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## REVIVING JAAT CAPABILITIES WITH EXISTING JOINT DOCTRINE

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An A-10C Thunderbolt II, assigned to 75th Fighter Squadron, performs a low-angle strafe during the 2016 Hawgsmoke competition at Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona, June 2, 2016. (Photo by Senior Airman Chris Drzazgowski, USAF)

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### BACKGROUND

As the Services return to major combat operations and away from counterinsurgency, the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) looked at reviving the Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (MTTP) for *Joint Air Attack Team* (JAAT) publication. Concerned that a critical capability gap may have developed over the course of the last 15 years of low-intensity conflict, the USAACE asked the Air Land Sea Application Center (ALSA) to research the problem. ALSA embarked on a study to revive the JAAT mission and the MTTP.

A joint working group (JWG) comprised of United States Army, United States Air Force (USAF), and United States Marine Corps (USMC) representatives assembled at Nellis Air Force Base to review the issue in January, 2016. One salient point summarizes the JWG's findings: current joint interdiction and close air support (CAS) frameworks provide the doctrinal structure with which to achieve JAAT mission objectives and capabilities.

The JAAT mission was intended as a method to integrate artillery and rotary- and fixed-wing aviation into close and deep fights. Air mission commanders were pilots specifically qualified to act as strike authorities in support of a ground force commander's JAAT area of operations. The Army maintained JAAT within its Service manuals, but the JAAT mission's lack

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of use in recent conflicts led the USAF to drop its JAAT qualifications and allot training resources to other areas. In the meantime, the ALSA-published MTTP dissolved into various other joint publications.

Although the USMC never participated in JAAT operations, the nature in which it conducts combined arms warfare with integrated surface and aerial fires displays the intended benefits JAAT was to achieve. Therefore, JAAT was an unnecessary framework for the USMC because their assets operate under common Service missions and doctrine. USMC aviation conducts CAS procedures for missions in proximity to friendly forces and adheres to the strike coordination and reconnaissance (SCAR) and Kill Box MTTP for interdiction operations.

Despite these seeming disparities at the Service-level, the majority of tactical integration guidance resides in cur-

rent CAS doctrine and ALSA's joint application of firepower MTTP. Sections in these publications on coordinated attack tactics, currently, comprise the bulk of the information previously presented in the JAAT MTTP. Typically underused by the Army, coordinated attack tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) are widely used by USMC and USAF aircraft to perform joint attacks across a variety of mission sets, not just CAS. The utility of coordinated attack tactics is the ability to apply them in an unplanned, or ad hoc, environment. For this reason, SCAR, a form of dynamic joint interdiction, relies heavily on coordinated attack procedures.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The dissolution of the JAAT MTTP leaves the joint force with several issues to manage. First, the joint force must re-educate itself on the existing JAAT-like capabilities in the

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Casings fall from a 30mm chain gun suspended beneath an AH-64D Apache helicopter assigned to 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, during the battalion's aerial gunnery exercise at Fort AP Hill, Virginia on October 24, 2016. (Photo by Sgt. Steven Galimore, USA)

current close (i.e. CAS) and deep (i.e. joint interdiction) mission doctrines. Second, the aforementioned existing frameworks still leave command, control, and coordination gaps for CAS integration in the absence of a joint terminal attack controller and may raise questions of the air mission commander's strike authority and responsibilities in the interdiction environment. The last, and most important point, is that JAAT procedures for coordination and integration were not effectively absorbed into joint interdiction doctrine. Although CAS did absorb coordinated attack MTTP, it still lacks the nuances for rotary-wing integration and surface-to-surface fires synchronization.

### MISSION REQUIREMENTS

A quick overview of mission requirements is in order before delving into the current coordinated attack doctrine and the updates needed to achieve JAAT-like effects. First, a JAAT-like capability must integrate surface-to-surface fires and rotary- and fixed-wing aviation at the tactical level. The solution must fully integrate into the theater command and control structure to alert the proper air tasking order (ATO) assets to coordinate with artillery or rotary-wing assets that, potentially, are not on the ATO. Therefore, this capability must execute within the ATO planning cycle and achieve product synchronization using a common language and terminology.

