

KILLING OF A KING: THE INCREASING MARGINALIZATION
OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY BRANCH IN CURRENT
COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

STEPHEN M. KAPLACHINSKI, MAJ, USA
M.B.A., Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2010
B.S., Marian University, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1998

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2010-01

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 11-06-2010		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2009 – JUN 2010	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Killing of a King: The Increasing Marginalization of the Field Artillery Branch in Current Counterinsurgency Operations			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Kaplachinski, Stephen M., MAJ, U.S. Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This thesis argues that the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in today's counterinsurgency operations. There are several key factors that have led up to this point, those being, loss of core competency within the branch causing a loss in confidence from maneuver commanders, and a lack of a clear strategy for what role the branch will play in the future. The most recent vision of the FA Commandant in the Field Artillery Strategy (2009) addresses some of these issues, but may not go far enough. This study argues that the biggest factor affecting the branch is the impact of multiple deployments in which artillery Soldiers are tasked with non-standard missions on the core competency. Many senior leaders are discussing this issue, and some are providing ways to resolve it. This thesis will address the main issues surrounding the FA branch. The majority of this research consists of reviewing FA unit actions in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past eight years, reviewing historical articles, and Combat Training Center after action reviews.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Field Artillery, Counterinsurgency, Core Competency, Iraq, Afghanistan					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	56	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: MAJ Stephen M. Kaplachinski

Thesis Title: Killing of a King: The Increasing Marginalization of the Field Artillery
Branch in Current Counterinsurgency Operations

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
LTC Celestino Perez, Jr., Ph.D,

_____, Member
Clay Easterling, M.A.

_____, Member
Sheldon D. Horsfall, M.S.

Accepted this 11th day of June 2010 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

KILLING OF A KING: THE INCREASING MARGINALIZATION OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY BRANCH IN CURRENT COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS, by MAJ Stephen M. Kaplachinski, 56 pages.

This thesis argues that the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in today's counterinsurgency operations. There are several key factors that have led up to this point, those being, loss of core competency within the branch causing a loss in confidence from maneuver commanders, and a lack of a clear strategy for what role the branch will play in the future.

The most recent vision of the FA Commandant in the Field Artillery Strategy (2009) addresses some of these issues, but may not go far enough. This study argues that the biggest factor affecting the branch is the impact of multiple deployments in which artillery Soldiers are tasked with non-standard missions on the core competency. Many senior leaders are discussing this issue, and some are providing ways to resolve it. This thesis will address the main issues surrounding the FA branch. The majority of this research consists of reviewing FA unit actions in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past eight years, reviewing historical articles, and Combat Training Center after action reviews.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my chair LTC Celestino Perez Jr., Ph.D, committee members Mr. Clay Easterling, and Mr. Sheldon Horsfall for taking the time out of their extremely busy schedule in order to participate in the MMAS process. Their guidance, knowledge of counterinsurgency strategy and operations along with their expertise of military service was vital in assisting me to complete this thesis. I would also like to thank Mrs. Venita Krueger for her patience in assisting me with the proper formatting of my MMAS. I really could not have completed this without her.

Last but certainly not least, a deep heartfelt thank you goes out to my wife, Buffie, for putting up with the long hours of research and study in order for me to complete my MMAS. Buffie, your insight and thoughtfulness were great and there is no way I could have done this without you by my side.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	2
Definitions	5
Overview.....	6
Limitations and Delimitation	7
Significance of Study.....	8
Primary and Secondary Research Questions	8
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Core Competency	11
The Draft FA Campaign Plan and 2009 FA Strategy	12
Combat Training Center Results and Analysis.....	12
Summary.....	13
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
Research Methods and Techniques.....	15
Background.....	15
Answering the Research Questions Step-by-Step	17
Strengths and Weaknesses of Research Methodology	18
CHAPTER 4 MARGINALIZATION OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY	20
Introduction.....	20
Atrophy of Field Artillery Core Competency.....	21
The Strategy and Campaign Plan.....	25
Field Artillery Results from CTCs.....	31

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	35
Conclusions.....	35
Recommendations.....	37
GLOSSARY	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	43
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	46

ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Review
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Operations
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
CAS	Close Air Support
CTC	Combat Training Center
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DIVARTY	Division Artillery
DS	Direct Support
FA	Field Artillery
FEC	Fires and Effects Cell
FECC	Fires and Effects Coordination Cell
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FSB	Fire Support Base
FSCOORD	Fire Support Coordinator
FSE	Fire Support Element
FSO	Fire Support Officer
FSS	Fire Support Section
GPS	Global Positioning System
GS	General Support
GSR	General Support Reinforcing
HVT	High Value Target

JP	Joint Publication
JRTC	Joint Readiness Training Center
LIC	Low-Intensity Conflict
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
ROE	Rules of Engagement
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Field Artillery Goals from 2009 Strategy	26
Figure 2. Field Artillery Campaign Plan Design.....	29

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis proposes to determine why the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in today's counterinsurgency operations. There are several key factors that have led up to the marginalization of the Field Artillery (FA), those being the loss of core competency within the branch, a loss in confidence from maneuver commanders, and an unclear campaign plan for the future of the branch. Research indicates that other factors such as modularity, increased uses of unmanned aerial vehicles, and precision munitions used in close air support may be influencing the marginalization of the branch, but those specific factors will not be researched in this thesis.

The Field Artillery Commandant addresses some of the problems facing the branch in his most recent vision statement, but this vision does not provide many solutions.¹ In addition, the Fires Center of Excellence produced its own "Fires Strategy" designed to provide an overarching strategy for fires, but having two strategies one from the Artillery Commandant and one from the Fires Center of Excellence only leads to confusion. This study argues that the Field Artillery (FA) branch could do more to provide solutions to the problems already identified helping to restore the confidence in the branch from maneuver commanders. This thesis employs the word marginalization because it has a negative connotation, and this is why this thesis argues the FA branch must address the problems now. The current situation is not desperate, but problems must be addressed head on to ensure a strong future for the branch. The main areas of focus in this thesis are the continued loss in core competency in the Field Artillery (FA) branch, current and future strategy of the branch, and recent Combat Training Center (CTC)

results for Field Artillery (FA) units, which are all helping to marginalize the branch. The majority of my research was completed through the review of professional journals, articles, after action reviews from Field Artillery (FA) unit actions in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past eight years, and Combat Training Center (CTC) lessons learned.

Background

The mission of the Field Artillery (FA) is to deliver and integrate lethal and non-lethal fires to enable joint and maneuver commanders to dominate their operational environment across the spectrum of conflict. Today's artillerymen are forced to focus on counterinsurgency (COIN) training and execution so much that they are losing their core competency. As a result, Field Artillery (FA) Soldiers are losing the ability to precisely and effectively fire rounds downrange. This problem is affecting every aspect of the process of firing a round downrange to include the target acquisition, digital processing of the mission, to the manual act of shooting. Most Field Artillery units in Afghanistan that are conducting firing missions currently do not use meteorological data because their Soldiers are now conducting nonstandard missions, and are not available. As a result, many Field Artillery units are unable to synchronize fires effectively with maneuver units. Maneuver commanders are beginning to lose or have already lost confidence in the field artillery's ability to provide them with timely and accurate fire support. Maneuver commanders are beginning to look for new and faster ways to bring lethal effects on the enemy, and this is being done by precision guided munitions, and an increased use of UAVs. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, Field Artillery (FA) Soldiers are performing missions outside their Military Operational Specialty (MOS), called non-standard

missions. Historically in Vietnam, Grenada, and Bosnia this also occurred, but in the past, the Soldiers never lost their core competencies or the ability to complete their MOS assigned missions. Much like today the past artillerymen according to Dr. Lawrence A. Yates “often served as light infantry or in other capacities that had nothing to do with firing the weapons on which they had trained and honed their skills.”² Unfortunately, today this is still the case, high operational deployment and training cycles prevent the FA officers and Soldiers from mastering their craft. The biggest factor affecting the FA branch is the increasing number of Soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers who do not have the training or experience required to provide accurate synchronized fires with maneuver.

