
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
THE BASIC SCHOOL
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019

**FIRE SUPPORT
PLANNING II
B2C0329XQ-DM
STUDENT HANDOUT**

Fire Support Planning II

Introduction

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) is one of the premier fighting organizations in the world. One of the key reasons for this status is due to the USMC's ability to integrate its supporting arms with maneuver forces creating a combined arms effect that facilitates and enables the Maneuver element's ability to accomplish their mission.

Importance

In this platform, we will be discussing how to build and brief a concise Fire Support Plan at the platoon level. This will facilitate the integration of fires into the maneuver scheme of maneuver and enhance combat power in order to accomplish the mission.

In This Lesson

This lesson covers the following topics:

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Learning Objectives

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. TBS-FSPT-1001 Given a scheme of maneuver, fire support available, and an order, develop a fire support plan to support the ground scheme of maneuver, in accordance with the commander's intent.

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. TBS-DEF-1002f Given a scenario and an order from higher, determine target precedence to support the scheme of maneuver.

2. TBS-DEF-2101d Given a defensive operations order, a unit, and a simulated combat environment, develop an indirect fire plan for the defense that supports the mission.

3. TBS-FSPT-1001c Given an evaluation, identify fire support control measures without error.

4. TBS-FSPT-1002c Given an evaluation, identify characteristics of fire support command relationships without error.

5. TBS-OFF-2103e Given a unit and an order from higher, integrate supporting arms to support the scheme of maneuver.

Fire Support Planning Themes

All Fire Support Planning principles can be summed up into three overarching themes. These themes encompass the responsibilities of the platoon commander in developing and implementing a fire support plan during the orders process and execution of the scheme of maneuver.

THEME #1: THE FIRE SUPPORT PLAN MUST SUPPORT THE SCHEME OF MANEUVER

Fire supporting agencies have the unique responsibility to support maneuver elements, whether they be infantry or armor, with timely and accurate fires. The nature of this responsibility effectively places fire support in a supporting role during combat operations. All fires planned must be developed after the scheme of maneuver has been determined in order to ensure support and combat power for the maneuver element as they execute the scheme of maneuver.

THEME #2: THE MANEUVER ELEMENT LEADER MUST PROVIDE BOTTOM UP REFINEMENT

The fires process is not a static process; it requires constant refinement at all levels. Targeting, specifically, is a fluid and deliberate process of developing fires objectives and allowing the Maneuver Commanders that are on the ground to refine and update these objectives. It is the responsibility of the Maneuver Commander to report back all updates on targets and fires objective in order to develop a more holistic view of the battle space.

THEME #3: THE FIRE SUPPORT PLAN MUST BE EXECUTABLE

The nine principles of war are not lost on fire support planning. It is imperative for the Maneuver Commanders to develop and implement fires plans that are in keeping with the principles of war, specifically simplicity. This will allow subordinates to better understand and implement the fire support plan in the absence of the Maneuver Commander.

Fire Support Coordinating Measures

Fire Support Coordinating Measures (FSCMs) are designed to provide safeguards for friendly forces and at the same time facilitate rapid engagement of targets. FSCMs fall into two broad categories: ***Permissive Measures and Restrictive Measures***.

The FSC is responsible for recommending the establishment of all FSCMs, with the exception of boundaries. Recommendations are based on:

- Maneuver commander's guidance
- Location of friendly forces
- Scheme of maneuver
- Anticipated enemy actions

Once established, FSCMs are displayed on maps, firing charts, and overlays. Graphical portrayal will include at a minimum (all in black) the:

- Abbreviation of the FSCM
- Establishing headquarters
- Effective date-time-group (DTG)

Before FSCMs can be established and implemented, it is essential that a Maneuver Commander understand the boundaries of his unit.

Boundaries: Unit boundaries are the zone of action or sector of a maneuver unit. Usually, unit boundaries are assigned along terrain features easily recognizable on the ground. Unit boundaries also are situated so that key terrain features and avenues of approach are completely included in the area assigned to a unit. Boundaries may also serve as the most basic FSCM. As such, unit boundaries have the potential of being both permissive and restrictive in nature.

