

Observation Report

April 2018



USARCENT

Intermediate Division Headquarters (IDHQ)

Operation Spartan Shield

29th Infantry Division



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Executive Summary

In the late summer of 2016, the 29th Infantry Division received notice that it was to become the U.S. Army Central's (ARCENT) intermediate division headquarters (IDHQ) for Operation Spartan Shield (OSS). OSS is a combined forces contingency operation designed to deter and react to possible threats within the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). The IDHQ would assume the mission command of all forces in OSS. Task Force Spartan (TF Spartan) consisted of more than 12,000 soldiers in an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), Fires Brigade, Engineer Brigade, Air Defense Brigade, and Combat Aviation Brigade. In addition, ARCENT decided to source the core staff element of the Combined Joint Operations Command-Jordan of around 80 personnel from the same division headquarters as the IDHQ since the 29th Infantry Division had already received that mission a few months earlier. The CJOC-J element arrived in Jordan in September, while the balance of the division headquarters arrived in Kuwait in December and immediately assumed the duty as the IDHQ.

The IDHQ's primary task was to execute mission command for Task Force Spartan's steady state operations of providing deterrence through presence, theater security cooperation, and missile defense in the CENTCOM AOR, in addition to providing extensive aviation, fires, and engineer support to other operational commands in the AOR. This was the steady state part of the IDHQ as described in the ARCENT OPOD. The IDHQ's secondary mission was to plan and execute contingency operations throughout the ARCENT area of operations; this was the "fight tonight" part of the mission.

Although the 29th Infantry Division had deployed headquarters elements to the Balkans and Afghanistan four times in the preceding 15 years, the Spartan Shield mission marked the first time the Division exercised mission command of subordinate brigades in a deployed environment since World War II. As such, the 29th needed to refresh many of the skills needed to function as a full division headquarters. Once the Division assumed operations in Kuwait, the staff was able to gain experience and the headquarters' effectiveness saw consistent improvement throughout the deployment.

The integration of the new headquarters in the CENTCOM area came with some growing pains, but was ultimately successful. The introduction of a 2-star headquarters was the right fit, as the normal mission command higher headquarters for a brigade is a division. The IDHQ, ARCENT Forward and ARCENT Main worked cooperatively during the first few months to establish appropriate lines of authority and responsibilities for the steady state.

Overall, the intermediate division headquarters proved that it is value added to the continuation of the OSS mission while freeing staff manpower of ARCENT for theater army tasks.

The purpose of this report is to describe observations made during the 29th ID's deployment to the ARCENT AOR to serve as the IDHQ from the period December 2017 to July 2018. The report will also highlight lessons and best practices used during this mission that can assist follow-on IDHQs in preparing for their deployment, and rapidly integrating into the ARCENT mission command structure once in theater.

29th Infantry Division Key Leaders Interviewed:

Commanding General
Deputy Commanding General - Operations
Division Chief of Staff
Division Command Sergeant Major
Deputy Chief of Staff
Division G1
Division G2
Division Deputy G3
Division G7/9
Division G8
Fires Chief
Division Engineer
Judge Advocate General
Inspector General
Protection Chief
Public Affairs Officer
ADA LNO to 29 ID

Key observations:

- The standard DATE Warfighting scenario did not prepare the headquarters staff for the steady state operations nature of the IDHQ's primary role in OSS.
- Neither the Division staff nor their First Army trainers had a clear understanding of the mission or of the tasks required of the IDHQ. The term "steady state" that ARCENT often used initially conveyed little information to help the staffs determine what the IDHQ would do.
- The 90-day deployment timeline and the last-minute addition of personnel detracted from the ability to build cohesive and effective staff sections. The DATE scenario as the culminating training exercise did not provide the opportunity for team building of the many just recently formed staff sections.
- For some sections, technical lines of authority and division of responsibility between organizations remained unclear for the first several months of the deployment.
- The division had difficulty filling many low-density high demand functional staff positions, specifically civil affairs operations, psychological operations, safety, space operations, and public affairs.
- Due to the heavy theater engagement mission, every leader in TF Spartan from company commander and up will conduct engagements with the military forces in the region. Forces supporting OSS operate in many different countries and cultures surrounding the Arabian Gulf region. Study and education before and during the deployment are required to be successful.

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IDHQ Concept

1-1. Observation: Yes, the IDHQ concept does work and is sustainable.

Discussion: The IDHQ concept is the right answer to providing mission command for multiple brigades deployed to the theater. The design and staffing of a division headquarters allows it to control multiple brigades. Divisions functionally command brigades during all phases of force generation (i.e., training readiness) through operational mission command on the battlefield. The design and organization of an Army Service Component Command (ASCC) does not readily lend itself to direct interaction with a brigade headquarters. The ASCC is a theater level asset meant to support the COCOM and to set the conditions for ARFOR entry into the theater. They are not organized and staffed to command brigade(s) for a sustained period.