The current Field Artillery Campaign Plan is still just a draft; the senior leaders of the branch have not finalized the plan. In an article by Scott R. Gourley, titled “Return of the King: The Field Artillery Campaign Plan” he states the Commandant of the Field Artillery Brigadier General Ross E. Ridge supports the current plan which is a multiyear, long-term effort to rebuild and transform the Field Artillery (FA) while simultaneously supporting the Army’s ongoing operations.³ The plan is designed to focus on the rebuilding of the branch experience base, re-establishing training capacity, and restoring senior FA leader oversight of fire support Soldiers in maneuver units. The FA branch is correct in identifying those problems, but may need to further to address them specifically pertaining to the loss in core competency. Below the main points of the plan are outlined for clarity.

A supporting plan titled “The Return of the King” was developed to address many of the problems plaguing our Soldiers and focused on rebuilding the field artillery experience base, reestablishing training capacity, and restoring

senior field artillery leader oversight of the fires support Soldiers in the maneuver units. We have seen a considerable degree of improvement by our Soldiers and proficiency within the artillery formations since this initiative was implemented. We continue to work closely with the BCT and maneuver battalion commanders to further address readiness and manning concerns. We still have much to do to fully bring back the competence, confidence and prestige of the field artillery force within our Army.⁴

In addition, the debate and discussion over the right mix or balance between counterinsurgency warfare training and conventional or high intensity training is very important in today's military, not just the FA branch. This thesis argues that the lack of training over the past eight years is the core reason we are seeing the negative impact on the branch competency. Many argue that a unit should train as they will fight in war and since the FA is not conducting many pure firing or shooting unit missions they should train for what mission they will have during the deployment. That is easier said than done because many artillerymen are used to fill gaps that are un-forecasted shortages. This speaks volumes to the agility and ability of our branch. I agree with the argument concerning training for the current deployment, but not having the right mix is what is causing the FA branch to lose core competency and ultimately the confidence of the maneuver commanders. In the white paper titled "The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery's ability to provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders" the issue of confidence from maneuver commanders is addressed in detail and I could not agree more.⁵ In today's Army, the FA branch is facing a series of problems and issues unlike any in the history of the branch. These problems and issues are very relevant and extremely important to the branch. This study shows that the current FA campaign plan or strategy designed to address these problems is not adequate, and as a result, the branch

will continue to be marginalized. This thesis will explore the gap in the campaign plan and strategy that is leading to the branch being marginalized.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used throughout the research project.

Close Air Support (CAS): Air action by fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces.⁶

Collateral damage: Unintentional or incidental injury or damage to persons or objects that would not be lawful military targets in the circumstances ruling at the time. Such damage is not unlawful so long as it is not excessive in light of the overall military advantage anticipated from the attack.⁷

Combined arms: The synchronized and simultaneous application of the elements of combat power--to achieve an effect greater than, if each element of combat power was used separately or sequentially.

Core Competency: Are the essential and enduring capabilities of a service.⁸

Counterinsurgency (COIN): Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.⁹

Effective Firepower: Provides the destructive element of combat power needed to defeat an insurgency and destroys his will to fight. When used properly firepower can set the conditions needed for successful maneuver operations to take place.

Fire Support: Is long-range firepower provided to a front-line military unit. Typically, fire support is provided by artillery or close air support (usually directed by a

forward observer), and is used to shape the battlefield or, more optimistically, define the battle.

Fires war fighting function: The related tasks and systems that provide collective and coordinated Army indirect fires, joint fires, and command and control warfare, including nonlethal fires, through the targeting process.

Irregular warfare: A violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over a population.

Maneuver: Is the employment of forces, through movement combined with fires or fires potential, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy to accomplish the mission. Maneuver is the means by which commanders concentrate combat power to achieve surprise, shock, momentum, and dominance.

Military Operational Specialty (MOS): The way in which the US Army classifies Soldiers in different specialties.

Operational Environment: A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences, which affect the employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander.

Precision Munitions: Are guided weapons intended to precisely hit a specific target, and to minimize damage to things other than the target.

Overview

According to MG Peter M. Vangjel his plan, “Return of the King” is a long-term effort to rebuild and transform the Field Artillery. This plan is to be updated after the completion of the 2010 fires seminar held at the Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The plan from 2008 is still relevant today and its main points and objectives

should not be ignored. My observation is that mission command or simply identifying the problems without providing solutions that are laid out in detail on how to accomplish them is not the way ahead. In addition, it will not accomplish the objectives set forth in the plan. Specific objectives of the 2008 plan include establishing field artillerymen as the Army's integrators of both lethal and nonlethal fires. Redefining individual and collective core competencies, redefining the institutional education construct to meet changing requirements for 21st century artillerymen. Developing and providing exportable training/education programs and simulations, transforming the Fires Knowledge Network to provide an interactive, responsive and comprehensive "reach back" capability. Fielding the weapons systems, munitions and materiel needed to defeat 21st century adversaries, developing and fielding "coalition friendly" command-and-control and fire control systems. Again, this plan is good, but it needs solutions on how we get there.

The plan also lays out four lines of effort on how we will accomplish the above objectives, the lines of effort are winning the current fight; resetting; transforming for future operations; and sustaining Soldiers, leaders and families. I do agree with the fact that the plan points out "we must support the maneuver commander."

Limitations and Delimitation

This thesis does not attempt to cover the non-lethal uses of the Field Artillery in the counterinsurgency fight. This thesis will only address the active duty Field Artillery, reserve and guard units will not be addressed. This thesis will not study the very similar marginalization of the Armor branch in the current counterinsurgency war. The intent is to focus strictly on the factors or areas that are marginalizing the FA branch.

Significance of Study

This thesis is important in light of current controversies and discussions surrounding the state of the FA branch. The marginalization of the FA branch could have a catastrophic impact on our Army if we enter a conventional war unprepared and untrained. As a branch, the FA will always be ready to support maneuver and even with the problems we are currently facing in regards to core competency we will complete our assigned mission. The war against terrorism will be the focus of our Army for years to come, but that does not preclude us from being prepared for future conventional combat operations. The losses in terms of lives could be large if we must enter a high intensity conflict and we are not 100 percent prepared. A similar example occurred during World War II when we conducted beach-landing operations in the Pacific. On the beaches of Iwo Jima the Allies lost almost seven thousand men, so not being prepared can have serious consequences. It is vital that the FA branch finds a way to improve the core competency of the branch, but more importantly re-gain the confidence of the maneuver commanders.

Primary and Secondary Research Questions

The primary research question that this thesis proposes to answer is why the field artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight, and what strategy are the senior leaders taking to fix it. Before the primary research question can be addressed, the following secondary questions must be answered first. Is the counterinsurgency (COIN) approach to training and war fighting hurting the core competency of the Field Artillery branch, or in other words focusing solely on COIN instead of a traditional firing role? How the senior leaders of the FA branch are planning

to address the current problems and issues, and are the units training for war at the Combat Training Centers meeting the standards?

¹Brigadier General Ross E. Ridge, “Field Artillery Strategy 2009” (1 July 2009).

²Dr. Lawrence A. Yates, Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 4, *Field Artillery in Military Operations Other Than War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 27.