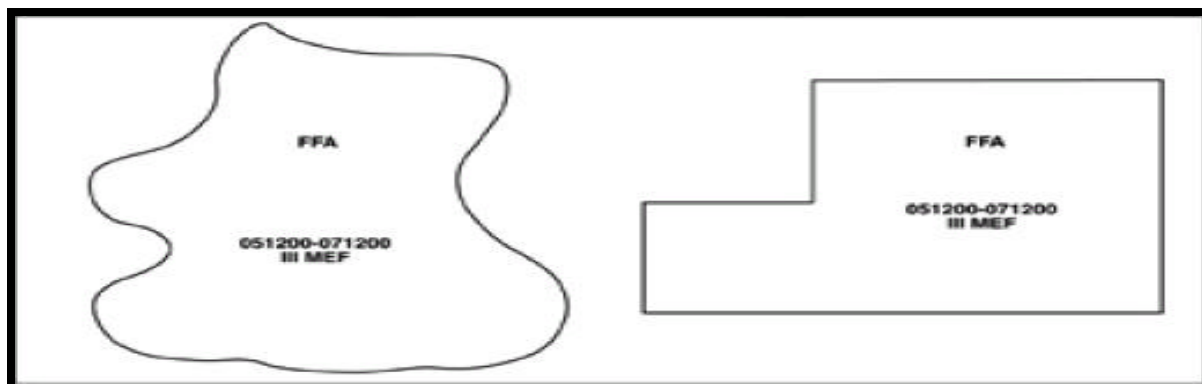
- Boundaries used restrictively: No fire support should be delivered across a unit boundary unless the fires are coordinated with the force having responsibility within those boundaries. Fires delivered within close proximity to boundaries also should be coordinated with the adjacent units.
- Boundaries used permissively: Within its own boundaries, the Maneuver Commander enjoys complete freedom of fire and maneuver without the need to coordinate with exterior agencies.

Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)



Permissive FSCM: The primary purpose of permissive measures is to facilitate the attack of targets. Permissive FSCMs allow for the execution of fires with no further coordination when engaging targets across unit boundaries. There are four primary permissive FSCMs: The Free Fire Area (FFA), Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL), Battlefield Coordination Line (BCL), and Coordinated Firing Line (CFL).

1) Free Fire Area (FFA): A specific, designated area into which any weapon system may fire without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters. This includes the fire or effects of fire.

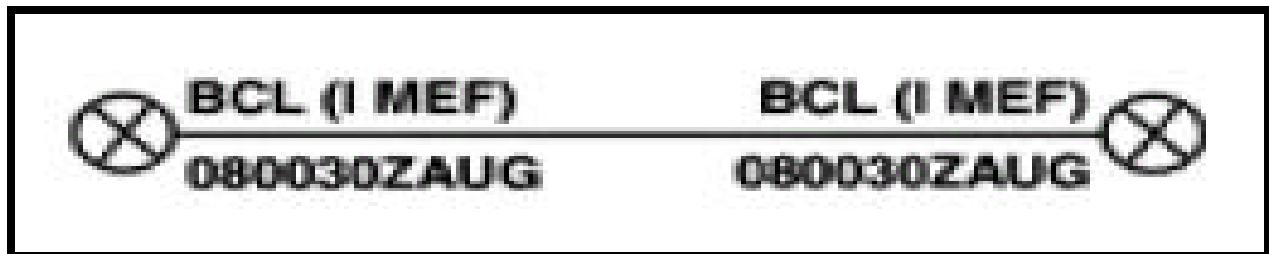


2) Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL): A joint imaginary line that expedites surface-to-surface (i.e. artillery, mortars, NSGF) AND air-to-surface attack **beyond the FSCL** without coordination with the ground commander in whose area the targets are located (across boundaries).

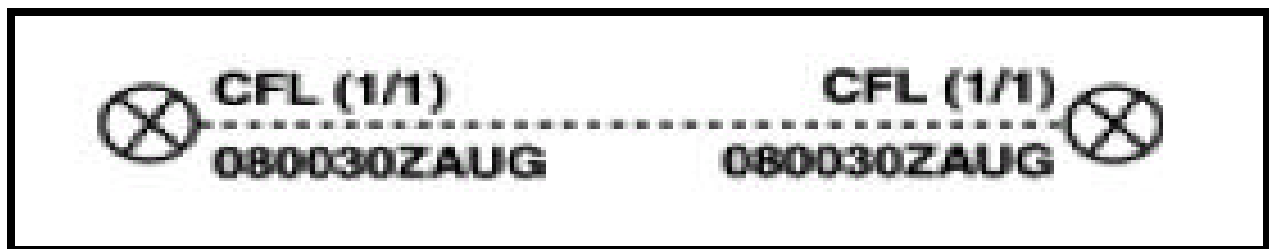
Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)



3) Battlefield Coordination Line (BCL): A Marine Corps imaginary line that expedites surface-to-surface AND air-to-surface attacks beneath the FSCL but beyond the CFL without coordination with the ground commander in whose area the targets are located (across boundaries). This FSCM is used **EXCLUSIVELY BY MAGTF FIRE SUPPORT ASSETS**.

