

maneuver), the platoon leader maneuvers the squad(s) into the assault:

(1) Once the platoon leader has ensured that the base-of-fire element is in position and providing suppressive fires, he leads the assaulting squad(s) to the assault position.

(2) Once in position, the platoon leader gives the prearranged signal for the base-of-fire element to lift or shift direct fires to the opposite flank of the enemy position.

FM 7-8 uses both terms with “or” separating them. To me, this means that leaders can choose to continue to engage targets in a safe manner beyond the objective I see “lift fires” having application primarily in urban fire control.

The confusion stems from Training Circular (TC) 7-9. Unfortunately, FM 101-5-1 is the proponent for those terms and is what is correct, regardless of what we may have learned incorrectly. A training circular is not authoritative.

6-2. OBJECTIVES (From TC 7-9 [mistake])

Platoon training has many objectives. These include:

- Reinforcement of principles of command and control.

- Reinforcement of concepts of supporting fire, base of fire, and synchronization of fires.

- Reinforcement of concepts of starting, stopping, and lifting and shifting fires. (Everyone must know [through training and rehearsals] the signal for lift or shift. Lift simply means to cease fire. Shifting is more complex. It can mean shifting from one section of the objective to an adjacent section, or it can denote a total shift from the objective to an adjacent area. Additional coordination and a timed sequence of events [matrix] can apply in certain missions such as a deliberate attack.)

- Concentration on maneuver (to include security), fire control measures, and fire discipline.

You might say, this is semantics and not important. Let’s look at some more practical reasons. “Shift” sounds a lot like “lift” and could be confusing during noisy combat operations. In training, we use “cease” fire on the range. Therefore, it makes sense to use what every Soldier uses from the beginning of his career to the end.

Our doctrine establishes the standards for our training. If we allow our doctrine to become irrelevant, then our training and future combat capabilities will degrade. We have a responsibility as combined arms leaders to use doctrinal rigor in our training. Without these standards, our training will become less effective.

At the time the article was written, **Captain Michael Dane Acord** was serving as small group instructor for the Infantry Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Why Organic Fires?

COLONEL ROBERT F. BARRY II

Editor’s Note: *This article first appeared in the March-June 2004 issue of Field Artillery magazine.*

The Army’s purpose is to fight and win the nation’s wars, according to the “Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2006-2023.” As the source of trained and ready land forces of decisive action across the spectrum of conflict, the Army provides the joint force commander (JFC) the ability to coerce enemies, control resources and populations, and decisively conclude conflicts on terms and a timeline favorable to U.S. national interests.

If we believe war is an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will, then to win our nation’s wars, we must leave the enemy no choice but to accede to our demands. By persistent close combat and, if necessary, occupation of the enemy’s territory and key facilities, ground forces compel him to accede.

The enemy must face a persistent state of disadvantage, and friendly ground forces must be able to escalate the disadvantages of his continued resistance *quickly*. Responsive, adjustable, scalable and precise fire support is a key enabler in creating persistent disadvantage. These adjectives describe fires organic to the ground force.

Joint Publication 1-02 DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines “organic” as “assigned to and forming an essential part of a military organization.” Building on that definition, for purposes of this article, “organic” refers to maintaining a balance of indirect fires assets



U.S. Army photo

When ground forces are in close combat, responsiveness will never be irrelevant — and the most responsive fires, today and in the future will remain those organic to the force.

as part of the ground force, in general, to preclude the force from having to rely too heavily on other joint fires assets that cannot provide the required responsiveness, force protection or variety of effects that organic assets can. There also have been discussions about field artillery's being "organic," or under the command and control of, say, a maneuver brigade — organizationally, much the same as the howitzer battery in each squadron of an armored cavalry regiment.

This article focuses on the joint balancing of fires assets organic to the ground force and leaves the other Army debate about the actual organization and command and control of those assets within the ground force to another article.

