

STAFF STUDY

IMMEDIATE AIR REQUEST PROCEDURES
WITHIN THE INFANTRY REGIMENT

by
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THE INFANTRY SCHOOL

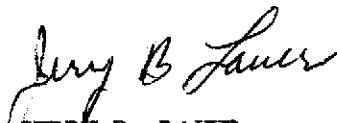
Advanced Infantry Officers Course

Class #1
1954--55

SUBJECT: Immediate Air Request Procedures Within The Infantry Regiment

1. PROBLEM.- To determine the optimum method of processing immediate air requests within the infantry regiment.
2. ASSUMPTIONS.-
 - a. The Army will continue to have a need for close air support.
 - b. The Air Force will continue to have the missions of obtaining air superiority, interdiction, and close air support.
 - c. The United States economy cannot support the Air Force with the manpower and aircraft needed to adopt the Marine Close Air Support System. (Annex A)
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.- There is at present a joint training directive for air-ground operations published jointly by the Office, Chief of Army Field Forces and the Tactical Air Command. This directive establishes the personnel in the air request net (Annex B) and the route which preplanned and immediate air requests will follow from the infantry battalion to the Air Force Base. (Annex C)
4. DISCUSSION.-
 - a. The present method of processing requests for immediate close air support missions has been developed through experience in World War II and the Korean Conflict. The personnel in the air request net have been established at all levels by directives. These personnel will operate in close contact with the Fire Support Coordination Center at all levels and will maintain close liaison with the infantry commanders concerned.
 - b. Good communication from the infantry battalion to the Air Force Base is the key to the whole system. By directive a special air request channel has been established from the infantry division to the Joint Operation Center, a joint Army-Air Force installation at which the final approval of requests is granted or denied. The present policy is to use any organic means available to get the request from the infantry battalion to the division.
 - c. Communications equipment is available within the infantry division to accomplish this request processing. (Annex D). Both infantry and artillery communication channels may be used to transmit the request from the battalion to the division. By the use of signal equipment available and the granting of permission by infantry commanders concerned to use their command channels for the processing of immediate air requests, a definite air request channel can be established. The problem of communicating from battalion to division with regiment monitoring can be accomplished by the use of infantry wire and FM radio.

5. CONCLUSIONS.- Of the methods possible the most dependable is wire. Radios which can be successfully used are also available without the addition of extra equipment. By the establishment of a definite procedure and priority to be used in immediate requests, the processing can be accomplished with little delay.
6. PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS.
- a. Proposed action is of current interest; its publication will not violate security and the release will have no adverse effect on troop or public relations. (Annex E)
- b. Recommend that information on proposed action be released to troops and public.
7. ACTION RECOMMENDED.- That Army Field Forces establish the recommended infantry wire and radio net in that priority as the best means of processing close air support requests between the infantry battalion and the infantry division.


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ANNEXES: A - Comparison of Air Force and Marine Air Missions.
 B - Personnel in Air-Ground Operations System.
 C - Communications in Air-Ground Operations System.
 D - Discussion.
 E - Public Relations Aspects.
 X - Bibliography.

CONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
ANNEXES ADDED: (Omitted)
ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date:

Approved (disapproved) including (excluding) exceptions

Signature

ANNEX A - Comparison of Air Force and Marine Air Missions

At the present time the close air support missions requested from Marine sources will probably be fulfilled much more rapidly than the Air Force requests. This is due to the difference in the assignment of over-all missions to the two air units. The Air Force has the mission of first establishing air superiority. The next mission is interdiction in the combat zone. The third mission is to furnish close air support to the ground forces. All three may take place at the same time. (1: Inc 3-2)