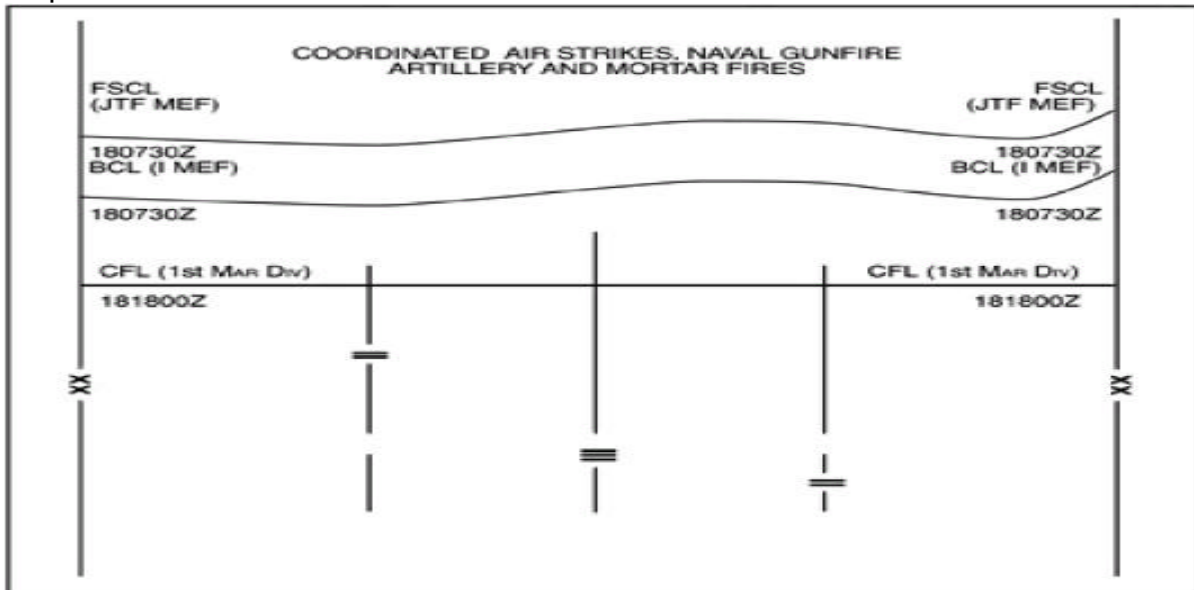


4) Coordinated Firing Line (CFL): A joint imaginary line that expedites surface-to-surface attack beyond the CFL without coordination with the ground commander in whose area the targets are located (across boundaries).



Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)

Example of Permissive measures on a linear battlefield:



Restrictive FSCM: Restrictive measures impose certain requirements for specific coordination prior to the engagement of those targets affected by the measure. The primary purpose of restrictive measures is to provide safeguards for friendly forces. There are three primary restrictive FSCMs: The Restrictive Firing Line (RFL), Restrictive Firing Area (RFA), and the No Fire Area (NFA).