For the foreseeable future, only mortars, cannons, and rockets organized and distributed on the battlefield along side maneuver forces can provide ground commanders responsive, all-weather, 24/7 fire support to close with and destroy the enemy. Organic fire support assets allow the ground force commander to synchronize his fires with his maneuver to destroy, neutralize, or suppress enemy forces before contact or during the fight. This enabling relationship between ground-based fires and maneuver speeds the destruction of enemy forces and preserves friendly combat power.

The compelling nature of close combat is a keystone of U.S. Army doctrine. According to Field Manual 3.0, *Operations*, close combat has but one purpose: "to decide the outcome of battles and engagements." Defeating or destroying enemy forces and seizing terrain are what decide the outcome of battles — fire and maneuver. The Army leadership historically has recognized the absolute necessity for ground force commanders to have responsive artillery fires available to them — as integral to their success — and task organized or mission tailored the force to ensure those fires were available.

The Debate: Organic Fires or Not

Today many are debating whether or not commanders need organic fire support assets. Much of this debate is fueled by the success of and continued improvements in technology, which leads some to point out the tremendous savings in resources that

could be garnered by reducing what some consider to be redundant fires assets.

Some argue that because technology is providing precise intelligence, targeting and weapons, we don't need the area fire capabilities and the variety of ammunition effects that organic cannon and rocket artillery bring to the fight. They argue that precision will give us surgical one-shot/one-kill capabilities with target location so precise and situational awareness (SA) so complete that suppression won't be necessary.

They also argue that responsiveness, typically a strength of organic artillery, will be irrelevant because the joint fires network will allow all sensors equal access to all shooters. Their logic is that responsiveness is not a function of what indirect fires at each echelon bring to the fight, but rather a function of the network and the availability of joint assets. The logic continues that, because we always will be able to achieve air superiority, a large portion of these joint fires assets can be air platforms, reducing the need for organic indirect fire assets in the ground force. Those assets that the ground force retains might be something akin to the non-line-of-sight-launcher system (NLOS-LS) because the force won't need area fires.

The argument goes that, surely, improvements in command and control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) give commanders such unprecedented access to information and sophisticated synchronization capabilities that they virtually are assured of dominating any battlefield without organic fires.

Are they right? In each of these arguments there is some truth. Technology



U. S. Army photo

Sergeant Elijah Caddy of the 2nd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, uses a panoramic telescope during a test fire at Baghdad International Airport in Iraq.

is impressive, and we need to continue to enhance our knowledge of the battlefield and precision strike capabilities. But we will never achieve perfect knowledge as long as humans wage war and the enemy "has a vote" on his actions — the enemy *always* has a vote, even if only to decide whether or not to surrender or die in a spider hole. The maneuver commander needs — and will continue to need — the options of precise area fires to neutralize and suppress the enemy, especially against a dispersed, dismounted enemy, such as in Afghanistan.

When ground forces are in close combat, responsiveness will never be irrelevant — and the most responsive fires, today and in the future, will remain those organic to the force.

Without a doubt, the ground force never should leave home without fixed-wing support, and the fire supporters' mission is to tap the right joint fires platform to provide the right effects to achieve the JFC's intent, including assets. But these very capable air platforms have, creating gaps that organic cannons and multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) fill as joint fires options.

Mitigating the Uncertainty of War — Now and in the Future

How does the ground force mitigate information gaps, the inability to target the enemy and indecision? One way is to employ organic fires to suppress and neutralize targets. Organic fires provide both a hedge against uncertainty and a *scalable* method for refining fires as commanders refine their targeting data.

As the Army transforms to meet the challenges of future combat, one of the driving principles is information dominance. Information dominance will enable commanders to achieve the “quality of firsts” necessary for success, as outlined in the “Unit of Action Operational and Organizational Plan” (UA O&O). Network management, information assurance and operational net assessment (ONA) will enable commanders to create a common operational picture (COP) for shared SA, gain positional advantage, and conduct precision maneuver and precision attacks against the enemy. Information dominance will allow commanders at all levels to translate their superior perspective into actionable decisions within the context of a COP and shared intent. Information dominance and enhanced connectivity will bring superior effectiveness and survivability with a lighter and smaller force.

