

TACFIRE

—and Chemical Corps make winning battlefield combo

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Here you are, working in the Tactical Operation Center (TOC) as the unit's chemical officer on another field training exercise (FTX). Your NBC element (NBCE) is set up to handle any major nuclear or chemical catastrophe that the enemy horde can throw your way. You've trained your NBC subordinates in garrison and now you hope to test their abilities on this exercise.

Instead, you pass along an occasional downwind message and resume your duties as an assistant S3 TOC operations officer. You have little opportunity to congest the command radio net with long NBC reports to train or test the proficiency of your subordinates in an integrated field environment. The FTX ends, your technical skills left unchallenged and your role as NBC advisor to the commander never exercised.

Does this scenario sound familiar? Every Chemical Corps officer has felt the frustration of not having the means to effectively integrate the training of his NBCE personnel into field exercises. Training the NBCEs usually requires transmissions of lengthy formatted messages that simply tie up radio nets for too long. By exercising the NBC warning and reporting system, the normal flow of command information must be interrupted for

some period of time. This is a trade-off most commanders are not willing to make.

Fortunately, if you find yourself in a tactical fire direction system (TACFIRE) equipped division, an effective solution awaits. In 1986, the 1st Armored Division Artillery (DIVARTY) initiated an imaginative approach aimed at maximizing the many nuclear and chemical capabilities offered by the TACFIRE computer system. The DIVARTY selected one of its 74A chemical officers and sent him to a six-week TACFIRE fire support element course. They wanted a trained, proficient fire support planner and target analyst who would also possess a sound doctrinal knowledge of tactical nuclear and chemical operations.

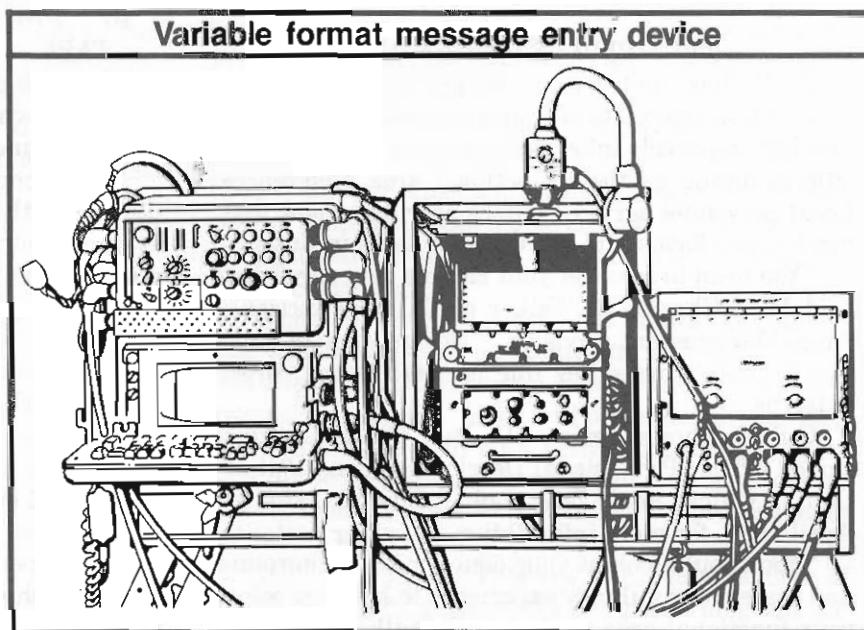
DIVARTY's initiative soon paid off. The TACFIRE system is an ideal means for analysis and dissemination of critical nuclear and chemical battlefield information. A TACFIRE-equipped DIVARTY locates computer subscribers in each of its artillery battalions, the maneuver and aviation brigade

TOCs, as well as the division TOC and Tactical Air Command (TAC).

Each subscriber, digitally linked into the TACFIRE network, transmits and receives essential NBC information. The electronic line printer (ELP) provides the receiver with a hard copy data printout. TACFIRE subscribers throughout the division now digitally transmit NBC information.

Artillery fire support subscribers, usually collocated with a Chemical Corps representative within each unit TOC, acknowledge message receipt and give the printed data from the ELP to the NBCE for action. This two-way interface promotes timely and accurate dissemination and coordination of NBC data without tying up command and fire support nets for long periods. The NBC information, typed up and digitally transmitted, reaches its receiver within seconds, instead of minutes.

Fire support officers, working with their Chemical Corps counterparts, now began to utilize fully the many nuclear and chemical capabilities of the TACFIRE system, max-



imizing the training benefit to both the Field Artillery and Chemical Corps.