³Scott R. Gourley, “Return of the King: The Field Artillery Campaign Plan,” FindArticles.com (accessed 5 December 2009).

⁴Department of the Army, “Field Artillery Strategy 2009,” July 2009, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp> (accessed 24 May 2010), 1

⁵Sean MacFarland, Michael Shields, and Jeffrey Snow, “The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery’s Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders” (White Paper, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2007), 2.

⁶Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001 as amended through April 2010); Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006).

⁷Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-60, *Joint Targeting* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007).

⁸Department of the Army, FM 1.0, *Human Resources Support* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010).

⁹Department of the Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review is to evaluate existing literature relevant to the thesis and identify any gaps that may exist. This study will break the research down into three distinct areas first, the review of professional journal articles pertaining to Field Artillery core competency. Second, the strategies produced and published addressing the concerns, issues and problems the Field Artillery branch is facing. Third, the current Combat Training Center trends and analysis from observer controllers stationed at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center. The observer controllers will provide the link between the increase in loss of core competency and eight years of deployments with little training time. This research exposes a gap that the current campaign plan and FA strategy does not address. No researcher has provided specific solutions to the problems facing the FA branch; leading the marginalization. All have been able to identify the problems, but few provide solutions on how to address these issues. This thesis argues that by addressing the problems and providing the solutions we can regain the confidence from maneuver commanders but more importantly ensure the branch is never marginalized again. Some might argue that the researcher has an axe to grind or a hidden agenda behind this thesis, but that is not the case. Identifying and studying problems is exactly what makes the FA branch so great, we as professionals need to examine our craft and the problems associated with it. This thesis addresses the current issues facing the branch and tries to provide solid solutions.

Core Competency

The Fires Center of Excellence located at Fort Sill Oklahoma provides numerous articles on how they are identifying the problem of loss in core competency. One article specifically addresses the restoration of core competency is playing a huge role in the new Non Commissioned Officer Educations System (NCOES). According to this article, “the FA cannot depend on the three pillars of training (self-development, institutional training, and operational assignments) to develop our Soldiers and leaders.”¹ Other professional articles address mobile training teams and how they are address the lack of home station training, but time is a resource that event he training teams cannot provide, and that is exactly what the Soldiers need to develop core competency.² There are articles that were uncovered during the research that addressed training in Iraq and Afghanistan, specifically ways to help mitigate atrophy in core competency, but conducting this training downrange should be a last resort.³ During the research, I discovered an incident that is still being investigated by the Army. The incident in question occurred during a battle, which took place in Afghanistan. A captain was unable to synchronize fires ultimately leading the possible death of some Soldiers. This incident will be discussed in chapter four, but research may show that this type of incident may become commonplace if the branch does not address these types of issues.⁴ It is also important to note that the Commander of US Forces in Afghanistan states in a memorandum “the ability to call in both ground and air fire support is a critical task” and should be mastered in both pre-deployment training and theater.⁵ The last element that was researched pertaining to core competency was the white paper by three maneuver commanders who all identified problems within the FA branch specifically the fire support. They conclude that the FA

branch is in a crisis and cannot provide accurate synchronized fire to maneuver commanders.⁶

The Draft FA Campaign Plan and 2009 FA Strategy

The research information provided by the current draft Field Artillery Campaign Plan and the 2009 Field Artillery Strategy will provide a context that will support the researcher's primary and secondary questions.⁷ This information will be accessed by researching the fires center of excellence along with numerous articles provided by the combined arms library on Fort Leavenworth. The past FA branch strategies along with commandant visions for the branch will provide valuable insight from the senior leader's point of view on the problems affecting the branch. Research shows that the strategy, vision, and campaign plan has been widely addressed by artillerymen throughout the Army in both positive and negative comments.

Combat Training Center Results and Analysis

Data from the combined arms training centers will provide an in-depth analysis with regard to the problems facing the FA branch. These combined arms training centers are noticing the problems that are causing the marginalization of the FA branch.⁸ In my research of many historical articles, it is important to point out that the Field Artillery was designed to operate on a conventional, high-intensity battlefield, but in other conflicts such as Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan it has adapted to unconventional warfare and stability operations.⁹ Throughout this research, the use of the book *Field Artillery in Military Operations Other Than War* by Dr. Lawrence A. Yates was vital to provide a historical context in which to frame the thesis key points.¹⁰ The use of after

action reviews and historical documented interviews with Soldiers and officers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan will provide valuable data to this research. Maneuver commanders who served in Iraq and Afghanistan will also provide valuable insight into why they have lost confidence in the FA branch.¹¹

Summary

The above review of literature shows several trends. First, current strategy and draft campaign plan from the FA branch does not fully address the problems we are facing specifically the loss in core competency within the branch. Second, there are alarming results from the Combat Training Centers that should provide enough data for senior leaders to realize we have a problem with lack of core competency.

The gap this thesis will fill pertains to the means in which we as a branch can address the problem of loss in core competency. Many have identified the problem but few have clearly provided a detailed solution that will address this loss in core competency. This thesis will fill that gap and fit into the body of literature that I have discussed in this chapter.

¹CSM Dean J. Keveles, "NCOES-Restoring NCO Core Competency," *Fires Bulletin* (September 2008): 20.

²CSM (Ret.) Jeffrey L. Moyer, FA "MTTs- Resetting FA Core Competencies," *Field Artillery Journal* (July-September 2008): 10.

³CPT David E. FitzPatrick and Kevin E. Morgan, "Developing Artillerymen in Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Field Artillery Journal* (September-October 2009): 34.

⁴Jonathan S. Landay, "Probes Overlook McChrystal's Role in Costly Afghan Battles," *McClatchy Newspapers*, 20 February 2010, www.mcclatchydc.com (accessed 15 January 2010).

⁵GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, “COMISAF/USFOR-A Counterinsurgency (COIN) Training Guidance (Fire Support),” 10 November 2009, 2.

⁶MacFarland, Shields, and Snow, 3.

⁷MG Peter M. Vangjel, *The FA Campaign Plan*, http://sill-www.army.mil/fires_bulletin/2008/Jul_Sep_2008/main.asp (accessed 15 February 2010).

⁸COL Robert Morschauser, CSM Alexander Figueroa, “ILE VTC Joint Readiness Training Center,” 7 May 2009.

⁹1st Brigade Combat Team 101st ABN DIV (AASLT), “TF Bastogne OIF AAR,” 2009.

¹⁰Yates, 27.

¹¹2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, “Initial Impressions Report (IIR)-BDE Fire Support Cell and 1-7 FA,” 27 January 2010.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The speed, accuracy and devastating power of American Artillery won confidence and admiration from the troops it supported and inspired fear and respect in their enemy.

— General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Research Methods and Techniques

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in order to answer the question of why the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight, and what strategy are the senior leaders taking to fix it.

Background

The methodology consists of gathering information about the current state of the Field Artillery, current counterinsurgency operations, branch core competency, along with implications through research of professional journals, and lessons learned from the Combat Training Centers (CTCs). In addition, research in the form of formal studies that were conducted by internal and external organizations will be reviewed. This research will provide a baseline as to the type of counterinsurgency (COIN) training conducted and implemented at the CTCs, and what affect it has on the long-term core competency of Soldiers.

The first step in this research method was a detailed review of all professional material pertaining to and addressing the current core competency of the FA branch. The information uncovered during this research provided an essential part in answering the primary and secondary research questions.