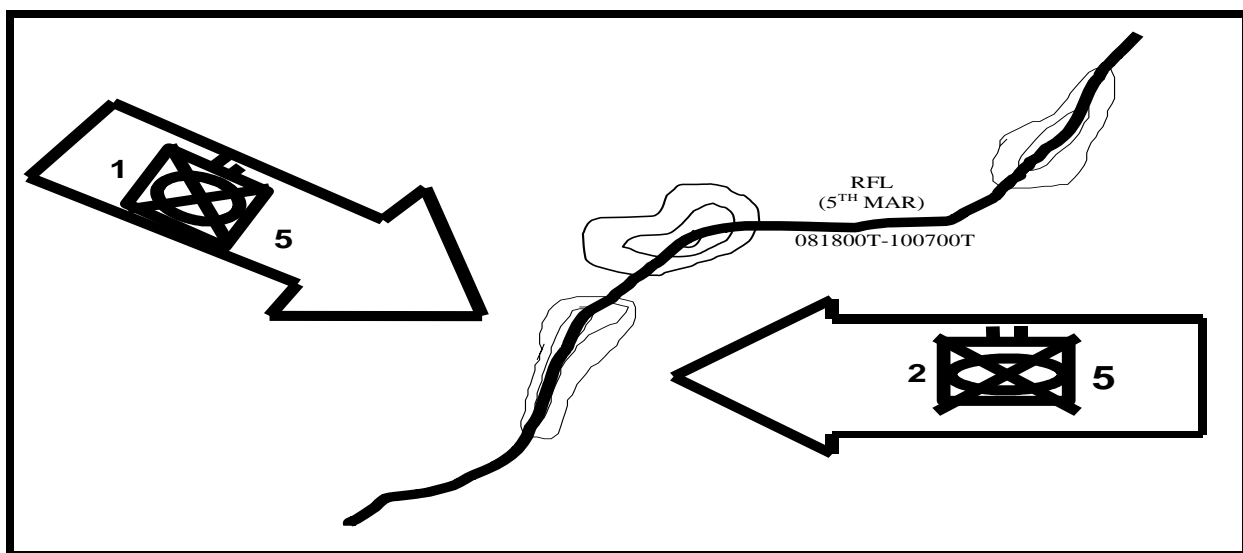
1) Restrictive Firing Line (RFL): An RFL is a line established between converging friendly forces (one or both may be moving) that prohibits fires, or effects of fires, across the line without coordination with the affected force. The purpose of the RFL is to regulate all fires occurring between converging forces.

The common commander of the converging forces:

- Establishes the RFL.
- May delegate establishing authority to the senior commander of the two converging forces or to the commander of the maneuvering force in a linkup operation between a moving and stationary force.
- The RFL should be located on identifiable terrain. In linkup operations, the RFL is moved as close as possible to the stationary force to allow maximum freedom of action for the maneuver and fire support of the linkup force.

Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)

- Upon arrival, the FSCC disseminates the RFL to the subordinate, adjacent, and higher headquarters, as required. The RFL is further disseminated at each level of command, to include the establishing command, and to all concerned fire control agencies and other services as may be applied.
- The location of the RFL is graphically portrayed on maps, charts, and overlays by a solid black line with the letters "RFL" followed by the establishing headquarters in parentheses above the line and the effective DTG below the line (see diagram below).



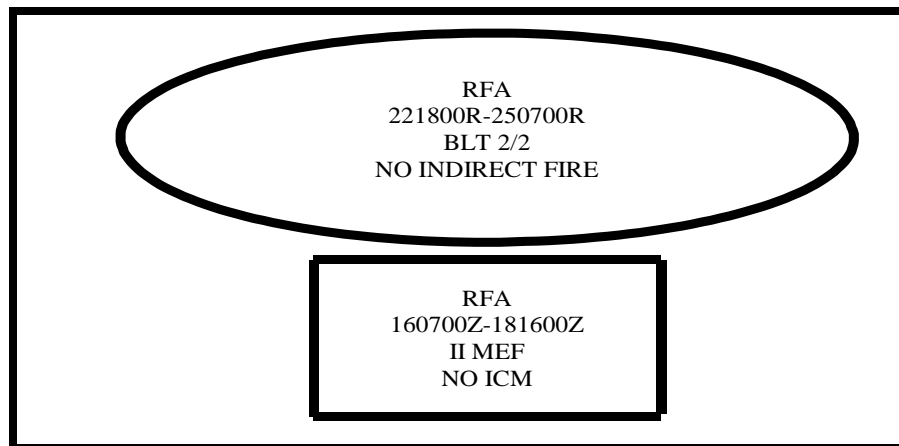
2) Restrictive Firing Area (RFA): An RFA is an area in which specific firing or coordination restrictions are imposed and any fires in excess that exceeds those restrictions will not be delivered without coordination with the establishing headquarters. The purpose of the RFA is to regulate fires into an area according to the stated restrictions. This means that fires or certain types of ordnance (e.g., limitations on improved conventional munitions (ICM / DPICM) or family of scatter-able mines (FASCAM) can be controlled in an area where friendly forces are or will be located.

