

Integrated Collective Training for the CAB

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“Combat readiness is built through tough, realistic training and leader development”

– 2016 Army Aviation Training Strategy

Our combat training centers (CTC) currently do not support training an entire combat aviation brigade (CAB) in mission command of its subordinate elements. The CTC model is excellent for training brigade combat team (BCT) rotations and the aviation battalion task forces commonly deployed to support them. The only collective training tool available to the CABs to exercise command and control and conduct maneuver of their organic battalions are war fighter exercises controlled by the Mission Command Training Program (MCTP). The CAB may use their home station Mission Command Training Complex (MCTC) to train individual systems (e.g. Command Post of the Future, Tactical Airspace Integration System, Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System) and to conduct collective command post (CP) exercises but the CAB must contend for the same resources as adjacent brigades, support of division leadership, land, ammunition, and time. These are critical factors in facilitating a successful home station training event.

Collective training is where leaders learn to lead, Soldiers hone their warfighting skills, and units train to mastery. [It] is the heart of building combat power. Collective training in the operational domain is where the Army focuses most its time, effort, and resources.¹ Army Aviation’s leadership acknowledges that our aviation formations are very well trained to maneuver at the platoon and team levels. However, the Army’s new objective training readiness initiative, driven by the capabilities of

potential adversaries, demands that CABs possess the ability to execute mission command and be able to effectively maneuver their battalions. Home station training is the primary location where commanders prepare formations for combat and build readiness.

The Army Aviation Training Strategy further illuminates the significance of home station training and the role of leaders at echelon:

Commanders and leaders at each echelon must drive relevant, rigorous, and realistic training through effective unit training management to ensure that we train the way we intend to fight.² Home station training must be realistic, challenging, and complex. Well resourced, planned, and synchronized collective training requires the application of the military decision making process. Planning a training event is no different than planning an operation.³

In May 2016, 3rd CAB, 3rd Infantry Division (ID) executed FALCON FOCUS as a field training exercise incorporating live, virtual, and constructive (LVC) integrated training architecture in a decisive action training environment. The 3rd ID Commander and staff enabled the training by dedicating resources and time to the development and execution of the exercise. The 3rd ID Deputy Commanding General - Operations was the FALCON FOCUS exercise director. The division resourced planners, an exercise control section, live and virtual blue forces and opposing forces (OPFOR), and BCT response cells. They also coordinated for observer controller trainers (OC/T) from the MCTP, 1st Army Divisions East and West, and from the Directorate of Training and Doctrine, United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence to provide external

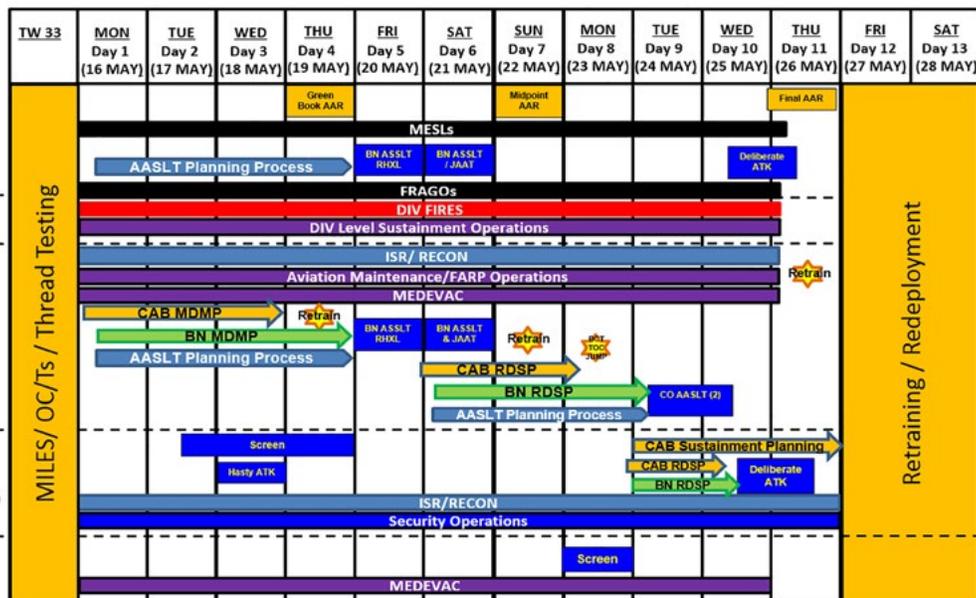
evaluation of 3rd CAB mission command system operations and processes in a field environment. The 3rd ID’s Division Artillery established their CP at the MCTC and deployed a battery of artillery to the field. The synchronized efforts of the supporting staff, MCTC, and CAB resulted in an exceptional training event that serves as a superb example of how a CAB can conduct tough, realistic, and effective home station training.