This new tactical paradigm enables the Army to restructure tactical echelons, design new combat systems and develop new tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for the Future Force. As it develops new combat forces, the Army is shedding old ways of thinking and old concepts of warfare in favor of lighter, more lethal and more expeditionary organizations.

As a result, lighter more deployable future combat system (FCS) vehicles will replace heavily armored vehicles. We no longer will need to mass formations to achieve overwhelming combat power. Instead, irregular battlefield geometry and distributed operations that strike throughout the depth of enemy formations will defeat the enemy and disintegrate his forces.

Future Force organizations, such as the UA, will employ combined arms battalions capable of autonomous operations. The new tactical paradigm specifies that these battalions be able to operate in a noncontiguous battlespace. Commanders will minimize the need for reserves by using information dominance to anticipate, plan for and quickly react to changing battlefield dynamics. Each of these changes is based on a belief in the power of information dominance.

The ability to acquire and use information is supplanting heretofore-accepted risk mitigators, such as mass and armor protection. Armor protection is a hedge against the uncertainty of the type, location and capabilities of the enemy’s weapons. Massed formations mitigate the uncertainty of command and control and faulty planning by placing forces close to, or in direct support of, decisive points on the battlefield. The ultimate hedge against uncertainty has been the reserve, whose size is inversely proportional to the amount of knowledge one has about the enemy.

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Based on the commander’s greater reliance on information, each of these hedges is being replaced or reduced in the Future Force. This simultaneously reduces the commander’s ability to react to unforeseen circumstances. Organic fire support is the ground commander’s last hedge against uncertainty and a critical component of the future operational concept.

Regardless of the very powerful capabilities of information dominance — the ability to help the commander make timely decisions, deduce enemy strengths and vulnerabilities, and provide important components for retaining the initiative — the fog and friction of war will remain, now and in the future. We must ensure commanders have responsive,

readily available combat power to deal with them.

Military operations ongoing in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have demonstrated that, while we may have information superiority, there is still much we do not and will not know about the elusive enemy because we never will have perfect information. Perfect information implies that we understand not only the enemy’s capabilities, but also his *intentions*. This is clearly a difficult task to execute with regularity.

During Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan in March 2002, intense reconnaissance efforts before the battle focused every available surveillance and target acquisition asset on a 10-by-10-kilometer area surrounding suspected Al Qaeda locations. In spite of this massive intelligence effort, less than 50 percent of the Al Qaeda positions identified in the course of the battle were discovered before ground contact. (Statistic taken from “Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare,” a U.S. Army War College Study by Stephen Biddle, 2 November 2002.) As reported by several studies and interviews with participants, most enemy fires in Operation Anaconda came from initially unseen, unsuspected Al Qaeda fighting positions.

Despite the best technology available that was focused intensely on a limited area, a technologically unsophisticated enemy was able to hide from U.S. forces until they made ground contact. This demonstrates that if the enemy knows how we are looking for him, then he can devise a means to conceal himself.

This detracts from the detail and accuracy of information available to the friendly ground commander, precluding or inhibiting his use of precision munitions in advance of ground contact. His preparatory fires must be on area targets while he relies more on developing targets in contact, which requires immediately *responsive* and *scalable* fires.

Similar incidents occurred in Iraq during the attack to Baghdad and continue today. There is little evidence to suggest that precision and information were solely responsible for the success of Coalition Forces in OIF. Our success in OIF, in fact, was due to the superb application of the elements of combat power: maneuver, firepower, leadership, protection and information (FM 3.0).