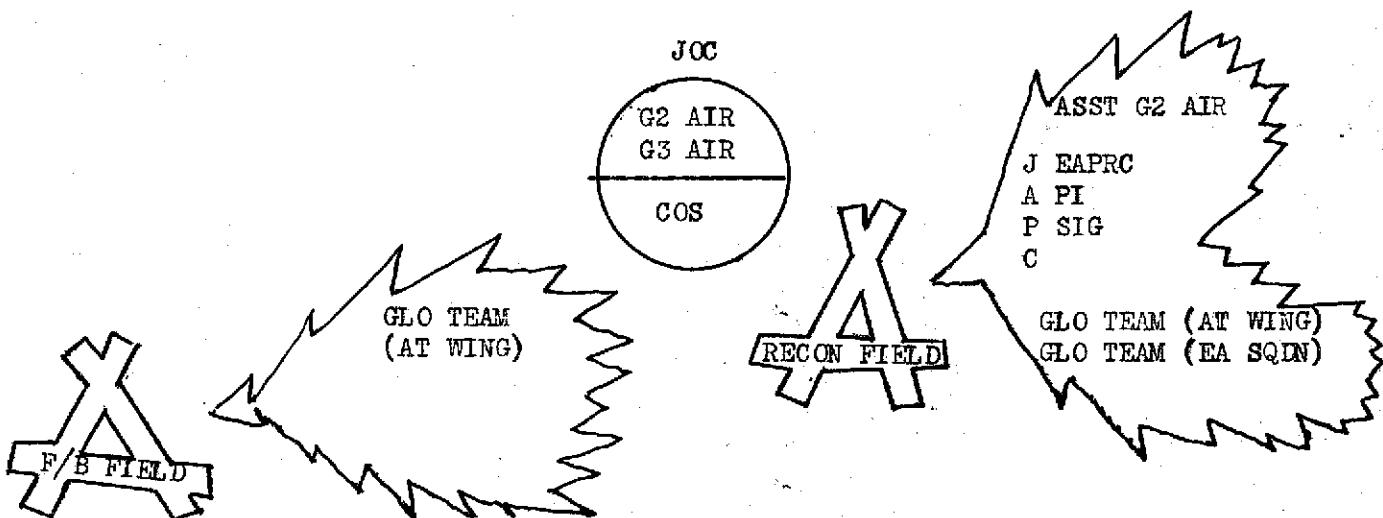
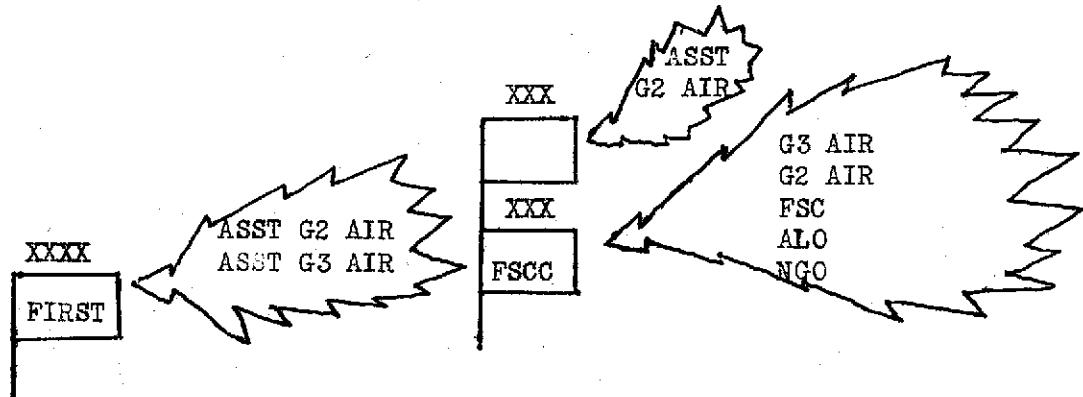
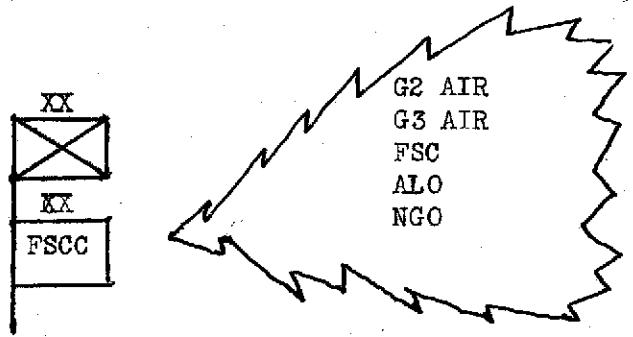
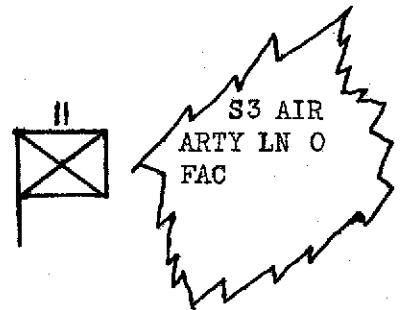
"At present it is planned that the majority of Marine Corps air operations will be conducted in direct support of Marine ground units." (11-164). "Support aircraft are normally kept in either an air alert or a ground alert status" (11-177).