Lesson: The division is the best headquarters echelon for command of the brigades in the ARCENT/CENTCOM area. With eight National Guard divisions available as a force pool to continue to source the IDHQ, it appears that the mission could continue indefinitely, as two will be available to deploy each year. These deployments also improve the mission command capabilities and proficiencies of the National Guard divisions.

1-2. Observation: The IDHQ can perform both TF Spartan and CJOC-J missions satisfactorily with a division MTOE.

Discussion: 29th Infantry Division mobilized its CJOC-J element before the rest of the division received a mobilization order to assume duties as the IDHQ. As a result, the 29th ID filled the CJOC-J with several of the Division's primary staff officers and senior NCOs in addition to the Deputy Commanding General for Support. The initial CJOC-J design for the first National Guard rotation could largely be termed a Division Tactical CP without its logistics support, as ARCENT contemplated providing the 29th ID HQ (-) BOS-I, signal, MI, and other enablers from other theater assets.

As the CJOC-J mission grew less operational than the prior incarnation headed by 1AD (-) and became more focused on BOS-I, setting the theater, and theater security cooperation tasks, ARCENT and other service-provided enablers began to disappear. CJOC-J requested that the division backfill several BOS-I and intelligence tasks, in particular, and ultimately the Division footprint in Jordan expanded from 82 soldiers to over 100.

Despite a minimal operational role, however, CJOC-J continued to represent a significant diversion of resources from the TF Spartan mission, including dozens of officers from the division coordinating staff sections. The G3 paid an especially steep personnel price to maintain a parallel round-the-clock operations center at CJOC-J. Due to inertia and other factors, CJOC-J continued to function as a separate, non-complementary headquarters even after the Division established TF Spartan in Kuwait.

As the Division submitted in its assessment to ARCENT, the CJOC-J mission relates to the TF Spartan mission and efficiencies are possible if later IDHQs approach the two mission sets as a unitary headquarters rather than two completely separate organizations. The lowest risk to the

TF Spartan “fight tonight” mission, however, would be for a Regional Support Group or other BOS-I, theater-setting-focused organization assume responsibility as ARFOR-J and reduce the Division’s mission to a handful of officers working with the Amman Embassy MILTEAM on arranging theater security cooperation events with TF Spartan units.

Lesson: Performing both missions, IDHQ steady state and the CJOC-J, with a standard Army division headquarters is feasible. In the case of the 29th ID, the CJOC-J staffing design included excess operations-focused personnel. Reallocating these personnel to the IDHQ main command post to reduce risk to the unified action mission was a better option than keeping them in Jordan. However, this did not happen.

PREDEPLOYMENT READINESS AND TRAINING

2-1. Observation: Initially the division struggled to determine what roles and functions ARCENT assigned to the IDHQ.

Discussion: The start point was the ARCENT EXORD order defining the IDHQ. The EXORD defined the IDHQ as the senior tactical headquarters in OSS, bridging the operational strategic theater army and the OSS tactical brigade headquarters. The ARCENT Forward Command Post, also located in theater, had a very limited capacity to be a mission command element.

ARCENT developed a transition checklist of specific tasks broken down by staff section that the 29th would assume. Two issues became immediately apparent. ARCENT, being an ASCC had a different level of thought between the operational and strategic than did the division headquarters. There were some discrepancies between what ARCENT thought a division ought to do, or is able to do, and what a division is structured and trained to do.

Adding confusion was that the ARCENT and Division staffs divided responsibilities differently, owing to their differing constructs. ARCENT employs far more sectional divisions, e.g., a G-31, G-32, G-33, etc., than a division, so it was sometimes unclear to the Division where responsibility for individual issues lay within the technical channels. Ultimately, with experience, both sides learned how to integrate across their respective structures.

Lesson: The IDHQ must continue to assess how to integrate and align staffs with the ARCENT Staff construct. The IDHQ and ARCENT conducted a 90-day assessment and risk to mission analysis which generated inputs to a revised ARCENT EXORD issued to the follow-on IDHQ division.

2-2. Observation: National Guard divisions have difficulty in filling functional area staff positions.

Discussion: As part of their mobilization and preparation, the division headquarters identified several functional area staff positions that were unfilled. These low density specialties included public affairs, civil affairs, space operations, simulations operations, and knowledge

management. To rectify the shortfalls the division either (1) sent officers to school whom then deployed late, or (2) requested that National Guard Bureau find “fills” from another state, or (3) requested fills from the Army Reserve.

Within National Guard divisions, these positions are hard to fill. In the case of space operations and civil affairs, these positions exist in the National Guard (as opposed to the USAR) only at the Division or Theater asset level—and then at the field grade or senior NCO rank level—so there is no natural pipeline within the state to develop experience in the field. Money is another problem, since sending officers and senior NCOs to retrain in these specialties is expensive and requires six to as many as 30 weeks active duty for the officer(s) attending, depending on the specialty. States are frequently reluctant to fund these courses, often assessing that they can fund dozens of Soldiers for career-required schools like Warrior Leader Course for the cost of sending one officer to a lengthy school for which there is no guarantee that he/she will remain in the position requiring it for long. The funding problem is even further complicated when the National Guard division headquarters is divided between two or more states.