- Any ground unit commander may establish an RFA within his zone; however, an RFA is not normally established below the battalion level.
- When RFAs are used to protect a unit from friendly fires (e.g., light armored reconnaissance (LAR) unit), the size of the RFA should be sufficient to allow the maneuver of the unit but not so large as to needlessly restrict fire support in other areas.
- To facilitate rapidly changing maneuver areas, on-call RFAs may be used. The dimensions, location, and restrictions of the on-call RFA are prearranged. The RFA is activated and deactivated when requested by the maneuvering unit or scheduled by time or event.
- An RFA may be on recognizable terrain expressed either by: Grid coordinates. Radius from a point.

Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)

- The establishing commander disseminates an RFA to the FSCCs of subordinate, adjacent, and higher headquarters, as required.
- An RFA is further disseminated to each level of command, including the establishing command, and to all concerned fire support agencies.

The RFA is graphically portrayed on a map, chart, or overlay by an area bounded by a black line with the letters "RFA", the designation of the unit establishing the area, and the effective DTGs inside the line (see diagram below).



3) No Fire Area (NFA): An NFA is an area into which no fires or effects of fire are allowed. The two exceptions to an NFA are:

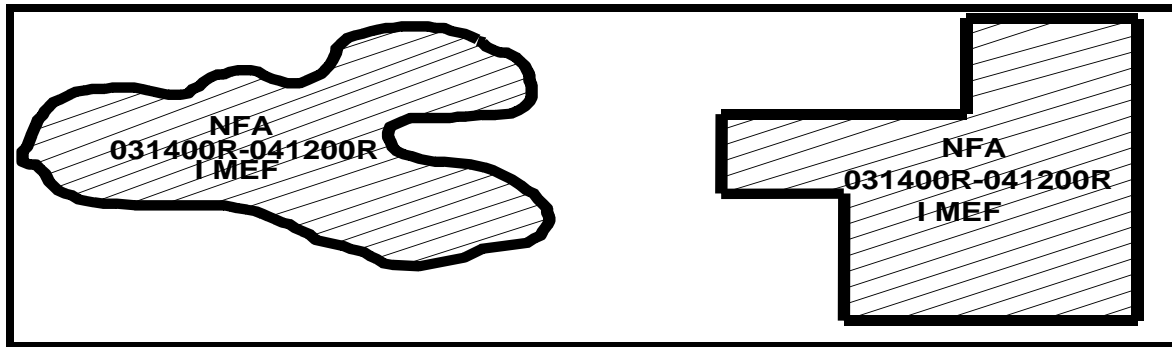
- The establishing headquarters may approve fires temporarily within the NFA on a mission-by-mission basis
- If any enemy force within the NFA engages a friendly force and the engaged unit leader determines there is no time for coordination, he may "respond in kind" with fires into the NFA

The purpose of the NFA is to prohibit fires or their effects in the area, normally to protect civilians. Typically, the host nation establishes an NFA. On arrival of military forces, the force commander coordinates the location of an NFA with local authorities.

Normally, an NFA is on recognizable terrain, but its location may also be expressed either by: Grid coordinates or Radius from a center point.

An NFA is graphically portrayed (see diagram below) in black with diagonal lines drawn through the enclosed area. The letters "NFA" are written inside the enclosed area, along with the effective DTG and the headquarters of the establishing unit.

Fire Support Coordinating Measures (Continued)



Command and Supporting Relationships

The integration and cooperation of combined arms is founded on the relationships between the Maneuver Commanders and the supporting agencies. These relationships can be summed up in two categories: Command Relationships and Supporting Relationships.

- **Command relationships:** These relationships define the degree of authority exercised by one commander over another commander. They are primarily based on the factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available
- **Supporting relationships:** These relationships are established by a senior commander between subordinate commanders when one organization should aid, protect, complement or sustain another force while still under the command of its parent headquarters.

In the context of command and supporting relationships, there are three fundamental relationships that apply to all supporting agencies: General Support, Direct Support, and Attached.

General Support: This is a supporting relationships where the support is given to the supported force as a whole and not to any particular subdivision thereof. Requires a unit to support the force as a whole and be prepared to support any subordinate element. This provides the ability to influence widely separated actions.

Direct Support: This is a supporting relationships where the tactical mission requires a force to support another specific force, authorizing it to answer directly to the supported forces' request for assistance. This requires the unit to furnish close and continuous fires to a single supported unit. Commander will position his firing units to deliver fires in the zone of action of the supported unit. Supported unit has priority of fires.

Command and Supporting Relationships (continued)

Attached: This is a command relationships where the placement of units or personnel are placed in an organization temporarily to augment tactical objectives. While the supporting unit is attached to the supported unit, the supported unit has the responsibilities of administration and logistical support to the supporting unit.

