MQA-9: LOCAL ARMY EXERCISES

PREREQUISITES: MQA-8

REQUIRED READING: None

PURPOSE: Familiarize ALO with the various Army exercises with which he may be involved.

Introduction - (Slide 2)

The Army uses a variety of exercises to support their training objectives. While CAS and ALO involvement in all exercises is neither required nor warranted, it is essential that ALOs are at least familiar with the requirements and roles of each exercise type.

Field exercises are exactly what they sound like: an Army unit deploys into the field training areas for a one-to-three week period of time and engages in simulated battle against a similarly sized unit. The Blue Force (BLUFOR) will be manned and equipped at established levels, while the Opposing Force (OPFOR) will simulate some adversaries equipment, manning, and tactics. Air Force involvement in FTXs is generally directly proportional to the size of the exercise. CAS kill credit in local FTXs is questionable, at best – the artillery White Force will attempt to credit CAS kills on ground forces, while the ADA White Force will attempt to credit ADA kills on CAS aircraft. The results generally do not satisfy any involved party. The ALO can help by coordinating with White Force prior to the FTX and establishing kill criteria for both CAS and ADA. The Army simulations and field exercises discussed are as follows:

- Simulation Exercises
- Squad and Platoon Lanes
- Company/Team (CT) Lanes
- Task Force (TF) Lanes
- Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Lanes
- Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX or FCX)

Simulation Exercises – (Slide 3 with build)

TOCEX

The TOC Exercises can be accomplished at any level that is staffed with TACPs and is more of a "seating exercise" than an actual simulation. In general, the unit's Executive Officer (XO) runs the TOC, and when a new XO is assigned to a unit (or there is a major turnover in TOC personnel), the XO may call for a TOCEX in order to ensure the smooth (relative term) operation of "his TOC." A TOCEX may be as simple as setting up the TOC and determining where everyone will sit, then running through a mission briefing or battle update brief. More commonly, particularly in FBCB2 (Force Twenty-one equipment) equipped battalions and brigades, the TOCEX will include a connectivity drill to ensure that all of the TOC's electronic equipment is operating properly, there is no interference between electronic equipment, and all key personnel have visibility with the appropriate viewscreens. In both of these variations of the TOCEX, the ALO (or BALO/Bn ETAC at the battalion level) should attend to ensure that the AF representative in the TOC is not "pushed off into a corner." One successful technique is to place the AF rep in close vicinity to the Fire Support Officer (FSO) and the Intelligence Officer (S-2). This will greatly enhance efficiency during the deep battle when the TOC becomes VERY noisy. If the TOCEX is going to include a connectivity/communications drill, the ALO should have an RSC placed in the TOC with an MRC-144 located in it's appropriate position to test for interference problems (NOTE: Based on frequencies used and atmospheric conditions, HF communications can play havoc with the digital TOC electronics. This may necessitate placing the MRC-144 well away from the TOC tents). Additionally, in

an FBCB2 equipped TOC, the ALO needs to ensure that the AF rep has a clear view of the FSE screen (AFADS), the ADA screen (AMDWS), and the UAV downlink.

An aggressive XO may run a deep fight drill during the TOCEX to test the current TOC setup. Since the TOC is responsible for the unit's deep fight, a sharp ALO can suggest a CAS drill as an excellent opportunity to test all the fires elements in the TOC. While there are many variations for the CAS drill, the S-2 can provide a simulated target in the unit's lane, while the ALO, FSO, ADA LNO and XO can coordinate the timing, ACA activation, ADA weapons status, SEAD missions, and CAS ingress/egress. The ALO generally drives the timing of the CAS drill with his "CAS X-minutes out", "CAS inbound" and "CAS outbound" calls. While extremely canned, CAS exercises in the benign TOCEX environment can pay off by working out timing glitches and getting all key players in the TOC used to the quick reaction times that CAS requires.

CCTT

The Close Combat Tactical Trainer is a battalion level simulation with key battalion personnel "driving" simulators in the CCT building (reference MQA-6). As the name implies, since the CCTT is primarily for training in the battalion close fight there is no real role for the ALO. There can, however, be some tactical utility having the battalion ETACs, and the Brigade ALO ensure the ETACs have contact with the battalion commander or S-3 to determine any need for AF involvement. Training for battalion ETACs and ROMADS in the CCTT can include maneuver practice with the battalion S-3 or commander, communications exercises on the battalion command net (to include ACA activation, SEAD fires, and commander authorization for CAS execution), and VERY limited CAS execution in close proximity to friendly forces (the CCTT now has a very basic CAS simulation that primarily exists to train ground personnel about the CAS threat).