There were multiple instances of unplanned contact with Iraqi

forces, suggesting that fog, friction and uncertainty are still key elements of the battlefield. Massed combat power and armor protection allowed commanders to overcome the information shortfalls while minimizing Coalition casualties. Indeed, the successful effects of precision weapons and information superiority were critically dependent on Iraqi ineptitude. Against a less exposed, better-prepared opponent, the results may have been different. (Information taken from the 18 August 2003 War College study, "Iraq

and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy" by Dr. Stephen Bibble.) As we observe the less capable but resolute opponents in Iraq, one can conclude that our expectations for attaining the information dominance required for full-spectrum operations may be optimistic. This is not an indictment of the new tactical paradigm or Army transformation, but, rather, it is recognition that there always will be uncertainty in military operations. Reducing uncertainty through better information management, better and more numerous sensors, and collaborative planning and execution are worthy goals, but those improvements will not *eliminate* the friction of war.

Some argue that more information makes us more, not less, uncertain. The "staring eye" of improved surveillance only will realize its full potential when our analytical tools reach similar levels of sophistication. Even then, the UA O&O acknowledges there will be times when tactical surprise is lost or the enemy does something unexpected. The ground maneuver commander needs his organic fires for just such times.

Characteristics of Organic Fires

The application of fires in support of the



Corporal Brent Walker, USMC

The only other U.S. service ground force in OIF, the I Marine Expeditionary Force, also relied heavily on its organic artillery. Its artillery task force, the 11th Marine Regiment, "engaged the enemy in every battle in the campaign."

tactical maneuver commander in close combat requires a delivery system that is immediately responsive and accurate, but adjustable, a system that can achieve a sustained high volume of fire, employ a full suite of munitions and effects, and can do so in all weather, all types of terrain and day or night. As characteristic of cannon and MLRS fires, these capabilities allow the ground commander the freedom to maneuver his forces out of contact while setting the conditions for his next fight — allow him the flexibility to adapt to overcome the actions of an interactive, thinking enemy. On-call organic fire support brings the simultaneity of effects in close combat needed to overwhelm a resolute adversary.

• *Organic fire support is always available to the ground commander and responds to his priorities.* Unlike other fire support assets, the Soldiers who man cannons and mortars are always present and frequently talk face-to-face with their unit and the commander they support. Rock drills, rehearsals and habitual relationships enable a high degree of flexibility, allowing the commander wider latitude in executing fragmentary orders or contingency plans. In contrast, naval gunfire platforms, for example, may not be

able to range the land force deep inland or may be forced by a submarine or air threat to move away and be out of range. When a ground commander is fighting in close combat, aircraft may be called to support a higher priority target or prevented from attacking ground force targets by weather or the enemy's air defense artillery (ADA) or aircraft.

During OIF, the ground forces moving toward Baghdad were in the Mother of All Sandstorms that had 100-meter visibility and winds gusting up to 50 knots with thousands of Iraqi paramilitary in the

area for *three* days — 24 to 27 March. About organic fires assets, Lieutenant General W. Scott Wallace, the Commanding General of V Corps in OIF, said that "during that dense sandstorm, indirect fires proved most valuable. We used the lethal effects of artillery and mortars with some degree of precision, in particular HE [high-explosive area fire munitions] artillery" (interview with General Wallace, "Trained, Adaptable, Flexible Forces Victory in Iraq," *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

His assessment was echoed by Brigadier General (Promotable) Lloyd J. Austin III, the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver in the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) during OIF. General Austin said, "Ground-based indirect fires were absolutely critical during the Mother of All Sandstorms" (interview with General Austin, "3rd ID in OIF: Fires for the Distributed Battlefield," *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

The only other U.S. service ground force in OIF, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), also relied heavily on its organic artillery. Its artillery task force, the 11th Marine Regiment, "engaged the enemy in every battle in the campaign. No other regiment can make that claim. The 11th

Marines processed more than 1,900 radar missions and fired 19,883 rounds [in OIF].” (Quotes taken from the article “Cannon Cockers at War: The 11th Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom” by Lieutenant Colonel Michael R. Melillo, USMC, *Field Artillery* magazine September- October 2003.)

