiles that are required and the initial positioning of the firing units to deliver lethal fires. The initial TLWS is sent to the FSNCO, the Fire Support Specialist, and the BSB SPO representative. The FSNCO has oversight of the Fire Support Specialists to build the initial TLWS in AFATDS and develop platoon area hazard (PAH), target area hazard (TAH), and munitions flight path (MFP). The 41st FAB TLWS

also includes the total ammunition calculations that are formulated through the Joint Weaponing Suite and Munition Effectiveness Assessments. The ammunition is calculated by firing unit, pod, and rocket/missile anticipated to be delivered per air tasking order (ATO) day.

The SPO coordinates with the supported command and submits E581 (Request for Issue and Turn-in of Ammunition) no later than -56 hours. Immediately upon completion of the TLWS, the FSNCO ensures the appropriate geometries are sent to ADAM/BAE for development of the Unit Airspace Plan (UAP), generally due to the supported command no later than -48 hours. This process allows the FFAPC and the 41st FAB MCP sufficient time to plan for the timely delivery of lethal fires. The initial FASM is developed including target numbers, position area for artillery (PAA), and timelines. Finally, the initial TLWS, initial FASM, and initial E581 are created and sent to the MCP for refinement as Warning Order 1 providing the FAB the fighting products required for execution.

41st FAB critical timelines

Ideally, the TCB concludes no sooner to execution than -60 hours and the TSM is approved, as shown in Figure 1. At this point, the MCP has had time to review the initial FASM, initial TLWS, and provide refinements back to the FFAPC. Additionally, changes that occurred between the TWG and TCB are updated and changed for implementation into Warning Order 2 for the ATO day. This process gives the SPO 4 hours for the E581 to be submitted and ADAM/BAE 8 hours to submit the UAP to the supported command. From Warning Order 2, the BDE MCP has 20 hours to produce Fragmentary Order 1 for the FA battalion including FASM, TLWS, and Field Artillery Support Plan (FASP.) This provides the battalion with approximately 12 hours to produce a Fragmentary Order to the FA battery, and 8 hours for the battery to produce their Operations Order for the ATO day. Following this timeline affords the FA battery approximately 16 hours prior to the beginning of the execution of the ATO day to prepare. The process is repeated per ATO day to maximize the 1/3, and 2/3 planning guidance. Refinements per ATO day are continuously



A U.S. Army advisor assigned to 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade assists Colombian military partners with field artillery planning in Colombia. (Photo by Maj. Jason Elmore)

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updated and completed through the targeting cycle. The FFAPC and its physical proximity with the supported command is integral in achieving these critical timelines.

Conclusion

With the FFAPC, the 41st FAB has been able to integrate our staff into and facilitate the supported command. Understanding that the requirements of each FAB and the supported commands are different and that using broad concepts to satiate the need for integrating the FAB is beneficial for both the supported command and the FAB's subordinate units. The ability to communicate in person and translate the commander's intent into action has been invaluable to the 41st FAB. The principles of the 1/3, 2/3 planning rule enable enough time for battalions and batteries to understand their requirements and provide refinements back to the Corps Fires Team in enough time to adjust and execute the missions.

To reiterate, the 41st FAB with the FFAPC concept has been proven to support the higher command's staff processes and alleviate points of friction in planning. The FFAPC integrates all

References

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warfighting functions into the supported commands' staff from intel support to targeting to assisting in managing airspace. The FFAPC is a nondoctrinal technique that is critical in increasing the capability of 41st FAB to expand the scale and scope of traditional roles within the Fires ecosystem. The FFAPC is the 41st FAB's current solution to a dynamic environment while answering the questions: What can the FAB provide to the supported command? What does the FAB require for executing corps-level strikes and augmenting supported commands?

CW2 Jonathan Forte serves as the Brigade Targeting Officer for the 41st Field Artillery Brigade. With a distinguished career of over 18 years, his experience spans from the tactical to the operational level, where he has led initiatives to enhance the knowledge, capabilities, and integration of lethal and non-lethal effects. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Saint Leo University and is nearing completion of a Master's in Educational Psychology from the University of Georgia. CW2 Forte's professional focus is on joint effects integration and leader development.

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U.S. Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division discuss radar operational planning during Rotation 25-02 at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Matthew Garnier)