Brigade Command Post Exercise

More commonly know as a JANUS exercise, these simulations are full brigade and battalion TOC and TAC computer driven exercises conducted in close vicinity to the JANUS simulation building (reference MQA-6). Battalion and brigade TOCs and TACs are placed in the vicinity of the JANUS building with full TOC and TAC manning (including the appropriate battalion and brigade TACPs). There are no maneuver elements and forward TACPs. JANUS exercises are executed at the TOC and TAC level just like a field exercise – the brigade ALO is involved from MDMP through the battle and the AAR. The same is true with the battalion TOC and the EBALO (or battalion ETAC in a BALO supported battalion – BALOs are not sent TDY for these exercises). Since there are no "maneuver TACPs" involved, all control of the simulated CAS is best done using positive-indirect control from the appropriate TOC or TAC. The primary purposes of these exercises are to train the brigade and battalion TOC and TAC staffs – they present a fairly good opportunity to work procedures with Army counterparts, but do no provide any realistic opportunity to practice employment.

There is also a requirement for Air Force support in both the simulation cell and the evaluation team (White Force). The simulation cell is located in the JANUS building and "fly" the CAS aircraft in the computer simulation. The simulation cell can be composed of ETACs from one of the squadron's brigade TACPs that are not participating in the exercise or "maneuver TACPs" from the participating flight (using a non-participating TACP for the simulation cell is a preferred technique – this gives young ETACs and ROMADs who are normally forward the opportunity to get experience at the battalion and brigade TOCs – building a knowledge base as future EBALOs). Refer to MQA-6 for techniques to increase simulated CAS effectiveness during JANUS.

The AF portion of the White Force is normally composed of a skeleton crew from the division TACP. A single ALO or senior ETAC and ROMAD on duty with a single MRC-144 can provide adequate simulation of both the division TACP and the ASOC. The division ALO can get the ATO from the G-3 Air (or may be asked to produce the ATO), and then is essentially "on his own" for the simulation. This is the only expected involvement above the brigade level during JANUS.

WARFIGHTER and WARFIGHTER Ramp-up

The WARFIGHTER exercises are essentially JANUS exercises for the division and corps TACPs and the ASOC. There are also division-only WARFIGHTERs that do not include the corps, but do include the ASOC. For these exercises, the Army will set up the main and tactical command posts for both the divisions and corps, while the ASOC will deploy to the field. Below the division level, the brigades will set up only their TOCs in the field, or may operate their TOCs out of the Battle Simulation Center (ref. MQA-6). All simulations are run out of the Battle Simulation Center and transmitted to the command posts, with all White Force and simulation personnel being provided from off-station (USAF White Force personnel usually come from the JCAS center at Ft. Leavenworth and/or one of the operational AOCs). Like JANUS for brigade, the division and corps TACPs and the ASOC execute just like a field situation. The brigade TACP operation is very limited, essentially acting as a simulation cell for the higher echelon (most of the brigade planning occurs before the WARFIGHTER and is not nearly as involved as JANUS or brigade level field exercises). The WARFIGHTER exercises provide the only real opportunity for the ASOC and upper echelon TACPs to operate in an integrated situation.

The WARFIGHTER ramp-up is essentially the same as a WARFIGHTER, but is self-supported. For the ramp-up, the ASOG will designate a White Force air component commander and deputy from the ASOC staff, and each squadron will be tasked to provide 2-3 personnel (ROMADS) to work the communications equipment and operate the simulated aircraft. Additionally, there will be a requirement for 1 or 2 MRC-144s for White Force communications support.

Squad and Platoon Lanes

These are the two smallest Army force-on-force exercises, pitting squad and platoon sized units against each other. Since there is no direct TACP support for these units, there is usually no AF involvement. If range CAS is scheduled while squad or platoon lane training is being accomplished, the best training for TACs can be accomplished by having the TACs operate "out of scenario" with CAS attacking whatever formations the TAC team can find. Expect a fairly target rich environment with many small formations in the field during this training.