Since it must be assumed that the Air Force cannot economically accomplish all three of its missions and still keep its planes on an alert status to fulfill ground force requests, the communications used in the Marine system will not be considered. When the Air Force does have planes in the area on air alert, the infantry units do have means of communicating with the planes so this does not enter into the problem

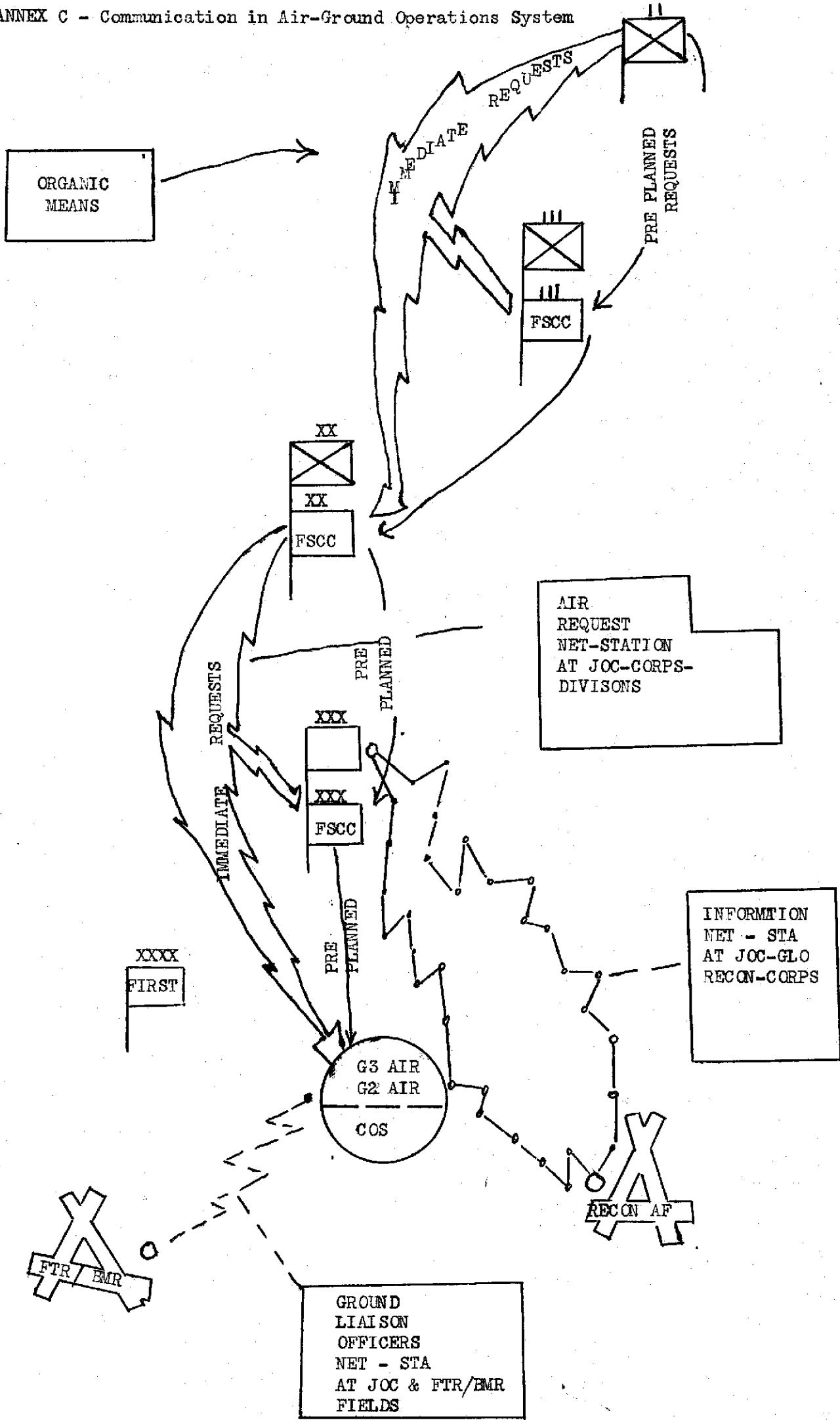
ANNEX B - Personnel in Air Ground Operations System

LEGEND

- FAC - FORWARD AIR COMPTROLLER (AF)
- FSC - FIRE SUPPORT COORDINATOR
- ALO - AIR LIAISON OFFICER (AF)
- GLO - GROUND LIAISON OFFICER (ARMY)
- EAPRC - ENGINEER AERIAL PHOTO REPRODUCTION COMPANY
- PI - PHOTO INTERPRETERS (ARMY)
- JAPC - JOINT AIR PHOTO CENTER
- NGO - NAVAL GUNFIRE OFFICER (ARMY)
- NGLO - NAVAL GUNFIRE LIAISON OFFICER (NAVY)
- COS - COMBAT OPERATIONS SECTION (AF)
- FSCC - FIRE SUPPORT COORDINATION CENTER
- SIG - SIGNAL PERSONNEL



ANNEX C - Communication in Air-Ground Operations System



ANNEX D - Discussion

The major delay in obtaining aircraft for close air support missions today is not in the communications channels but in the time consumed getting the planes to the area after the request has been approved by the Joint Operations Center. (9). This is due to the present doctrine in the use of the Air Force. Since this doctrine is established as necessary at the highest levels, time cannot be gained in this area of the air ground support system. Therefore, the ground forces must do what they possibly can to cut to a minimum the time the request remains in ground force hands.