The second step was to take a historical approach to what the strategy of the Field Artillery branch has been in times of irregular war. In addition, it was important to review how the branch trained for conventional warfare, but ultimately executed non-conventional operations. Historical examples included Vietnam, Korea, and Bosnia. Historical doctrine was also used to provide a baseline for how the Field Artillery conducted conventional and non-conventional warfare. This information allowed for a detailed review of the current FA strategy, and draft Field Artillery Campaign Plan. The goal of step two was to review what has been researched in the past and then compare that to today's documents put out by our senior leaders.

The third step was to research the current results and trends that the Combat Training Centers (CTCs) have uncovered during unit rotations, based on commander's assessments. The research indicates that this data is essential in answering my primary research question, and can provide valuable insight to senior leaders. The information can be used to properly address the current issues the FA branch is facing concerning loss in core competency.¹

These steps allowed the researcher to use historical data from doctrine, journals, and CTC results to show why the United States Army and specifically the FA branch are focusing too much on counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, and not addressing the loss in core competency. After eight years of war, we are now beginning to see the effects of being so counterinsurgency (COIN) focused, and many are asking for changes back to a more branch specific task focus. The definition of core competency is the skills that a Field Artillery soldier must possess to conduct the conventional mission of the branch. One issue is that we are still conducting a COIN fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, and this

supports the points of many proponents for COIN training and execution². Major threats like China and Russia will require the Field Artillery to deploy in a conventional role, but if loss in core competency is not addressed the FA branch may not be able to perform this role, and that could lead to many deaths within the Army. Even if the Army has decided to assume risk at the strategic level, death of soldiers is not an acceptable risk.

Answering the Research Questions Step-by-Step

In order to answer the primary research question of why the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight, and what strategy are the senior leaders taking to fix it the critical secondary questions must be answered.

The first secondary research question, are the Field Artillery core competencies being affected by the non-standard missions conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan? The question is to determine what if anything can we do to reset the Field Artillery core competencies, and identify any additional questions that the research must identify in order to get to the heart of the thesis.

The next secondary research question, what is the current mission of Field Artillery units deployed in support of the war on terror, are they being utilized to their full potential? This question requires a look into what is currently going on in Iraq and Afghanistan with respect to Field Artillery units along with what is the utilization and employment of these units. This question also relates to how the Field Artillery was used in past counterinsurgency operations, this history of its utilization and effectiveness. The ability to assess if today's conventional Field Artillery is useful for a COIN fight could have major implications as to the future of the branch.

The third secondary question to answer is how are the senior leaders of the FA branch planning to address the current problems and issues?

The final secondary question that must be addressed, are the FA units training for war at the Combat Training Centers meeting the standards? If the units are not meeting the standard what are the senior leaders doing to address it if anything.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Research Methodology

The study and detailed analysis along with observations from observer controllers at the CTCs of how Field Artillery units performed is considered a strength in the research. Another strength in this research is the large amount of articles and journals pertaining to loss in FA core competency along with the review of the current FA strategy set forth by the Field Artillery Commandant. In addition, anytime doctrine is used in research it is considered strength. A weakness in this research could be the interpretation of the draft Field Artillery Campaign Plan, because it was never finalized or approved and accepted by the branch leadership for production. Another weakness can be the qualitative research conducted in relation to the quantitative amount.

Overall, the research objective is to identify why the training and execution of counterinsurgency (COIN) or non-conventional operations are hurting the core competency and ultimately “killing” the Field Artillery branch. The research method, primary and secondary research questions, reflects a logical, realistic, and reasonable approach to answering the research question. The researcher will minimize bias by utilizing multiple sources and objectively analyzing the collective perspective of those sources. This will no doubt maximize the objectivity and outcome of this thesis.

¹Yates, 27.

²2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, “Initial Impressions Report (IIR)-BDE Fire Support Cell and 1-7 FA,” 27 January 2010.

CHAPTER 4

MARGINALIZATION OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY

No branch of the Army has suffered a greater identity crisis than Field Artillery, as a result of transformation, COIN-centric operations and the non-standard manpower demands of OIF/OEF. The once-mighty “King of Battle” has been described by one of its own officers as a “dead branch walking.” Now the Army is beginning to see real consequences in our ability to integrate fires with maneuver.

— COLs Sean MacFarland, Michael Shields, and
Jeffery Snow, White Paper, 2007

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the reasons why the FA branch is being marginalized in today's counterinsurgency fight, and these reasons are loss in core competency, a weak strategy, and poor CTC results by FA units prior to deployments. Chapter 4 will answer the primary research question of why the Field Artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight and what strategy are the senior leaders taking to fix it. This chapter will answer the secondary research question of are the field artillery core competencies being affected by the non-standard missions conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan? What are the current missions of field artillery units deployed in support of the war on terror? Are these units being utilized in a purely fires role utilizing their full potential? Lastly, are the units training for war at the Combat Training Centers meeting the standards?

Chapter 4 will be organized by three areas all of which will answer the primary and secondary research questions. The first section will be the analysis of losses in core competency, second the strategy to address it, and third the CTC results of FA units.

Atrophy of Field Artillery Core Competency

The “numerous non-standard missions have caused a critical atrophy in core competencies” states CSM Dean Keveles, Commandant of the NCO Academy at the Fires Center of Excellence.¹ Over the past eight years the increased requirements for Soldiers during the Global War on Terror has caused many FA units to deploy and conduct operations outside of their primary MOS. This has caused a serious atrophy in the skills required by an FA soldier during CTC exercises, but it could also show up on the battlefield. According to the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center, they reported that following recent rotations over 90 percent of FA MOS Soldiers and Officers are deploying outside of their traditional skill set.² The CTCs have identified other alarming statistics such as many of the FA units routinely fire unsafely during their rotations.³ In Afghanistan, an incident described in an article by Jonathan S. Landay states that an attack by insurgents uncovered possible “ineffective actions” which led directly to the deaths of five American and eight Afghan Soldiers. Landay states in his article “an unidentified witness told the military investigators that the operations center failed to provide effective artillery and air cover” to the forces.⁴ The article was not clear, if this was a FA leader, but even if not, the implications of an inability to synchronize fires with maneuver is telling. If this investigation turns out to be true, this could be an example of how losses in core competencies can lead to casualties on the battlefield.

The topic of losses in core competency has become such a big issue that even the Commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan issued a memorandum outlining the need for increased MOS specific, and more fire support training. This memorandum lays out what General McChrystal defines as “mastering the basics.” The General wants every Soldier,

Sailor, Airmen, and Marine to “become an expert in your field,” but that is hard to do when you are operating outside your MOS. Most FA units find themselves in this problem.⁵

The Fires Center of Excellence along with the Command General Staff College has identified problems with the core competency of officers and in response; they have implemented a program they entitled “re-Redding.” This program is designed to address the artillery atrophy, which has occurred in many officers over the past eight years. In a paper by COL (Ret) James L. Davis, he outlines what the College is doing to combat the atrophy by listing the program by day and topic. This article also provides a detailed list of elective classes that FA officers can take to become more proficient in their area of expertise. This program changes every year based on the needs of the officers attending the Command General Staff College.⁶ Based on my experience this program is a good way to combat the atrophy in officers, and this research concludes that the real problem occurs in the enlisted ranks.

The loss of core competency within the enlisted ranks results from the same disturbing trend of numerous nonstandard missions and lack of quality training time. In an article for FA Journal CSM Dean Keveles discusses his observations, the CTC trends, the Army leadership response, and recommendations to fix the problem. Keveles states, “The Army is beginning to see a generation of NCOs who have lost core skills and cannot teach those skills to their subordinates.” The NCO Corps is the backbone of the Army and for a CSM to publish the findings it is very telling of the crisis the FA branch is finding itself. NCOs are the primary trainers in the Army and in each specific MOS, they are charged with the training of all junior Soldiers and even officers at lower levels.