In 1973, the Israelis made the almost fatal mistake of relying too heavily on air assets for fires, assets that were soon attrited. For the first eight days of that Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab air forces and ADA neutralized the Israeli Air Force. It almost cost the Israelis the war and caused them to reenergize their cannon and mortar programs to provide organic capabilities to their ground forces.

In a similar vein during the Falkland Island conflict, the British found their sea-based forces (upon which the British were relying for fires) seriously threatened by Argentine land-based aircraft. In both these conflicts, significant threats to the joint fires assets caused profound adjustments to ground force operations and an increase in demand for organic fires assets.

• *Organic fire support assets can bring fires in close to friendlies — closer than other joint fires assets.* The maneuver commander requires this ability to support his troops in contact. For example, a 500-pound or larger bomb simply has too large a bursting radius for friendly forces in close contact. Close air support (CAS) is difficult business and requires positive control over the attack. An aircraft at 10,000 feet or a fighter on the deck at high speeds attacking a moving enemy in close contact with friendlies leaves little room for error. At that altitude or speed, the adversary is often able to fool the attacker with decoys and the opportunity for fratricide is greatly increased.

Cannon-delivered general-purpose munitions may be adjusted to within 300 meters of friendly forces. Precision munitions, such as the Excalibur family of munitions and other sensor-fused and laser-guided projectiles, are also very lethal and even more accurate. From the joint perspective, improved munitions launched from ground-based fire support platforms will reduce the latency in joint attacks by giving the commander more options for precision attack.

• *Organic fires assets respond to the needs of the supported commander within his decision cycle and easily can be re-targeted or re-prioritized to adjust to the changing nature of the battle.* Organic fires assets minimize the clearance- of-fires procedures and airspace coordination required when assets are not habitually part of the ground commander’s forces. The additional coordination adds time and, thus, decreases responsiveness. Fixed-wing aircraft, while very efficient in providing fires that set the stage for future fights, are less capable of supporting the maneuver commander in contact.

The maneuver commander plans his fires to be integrated and synchronized fully with his scheme of maneuver. However, the adversary strives to adapt and the fight seldom unfolds exactly as planned. As the tactical situation changes and the commander employs and adjusts fires to adapt and react to these changes, he needs systems and procedures that can react in seconds. Fixed-wing assets are simply not that responsive in attacking unplanned targets.

A close fight is timed in minutes, and the ground force’s ability to finish decisively is, in large measure, based on its ability to rapidly shift and focus overwhelming firepower at a decisive point, something that may occur more than once in the same battle. Even if aircraft are on station and weaponeered correctly (have the right munitions for the desired effects), the weather is acceptable, direct communications are established with the attacking aircraft and something is available to mark the target (often artillery-delivered smoke), the coordination necessary for effective employment is time-consuming.

Although CAS employment timelines vary based on the proficiency and availability of aircraft and observers, in the vast majority of combat scenarios, it takes longer to coordinate and employ CAS than ground-based indirect fire systems. Direct support battalion cannon fires typically are available within 60 seconds of the call-for-fire in all weather, day or night and are not limited by time-on-station or weapons mixes onboard.

In OIF, with thousands of designated no-fire areas (NFAs), it only took about six and one half minutes from the time the Firefinder radar acquired the target through the battle drill to clear the fires for NFAs and friendly forces and vet them for the rules of engagement (ROE) until the cannons or MLRS fired. Of the 91 counterfire missions the 3rd ID fired in 21 days of combat, artillery fires were the most effective — even when the effects of fixed-wing assets were preferred — because accessing the fixed-wing assets took too long (“Acquisition!’ 3rd ID in Counterfire in OIF” by Chief Warrant Officer Three Brian L. Borer and Lieutenant Colonel Noel T. Nicolle, *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

Although it is true that improved joint interoperability of air-ground systems will increase the responsiveness of air power significantly, overall, fixed-wing assets will not be as responsive to the ground force



Master Sergeant Terry L. Blevins, USAF

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commander as his organic fires assets.