Company/Team (CT) Lanes

These are company sized force-on-force exercises. Like squad and platoon lanes, there are no dedicated TACPs at the company level, so AF involvement is generally minimal. If CAS is scheduled during CT lanes, it may be useful to have one of the battalion ETACs work "in scenario" with the company and practice CAS control in the close fight. This would simulate the ETAC deploying with the battalion's forward company. Since both the battalion and brigade TOCs are active during CT lanes, it also provides the opportunity for SEAD and ACA coordination by the forward TACPs. NOTE: If "live" CAS is not scheduled during CT lanes, then AF involvement is not warranted. Additionally, a Mech. Infantry Company generally provides a better match for a forward TACP than a Tank Company during CT Lanes (this is since the Tank Companies tend to strive for direct fire force-on-force training).

Task Force (TF) Lanes

These are battalion sized force-on-force exercises and an excellent opportunity for live CAS training. The brigade ALO should make every effort to make sure the Army schedules live CAS during TF lanes. TACs and TOCs will be set up at battalion and brigade level, with the division TAC occasionally scheduled to act as White Force and simulate the ASOC for "simulated CAS". If the DTAC is not tasked, then the brigade TACP will simulate the ASOC for "simulated CAS" missions (the 712 ASOS maintains conventional ASOC duties for live CAS, but does not get involved in the "simulated CAS" war). TF lanes are the smallest FTXs that afford both battalion and brigade TACPs to practice the entire MDMP planning and execution process using actual aircraft. Since TF lanes tend to occur about once every 12 months, the ALO should strive for full integration at the brigade and battalion level and emphasize CAS employment by the battalion TACPs (not indirect from the brigade – there are other opportunities for this).

NOTE: Since live CAS can be difficult to obtain, there is often a heavy push for "simulated CAS." The ALO should do a "sanity check" on the Army's "simulated CAS" plan in order to ensure that false expectations and

unrealistic situations are avoided. The Army's traditional "simulated CAS" plan is that the unit will have something like eight sorties of CAS to use during the battle, implying that these aircraft are on ground alert and waiting to be called by the brigade or battalion. The ALO should divide this allocation into a "mini-ATO" with 2 sorties on station from XXXX to YYYY, 2 more on station from YYYY to ZZZZ, etc., to more realistically simulate the XCAS concept and availability of CAS aircraft. Additionally, the ALO has to "White Force" himself, and be realistic about whether his "simulated CAS" would have been effective and what types of control would have been available, transmitting this information to the Fire Support White Force officer. Because of these hurdles, some ASOSs refuse to use "simulated CAS" with the philosophy that "no CAS is better than sim CAS."

Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Lanes (also called Ex Evals)

This is simply an outgrowth of TF lanes, with all of the same notes applying at the brigade and battalion TACP levels. Both the division main command post (DMAIN) and division TAC (DTAC) are usually tasked to play. The Army has occasionally combined a JANUS exercise with BCT lanes to give the DMAIN and DTAC more than one brigade to deal with. For the brigade ALOs, BCT lanes are essentially the same as TF lanes, with more than one battalion TACP involved. Division ALOs should contact their appropriate division Chief-of-Staff to determine the amount and nature of play at the division level for each exercise

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Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX or FCX)

This is a brigade-wide live fire exercise involving direct and indirect fires into the live-fire areas. Due to the limited nature of the live fire areas, the CALFEX is extremely "canned," but the Army will still attempt to execute brigade and battalion level MDMPs. CAS execution during a CALFEX is fairly restricted – ALOs should begin coordination with the division G-3 and range control at least two months prior to the CALFEX. Range restrictions require no artillery fire during the first CAS pass, but will allow continued fire after that if range control has been briefed on and approved the deconfliction plan. Live drops in PD-94 are a bit more difficult to orchestrate due to extremely restrictive run-in and weapons requirements on the range. The ALO should contact range control early in the coordination plan to determine the current CAS target, run-in and weapons restrictions.

Conclusion – (Slide 5)

This lesson should have provided the new ALO with a basic understanding of Army exercises. As a general rule of thumb, the larger the exercise, the larger the ALO involvement. Since experience is the best teacher, the new ALO should plan on maximum involvement when first assigned, then tailor his participation based on experience.