All this training helps to develop the skills required to support the collective training efforts of our units. Keveles also claims that the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle, operational tempo, and the current operational environment have created a problem of reduced training time available. Keveles describes a problem that affects the Army concept for training that consists of three pillars, those being self-development, institutional training, and operational assignments. The reduced training time negatively affects two of the three pillars of training, those being self-development and operational. Because of the reduced time to train the pressure falls on the institutional pillar to accomplish all the training needs for NCOs and that is simply not realistic. It is clear that time for training plays a huge role in the development of core competencies for NCOs and Solders, and certain schoolhouses or training institutions have taken measures to address the problem, but they cannot do it alone. All three pillars must be engaged in order to fix the problems. As a note despite all the challenges our Soldiers and NCOs face both at home station and while deployed they are performing magnificently and if given time they will fix this problem of loss in core competency.⁷

Prior to a unit's deployment many organizations simply do not have enough time to address training for major combat operations and training for COIN. The senior leaders must determine what to train on, and for the majority of units COIN is what they will be doing in theater so that is what get the time for training. Some units must rely on NCOs and Officers to continue the training once deployed, but as I have discussed earlier this can also be a problem if the experience base is not available in the unit. Despite the requirements, and lack of training time, the FA branch is blessed with very dynamic

leaders who can adapt very well to any situation. This ability to adapt and overcome obstacles makes the FA branch able to rise to any unique challenge.

In the white paper by three former Brigade Commanders, this crisis facing the FA branch was detailed with surgical precision. Their observations at the time were a wakeup call to the leaders of the branch and makers of policy and strategy. It was time to do something to address these concerns, but a strategy would not be sufficient, there must be a detailed plan that could address the problems. The three maneuver commanders who consider themselves “customers” to the FA branch cite modularity, lack of training, and the now responsibility of maneuver commanders to train the fire supporters as major problems. These commanders do provide some plausible solutions to address the issues they bring up in the white paper. One recommendation in particular that sticks out in my mind is their requirement to “resource artillery training, both with ammunition and time.”

These commanders state “no matter what their expected mission while deployed, artillery units need to maintain their proficiency in core tasks. This enhances their flexibility on the battlefield and enables a more rapid return to full spectrum capability upon redeployment. It also helps to ensure the long term health of the force.”⁸

Ultimately, the problem with loss in core competency is killing the FA branch and it is vital that senior leaders address this issue with a strategy to fill the gap in training that has been created over the past eight years of COIN operations. One Army leader General Martin Dempsey, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Commander is addressing the learning and development of our Soldiers through a plan called the Army Learning Concept for 2015. General Dempsey states, “The concept will guide all Soldiers and leaders through a continuum of learning for the duration of their careers.” This thesis

and research indicates that this type of program could help the FA branch and its Soldiers.

The Strategy and Campaign Plan

The 2009 FA strategy is a fifteen page document that introduces the reader to the FA mission, vision, goals, and desired outcomes for the branch. This strategy discusses the operational environment, current force, and 21st century requirements. Under the section FA priorities the Commandant breaks out the way the branch will recruit, and retain Soldiers, leaders, and civilians. The Commandant also lists growing leaders, supporting the current fight, transforming the force, establishment of the US Army Artillery School, and develop a culture of outreach, communication, collaboration, and coordination. His plan consists of five lines of effort in which if followed will achieve the desired outcome. The desired outcome described in the strategy by the Commandant is that we will create “an agile, adaptive and decisive Field Artillery force that provides the right fires and effects in the right amount at the right time in support of the maneuver, combined and/or joint force commanders.” The research indicates that this strategy ties directly to my primary and secondary research questions and will help to answer those in this chapter.

This thesis argues that the strategy is very well written and thought out, but during my research I found a few areas in which we can improve. The Commandant also acknowledges that we still have a lot to do, and in the strategy he states “we still have much to do to fully bring back the competence, confidence and prestige of the Field Artillery force within our Army.” The purpose of the FA strategy is to provide guidance to the FA force by establishing attainable goals and priorities and define how we as a

branch can accomplish them. Overall this thesis indicates that you can accomplish the goals and priorities set forth in the strategy, but the main issue that sticks out is the loss of core competency and the lack of plans to address it. The strategy plan is to send mobile training teams from Fort Sill to address it, but that may not always be so easy. This thesis argues that the FA branch should figure out a way to address this issue and do it quick.

Field Artillery Goals

The following long-term goals will assist us in achieving our desired outcome by providing us with a common direction, situational understanding, and aimpoints to keep us on course as we strive to be experts in our craft and sustain the capabilities and contributions that our branch provides to the larger Army, our sister-Services and our Nation. More importantly, these goals provide focus for all artillerymen as they support their respective commanders and the Soldiers that they serve.

- Manning and leader requirements for the Field Artillery fully support the immediate needs of the force, the long-term health of the branch, and the “all volunteer” Army.
- The maneuver commander’s principal integrator for lethal and non-lethal joint and combined fires...his trusted agent for all aspects regarding the fires warfighting function.
- The Field Artillery is the dominant shaping force for the commander on the battlefield.
- Weapon system platforms and enablers designed, fielded and employed to support Field Artillery Soldiers as they fight to defeat all threats...current and future.
- The United States Army Field Artillery School is the premier military institution in the world in the development of artillery leaders who are agile, adaptive and decisive.

Figure 1. Field Artillery Goals from 2009 Strategy

Source: Department of the Army, “Field Artillery Strategy 2009,” July 2009, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp> (accessed 24 May 2010), 2.

As we operate in an era of persistent conflict the Commandant states: “To prevail in this struggle, our artilleryman must be able to anticipate requirements, be able to expertly integrate joint lethal and nonlethal fires, and be able to dominate the environment in order to provide the desired fires and effects that the maneuver commander needs to accomplish his mission.”

It is clear after reading the strategy that the Commandant as the branch proponet is taking responsibility for leader development and education. The school house at Fort Sill does an excellent job of getting our Soldiers and junior officers ready for the force. The problem with loss in core competency occurs when an artillerymen leaves the school house and then reports to his unit. If the unit is preparing to deploy this soldier must do whatever mission the unit is tasked to do, and most of the time recent history tells us that does not include conducting FA specific training. After a twelve month deployment these Soldiers have lost their core competency and are unable to safely do their jobs. In chapter five I will explore some things that I believe were not addressed in the strategy that we could do to help mitigate the competency loss.

The FA Strategy does address ARFORGEN in detail to include how the branch will support the process. The branch according to the strategy will provide master gunners and subject matter experts as part of individual and collective mobile training teams. The research indicates that the ARFORGEN cycle may be inadvertently hurting the branch because when an FA soldier returns from deployment most of the time that same Soldier is leaving for a new unit. This thesis indicates it is hard to believe that working within the ARFORGEN process will solve the core competency problem. The mobile training teams may come to the unit, but the majority of Soldiers who need the training will be gone. I do understand that new Soldiers will be coming in the unit and the teams can train the Soldiers up as they arrive, but it just does not seem like a great plan. We can do better and this thesis argues that point. This researcher does like that fact that the plan lays out how the branch will pull all resources together from the Centers of Excellence, branch schools, outside agencies, the Center for Army Lessons Learned

(CALL), the Combat Training Centers (CTCs), and Joint Forces Command. Pulling all these agencies together will facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned to the institutional Army, operating force and joint fires community.

When addressing the requirements for the FA force in the 21st Century the Commandant does a great job projecting what we can expect.