The second problem is finding officers who are both qualified to attend and can afford the time away from their civilian careers. These functional area courses typically are at least six weeks in duration, and for many Guard members taking the time off from their civilian job is not practical.

While it depends heavily on a state’s force structure, in most cases few National Guard officers can successfully remain in a single basic branch over their entire career. Acquiring a functional area gives National Guard officers flexibility to move between units and advance in rank as functional positions become more plentiful at the field grade level even as basic branch-coded positions become scarce. The trade-off is that the less time a reserve officer spends in any particular field, the more limited his or her knowledge and expertise.

Lesson: National Guard Bureau should consider employing a central funding system for functional area schools or fencing off funds for specific schools so that states cannot shift earmarked funds for critical Division schools to its general schools account. Commanders should counsel company grade officers regarding functional area opportunities—frequently tied to promotion opportunities—so they can plan school attendance well in advance at times compatible with their civilian occupations. Officers in whom a state invests functional area schooling should be committed to that particular career track to gain sufficient depth of knowledge and experience needed to function at the field grade level.

2-3. Observation: Post-Mobilization training was ineffective in readying the Division.

Discussion: At the time of notification for IDHQ, part of the division G-2 staff was preparing to support the Kosovo SFOR mission. Another part (82 personnel) was preparing to assume the CJOC-J mission and was already conducting post-mobilization training at Fort Bliss. The remainder was readying to support USNORTHCOM.

The division received notification of the IDHQ mission just two months prior to its mobilization day. With the exception of the CJOC-J mission, the division pulled back from preparations for

the other missions and prepared for deployment to OSS.

Consequently, the mobilization process was very truncated. As the division headquarters moved to Fort Hood for a pre-mobilization annual training period, many of the staff sections were still forming or awaiting fills. At Fort Hood, First Army Division West hosted the Division's train up and certification exercise. The short preparation timeline, combined with the training brigade's limited knowledge of the mission and other constraints meant the Division's culminating training event (CTE) was a standard DATE rotation. The post-mobilization training included no formal instruction on the OSS IDHQ mission, nor did it allow for training on the specific (non-standard) tasks the IDHQ would perform during steady-state operations.

Most of the division staff felt the train up was irrelevant to the primary IDHQ mission. None of the preparation concerned the current operational environment in theater, the current disposition or missions of the brigades the IDHQ would command, nor how the ARCENT FWD headquarters then in theater would transition with the 29th ID.

Lesson: Because of these mobilization training shortfalls, the 29th spent the first 2-3 months in theater conducting discovery learning and on-the-job training. Future IDHQs should be templated on FORSCOM patch charts several years in advance, provided notifications of sourcing at the 18-month point, and provided mobilization orders as early as possible to lock personnel into positions. This facilitates pre-mobilization training with the team that will ultimately go forward.

2-4. Observation: WARSIM is not the optimal tool for the IDHQ Culminating Training Exercise (CTE) and the digital terrain does not reflect the environment in which the IDHQ will operate.

Discussion: First Army Division West had the task to organize and execute a CTE for the IDHQ. Division West primarily conducts exercises for reserve component brigade headquarters as part of their ARFORGEN cycle. First Army West assigned the Division's CTE to the 120th Infantry Brigade, which is staffed to provide the exercise overhead (exercise design, EXCON, OC-Ts, etc.) for a brigade-sized headquarters.

WARSIM, loaded with the common Caspian Sea scenario, was used to drive the exercise, which neither replicated the IDHQ's operational environment nor primary mission. The Caspian Sea scenario is a Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) designed to support a Unified Land Operations exercise. Fundamentally, it models a conventional force kinetic fight between large formations maneuvering throughout the operational area. This was a less than optimal choice for the training of a division level headquarters as the IDHQ, whose primary mission is maintaining steady state operations for a number of brigades supporting a theater deterrence and security cooperation mission.

Technical issues also plagued the WARSIM exercise. There were issues with the both the BLUFOR and OPFOR database in the WARSIM. The robust size and lethality of forces represented in this database did not reflect assets available to OSS. This was problematic in that the situational picture generated by the exercise control, white cell, and OC/Ts differed from what was present in the simulation.

The terrain representation in WARSIM does not replicate the geography of the OSS area (Arabian Gulf Region north into Central Asia). This also required adjudication of the real-world tasks and techniques of force movement to the terrain represented in the simulation. The size of the “box” in the WARSIM terrain database does not provide a realistic representation of the large international area of OSS.

Lesson: To the extent WARSIM simulation is the venue for training the IDHQ’s Unified Land Operation mission, develop and employ an appropriate Arabian Gulf region terrain database and replicate existing friendly and threat forces orders of battle in the OSS AOR.