- *Organic fire support assets have the ability to provide the right amount of precision, ranging from near pinpoint accuracy to target area coverage.* This precision allows the commander to apply fires to fit the tactical situation, target location/identification capabilities and limits imposed by proximity to friendly forces or noncombatants. Organic fires precision is scalable and achievable within the time limits demanded by close combat situations.

In OIF during the “mother of all” sandstorms, the 3rd ID’s cavalry squadron, 3-7 Cav, found itself embroiled with suicidal enemy forces while running low on ammunition. Unable to break contact with the resolute fighters, the Cav called for fires. Air Force B-52s circled above the sandstorm and dropped ordnance some distance from the four sides of the stalled 3-7 Cav, helping to prevent additional masses of the enemy from attacking the Cav.

The only joint asset in range that could fire in close support of the Cav was the 3rd ID’s organic MLRS, which fires dual-purpose improved conventional munition (DPICM) rockets with a large, deadly footprint. From nearly 30 kilometers away, MLRS fired a 12-rocket volley *precisely* 1,400 meters from 3-7 Cav. One volley did the job, allowing the Cav to disengage, and there were no friendly casualties from MLRS. Fortunately, the 3-7 Cav commander ensured his squadron was *always* within artillery range throughout OIF.

- *The ground commander requires adjustable fires with a sustainable volume and a wide variety of effects that his organic fire support assets can provide.*

Depending on the tactical situation, the ground commander may not need to destroy a target with artillery. While maneuvering his forces against an adversary, the ground commander may require quickly delivered suppressive fires to get the enemy to change intentions while the commander achieves a tactical advantage.

Fixed-wing aircraft are unable to provide the sustained high volume of fires necessary against a repositioning enemy force. While target location capabilities are improving, the enemy is often fleeting and will not

remain where he first was targeted or where the first rounds were delivered. For air-delivered precision-guided munitions (PGMs) to work — a single round on a single target — you *must* have accurate target identification and location at the moment the weapon is fired. In addition, you must have a sophisticated tracking/lock-on device or other designator or be certain that the target location will not change while the round is en route.

Also, the target needs to be of such a nature that desired effects can be achieved with a single, discrete PGM round. Otherwise, the aircraft will have to re-engage the target — or the area in which the target is probably located — again and again. This is the classic scenario for employing area weapons. Of joint fires available today, only field artillery can provide responsive and sustained area fires with diverse effects for the ground force in close combat — that is, unless the maneuver commander can be guaranteed to have a lot of CAS available at one time.

Even in the first major battle between U.S. forces and Vietnamese regulars at Ia Drang in 1965 where the fighting was desperate and CAS was plentiful, field artillery fires were critical to the survival of the U.S. battalion. The battalion commander, now Lieutenant General (Retired) Harold (Hal) G. Moore, said,

“Our most effective fire support was field artillery.... [that during the three days of the battle, he had] “practically nonstop field artillery fires—*magnificent*.” General Moore said “the 105- mm howitzers ...five miles away fired so fast and often that some recoil mechanisms failed [and] one tube melted.” (Quotes were taken from the interview with General Moore, “We Were Soldiers Once ...The Battles of Ia Drang, 1965,” *Field Artillery* magazine July-August 1999.)

An organic cannon battalion can make adjustments within 15 seconds while an air asset, at a minimum, will have to make another pass, fly out for refueling or return to its home base to rearm. The maneuver commander often requires special munitions: smoke, illumination and scatterable mines. The Air Force, other service fixed-wing aircraft and attack

aviation can deliver all these munitions, but the aircraft must depart the air base with these special munitions *onboard*. While relying on fixed-wing support, the commander may not have flexibility — he may have to attack targets with the munitions on the aircraft, regardless of whether or not they will provide the effects he desires, which could limit his ability to achieve his intent. Cannon battalions have the full suite of munitions onboard and can change types of munitions rapidly (measured in seconds).