In the years ahead, we can expect to encounter complex, dynamic and unanticipated challenges to our national security and the collective security of our friends and allies. These challenges will be waged across the spectrum of conflict- ranging from peacetime engagements to general war and at all points in between- and in all domains- land, sea, air, space, and cyber. The lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan have taught us about the inextricable and simultaneous nature of full spectrum operations and the importance of being able to rapidly transition from offensive to defensive and stability operations within the same environment. (FA Commandant, BG Ross E. Ridge)

He also states in the plan that “it is a requirement to retain proficiency in core artillery and fires competencies in spite of the ongoing nonstandard missions that currently support the irregular warfare fight.” The problem is that besides the idea of a mobile training team there is no other plan or solution mentioned to address this issue.

The last part of the 2009 FA Strategy addresses the FA Campaign Plan which as of the writing of this thesis is still in draft form. The Campaign Plans primary purpose is to provide direction, operational focus, campaign and subordinate objectives, and tasks necessary to orchestrate the efforts of subordinate directorates, organizations and the Field Artillery force toward a unified outcome. The Campaign plan in draft form is roughly 212 pages long, and to this date I have not met one Artillerymen who has honestly read the whole thing. One of the best synopsis of the plan was done by Scott Gourly in an article back in 2008.⁹ In the figure below you can see the Campaign Plan

Design as described in the 2009 FA Strategy. This design lays out the priorities and lines of effort all to achieve the desired outcome.



Figure 2. Field Artillery Campaign Plan Design
 Source: Peter M. Vangel, "The FA Campaign Plan," *Fires* (July-September 2008): 1.

The lines of efforts are to grow FA leaders, prepare soldier and leaders to succeed in the current and future fights, sustain FA Soldiers, Army civilians and families, engage, and transform for future operations. In order to help answer my primary and secondary research questions I will only focus on a few of the lines of efforts, as some do not relate to my research. The first line of effort is to grow FA leaders and the Commandant describes what he believes are the must haves in order to be successful in this line of

effort. He states, “FA leaders, regardless of rank, MOS, or echelon of command, must have master-level proficiencies in core and functional competencies.” To his credit the Commandant in a later paragraph describes how the “institutional approach to training must be re-looked and we must leverage educational technology and extended partnerships with other branch and sister-service schools and centers, universities and academia to obtain the desired outcomes.”

In the second line of effort, prepare Soldiers and leaders to succeed in the current and future fights it focuses on four key areas. The first area consists of training on the technical skills and core tasks as part of the initial military training- Advanced Individual Training, Warrant Officer Basic Course, and the Basic Officers Leader Course. The second area consists of assisting units at home-station and deployed as required to re-set, re-equip and re-train to support ARFORGEN and commanders’ branch core competency concerns. This is a new concept, but so far, this study was unable to find any examples besides the mobile training teams assisting in specialized training where this was implemented. The third area consists of exporting lethal and nonlethal functional training. The fourth area consists of updating and disseminating current training principles of instruction, doctrine, and lessons learned to units throughout the force.

Ultimately, the FA branch is trying to address the issues surrounding eight years of war and the impact it is having on the Soldiers within the FA. The senior leaders are trying to implement plans to fix what they believe are the major issues surrounding the loss in core competency. This study argues that more could be done and should be done to address this very serious issue. Units in both Iraq and Afghanistan continue to use artillerymen to fill the gaps because they are versatile, expeditionary, agile, lethal,

sustainable, and very dynamic. This study argues that focusing the force totally on the COIN warfare is the right thing to do, but we cannot ignore it either. The branch must find a way to develop the core competency of its Soldiers in this current state of operations of we may be forced to deal with the continued loss in confidence from maneuver commanders who we should consider as our “customers” on the battlefield.

Field Artillery Results from CTCs

During the quest to find answers to my primary and secondary research questions, it was very clear that FA units training at the CTCs were not performing to the level of proficiency required to be successful. This information further supports the idea that loss of core competency is not being fixed by units or the mobile training teams that Fort Sill is sending out. The information obtained from the CTCs was acquired through numerous video teleconferences with both the Joint Readiness Training Center and the National Training Center. Other observations were pulled from professional articles and journals written by professional Soldiers within the FA branch.

In the white paper titled “The King and I: The Impending Crisis in the Field Artillery’s Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders,” the three authors cite some glaring CTC observations. These findings support the claim that loss of core competency is real and affecting the branch. They note that a fires annex was only produced in 20 percent of rotational unit’s operations orders. Ninety percent of fire supporters are serving outside their MOS, and 90 percent of available fire supporters are uncertified. Counter-fire was seldom executed, an inability to fire plan prevents effective close air support application. Most of the cannon platoons would have fired “out of safe” if not prevented by the observer controllers. Crew drills are very slow, and any type of

friction halts operations within the platoon. FA leaders no longer understand the need to calibrate or use metrological data to ensure the firing requirements are met prior to shooting. In addition, the entire sensor to shooter chain is broken, and fires battalions appear unable to fix forward observer problems. It is important to note that this is an observation from three maneuver commanders using data collected from the CTCs. This observation is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and should not be ignored.

In a video teleconference with the Senior Fire Support Observer Controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center, LTC Daniel A. Pinnell and LTC Robert Morschauser some of the same observations that were pointed out in the white paper were also presented. One point that I found of particular interest concerns what else can you do to prepare your unit for the CTCs and ultimately combat. It is simple but very effective “tell yourself the truth about where you unit stands. If you do not give the FA and maneuver leaders the data they need to help set things right- you are contributing to the problem, and are responsible for the outcome.” I feel that sometimes the FA branch is not being honest about where the units and Soldiers level of core competency really is and they are accepting risk that should be avoided.

In order to answer my secondary questions I researched FA unit after action reviews from Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of that information is classified, but it was clear that many of the FA units are conducting nonstandard missions. One fires battalion performed a diverse mission during the deployment that included Full Spectrum Operations as motorized infantry elements, base security duties, and traditional artillery tasks including indirect fire as well as meteorological and radar coverage. This particular unit noted in the AAR that they experienced challenges with using the Advanced Tactical

Data System (AFATDS). The problem was a lack of user training, experience, and depth within this career field to cover leave and other emergencies, which would take Soldiers out of the fight. This unit also noted that the Artillery skills degradation varied between the batteries based on the mission performed. It is clear the unit that conducted a traditional firing mission maintained their core competency, but the other did not. Out of the whole Battalion “approximately 50 Soldiers were able to maintain artillery core competencies,” this particular unit saw this as a victory, but this study indicates that this is a major issue. The last area this particular unit describes as an issue concerned pre-deployment training focus. Because of the impending mission, this Battalion decided to split the available time for training between the artillery mission and the maneuver mission. This allowed the unit Brigade Commander flexibility and allowed the battalion to perform a wide variety of missions. The unit does address the loss of core competency as a serious problem within the fires battalion. This is an excerpt from the actual after action report.

Across the board all Field Artillery MOS’s have suffered skills atrophy. The standards of what more senior officers and NCOs grew up with are no longer there. Case in point, the artillery battery that assumed the field artillery mission had not fired a round of artillery in over nine months. They conducted a two week train-up and did an outstanding job, but it shows a continuing problem across the Army. Fire Direction Soldiers (13D) have perishable digital skills. There are some 13D SGT/SSG’s that have never fired a round as an NCO and in some cases have not fired an artillery round since advanced individual training (AIT) in a fire direction center.¹⁰

Looking at the CTC results and the AARs from units in both Iraq and Afghanistan it was very telling of the problems nonstandard missions are having on the FA branch. It is also telling of the type of Soldier we are producing from the school house. The Soldiers are very prepared and capable when they leave the schoolhouse, but as described above,

if the unit is not performing that FA specific mission the skills atrophy. The Soldier will always do his best to get the mission done, but we as leaders are not setting the table for them to be successful in the future. Having an NCO who has never fired a round is not the type of leader junior Soldiers want to follow. That NCO will not know how to do his job and ultimately he will not be able to effectively lead Soldiers.