In order to train the IDHQ for what ARCENT dubs its “steady-state” mission, the CTE should be more of an MRX giving exercise designers and controllers the ability to plug and play real world orders and intelligence summaries into the simulation data. This would greatly enhance the exercise’s fidelity to the real world situation. Exercise controllers also expressed a desire for CAC help in building the background “white noise” that the IDHQ encounters in steady state operations in the simulation.

STAFF FUNCTIONS

3-1. Observation: Sustaining training readiness of the OSS units

Discussion: A challenge that emerged for 29th Infantry Division was maintaining the training readiness maintenance of their OSS units, particularly as the Objective-T standard is enforced. As the IDHQ must train to “fight tonight,” the operational readiness of its units was a significant focus for the division.

Under the Sustained Readiness Model (SRM) concept, forces deploying to support overseas operations must complete a culminating training exercise (CTE). In the case of a brigade, this is usually a combat training center rotation. Units normally move overseas shortly after their CTE with little or no recovery time to maximize personnel stability after the CTE. Little recovery time degrades unit maintenance (and, correspondingly, operational readiness). Because, under SRM, deploying units do not have priority for fills nor are soldiers stabilized for the deployment, deploying active component units are often arriving in theater with an 80% personnel fill. SRM has an even more significant impact on qualification rates depending on when the unit last conducted gunnery, one ABCT arrived with only 62% gunnery qualified tank crews.

The 29th Infantry Division desired greater visibility, if not actual control, over their subordinate brigades’ readiness prior to their arrival in theater. FORSCOM denied this because pre-deployed units were still under the command of their home station headquarters until their LAD (latest arrival date). The IDHQ did succeed in gaining a presence in the unit training briefs (UTB) and unit status reporting (USR) briefings of deploying units in order to provided early visibility on incoming unit readiness. This provided both the Division and ARCENT some “expectation management” while aiding in the scheduling of resources and time once in country for the units to train. Experience was that 30-60 days training time was required for units to reach acceptable

levels of crew readiness.

The 29th Infantry Division mandated that brigades provide it a unit training brief (UTB) no later than 30 days after arrival and then conduct quarterly training briefs (QTBs) from then on. The Division began issuing training guidance for units in OSS and established a priority for training exercises.

Lesson: Just like any other division headquarters, the IDHQ is responsible for the readiness of its assigned units. As such, the IDHQ needs the authority to provide incoming brigades training guidance and receive reporting that will allow the division to plan for deficiency remediation upon arrival in theater.

3-2. Observation: Establishment of IDHQ Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) section in theater

Discussion: The 29th ID deployed a 22-soldier SJA team with 11 attorneys, 1 legal administrative WO, and 10 paralegals (two were senior paralegals). The SJA staff organized into three sections: Operational Law, Military Justice, and Criminal Law. The SJA staff was heavy on administrative law experience, average on military justice, and light on operational law, as assessed by the SJA deputy.

Some key members of the SJA staff were not available to mobilize, and shortages existed in the division's SJA as a whole. The short notice deployment made it a challenge to get the SJA staff section together. Many of the SJA staff members who deployed came from other units in Virginia and Maryland, so the first time that any of them worked together was during the deployment. One initial challenge for the attorneys on the staff was to close down their civilian practices while at the same time coming together as a team.

The next challenge for the staff was in establishing relationships with the OSS units and the ARCENT SJA. This began with the 29th DJAG and admin WO deploying with the torch party. This turned out to very beneficial and proved a huge advantage. When the torch party arrived, the division staff had no facilities. The torch party had to establish office and work space. One of the tasks that fell to the torch was negotiating the exit of ARCENT staff who occupied buildings intended for the IDHQ, which ultimately took direct intervention of the ARCENT CoS to force the move.

ARCENT's SJA gave good support to the division's torch party. The IDHQ SJA's collocation with the ARCENT FWD SJA was critical to getting the SJA staff functioning. Being collocated with ARCENT SJA facilitated the transfer of responsibilities to the IDHQ SJA and enabled interactions with SJA staffs in the OSS brigades.

The IDHQ SJA established a good relationship with the subordinate brigades, in part because they provided a full division-size SJA staff that supported the latter with greater legal resources than the ARCENT FWD section had possessed.

Lesson: The IDHQ must deploy with a robust Staff Judge Advocate staff to properly support

both the down trace OSS brigades and support ARCENT's forward requirements. Upon notice of sourcing for later divisions, recommend locking in the SJA roster as early as possible to reduce distractions. Continue to collocate the IDHQ and ARCENT FWD SJA staffs to enhance the capability of both sections.

3-3. Observation: The IDHQ SJA reached agreement on a division of legal responsibilities between it, ARCENT FWD, and 1st Theater Support Command (1TSC) that reflected the strength of expertise in each headquarters.

Discussion: The two main areas in which the IDHQ worked agreements were military justice/criminal law and contract law.

