

FORUM & FEATURES



INTEROPERABILITY WORKS



LIEUTENANT GENERAL EUGENE P. FORRESTER

The Combined Field Army (ROK/US) (CFA) is known as the "Shield of Seoul." It is composed of three Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) corps and 13 divisions, including the 2d U.S. Infantry Division. The CFA's mission is to defend the important western sector of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), which includes the three historic invasion routes into the Republic of Korea.

Because of its combined nature, the CFA has a "C" staff instead of a "G" or an "S" staff. The commanding general, chief of staff, the Inspector General, and the Staff Judge Advocate are members of the U.S. Army, while the deputy commanding general, deputy chief of staff, and C3 are ROKA officers. All other primary and special staff members are senior ROKA officers with senior U.S. Army officers as deputies (Figure 1). This is not an advisor or counterpart relationship such as that used in Vietnam; both the ROK and U.S. members are fully integrated into a combined organization.

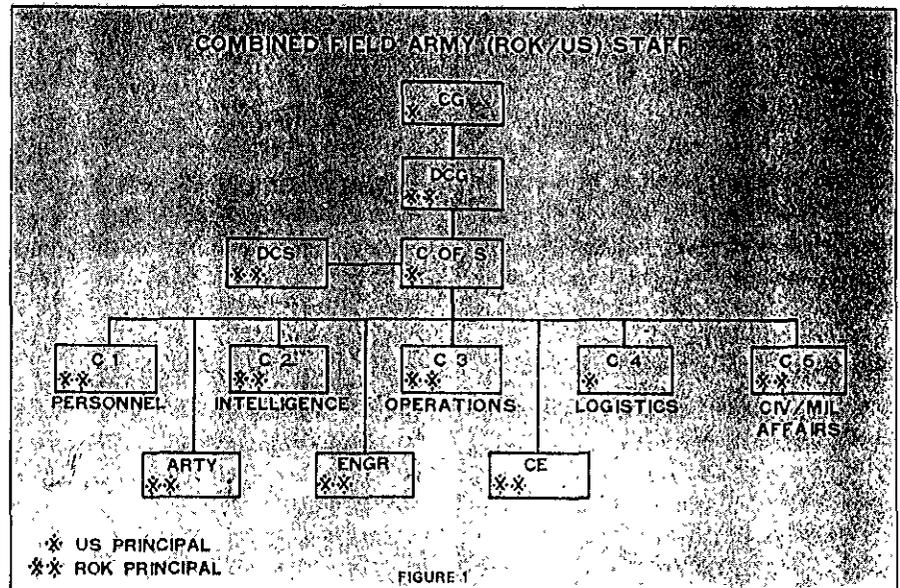
How does CFA train, in a real world situation, to defend against an implacable enemy who has twice as much artillery, three times the number of tanks, twice as many aircraft, and four times as many ships?

Part of the answer to that question lies in the concept of *interoperability*. Interoperability is essentially a self-image that includes a total reliance upon and belief in a true combined command and the ability of diverse national components to operate as one cohesive, well-disciplined military element.

Interoperability is the end result of *rationalization* and *standardization*. Rationalization is a thought process that identifies and evaluates the methods through which different armies perform combat, combat sup-

port, and combat service support functions. The process identifies similarities and differences and searches for ways of capitalizing on the similarities and compensating for the differences.

Standardization involves the development of like ways of doing things, such as organizing tasks, conducting military operations, producing and reporting intelligence information, and requesting and providing logistical support. It also involves using the same operating procedures and the same language as much as possible.



In pursuit of interoperability and of readiness to accomplish its assigned mission, the CFA periodically conducts three different no-notice exercises: FOG RAIN, FOG RAIN ALPHA, and CROSS BUCK.

The CFA headquarters conducts a FOG RAIN practice alert exercise quarterly. It begins with a no-notice communications check made by radio to conduct an immediate 100 percent muster. A confirmation message is sent concurrently by teletype in both English and Hangul (the language of the Korean people). This message designates selected units through regiment or brigade levels to move with their basic combat loads to specified assembly areas.