¹Keveles, 20.

²MacFarland, Shields, and Snow, 3.

³CPT Jayson Morgan, NTC Observer/Controller, Electronic correspondence with author, 12 December 2008.

⁴Landay.

⁵Commander, International Security Assistance Force/United States Forces-Afghanistan, "COMISAF/USFOR-A Counterinsurgency (COIN) Training Guidance," 10 November 2009, 1.

⁶COL (Ret.) James L. Davis, "Intermediate Level Education: Helping to Combat Field Artillery Atrophy," *Red Book* (November-December 2009), 41.

⁷Keveles, 21.

⁸MacFarland, Shields, and Snow, 4.

⁹Gourley.

¹⁰Unit AAR, 27 January 2010.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This thesis set out to describe why the field artillery (FA) branch is being marginalized in today's counterinsurgency operations, and define what the senior leaders of the branch doing to fix it. This chapter is organized by the researcher's findings, conclusions, and recommendations along with areas that may require further studies.

The results from the research show that a loss in core competency, decreased training time, lack of pre-deployment focus on core artillery skills, and an inability to perform at a high standard during rotations to the CTCs have all led to the branch being marginalized. This marginalization is happening because maneuver commanders have lost confidence in the FA branch and its ability to provide timely and accurate lethal fires. Many artillerymen have lost the ability to effectively synchronize fires with maneuver and it is evident at the CTCs and in certain cases on the field of battle.¹ The research has shown that the 2009 FA Strategy, is a good document, but improvements can and should be made to the strategy. These can be in the form of concrete solutions addressing the current problems facing the branch.² This study shows that we as leaders in the branch cannot simply accept risk in the area of training and simply focus on other areas; it is our responsibility to fix it and do it now. The need for capable FA Soldiers will only increase in the future, and with the loss in core competency affecting the force, we may not have the organizational experience in the future necessary to train effectively.

This thesis demonstrated that the loss in core competency is clearly the biggest challenge the FA branch is facing in today's operational environment. It is clear through

the research that mobile training teams are not the only way we should be addressing this problem. This thesis also determined that the training being conducted at Fort Sill for new Soldiers and junior officers is great, and they are producing very capable and dynamic young Soldiers. The problem occurs once these individuals leave and report to their next unit. The pre-deployment training is very COIN focused and as a result, the FA skills are being pushed aside. Once deployed these Soldiers are conducting mostly nonstandard missions and they are very capable of mastering these tasks, but they still need to maintain core competency. The maneuver commanders know how dynamic FA Soldiers are, and as a result, they can count on them to get any job done. Unfortunately, this is leading to the high level of skill atrophy, and our branch is suffering. Almost every document that was researched cited loss in core competency as a major problem, but few to include the 2009 FA Strategy and the FA Campaign Plan provide detailed solutions. Therefore, what does this mean for the FA branch and ultimately the Army, and what are the implications if we do not address them.

If the FA branch does not seriously address the loss in core competency and the resulting marginalization by maneuver commanders, the end of the branch as a whole could result. In the Army today we are starting to see resources shrink, and projects are cut. It may only be a matter of time before the FA branch is changed by our government, and looks very different than it does today. The result from a lack of planning could be a merger of FA, Air Defense Artillery and even Armor, which is facing the same marginalization. The history and tradition of the FA branch is long and distinguished, and I would hate to dishonor all the Soldiers and officers that have come before me by not

addressing the issues that are killing the branch. It is time to fix the problems that we are facing and begin to clearly define our role in both COIN and the Army.

Recommendations

This thesis has concluded that not only the institutional but also the operational Army must address the loss in core competency. The first solution this thesis proposes is the development of a separate track for Soldiers and officers, much like we currently have light and heavy artillery. This separation would cut the branch in half and create a COIN operating force and a traditional firing force. This recommendation would allow the traditional artillery force to focus solely on fire, fires support, digital artillery, and all other areas concerning the fires war fighting function. An immediate improvement would relate to the synchronization for fires with maneuver and would allow for a complete integration with maneuver. This thesis argues that this would bring the confidence back from maneuver commanders, and help make the FA branch marginalization disappear.

These traditional firing units would become very effective in their assigned tasks and drills. They would be allowed to focus solely on FA skills prior to deployment, and having the most important resource of time to train would pay huge dividends for that unit. Creating this divide in the branch would eliminate the requirement for the traditional forces to conduct nonstandard missions, thus eliminating the loss in core competency within the FA branch. The other COIN artillery force would assume any nonstandard missions while deployed allowing the traditional unit time to train and maintain proficiency. The Human Resources Command could effectively manage the assignments to traditional and COIN units based on the same criteria they use for rotation between heavy and light artillery. The only major difference would be once a soldier is assigned to

a traditional unit, be it light or heavy that assignment would be the career field they would maintain during their time in the Army. Further research must be done to conclude if this would work, but this study indicates that it is feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable, and complete.

The second recommendation would be to pull the responsibility for training fire support Soldiers from the maneuver commanders and give it back to the senior field artillery officer in the unit. Many maneuver commanders simply do not understand the requirements these Soldiers have and frequency they must be competed. Each brigade in the Army has a direct support (DS) artillery unit assigned to it and before modularity, the fire support Soldiers were assigned to that DS FA unit. My recommendation is not to simply pull the fire support Soldiers from the maneuver units and assign them under the DS Artillery unit. This thesis argues that these Soldiers and officers could be assigned to the firing batteries within the DS Artillery unit. These firing batteries already have a habitual relationship with a maneuver battalion within the brigade. The firing battery commander understands the training requirements for the fire support Soldiers and is more capable to ensure that skill atrophy does not set in within the unit. Further research must be done to conclude if this would work, but this study indicates that it is feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable, and complete.

The third recommendation would affect the institutional Army, specifically the organizations that are charged with training and developing our leaders and Soldiers. I recommend that the time allowed for basic training, advanced individual training, officer basic course, captain's career course, and the intermediate level education be extended to allow sufficient time to focus on core competency. By extending these schools, an

individual will be able to focus on the skills that they have lost. This is not a perfect situation because the units need these Soldiers to fill their ranks, but research indicates that the investment would create a better more capable soldier. This recommendation would directly affect the junior NCOs and young officers in a positive way by providing more artillery specific and detailed training. This thesis argues that the only issue would be creating the time required for these Soldiers to train. Time is a resource we cannot create and find the extra school time will be difficult, but we must find a way to accomplish this task.

Throughout this research project, additional areas of possible research arose. The thesis author has provided this information above along with areas future researchers may want to explore. Future research will be necessary in order to ensure the FA branch continues to get better. Future research will be needed to continue a process of reform and transformation within the FA branch, and to specifically address the loss of core competency.

This research is by no means meant to degrade or diminish the efforts of our senior leaders in the branch. Currently many hard working individuals within the branch are trying everyday to make the branch better. My hope is that this research will fill a gap and it has identified problems that persist even with the implementation of a strategy and campaign plan. The artillery branch is still very much needed and is relevant in the counterinsurgency fight. Historical lessons have provided us a path to follow to ensure we stay relevant, but it is up to us to ensure we do what is necessary to follow the path. In the future, the artillery will continue to play a vital role in the way we fight, and if we can

increase the core competency of our branch, we will ensure that a marginalization will never occur again.³

¹MacFarland, Shields, and Snow, 4.