Fire Support Planning in the Offense

The purpose of fires planning in the offense is to provide support by using all available fire support means to accomplish the essential fire support tasks (EFSTs) that the Maneuver Commander has designated. When developing the fire support plan in support of the scheme of maneuver, the Maneuver Commander must take into consideration the three primary phases of an offensive operation: preparation phase, conduct phase, and consolidation / exploitation phase.

Preparation Phase: This phase consist of fires executed before the maneuver unit crosses the Line of Departure (LD). These fires are used for:

- Attacking targets as part of a deception effort.
- Using smoke to screen the movement of friendly forces preparing for the attack.
- Softening enemy defenses before the attack by engaging enemy indirect fire weapons, observation posts (OPs), reserves (or second echelon forces), command and control centers, logistic and assembly areas, or front-line defenses.

Conduct Phase: This phase begins as soon as the maneuver unit crosses the LD and commences the attack. The phase ends once the maneuver unit culminates and calls for consolidation. These fires are used for:

- Attack planned targets as part of the execution
- Providing responsive fires to leading elements during the attack
- Implementing an aggressive counter-fire plan to prevent enemy indirect fires from unnecessarily delaying the advance.

Consolidation or Exploitation Phase: This phase begins once the maneuver unit has culminated and has called for consolidation. The phase ends once the maneuver unit has fully transitioned to the defense or has resumed offensive operations. These fires are used for:

Fire Support Planning in the Offense (continued)

Consolidation:

- Protecting friendly units during reorganization / transition
- Breaking up an enemy counter-attack
- Preventing enemy reinforcement, disengagement, or resupply

Exploitation:

- Providing mobile, flexible fire support for maneuvering units
- Placing fires on bypassed enemy pockets of resistance to fix them for attack
- Providing fires to slow enemy retreat.

Fire Support Planning in the Defense

The purpose of fires planning in the defense is to provide support by using all available fire support means to accomplish the essential fire support tasks (EFSTs) that the Maneuver Commander has designated. When developing the fire support plan in support of the scheme of maneuver, the Maneuver Commander must take into consideration the three primary types of defensive fires: Long Range Targets, Close Defensive Fires, and Final Protective Fires.

Long Range Targets: These type of defensive fires are used primarily as a means of creating depth in the defense. Long Range Targets are always located outside of the defensive Engagement Area (EA) and are usually employed by LP/OP or patrols. These fires are usually used for:

- Engage the enemy with fires to create confusion and cause early deployment
- Provides fire support for security units such as patrols or LP/OPs

Close Defensive Targets: These type of defensive fires are used primarily as a means of funneling, turning, and destroying the enemy to and within the defensive EA. Close Defensive Targets are always located within defensive Engagement Area (EA) and are tied into the defensive obstacle plan in order to maximize effects and canalize the enemy. These fires are usually used for:

- Mass fires to canalize and slow enemy forces
- Fire on obstacles to disrupt breaching effort and to inflict maximum casualties
- Use fire support to isolate enemy forward echelons
- Use fires to allow friendly's movement to supplementary positions
- Fire to separate infantry from armor

Fire Support Planning in the Defense (continued)

Final Protective Fires (FPF): These type of defensive fires are used as an immediately available prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas in the primary defensive positions. The FPF will facilitate friendly's movement from primary to alternate positions. The FPF can only be fired by the command of the Commanding Officer or most senior Marine present. The following are FPF considerations:

- The only priority target in the defense
- Placed on most likely dismounted Enemy Avenue of Approach
- Firing agency will fire every round it has at the rapid rate until they run out of ammunition or the command to cease load is given by the Commanding Officer or most senior Marine.
- Lengths of FPFs will vary according to firing agency
- A firing agency can only be assigned one FPF at a time

Calculating FPF lengths by firing agency: To calculate maximum lengths for FPFs, the Maneuver Commander must take the number of tubes in that firing agency and multiply it by the effective casualty radius (ECR) of that weapon system.

- Artillery Battery: 6 Howitzers x 50m ECR = 300m length
- 120mm Platoon: 6 mortars x 45m ECR = 270m length
- 81mm Platoon: 8 mortars x 35m ECR = 280m length
 - 81mm Section: 4 mortars x 35 ECR = 140m length
- 60mm Section: 3 mortars x 30m ECR = 90m length

Registering the FPF: The following steps are necessary when registering an FPF in a defensive position.