During a FOG RAIN exercise, observers travel to various locations throughout the field army area and check to see that the standards are maintained in personnel and material readiness. They also report on the preparations for and movement to the assembly areas and on their occupation and defense. The observers also check on road or cross-country marches, on communications, light and camouflage discipline, and on troop health, welfare, and morale. Thus, FOG RAIN exercises give commanders and staffs at all levels good insight into the readiness of their units.

FOG RAIN ALPHA is a live fire, time-on-target (TOT) exercise for CFA's field artillery units. It involves all available artillery units within the range of the exercise target, including units from adjacent corps and from the 2d U.S. Infantry Division Artillery. The exercise requires all participating units to fire simultaneously at a target designated by the CFA commander. This greatly improves the combat readiness of all CFA artillery units, because it allows them to practice artillery procedures at corps level and below and at the same time to check their responsiveness and their ability to mass fires across corps and division boundaries.

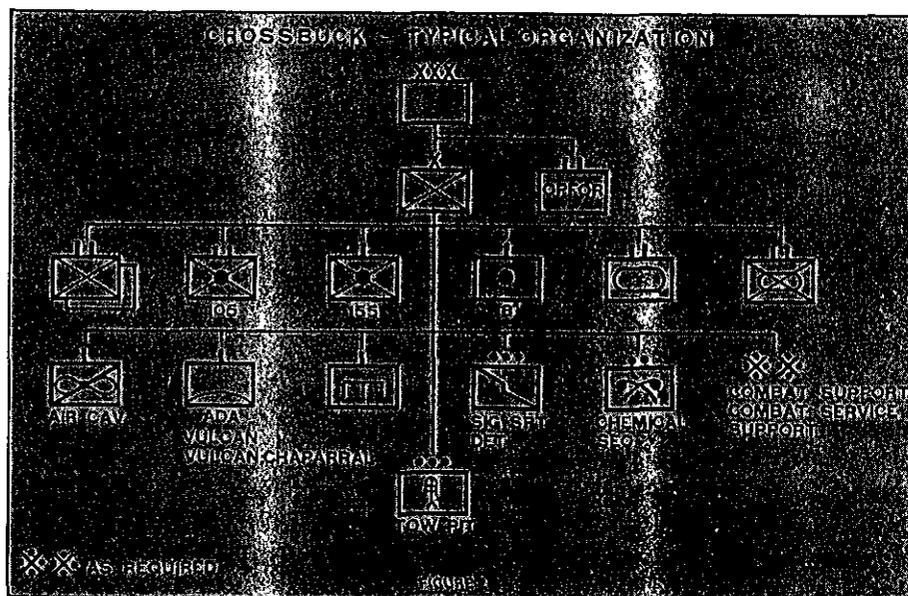
To succeed in combat, units must be able to move, shoot, and communicate in a tactical environment,

and they also must be able to sustain themselves. FOG RAIN and FOG RAIN ALPHA clearly test a unit's ability to shoot, move, and communicate, but they do not validate a unit's ability to do these things in a field environment for a sustained period of time. The CROSS BUCK exercise does.

CROSS BUCK is a field training exercise (FTX) for sustained inter-corps and combined military operations. (A typical combined ROK/US regiment or brigade combat team is shown in Figure 2.) It can be conducted either concurrently with a FOG RAIN alert or as a separate exercise at a different time. It takes selected elements from throughout

preparing for and moving from an assembly area, occupying defensive positions, conducting a hasty defense, carrying out local counterattacks, crossing a water obstacle, and conducting battalion-sized airmobile operations.

In addition to controller personnel for such a mission, CFA and the corps that is participating in the exercise provide evaluation teams to the headquarters of each brigade, battalion, and company, troop or battery that is taking part. Primary and special staff evaluators are also dispatched to the various field locations to observe, assist, and occasionally instruct in their functional areas. Particular emphasis is placed



the Combined Field Army through defense condition (DEFCON) checklists to their designated assembly areas, and then continues with a combined-joint FTX for four days and three nights.

Only four headquarters elements (CFA, the selected corps, the regiment or brigade, and the opposing force) know in advance that they are going to take part in a CROSS BUCK exercise. In addition, one of the corps will provide the terrain and the tactical scenario.

During the exercise, a number of typical combat operations are held during daylight hours as well as during the night. These may include

on the fire support elements, including tactical air, intelligence, operations, resupply, and communications.