Certain channels of communication in the air request system have already been established by directive. (Annex C). The net connecting the infantry division and Joint Operations Center is already established. This net uses AN/GRC 26s as a means of communication between division, corps and Joint Operations Center. In immediate requests, corps is solely a monitoring station. (12:6). This net is operated by a signal company and is assigned with one net to each corps in the army. (3:11). There is little delay therefore, in the transmission of the request from division to Joint Operations Center.

At division, the request from battalion is acted upon by the G3 Air. (Annex B). Upon receipt of the request he confers with the fire support coordinator and the air liaison officer and acts on the request as directed by the division commander. There is little delay in this processing at division. (1: Incl 4:8).

At present there is no definite channel prescribed to get the request from battalion to division. The directive merely states that the request will go directly from battalion to division with regiment monitoring and remaining silent for approval. There is no established net between battalion and division.

Wire is the best and most reliable means of communication. It should be established as the first priority means of requesting air support missions. It can be used in the following manner to accomplish the mission. Battalion calls to regimental switchboard and requests a conference call with regimental S3 Air and the Division G3 Air. In this manner the request goes directly from the battalion to the division with the regiment monitoring. For security reasons, code would be necessary regardless of method used.

When wire is not available, there is still FM and AM radio available in the division. See Tab A, for the netting of already available FM sets in order to accomplish this air request channel. The biggest drawback to using this net will be that the radios will be out of the command channel for a very short time. Since the use of air is a command decision, this should be an advantage as well since it gets the request directly to the commander quicker. The sets discussed are already at the command posts considered so no moving of sets would be required. By removing the sets to the officer concerned, no action would be necessary by an operator other than switching the set to remote.

It is recommended that the FM command net be the second priority means of communication since it is a voice set. Ordinarily the AM set is on CW. Since the message must be coded this would cause little delay but would be slightly slower than voice. This AM net should be the third priority means.

There is another complete means of communication available. So far the existing artillery nets have not been discussed. Since the artillery is charged with fire support coordination, this means is another logical channel. Artillery has wire and radio from the infantry battalion to field artillery battalion, at regiment usually, and on to division artillery which is near the fire support coordination center at division. This channel is used constantly for fire requests. The decision as to which means should be used to request air depends upon how much weight the commander gives to the air missions. If the final decision on the requesting of air support missions is to be made by the infantry commander, infantry communications should be used for the request. If this decision is delegated to the fire support coordinator, then artillery channels could be used. It is felt that this will usually be a command decision so it recommended that infantry channels be used. The artillery means of communication should not be forgotten. They are available and almost as rapid as the infantry channels.

Since there are available so many different channels to request close air support missions, it is felt that there is no additional equipment needed. No additional personnel are needed. Even if the available means between battalion and division go out, there is little delay encountered if regimental S3 Air has to relay the request to division for the battalion. In Korea, due to distances and disturbances, this often had to be done. The briefing of personnel concerned on the equipment available will help to speed the requests while in infantry channels.

Tab A, ANNEX D - Recommended FM Radio Net for Immediate Close Air Support Requests Within the Infantry Regiment.

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GRC 7

1. Presently in division command net.
2. Located at command post.
3. Change needed: On signal from the regimental operator that an air request was to be transmitted, operator will remote the set to G3 Air. Division commander will also receive the message on his GRC 7 in this command net.

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VRQ 3

1. Presently monitors regimental FM net and operates in the division command net.
2. Located at command post.
3. Change needed: On signal from the battalion operator that an air request was to be transmitted, the operator will: 1. Remote the set to S3 Air at the FSCC. 2. Retransmit the message over the other "A" set available in the VRQ 3 to division on the division command net.

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GRC 7

1. Presently in regimental command net.
2. Located at command post.
3. No change needed.

NOTE: Derived from Reference 12 and a personal interview with Major Adams, Communications Dept, The Infantry School.

ANNEX E - Public Relations Aspects

In the past several years since the Korean Conflict there have been many articles written about the close air support that was furnished to the ground forces by the Air Force. Many of these articles criticized the time delay between the request of the mission and the actual mission. The reaction to this release would have no adverse effects. It points out that the Army is attempting to decrease the delay in the fulfillment of these requests. Secondly, it points out that no additional expenditures are required, a very critical point at this time.

Among the military personnel there could be several reactions, none of them adverse. It will help stress the actual method used in the processing of close air support missions. It also points out the many methods possible to communicate between the infantry battalion and the infantry division. It will also stimulate thought towards developing even better methods of processing air requests.

ANNEX X - Bibliography

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