1) Send CFF in three transmissions:

- Grid must be a grid 400m – 600m in front of friendly troops. The FO will creep the fires in via adjustments to the center of the FPF between 200m – 400m from defensive line.
- Fuze in adjustments will always be delay for an FPF vice HE/PD.
- FPF is a danger close mission because it is within 600m from friendly troops.

2) Adjust fires by creeping into the desired location. These adjustments will be in 100m increments until within 50m of desired FPF location.

3) Once the rounds are located on the desired FPF location – say FPF is registered

Fire Support Planning in the Defense (continued)

Example:

TRANSMISSION	EXAMPLE TRANSMISSIONS
1	Carnage this is Raider, Adjust Fire, over
2	Grid 1234 5678, over
3	Final Protective Fires, attitude 1900, danger close, delay i/a, At my command, over
MTO	FDC sends MTO
	MTO, Carnage, 1 round, TGT # AB1000
EVENT	CORRECTIONS
Btry Fires	TGT# AB 1000, Right 30, Drop 100
Brty Fires	TGT# AB 1000, Drop 50
Brty Fires	TGT# AB 1000, Drop 30, End of Mission, FPF Registered, over

The Fire Support Plan

A Fire Support Plan is simply a tactical plan containing information necessary for the employment of fire support during an offensive or defensive operation. All pertinent information can be pulled from Higher's order from Paragraph 1 – Situation, sub-paragraph Friendly under Supporting or in Paragraph 3 – Execution, sub-paragraph Concept of Operations under Fire Support Plan.

When Higher provides a fire support intent it will be distributed in three broad categories: Priority, Allocation, Restrictions. From these categories, the Maneuver Commander must create an Essential Fire Support Task (EFST) for each offensive phase or defensive types of fires target.

The Essential Fire Support Task consist of four main parts: Task, Purpose, Method, and Effect.

1) Tasks: Task are enemy centric that describes the targeting objective that fires must achieve against a specific enemy formation's function or capability.

2) Purpose: The purpose is friendly focus and emphasis the "why" of the operations. This should reinforce the supporting role of fires in relation to the scheme of maneuver.

3) Method: The method is the targeting information and fire asset that will be used to accomplish the objectives of the FSP. This consist of seven elements: **T**arget, **T**rigger, **L**ocation, **O**bserver, **D**elivery System, **A**ttack Guidance, and **C**ommunication Net (TTLODAC)

The Fire Support Plan (continued)

4) Effects: Attempts to quantify successful accomplishment of the task. It provides a measure of effectiveness for the task.

Creating a Fire Support Task

When creating a Fire Support Task there are five steps that must be followed in order to effectively create a plan that will support the scheme of maneuver.

- 1) Determine the critical event for the phase
- 2) Determine the conditions that must be set for that phase to accomplish the critical event
- 3) Identify the conditions that cannot be accomplished through maneuver
- 4) Identify and assess the fire assets available
- 5) Develop your FSP based off this analysis

Once availability of fires and need of fires has been determined, the Maneuver Commander must create an EFST. This consists of creating a Task, Purpose, Method, and Effects that will be briefed during the orders process.

Tasks: Task describes the targeting objective fires must achieve against a specific enemy formation's function or capability. In the tasking portion there are four appropriate fires tactical tasks that may be assigned to a firing agency:

1) **Disrupt:** This fires tactical task means to preclude efficient interaction of enemy combat or combat support systems. Simplified, it means to not let an enemy formation perform a specific function: prevent the enemy from doing what it was supposed to be doing.

Example: *Disrupt the EN's ability to employ direct fire weapons on our attacking force.*

2) **Delay:** This fires tactical task means to alter the time of arrival of a specific enemy formation or capability. It focuses on not letting the enemy do some function when it wants / needs to; simplified, it means to slow down or stop the EN for doing what it wants.

Example: *Delay the ability of the advance unit to support the security element with direct fires.*

The Fire Support Plan (continued)

3) **Limit:** This fires tactical task applies to reducing the options or courses of action available to the enemy commander. To limit capabilities implies we also interrupt the enemy plans by precluding effective interaction or the cohesion of enemy combat and combat support systems. Simplified, it means taking away COAs or options the EN has to accomplish their mission.

Example: *Limit the ability of the enemy air assault company to establish an LZ in the high ground west of the firebase.*

4) **Divert:** This fire support task addresses the commander's desire to tie up critical enemy resources. Divert indirectly reduces the enemy commander's capability to continue his plans. It can also be used as a method of turning or moving an EN in predetermined direction.