The IDHQ SJA reached an agreement with the ARCENT SJA regarding military justice cases that required courts martial. Generally, National Guard Judge Advocates lack practical experience in military justice and the courts martial trial process. Practically speaking, the IDHQ's Judge Advocates are only in theater for a limited time and with a fixed amount of funding for their deployment. Assigning an IDHQ lawyer to a case proceeding to court martial would often require extending him or her well beyond their unit's tour to complete the prosecution.

Because having IDHQ attorneys work on courts martial cases was going to prove impractical, ARCENT agreed to assign those cases to 1TSC trial lawyers. The IDHQ SJA, working through the ARCENT SJA, would recommend courts martial cases go to 1TSC SJA for trial. Cases were coordinated between the IDHQ and 1TSC to determine which command would handle the trial. To assist 1TSC with the caseload, the IDHQ attached one lawyer and one NCO as trial counsel to their SJA staff.

ARCENT performed most of the contract and fiscal law. Again, Army National Guard attorneys did not have the expertise in contract/fiscal law gained from working these cases day-to-day. IDHQ attached one attorney and one paralegal to the ARCENT SJA. Further, the IDHQ SJA passed any contract law issues to that attorney who then worked the case inside the ARCENT SJA.

Finally, 29th ID also assigned two JAG officers to the division's CJOC-J element as operational law lawyers.

Lesson: By attaching their attorneys to other commands, these attorneys gained valuable expertise that they applied to the steady state tasks of the IDHQ and prevented unnecessary turbulence in courts martial prosecutions.

3-4. Observation: Integrating the division engineer with the ARCENT engineer cell and the OSS brigades was a challenge for the IDHQ.

Discussion: Normally an engineer brigade is a Corps level asset with a division having an

engineer battalion. As part of the IDHQ, the division now had an engineer brigade. The type of engineer brigade further complicated the situation. The engineers assigned to the IDHQ were horizontal & vertical construction type normally assigned to a Corps headquarters, rather than the combat engineers one would expect to find in a division.

Prior to the IDHQ's establishment, ARCENT had an engineer brigade with two subordinate engineer battalions supporting OSS in the theater. When the IDHQ arrived, a Lieutenant Colonel headed the ARCENT FWD engineer section, the ARCENT/OSS engineer brigade commanded by a Colonel, and the ARCENT Engineer, a Colonel, was at Shaw AFB. At that time, the Engineer Brigade took its direction from the ARCENT Engineer. Both the engineer brigade and the ARCENT Engineer were satisfied with this alignment. The engineer brigade had one battalion headquarters with two companies TACON to CJTF-OIR.

Along with the IDHQ came the division engineer cell. Under ARCENT's IDHQ OPORD, the engineer brigade was OPCON to the IDHQ, with staff responsibility falling to the Division Engineer, a Lieutenant Colonel. Despite the apparent clarity in the ARCENT OPORD, the Division Engineer's relationship with the engineer brigade was unclear. The persistent perception seemed to be that ARCENT communicated engineering related tasks directly to the engineer brigade headquarters, bypassing the IDHQ Division Engineer. This initially caused problems, as the brigade was not communicating fully with the IDHQ Engineer. The existing engineer brigade commander and staff seemed reluctant to work for the division (whose engineer was a lieutenant colonel) and the relationship was ineffective. It took some time for the IDHQ engineer to build rapport both with ARCENT and the engineer brigade.

The situation eased when a new engineer brigade headquarters rotated into theater. That brigade looked directly to the IDHQ from the beginning, easing the relationship with the Division Engineer section. Meanwhile, the ARCENT Engineer Forward also rotated staff with new personnel. These moves all helped break prior precedent so that the IDHQ established its responsibility for "all things engineer."

Lesson: As part of the pre-deployment tasks, the division engineer must coordinate with the two other main engineer headquarters (ARCENT and the brigade) to ensure the lines of authority and command are clearly established.

3-5. Observation: Part of the IDHQ was the non-doctrinal alignment of Air Defense Artillery Brigade to Division HQ. This required division staff education on the unique aspects of the brigade.

Discussion: One of the brigades that fell under the command of the IDHQ was the Patriot HIMAD ADA Brigade headquartered in Qatar. Like all other OSS brigades besides the ABCT, the ADA brigade and its battalions were on staggered deployments. Each deployment cycle included some train up. The ADA brigade HQ placed an LNO in the IDHQ COIC with the responsibility to inform the headquarters on Patriot capabilities and air defense operations.

A Patriot Brigade is structured and managed very differently than a maneuver brigade or fires

brigade. Additionally, ADA Brigades are theater assets not routinely assigned to DIV HQs. In the early weeks of the IDHQ, the ADA LNO conducted many “Patriot 101 Introduction to ADA” classes to educate the division staff and the division’s Air and Missile Defense (AMD) cell. Topics included the Patriot Brigade task organization, OPCON and TACON command relationships to the headquarters, equipment in a Patriot Battery, and how batteries communicate with each other, and Patriot crew training and certification. Maintenance of the Patriot system is very different from what a maneuver division routinely experiences. As such, the instruction included additional emphasis on maintenance of the batteries deployed in theater.

