



Soldiers of Company C., 457th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion, 7th Civil Support Command, conduct training with Romanian soldiers June 2011 at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, in preparation for a deployment to Afghanistan. Civil affairs personnel provide commanders with information obtained through close contact with indigenous peoples that can help identify enemy networks, sources of social instability, and enemy safe havens. (Photo by Pfc. Devin M. Wood, U.S. Army)

Civil Affairs

More than a Force for Stability Operations

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Historically, civil affairs (CA) capabilities have supported maneuver commanders' objectives across the full spectrum of military operations. However, recently, CA capabilities have been focused mostly on nonlethal effects associated with stability operations. Notwithstanding, the Army's

the operation to use both lethal and nonlethal effects to shape the deep fight and set the conditions for the divisions to fight the ground tactical plan.

Concurrently with WFX 19-04, the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade (321st CA BDE), headquartered in San Antonio, was scheduled for a command-post exercise.

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shift toward increased lethality requires CA to again expand its range outside this current niche. According to Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, “The Army must be manned, equipped, and trained to operate across the range of military operations, starting with the most lethal conditions first—large-scale combat operations against a regional peer.”¹ During the conduct of Warfighter Exercise (WFX) 19-04, the III Corps G9 (Civil Affairs Directorate) acknowledged this reality, seeking to enable freedom of maneuver by conducting limited stability-related tasks focused on three lines of effort: civil control, populace and resource control, and messaging. Through these lines of effort, all CA forces were nested and focused on setting the conditions for unified-action partners (UAPs) to conduct humanitarian operations, minimize civilian population interference on combat operations, and begin the stabilization process to consolidate gains as swiftly as possible.

Background

III Corps conducted WFX 19-04 from 6–15 April 2019. Considered one of the largest WFXs to date, III Corps functioned as a combined task force with 1st Infantry Division, the United Kingdom's 3rd Division, and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment as subordinate maneuver elements, along with a strong contingent of enablers such as artillery, psychological operations, and engineer units. This combined task force was placed in a complex training environment designed to prepare staffs for large-scale combat operations and to maximize lethality against a near-peer threat. Well in advance of the exercise, the III Corps staff planned and coordinated

In conjunction with III Corps, the U.S. Army and Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) decided to integrate the 321st CA BDE and two subordinate battalions into WFX 19-04 as enablers. To capitalize on this integration, the G9 and 321st brigade commander exploited this training opportunity to better facilitate each organization's training objectives, confirm doctrinal concepts, and test new concepts.

Doctrinal Rules of Allocation

According to doctrine, CA forces support operations from tactical to strategic levels and are allocated to Army forces or their equivalent in the joint force as follows: CA companies support brigade combat teams, CA battalions support Army divisions, and CA brigades support Army corps or theater armies.² In this construct, CA forces are not the only components of a commander's civil-military operations (CMOs) plan but are key enablers in synchronizing the CA efforts of joint forces, multinational forces, and nongovernmental organizations to achieve unified action. According to Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, “CMO[s] are an inherent command responsibility.”³

Field Manual 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, explains that CA forces can mitigate adversary threats by leveraging populations, civil capabilities, and civil networks to enhance the commander's situational understanding and the unit's lethality.⁴ In a near-peer threat environment, combat units at all echelons will bypass significant population centers and pockets of enemy forces as they concentrate combat power on their highest priority conventional threats. With the enemy using



civilization for cover and concealment, these “blind spots” can be reduced through the employment of CA forces conducting civil affairs activities (CAAs) to identify enemy networks, sources of instability, and enemy safe havens.⁵ The effort to deny the enemy access to the civil component is conducted simultaneously and in cooperation with the indigenous populations, civilian institutions, and UAPs. Through the planned, coordinated, and synchronized employment of CA forces to enable CMO efforts across the range of military operations, commanders stand to gain better situational understanding, promote stability, consolidate gains, and enable unified action.⁶