Example: *Divert the logistics convoy from resupplying the enemy maneuver force on Co Obj A.*

5) **Destroy:** Primarily used when targeting structures. This task addresses the commander's desire to ruin the structure, organic existence, or condition of an enemy target that is essential to an enemy capability.

Example: *Destroy the enemy machine gun bunker on Co Obj A.*

Purpose: The purpose (in order to) of the fire support task must be friendly focused and the reasoning must justify the employment of fires in support of maneuver forces.

Example: *To allow Supporting Effort 2 to occupy the support by fire position without becoming decisively engaged by the enemy patrol.*

Method: The method describes how the task and purpose will be achieved. It gives the specifics of the target: Target Description, Trigger to fire the target, Location of target, Observes, Delivery system (firing asset) to be used, Attack guidance, and Communications net. In essence it is the TTLODAC.

Example:

Target: AB 1010 / Likely EN LP/OP

Trigger: Upon visual of LP/OP

Location: TH 870 663

Observer: Primary: 1st Fire TM Leader / Alternate: Sqd Leader

Delivery System: Primary: 60mm Mortar / Alternate: 81mm Mortars

Attack Guidance: Primary: HE/Prox / Alternate: HE/ Prox

Comm Net: Primary: Co TAC Net / Alternate: Bn Mortar Net

The Fire Support Plan (continued)

Effects: Attempts to quantify successful accomplishment of the task. It provides the Observer with a measure of effectiveness (MOE) for the task. There are five primary effects used to measure the effectiveness of our fires.

1) Suppress: To suppress is to temporarily degrade the performance of a force or weapons system below the level needed to accomplish the mission. Suppression usually lasts only as long as the fires or their effects continue. Usually involves a specified amount of time for the target to be suppressed.

Example: *Enemy MG squad suppressed for 3 minutes*

2) Neutralize: To neutralize is to render enemy personnel or material incapable of interfering with a particular operation. This target becomes ineffective or unusable and has a degraded capability of accomplishing its mission.

Example: *Enemy MG squad is neutralized, (1) MG incapable of placing fires on our support by fire position*

3) Destroy: To destroy is to apply lethal combat power on an enemy capability so that it can no longer perform any function and cannot be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt.

Example: *LP/OP is destroyed and 1st Platoon able to reach the assault position unimpeded*

4) Harass: Fires delivered to disturb the rest of enemy troops, to curtail movement, and, by threat of losses, to lower morale.

Example: *Enemy Plt in their AA is unable to cross LD undisturbed.*

The Fire Support Plan (continued)

Example Essential Fire Support Task (EFST):

Conduct Phase – EFST 1

Task:

Disrupt the CRF Sqd's ability to employ their Medium MG against the Plt's attack on Co Obj A

Purpose:

IOT allow the Plt to seize and hold Co Obj A and prepare to support follow-on missions

Method:

Target 1

Target: AB1000 / Known CRF Sqd (+)

Trigger: As the Plt departs the Aslt POS

Location: TH 8754 6523

Observer: Pri - Plt Co / Alt - Plt Sgt

Delivery Asset: Pri - Arty / Alt - 81s

Attack Guidance: Arty - HE/VT / 81s - HE/PROX

Comm Net: Arty - Arty COF / 81s - BN Mortars Net

Effects:

CRF units are neutralized and not able to effectively coordinate a counter-attack against the Plt during consolidation

SUMMARY OF FIRE SUPPORT PLAN:

Fires are employed in a supporting role in order to enable and facilitate the accomplishment of the mission. When creating and briefing the Fire Support Plan it must always be briefed by phase (offense) or type of fires (defense) using the Task, Purpose, Method, and Effect format. The effective use of supporting arms can mean the difference between victory and defeat. The tools presented in this lesson, along with the practical application training you will execute during the platform are the foundational steps in understanding how to best use this force multiplier and truly create a combined arms dilemma.

References

Reference Number or Author	Reference Title
MCTP 3-01C	Tactical Employment of Mortars
MCWP 3-31	Marine Air-Ground Task Force Fires
MCTP 3-10F	Fire Support Coordination in the Ground Combat Element
MCWP 3-16.6A	Supporting Arms Observer, Spotter, and Controller (JFIRE)
FM 3-60	The Targeting Process

Notes

[illegible]