The “Patriot 101” training enabled the IDHQ to conduct analysis of ADA OPORDs issued from higher and conduct staff analysis of operational requirements, battle tracking of Patriot units (maintenance measured in hours). The IDHQ became the clearinghouse for information flowing from the Patriot Brigade headquarters to entities beyond OSS in the CENTCOM AOR.

The IDHQ did not conduct planning for the ADA brigade, but worked with ARCENT and 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command on training and force protection issues. U.S. Air Forces Central Command (AFCENT) had TACON of the Patriot Brigade so performed all the planning and controlling of exercises of the brigade.

Lesson: The OPCON of an air defense brigade to an Infantry Division is unique to the OSS Task organization. Placing a LNO from the Patriot Brigade in the IDHQ was essential to the division’s mission command of the Patriots in theater. Future IDHQ divisions should consider sending staff from their AMD cell to attend one of the 32nd AAMDC sessions to receive training on Patriot missions.

3-6. Observation: Fire support coordination improved with the arrival of the IDHQ Fires Cell.

Discussion: Initial ARCENT mission planning guidance emphasized the IDHQ’s “steady-state” mission and de-emphasized the conduct of tactical operations. This initial guidance influenced the Deployment Manning Document, pre-mobilization train up and later had a negative impact on operations for sections like Fires that ended up under-resourced on the assumption that fires planning and mission execution would be minimal.

There was confusion in the overall fires planning between tasks presented in the OPLAN (steady state conditions) and the CONPLAN (the fight tonight) and which tasks took priority. As it was with most of the 29th Division staff, the Fires section lacked a detailed understanding of the mission specifics.

Critically, the Fires Cell deployed without its organic Air Support Operations element in the headquarters because the associated Air Support Operations Squadron was included in the deployment order. The governing rationale for the IDHQ was to deploy an organic army division headquarters according to the (in some cases) FY18 MTOE. However, this was not the case for the IDHQ as ARCENT failed to request the Air Support Operations element. Both ARCENT and CENTCOM initial concept for the IDHQ’s missions did include a need for air support management, even though 29th Infantry Division raised the issue during its earliest

discussions with ARCENT.

This absence was significant. Without any Air Force personnel in the fires cell, clearance for rocket fires is problematic. The large number of commercial aircraft flying overhead in parts of the Division's area of operations made this a real issue. The fires cell ultimately mitigated this shortfall by getting some Army personnel trained in joint targeting, but it did not obtain this capability for some time after the division assumed responsibilities in theater.

When the Division arrived in Kuwait, it found there was no capability to clear air or to conduct targeting due to lack of equipment. The lack of an automated system of record for planning compounded the clearance of fires problem. In some instances, mIRC Internet Relay Chat provided the primary communication means for air space clearance and coordination. With assistance from the Fires Center of Excellence (FCoE), the division brought the Automated Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) to Kuwait. It took the Fires Cell about 6 weeks to get AFATDS on the tactical network and to train users. The Fires Cell resourced all this additional equipment and synchronized the databases. AFATDS enhanced the capability of a reduced fires cell staff to plan targeting for the "fight tonight" mission.

Before the arrival of the IDHQ and its Fires Cell, requests for support went straight to the Fires Brigade. The brigade distributed fires assets throughout theater in small, nonstandard packages that lacked proper support. Typically, these packages consisted of two or three howitzers or HIMARS launchers alone. The IDHQ Fires Cell immediately recognized the need to intervene and manage requests to move artillery assets around the theater. It was a fight to get this done. Over time, tube artillery fire support migrated away from the "two howitzer" practice to deploying as a howitzer gun platoon including a fire direction center (FDC), a maintenance slice, and an ammunition supply slice, though HIMARS launcher distribution proved a more difficult problem to address.

Over time, trust between the Operation Inherent Resolve, TF Spartan, and ARCENT headquarters improved greatly. In time, the approval authority for moving artillery assets shifted from the ARCENT CG to the Division Commander. Reallocating fire support in the theater from direct support (DS) to general support (GS) enabled the IDHQ to better support the theater, especially with regard to operations in OIR.

Lessons Learned: Before the arrival of the IDHQ, coordination of fires in the theater lacked centralized control and management. The IDHQ provided that central control and coordination resulting in better support for the theater. The IDHQ screened all requests for artillery and rocket fire in theater, providing better and more sustainable support to the mission of OSS and OIR.

3-7. Observation: The 29ID Public Affairs office was not robust enough to fully support the message of the IDHQ.

Discussion: The Division's Public Affairs section began the mobilization in disarray. The prior long-serving Division PAO had recently transitioned and the NCOIC deployed with the CJOC-J element. Not until two weeks after did they designate a replacement Public Affairs Officer

(PAO). In addition to the new PAO, the public affairs cell consisted of an assistant PAO and two non-commissioned officers (a sergeant first class and a sergeant), all new to the unit. Overall, the PAO team lacked equipment and training.