Integral to the exercise design was a live OPFOR that incorporated robust hybrid and near-peer threat capabilities. The simulation provided a varied and complex operational environment vital to the stimulation of all of the CAB’s mission command information systems, including Blue Force Tracker, with live and simulation-generated information. This capability offered the division and CAB the opportunity to train all warfighting functions within the CAB’s main CP and subordinate battalion CPs through a fully blended LVC training environment.

The OC/Ts provided an objective assessment by focusing observations and coaching on the CAB commander’s training objectives that were based on the recently published standardized mission essential task list. The CAB commander selected air assault, attack, reconnaissance and security, joint air attack team (JAAT) operations, Gray Eagle and manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) in support of the division as the five key training events to support his eight training objectives consisting of: Reconnaissance, Security, JAAT, Battalion-size assault (in sector), Company-size assault (out of sector), Attack Support to division with Gray Eagle, and MUM-T.

The CAB executed three live air assaults, two live hasty attacks, a screen mission, and a deliberate attack mission in the division’s

area of operations in addition to numerous virtual iterations of attack, reconnaissance, and aeromedical evacuation operations from an Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer linked into the exercise. Live aeromedical evacuation, air movement, forward arming and refueling point operations, and tactical convoy operations were also executed. Mission command systems were employed at the CAB and battalion/squadron CP, tactical command post, and from the brigade's command aviation aircraft. In addition to frequency modulation and tactical satellite



The Live, Virtual and Constructive Integrated Exercise Construct for FALCON FOCUS



AH-64D Longbow Apaches from 3-17 ARS-H execute JAAT with Marine F/A-18 Hornets and DIVARTY Howitzers on 21 MAY 2016. Photo Credit: SPC Scott Lindblom, 3rd CAB Public Affairs

communications, the CAB leveraged CPOF and Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below Joint Capabilities to communicate missions, plans, and orders to subordinate elements. Additionally, the entire Warfighter Information Network-Tactical connected organizations and linked Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation exercise information to the battalion level.

The exercise control section and the CAB both used recently published doctrine to guide their training. Air assaults were planned and executed using Field Manual (FM) 3-04, *Army Aviation*; Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-04.1, *Army Aviation Tactical Employment*; FM 3-99, *Airborne and Air Assault Operations*; and unit standard operating procedures while attacks were conducted in accordance with tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) described in ATP 3-04.1. The application of relatively new doctrine speaks to the CAB's ability to adapt TTP in support of both Army Aviation core competencies and the Army core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security.

FALCON FOCUS is an example of how a CAB may leverage home station training and

maximize the use of time and resources. As a CP exercise that occurred relatively early in the CAB's training cycle, this 'walk' event highlighted areas of focus for future training in advance of a mission readiness exercise scheduled for October 2016. The systems and processes the CAB honed, to include mission command of three subordinate battalions, demonstrates how lethal and agile the brigade can be in decisive action. Whether tasking elements to directly support ground maneuver or deliberately engaging the enemy in the deep area using joint and combined assets, the CAB and its staff, executing across the range of Army Aviation's core competencies, provides the commander the flexibility, reach, and lethality to maintain relative advantage.



¹ Army Aviation Training Strategy, pg. 13, January 2016

² Ibid, pg. 1

³ Ibid, pg. 9

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Acronym Reference

ATP - Army Training Publication
BCT - brigade combat team
CAB - combat aviation brigade
CP - command post
CPOF - command post of the future
CTC - Combat Training Center
FM - field manual
ID - Infantry Division

JAAT - joint air attack team
LVC - live, vertical and constructive
MCTC - mission command training complex
MUM-T - manned-unmanned team
OC/T - observer, controller-trainer
OPFOR - opposing force
TTP - tactics, techniques, and procedures