Differences in the frequency spectrum and international agreements, combined with CEOI's in different languages, create interesting challenges to combined operations. Similarly, since each nation provides its own logistic support, composite maintenance and supply contact and support teams have to be formed. Other challenges include bilingual maps, messing and medical support, traffic control, and realistic training with minimal maneuver damage.

A CROSS BUCK exercise can be called any time, any day, anywhere.

The CFA commander selects the time and day. For example, at 1600 on a Sunday, the sirens and other alert notification methods may be implemented throughout CFA. Concurrently, the CG reviews a list of units and locations and their activities. At this time, he selects sub-elements from throughout the three corps and 13 divisions to participate in the exercise, and these elements are notified to proceed to designated assembly areas.

At the same time, the commanders of those units with some staff representatives (normally logistics, artillery, and communications) and some bilingual personnel, travel to the regiment or brigade headquarters field locations to receive their intelligence briefing, maps, and movement and operations orders.

In addition, the commanders are prepared to exchange CEOs and bilingual liaison officers and other personnel. The U.S. Army elements also use personnel from the Korean Augmentation To the U.S. Army (KATUSA) to act as translators and radio operators during the FTX.

The composite, combined ROK/US regiment or brigade is organized into teams or task forces to accomplish the assigned mission. The artillery and tactical air control party (TACP) personnel check to make sure the CFA's glossary of terms for fire support, close air support (CAS), and emergency close air support (ECAS) has been provided down to company level.

The sub-elements then move from their locations. Depending on the mission, enemy, terrain, weather, troops available, and the "real world situation," most of them cross divisional and corps boundaries to get to the FTX area. Some are provided with air cavalry support from the U.S. Army to provide protection during their movement. Similarly, military police man traffic control points at critical choke points to assist and expedite the movement.

During CROSS BUCK, the safety, health, welfare, and morale of the troops are continuously monitored by

the players, controllers, observers, and evaluators. The efficiency of a unit's cold and hot weather training, as well as its field sanitation techniques, can be readily determined.

Participants in the exercise receive periodic, timely comments from controllers regarding their performance and their ability to shoot, move, and communicate. Controllers note whether all elements remain fully operational throughout the exercise and whether the leaders and troops are aware of the mission. Controllers also look to see whether the troops are properly clothed and fed, whether the plan is likely to work, whether the commanders at all levels know what is good, mediocre, and sometimes bad, and whether the commanders clearly know their units' deficiencies and what needs their attention.

Immediately upon completion of the CROSS BUCK exercise, all commanders and staff personnel participate in a critique in which an overview and specific comments are provided. The participants then prepare an afteraction report consisting of a short narrative and separate observations from each, including the strong and weak points of the exercise with recommendations as to which level needs to take what corrective action. The report is collated at each headquarters and formalized at the corps and CFA levels for action, guidance, or submission to the ROK/US Combined Forces Command for assistance at that level.

Through the use of FOG RAIN,

FOG RAIN ALPHA, and CROSS BUCK exercises, leaders and commanders from platoon through corps are making interoperability work. Because of the Republic of Korea's real world situation, interoperability is an absolute necessity if two or more countries are to make the most of their military capabilities as an integrated and cohesive fighting force.

In my frequent visits with the new commanders and troops in the front line divisions, I have been impressed with what I saw. The leadership and the quality of the ROK Armed Forces is superlative. Their commanders are educated, well-trained, and experienced professionals, especially at the battalion and regiment level where most of the commanders have combat experience from Vietnam.

Similarly, the 2d U.S. Infantry Division is an outstanding, highly motivated, well-trained, and mission-oriented fighting force. A soldier who is assigned to the division for a year can expect to do strenuous physical exercise, conduct realistic training near a potential enemy, work closely with an ally, and depart a better professional soldier. Morale is high, as reflected by the record-setting reenlistment rates the division has enjoyed during the past several years. A senior NCO of the 2d Infantry Division has been quoted as saying, "This is the last, best place to soldier."

If you're looking for challenges and professionally rewarding work where the action is, "We'll see you in Korea."



LIEUTENANT GENERAL EUGENE P. FORRESTER, formerly commander of the Combined Field Army (Republic of Korea / U.S.), is now the commanding general of the U.S. Army Western Command in Hawaii.