The PAO cell did not have a dedicated training path or trainer at the Division's CTE, so they had not operated as a team prior to arriving in Kuwait. They also found that no theater provided equipment (TPE) was available, which limited the team to the limited equipment they had brought from home station. Office automation was another shortage area for the team, to the point where simply processing a photograph for publication with a story occupied their resources for a full day. This lack of equipment limited their ability to cover multiple events in the OSS.

Another issue with the PAO was the section's small size relative to its tasks. The normal allocation expectation for public affairs coverage is one Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) for every three brigades. Since the IDHQ consisted of five brigades distributed over a large geographic area, it should doctrinally have had a PAD assigned, if not two. A PAD is a seven-man team, including an OIC and NCOIC, photojournalist, videographers, and print media specialists.

The ARCENT IDHQ OPORD specified several tasks for the IDHQ's PAO staff. The Division's public affairs team attempt completed all of these specified tasks, but in the PAO's opinion, many of them to a low standard. Completing the specified tasks to standard would have required augmentation with a PAD.

With only two journalists in the IDHQ's organic team, production of command information became a lengthy process; one day to cover the story, a second day to process the pictures and develop the story, then uploading to a media outlet. A photograph for publication was first loaded on a personal laptop, processed, and uploaded for transfer to the media site. The process took four hours to complete and occupied a staff member for the entire process. To get video out, a journalist upload to the same personal laptop, and then transmitted over a commercial internet access.

Messaging was not a problem within the IDHQ or the OSS brigades. ARCENT pushed the theme and message it wished to convey to the public. The IDHQ then passed these messages and themes to brigades. The IDHQ public affairs did monitor press releases coming from the brigades to ensure they stayed on message, and did not find any infractions during their time there. There was one instance when a soldier uploaded private video to a commercial media site in which the Soldier was engaged in questionable activity; that post later generated an inquiry from the operators of the commercial site. The PAO responded correctly saying that the Army does not condone the behavior and that the incident was under investigation.

The IDHQ PAO staff failed to connect or message with the Kuwait population. Without a full public affairs staff, the IDHQ simply lacked the resources to work with and through the Kuwaiti media.

Lessons Learned: The IDHQ requires a robust PAO team to cover the depth of the Operation Spartan Shield mission and units. The PAO lacked equipment and resources to process news

stories with pictures or video and this limited the number of events that the PAO team covered. The PAO recommended that a PAD augment the IDHQ including a Kuwaiti media team to assist with addressing the local audience. Staff, credential, and resource local media team in a manner similar to teams formed in Iraq during OIF.

3-8. Observation: The IDHQ inherited a mission set different from that of a traditional infantry division.

Discussion: Before they deployed, the division first had to understand what the ARCENT mission was and what ARCENT roles it expected the division to perform when the former drew down its forward command post. Early on, staff in both the IDHQ and ARCENT struggled somewhat with the difference between the Army Service Component Command and the division structure, roles, capabilities, and perspective. There was a gap between the two headquarters and both had to change their thinking on roles and responsibilities to close that gap. There were pieces and parts of the theater OSS mission set that the division had to assume because, in some cases, it was the only available option.

As one example, a Safety Office is a functional role needed to establish safety guidance and coordinate safety issues with and among the OSS units. Accidents will happen that require 15-6 investigations, require safety boards, etc. While the Aviation Brigade, Engineer Brigade and Armor Brigade each had their own Safety Officer, they required a higher node to plug into. Because ARCENT left no safety office in place when it downsized, the division had to fill this position by pulling previously safety-trained soldiers from their assigned duties. Establishing a minimally functional two-person safety office came at the cost of robbing a senior NCO and a field grade officer from the already-small medical and fires sections, respectively.

Perhaps even more problematic, the division inherited far more base operations support integration (BOS-I) requirements than initially anticipated. Even before the division main command post arrived in Kuwait, the division's CJOC-J element began requesting division personnel to fill BOS-I functions in Jordan that ARCENT had previously resourced from 1st TSC and 3rd MEDCOM. Additional BOS-I requirements emerged as the Fires Brigade headquarters was unable to manage ongoing construction and contracting requirements at Camp Redleg with its organic personnel. Finally, the division found itself dedicating a significant part of its senior logistics staff to contract support.

Lesson: The IDHQ's provision of BOS-I support is possible, but comes at the cost of readiness since many personnel necessary for unified action operations have been re-tasked into non-doctrinal, unauthorized positions. In some cases, the personnel are hundreds of miles from the division main command post performing these functions. At the 90-day point, the 29th Infantry Division provided ARCENT an initial assessment of those external requirements and the impact they had on readiness. This assessment recommended that future IDHQs have access to the approximately 100 personnel in the division's associated Main Command Post Operational Detachment (MCPOD) and mobilize some of those personnel to perform these additional duties at lower risk to the division's operational mission.