CA forces provide this shared understanding of the battlefield and support to a 360-degree view of the common operational picture by conducting specific CAAs—primarily civil reconnaissance (CR) and civil engagement (CE). The tactical conduct of CR and CE provides bottom-up understanding of the conditions on the ground within the civil component while confirming or denying the assumptions made during planning. This is done by analyzing civil data gained during the conduct of CR/CE missions then

Iraqis who fled fighting between Islamic State militants and Iraqi forces run behind a pickup truck to receive aid supplies and clothes 28 November 2016 in the Samah neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq. Civil Affairs forces are key enablers for synchronizing the actions of joint and multinational forces with nongovernmental organizations to achieve unified efforts to minimize civilian population interference on combat operations through humanitarian operations aimed at beginning the process of stabilization to consolidate gains. (Photo by Hussein Malla, Associated Press)

presenting those analyses through the operations, targeting, and orders processes to increase commanders’ situational understanding.⁷

III Corps G9's Methodology

In drafting the order for WFX 19-04, III Corps followed doctrine and distributed its CA forces at each echelon from corps to brigade to include a CMO center to synchronize CAAs within their respective areas of operation. Additionally, the 321st CA BDE provided a civil affairs planning team (CAPT) to the III Corps G9 as staff augmentation across all three corps command posts. This augmentation in the support area command



post was crucial for the G9's ability to synchronize and manage CA efforts across all three planning horizons: current operations, future operations, and plans.

The 321st CA BDE headquarters and its battalions were not designated as a training audience for WFX 19-04 but conducted their own command-post exercise in conjunction with the corps' exercise. While this created some challenges, it did not prevent the CA forces from synchronizing their efforts with the G9. Through the direction of the corps G9 staff, the 321st CA BDE contributed its extensive analytical capability to the corps and divisions with significant impacts on the corps' maneuver plan. For example, the brigade's CMO center conducted thorough analysis of the corps' area of operations using the civil considerations of areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events (ASCOPE) as its guide to the civil environment and cross-walked those considerations with the operational variables: political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII). Once passed to the corps, the G9 along with the CAPT identified several elements of key infrastructure that, if targeted, could affect the enemy's ability to disrupt the corps's maneuver

Maj. Gen. Darrell J. Guthrie (*right*), commander, U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command, receives an update from members of the 321st Civil Affairs (CA) Brigade 10 April 2019 regarding the status of CA operations and CA integration into the III Corps Warfighter Exercise 19-04 at Fort Hood, Texas. Shown above (*from left to right*) are 1st Lt. Jessica E. Luna, Spc. Ashley E. Landry, Staff Sgt. Luis S. Gutierrez, Command Sgt. Maj. Paul G. Sanchez, Col. Dean P. Thompson, Master Sgt. Kevin Williams, and Maj. Gen. Guthrie. (Photo courtesy of 321st CA Brigade)

plan. One example was the identification of a series of hydroelectric power plants and dams assessed as being used to provide power to enemy forces command and control, air defense, and long-range artillery assets.

Exercise Execution

Once the exercise began, CA forces planned, coordinated, and conducted CR and CE missions to confirm or deny planning assumptions and continually update the commander's common operational picture. These efforts contributed to the successful identification of enemy threat networks seeking opportunities to disrupt the corps' maneuver plan. Simultaneously, information and products from their reporting were

used by the III Corps staff to develop intelligence and targeting efforts for continued operations in the deep, close, and support area fights.

One area of emphasis, where CR/CE efforts impacted III Corps maneuverability, was in refining the corps' populace and resource control (PRC) plan. According to FM 3-57, "CA forces support maneuverability by developing, coordinating, and executing plans that positively influence target populations to support the commander's objectives. CA forces can minimize the impact of military operations on civilian populations and the level of interference by civilians during combat operations."⁸ As a part of the G9's guidance, the 321st CA BDE Civil Liaison Team and CAPT analyzed reported data from tactical CA teams and developed route overlays for the movement of dislocated civilians. Their analysis and corresponding recommendations to update the PRC plan were then discussed and coordinated with the corps' UAPs during the G9's daily CMO working group meeting. The focus of the CMO working group was to facilitate dislocated civilian collection planning efforts, minimize the impact of civilian interference with ground combat operations, and enable deconfliction with UAPs for future humanitarian assistance operations.