²Department of the Army, “Field Artillery Strategy 2009.”

GLOSSARY

Assessment: (Army) the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the current situation, particularly the enemy, and progress of an operation. (FM 3-0)

Assumption: (Joint) A supposition on the current situation or a presupposition on the future course of events, either or both assumed to be true in the absence of positive proof, necessary to enable the commander in the process of planning to complete an estimate of the situation and make a decision on the course of action. (JP 1-02)

Campaign Plan: (Joint) A joint operation plan for a series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic or operational objectives within a given time and space. (JP 5-0)

Combat power: is the total means of either or both destructive and disruptive force that a military unit-formation can apply against the opponent at a given time. Combat power is comprised of five basic elements: firepower, maneuver, leadership, protection, and information.

Combined arms: The synchronized and simultaneous application of the elements of combat power- to achieve an effect greater than if each element of combat power was used separately or sequentially.

Counterinsurgency (DOD) Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. Also called COIN.

Desirable effects: are those that directly support the commander's objectives and operational scheme, and that comply with his guidance and intent for fires. They achieve a specified purpose in time and space.

Effective firepower: provides the destructive element of combat power needed to defeat an insurgency and destroys his will to fight. When use properly firepower can set the conditions needed for successful maneuver operations to take place.

Essential task: (Army) A specified or implied task that must be executed to accomplish the mission.

Firepower: Is the amount of fires that a position, unit, or weapons system can deliver.

Fire support: Joint Publication 3-09 defines fire support as fires that directly support land, maritime, amphibious, and special operations forces to engage enemy forces, combat formations, and facilities in pursuit of tactical and operational objectives. It is the collective and coordinated employment of lethal and nonlethal fires against targets at both the tactical and operational levels of war.

Fires War fighting function: The related tasks and systems that provide collective and coordinated Army indirect fires, joint fires, and command and control warfare, including nonlethal fires, through the targeting process.

Insurgency (DOD, NATO) An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. (JP 1-0)

Irregular warfare: (Joint) A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over a population.

Leadership: The process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization. (FM 6-22)

Lethal fires: as defined by FM 6-20 include armed aircraft and land-based and sea-based indirect fire systems (such as field artillery, mortars, and naval surface fires).

Line of effort: A line that links multiple tasks and missions using the logic of purpose- cause and effect- to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions.

Maneuver: is the employment of forces, through movement combined with fires or fires potential, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy to accomplish the mission. Maneuver is the means by which commanders concentrate combat power to achieve surprise, shock, momentum, and dominance.

Mission statement: (Joint) A short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential task and purpose. A clear statement of the action to be taken and the reason for doing so. The mission statement contains the elements of who, what, when, where, and why, but seldom specifies how. (JP 5-0)

Nonlethal fires: include electronic warfare capabilities, psychological operations, information operations, civil affairs, and the use of munitions such as illumination and smoke, and nonlethal, area-type delivery systems that employ water, sticky agents, and similar materials.

Task: A clearly defined and measurable activity accomplished by individuals and organizations. (FM 7-0)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Boyd L. Dastrup, *The Field Artillery History and Sourcebook*. Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1994.
- Macgregor, Douglas A. *Breaking the Phalanx—A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 1997.
- Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Periodicals

- Davis, COL (Ret.) James L. “Intermediate Level Education: Helping to Combat Field Artillery Atrophy.” *Red Book* (November-December 2009), 41.
- Gentile, Gian P. “Let's Build an Army to Win all Wars.” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 52 (1st Quarter 2009): 31.
- Hallmark, Bryan W., Henry A. Leonard, and Laura W. Castaneda. *Examining Trends in Skills for High- and Mid- Intensity Combat*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, March 2008.
- Inman, James P., and Michael J. Gould. “Increasing the Flow, Plugging the Holes-Addressing FA Manning Challenges.” *Fires* (July-September 2008): 30-33.
- Kliwer, Christopher R. “Fires Battalion in the IBCT -FFA HQ or Maneuver Task Force.” *Fires* (September-December 2007): 45-47.
- Nagl, John A., and Paul L. Yingling. “The FA in the Long War.” *Fires* (July-August 2006): 33.
- Odierno, Raymond. “2007 Surge of Ground Forces in Iraq- Risks, Challenges and Successes,” Interview by Patrecia Slayden Hollis. *Fires* (March-April 2008), 4-11.
- Rumsfeld, Donald H. “Transforming the Military.” *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May-June 2002).
- Vangel, Peter M. “The FA Campaign Plan.” *Fires* (July-September 2008): 1-3.
- Vuono, Timothy A., Jeffery C. Collins, and Evans A. Hanson. “3-82 FA Transformation into a Hybrid Motorized Rifle and Paladin Battalion: Training for Baghdad.” *Field Artillery Journal* (January- February 2004): 7-12.
- Whiteside, Daniel L. “It’s a Dumb Idea-Don’t Slash the U.S. Army’s Field Artillery.” *Armed Forces Journal* (December 2003): 46.

Government Documents

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001 as amended through April 2010.

———. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

———. Joint Publication (JP) *Joint Operations Planning*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

Department of the Army. FM 1.0, *Human Resources Support*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010.

———. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

———. Field Manual (FM) 3-07 *Stability Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 2008.

———. Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

———. Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Army Leadership*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

———. Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Training for Full Spectrum Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008.

Other Sources

3ID DIVARTY Fire Support After Action Comments, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Fort Stewart, GA, June 2003.

Bledsoe, Michael. *Joint Fires Collection and Analysis Team, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 30 December 2008. <https://call2.army.mil/toc.asp?document=4932> (accessed 7 January 2010)

Commander, International Security Assistance Force/United States Forces-Afghanistan. “COMISAF/USFOR-A Counterinsurgency (COIN) Training Guidance.” 10 November 2009.

The Congress of the United States. *Options for Restructuring the Army*. Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, May 2005. <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/63xx/doc6348/05-10-RestructureArmy.pdf> (accessed 24 January 2010).

- Department of the Army. "Field Artillery Strategy 2009." July 2009.
<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp> (accessed 24 May 2010).
- . "The United States Army FY 2008 Posture Statement, Addendum G, Modularity."
http://www.army.mil/aps/08/addenda/addenda_g.html (accessed 20 January 2010).
- Gourley, Scott R. "Return of the King: The Field Artillery Campaign Plan." FindArticles.com
(accessed 5 December 2009).
- Krepenevich, Andrew L. *An Army at the Crossroads*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008.
- MacFarland, Sean, Michael Shields, and Jeffrey Snow. "White Paper: The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery's ability to provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders." Memo to the Chief of Staff of the Army, 2007.
- Pritchard, Jack K. "Overthrow of the King: The Diminishing Role of the Field Artillery."
USAWC Strategic Leadership Writing Requirement AY09.
- Propes, "Fires Concepts Development Division for the Frontier Artillery Seminar." Briefing Slides with Scripted Commentary, Fort Sill, OK, 29 October 2008.
- Wright, Donald P., Dr., Timothy R. Reese, and the Contemporary Operations Study Team. *On Point II- Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003-January 2005*. Fort Leavenworth, KS, Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008.
- Yates, Lawrence A., Dr., Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 4, *Field Artillery in Military Operations Other Than War*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

Combined Arms Research Library
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
250 Gibbon Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2314

Defense Technical Information Center/OCA
825 John J. Kingman Rd., Suite 944
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6218

LTC Celestino Perez, Jr., Ph.D
DJMO
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Clay Easterling
DJMO
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Sheldon Horsfall
CTAC
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301