Also, the joint doctrine for a JAAT-like solution must clearly delineate authorities in planning and execution. The joint community must establish common expectations and authority for the airborne mission commander or the SCAR (a role within air interdiction similar to the role of a forward air controller (FAC) or FAC (Airborne) in CAS). This capability needs to account for target detection, assuring target destruction using common communication systems, verbiage, and plans executed through common mission types. Furthermore, it is vital that fires are integrated with consideration to appro-

priate airspace control measures and fire support coordination measures for all forms of combined attacks; including suppression of enemy air defenses, counterair, and counterfire integration.

In addition to identifying essential mission requirements, the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command training guidance should serve as a reference to ensure the replacement nests with the Army higher headquarters' direction. The solution to mass joint fires outside of proximity to friendly forces must adhere to the USAACE commander's guidance. This guidance includes the assumptions that the Army will maintain control of its assets, that the guidance will neither limit Army aviation capability and flexibility nor will hinder Army air-ground operations. The solution must be capable of dynamic and deliberate targeting, and account for how the Army can integrate forces operating above the coordinating altitude.

### SOLUTION

Since the joint solution for the close fight exists in Joint Publication (JP) 3-09.3, *Close Air Support*, the JWG focused attention on multi-Service fires not in proximity to friendly forces. The JWG proposed two courses of action (COAs). The first COA recommended all Services conduct SCAR as the standard method to coordinate and mass joint fires while not in proximity to friendly forces. This option requires revising the SCAR and Kill Box multi-Service publications. The second COA recommended the Services conduct JAAT as the method to coordinate and mass joint fires while not in proximity to friendly forces, requiring the USAF, United States Navy (USN), and USMC to rewrite their Service doctrine and TTP. The second option also requires a significant investment in time, effort, and money to incorporate JAAT into qualification courses and training plans—a significant obstacle for all in the current fiscal environment.

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The first COA is clear; integrate Army tactics into existing joint doctrine which all Services have approved. Under this COA, SCAR not only breathes new life into the USAF and Army JAAT concept, but it promotes the incorporation of additional USN and USMC strike assets. Not surprising, the ALSA working group recommended the first COA and the USAACE commander agreed.

To implement the JWG's recommendation, several changes must be made to JP 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*; JP 3-52, *Joint Airspace Control*; and the SCAR and Kill Box MTTP. The most relevant doctrine for incorporating joint fires integration outside the proximity of friendly forces is through the SCAR tactical guidance found in JP 3-03 and the SCAR MTTP. The JWG recommended the following major changes to JP 3-03 and the SCAR MTTP:

- Update the publication to incorporate surface-to-surface and rotary-wing fires integration.
- Improve readability for the non-aviation fires community.
- Incorporate Army employment terms.
- Designate SCAR aircrew operating short-of-the-fire-support-coordination line as extensions of the ground commander's fires coordination center.

To address the Army's concern about fixed-wing release authority and airspace coordination when executing attacks not in proximity to friendly forces, we [the authors] turn to SCAR MTTP. The SCAR-designated platform will typically be allocated a purple kill box (or designated geographic area) in which to conduct SCAR; and therefore, owns the roles and responsibilities detailed in JP 3-03. The SCAR coordina-

tor determines how supporting fires assets are integrated and deconflicted to support the ground force commander's intent. As for weapon release authority, clearance for all SCAR assets will remain with the ground commander and may be given in real-time or pre-mission.

While the first COA requires significantly less investment in time; inevitably, there are additional training requirements for SCAR aircrews to incorporate Army-specific TTP associated with rotary-wing and surface fires. Currently, the Army does not train to the SCAR mission, although they are a signatory on ALSA's SCAR MTTP. (The MTTP does not address a role for the Army.) The USAACE-accepted solution is to develop a standardized training syllabus for SCAR. To help educate the joint fires community, ALSA recommended a SCAR "road show" with all joint stakeholders to synchronize efforts during the MTTP's overhaul.

## CONCLUSION

The decision for all Services to formally recognize and conduct SCAR as the preferred method to coordinate and mass joint aviation and surface fires outside proximity to friendly forces is a significant step in aligning joint effects. While the term "JAAT" will be deleted from the lexicon, the capability it represents will remain. In fact, the joint community should expect improved capability. Whereas JAAT missions limited the Army to solely USAF support, the use of the SCAR mission set incorporates available USN and USMC assets. Furthermore, the way-ahead eliminates the Army's concerns about limitations to air-ground operations and begins the long-desired formal synchronization of Service capabilities, to include procedures and terms common to all.

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