3-9. Observation: Sentinel Radar support was inadequate.

Discussion: ARCENT's IDHQ OPORD required the IDHQ to maintain Sentinel radars for counter UAS defense. As UAVs have become cheaper and the technology is proliferating, forces operating in the AOR, UAV surveillance, and, along with that, the potential for targeting is an increasing threat. Although 29th Infantry Division deployed with the radars fielded to them, the revised division MTOE eliminated them for the future. The 29th Infantry Division generated a request for forces (RFF) stating that maintenance of this capability, if desired by ARCENT, will require a separate RFF to augment future IDHQ headquarters.

Lesson: ARCENT should augment the IDHQ to ensure that it deploys with a Sentinel Radar section to provide early warning of UAVs and support counter UAV operations.

BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY

4-1. Observation: Leaders and Soldiers at all levels must educate themselves about the operational environment and the current situation in the area.

Discussion: Every Soldier needs a basic understanding of the countries and cultures of the people that make up the OSS operational area. Leaders at all levels must educate themselves on the operational environment. Leaders down to the junior NCO level can expect to work with and interact with partnered nation forces and on occasion, government officials. Leaders must understand the political and cultural "dos and don'ts". For instance, when U.S. forces are training with forces from the other nations, they must be aware of national caveats that may prevent those nations from participating in a shared training event with the U.S.

Leaders and Soldiers should be aware on what is currently going on in operational area militarily and politically. Circumstances in the region are constantly changing. Instruction given in the pre-deployment preparation must have a strong emphasis on the current situation in the AO, starting with a strategic overview and then work through the structure of the regional forces.

There are three keys to any discussion on the region and they should provide the basis for any educational focus:

- Resources: Because of FML restrictions on the counter ISIS fight in Iraq and Syria, units in OSS became a resource provider to OIR. Draining off forces from the OSS mission diminishes the IDHQ's ability to fight the OSS mission tonight. Operational requirements in both OIR and OFS have spread OSS forces from one end of the theater to the other; close management of them is a necessity.

- Transitions: With the OSS forces, the velocity of change (rotation) is very high. With the exception of the ABCT, the brigade headquarters (Air Defense, Field Artillery, Engineer, and Aviation) and their battalions all rotate on separate schedules. That equates to 14 different headquarters at the battalion or brigade level that rotate yearly. The IDHQ is responsible for the RSOI and training for all these rotation forces. On average, it takes 30 days once on the ground in theater, to get the unit back to an Objective–T level of readiness.
- Multi National Inertia: Getting things done in theater is complicated by all the little “ankle biters” that come from working with host nations. The term “Multi National Inertia” refers to US forces act unilaterally, or without regard for the host nation culture. The Arab culture places a very high value on acting honorably and Arabs have long memories. A single wrong act in the present can resurface much later in a way not favorable to the US.

Lesson: Future IDHQs’ education process must start before, not during, the mobilization process. Commanders should develop a professional reading list for all levels of leaders in the division and insist that people read and understand the region’s history and background. Post-mobilization training should include a full week of academics covering regional background, strategic overview, and Joint and embassy operations (working with and in). As part of the last, we recommend having representatives from the embassy country teams present to contribute to the academic discussion. Have prepared classes presented by subject matter experts in the region.

4-2. Observation: Building Partnership Capacity is an important part of the IDHQ in executing its mission.

Discussion: Many of the battalions in OSS had partnerships with host nation forces. For example, each of the ABCT’s battalions aligned with a Kuwaiti Brigade. Prior to the IDHQ, these U.S. battalions had no clear direction for doing partnered activities; they set their own training agendas. Over time, the IDHQ had enough information to assess the various partnered forces and training needs, the division provided guidance and a focus for the battalions. This allowed commanders to nest partnered activities with requirements to accomplish their intermediate military objectives.

The division formulated some measures of effectiveness for counterpart unit training and readiness. The division intent is to pass these to follow-on U.S. units rotating into OSS to prevent wheel reinvention and redundant/repetitive assessment efforts.

Lesson: Working closely with host nation militaries is a primary task of the IDHQ and their subordinate brigades. Develop measures of effectiveness for assessing the success of partnership and working interoperability is important.

4-3. Observation: The complex over-classification of information can impede the exchange of relevant information with coalition partners.

Discussion: OPORDs / CONPLANS that cover partnership efforts were written at S//NF with release at the FVEY level. SIPR default classification is S//NF. This impedes release of sharable information to those partners. Partnership efforts across directorates and functions are not always easily associated with existing entries in classification guidance. Inconsistencies over the years of operations create varying disclosure perceptions.

Lesson: CENTCOM and ARCENT should provide a more detailed security classification guidance specific to OIR and partnership efforts (bilateral and multilateral). These will provide greater clarity as to what is classified and what is not, therefore increasing opportunities for sharing with our regional partners.