The second effort that supported corps' freedom of maneuver was the development of civil information requirements to focus

all CR and CE missions. Through this top-down focus on like items within their respective areas of operation, CA forces enabled freedom of maneuver for division and corps elements by identifying key infrastructure and leaders that could facilitate future humanitarian assistance operations and help direct dislocated civilians to safe zones. Additionally, CA forces connected UAPs to those facilities and people most in need. To

visualize this, the corps' initial planning factor going into the operation was around 350,000 dislocated civilians moving throughout the area of operations once combat operations began. Because of a nested, synchronized, and well-published PRC plan tied to the corps' messaging efforts, the estimated number of dislocated civilians was never realized but rather crested well below two-thirds of that assessment. More importantly to the Warfighter, there were no reported occurrences of civilians hindering military operations.

Finally, the III Corps G9 plans team integrated the CAPT early in the mission analysis process for WFX 19-04. As previously mentioned, the PMESII/ASCOPE crosswalk identified a series of dams linked to hydroelectric power plants that were assessed to support enemy command and control rather than to serve the population. This information was incorporated into the G2's enemy situation template, making it clear the enemy would rely heavily on hydroelectricity to provide power to their command-and-control systems, and its main effort would most likely be colocated within range of most major dams in the area of operations. Through cooperation across the corps staff, this information was vetted, corroborated, and formulated as a recommendation to the commander to attack the power grid through lethal or nonlethal means to deny, degrade, or disrupt the enemy's ability

to coordinate efforts against coalition forces. By targeting this system, the achieved

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effects allowed for friendly forces' freedom of maneuver while denying the enemy's ability to synchronize lethal effects on the corps' maneuver elements. Simultaneously, it would force the enemy to revert to an alternate means of power and limit their capacity within the entire country.

Conclusion and Way Forward

By analyzing civil information to support the targeting cycle and common operational picture, CA forces added to the commander's shared understanding and enhanced freedom of maneuver—therefore, directly increasing the commander's lethal capabilities. Close cooperation between the III Corps G9, the 321st CA BDE commander, and the 321st's subordinate units yielded several examples of what CA forces can do to support the commander while enabling friendly forces freedom of maneuver. This support went well beyond staff augmentation to a fielded CA force tasked to conduct CA missions in support of

the maneuver commander. Such support should be codified in unit training plans and then replicated in future WFXs. Each corps-level Warfighter should have a CA brigade to support its efforts, either from the reserve or active component.

Resources are the challenge. Training dollars and training days must be dedicated to the integration of CA forces into these types of events on a persistent basis. Despite the challenges, WFX 19-04 demonstrated that having CA units participate provides force-multiplying capabilities to ground combat operations (as CA forces executed doctrinal tasks that directly supported III Corps during ground combat operations). The current focus of the Army's Mission Command Training Program is not conducive to adding a CA BDE as a training audience. However, fully integrating a CA BDE into future Warfighter exercises as part of the training audience increases the training value for all involved and improves lethality of the force. ■

Notes

1. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2017).

2. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2019), 3-28.

3. Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil Military Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2018), I-2.

4. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 4-2.

5. Jay Liddick et al., "Calibrating Civil Affairs Forces for Lethality in Large Scale Combat Operations," *Small Wars*

Journal, March-April 2019, accessed 22 April 2019, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/calibrating-civil-affairs-forces-lethality-large-scale-combat-operations>.

6. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 4-1.

7. Liddick et al., "Calibrating Civil Affairs Forces."

8. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2019), 3-1.