- *Organic fire support assets have the same endurance and persistence as the ground forces they support.* They do not have to leave the theater for retraining, refitting or any other activity more frequently than any other portion of the ground force. Given their high endurance, the ground commander can use his organic fire support assets to constantly maintain the appropriate level of fire support without gaps in coverage and with scalable effects. This is particularly important during transitions or non-contiguous operations.

- *Organic fire support brings cost-effective methods to provide effects from small-scale suppression to point destruction to area destruction.* These effects can be scaled to meet the immediate needs of the ground commander and, as importantly, can be transitioned at the same rate as the supported force requires. Thus, without significant reorganization or change in munitions, organic fire support can provide the proper mix of effects during major combat operations and then transition to stability operations and support operations (SOSO). In other words, organic assets can shift rapidly from providing fires in support of a brigade in contact to fires in support of a foot patrol, roadblock or other small-scale military operations that are highly restricted by the ROE.

This is particularly important as we look at the Future Force construct, which has multiple operations of varying intensities occurring simultaneously on the battlefield.

In addition, even with FA ammunition accounting for the majority of ground force resupply, it is still more cost effective to



Specialist Jason Baker

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employ the variety and volume of artillery-delivered effects than the same variety and volume of air delivered effects.

• *Cannons and rockets organic to the ground forces reduce the demands on other joint assets, releasing them for operational and strategic attack missions — or when used simultaneously with other joint fires—to create synergistic effects.* The J3 of Central Command during major combat operations in OIF agrees. In the interview in this magazine, “OIF Hallmarks: Integrated Joint and Coalition Operations with Adaptable Commanders and Agile Planning and Execution,” Lieutenant General Victor E. Reunuart, USAF, said, “...a battalion commander will have many targets on the battlefield to kill that are fleeting and of high value at the tactical level. But he has indirect fires assets organic to his ground force ...[and] knows the rules of engagement, so he can attack those targets ...[these are not] targets for which we will change the ATO [air tasking order] and move resources to kill.”

In his conclusion, General Reunuart says, “In some instances, we found pieces of 155-mm rounds, ATACMS [Army tactical missile system] and air-delivered bombs in the same target area ...In many areas of Iraq, those integrated fires were synergistic, creating total effects far beyond what any one of the services could have produced.”

As we continue to develop and refine our force structure, equipment and TTPs to fit the new tactical paradigm, fires will play an increasingly important role. As an enabler to precision maneuver, responsive, organic fire support assets will help shape the battlefield, shield friendly forces and provide close support to isolate and destroy the enemy. U.S. combat will be prosecuted as fast as possible while preserving the lives of not

only friendly Soldiers, but also the lives and property of innocent civilians and their infrastructure. This modern American way of war was prosecuted in major combat operations in OIF and organic artillery was critical to its success.

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In May 2002, then Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki testified before Congress on the importance of organic indirect fires. He stated, “Successful ground combat against determined enemies requires responsive and timely indirect fires. Organic and inorganic indirect fire support are important to ground combat operations, *but organic fires have been indispensable to success*” (emphasis added). (The testimony was

before the Committee on Armed Services on 16 May 2002.) This statement was based on not only his more than 30 years of service to the nation in peace and war, but also on his clear understanding of the enduring nature of close combat operations.

As we build the Army’s Future Force, we must take advantage of every technological edge and the synergies inherent in joint operations to ensure the success of our commanders and the Soldiers they lead. However, we must heed the lessons of past and recent wars.

On organic fires, the message is clear: ground force commanders need responsive, organic fires to ensure success in full spectrum combat operations and to offset the risks inherent in those operations — now and in the future.

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