The DIVARTY finds that a TACFIRE-trained chemical officer working in the division fire support element can assess more realistically nuclear and chemical target analysis and the employment effects of these weapons. Similarly, the division NBCE realizes the operational value of TACFIRE nuclear and chemical analysis. Analysis that normally takes hours for the NBCE to complete manually, reduces to minutes with TACFIRE automation. Offensive and defensive NBC operations soon become a continuous and integrated part of every CPX, FTX, and DIVARTY ARTEP.

Only the imagination limits the NBC applications of TACFIRE. A chemical officer familiar with, or trained on, the TACFIRE system

possesses a valuable training tool that generates all of the following data.

- Nuclear fire planning
- Chemical fire planning
- Nuclear target analysis
- Chemical target analysis
- Fallout prediction
- Chemical hazard areas
- NBC 1 and NBC 3 report formats
- Vulnerability analysis
- Minimum safe distances

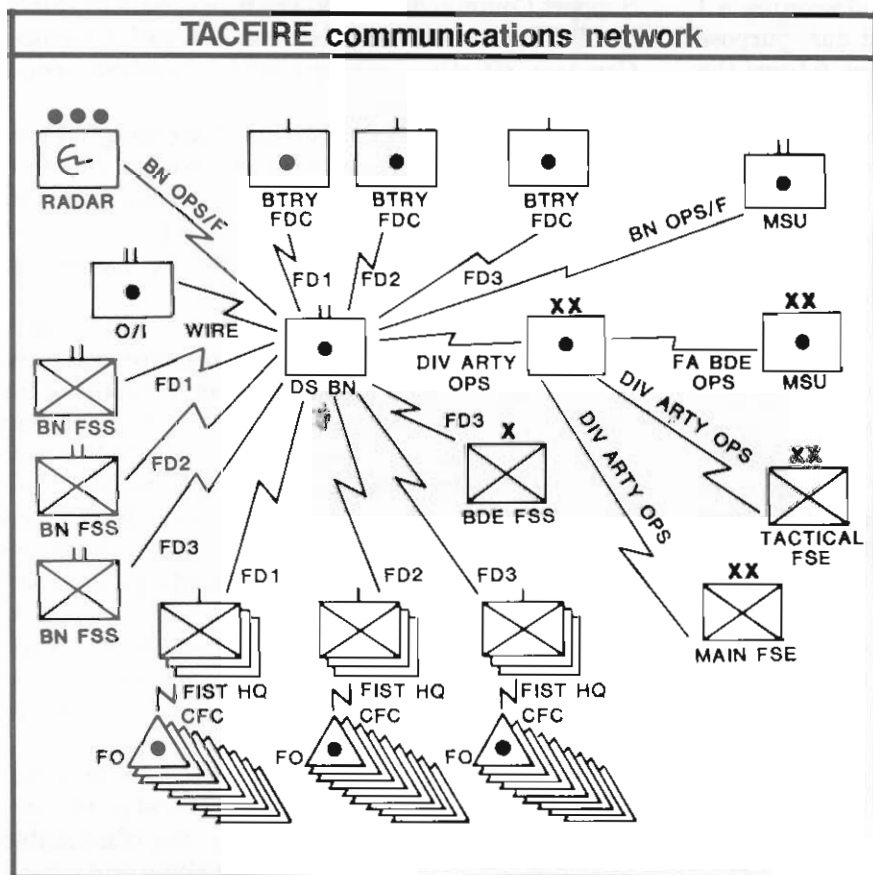
The Combat Target Intelligence and Plain Text Message formats allow further dissemination of:

- Critical NBC intelligence
- Chemical/effective downwind messages
- STRIKWARN messages
- Radiation status reports
- NBC 1 through NBC 6 reports

By working closely with the fire support officer and armed with the knowledge of TACFIRE's NBC

capabilities, chemical officers at all levels can coordinate, analyze, integrate, and execute an effective NBCE training program into any unit's operation. Armed with this new knowledge, you now confidently deploy to the field.

Here you are working in the TOC, the unit's chemical officer, familiar with TACFIRE and coordinating closely on this FTX with the fire support officer. The enemy horde begins its attack by devastating the battlefield with nuclear and chemical strikes. The ELP begins spewing out NBC reports, MSDs, chemical hazard areas, and radiation status reports from across the division sector. You and your NBCE personnel begin advising your commanders in the field, testing your abilities and showing them what you know by providing valuable input to your unit's operations. The FTX ends, your abilities challenged, and proficiency tested. You return to garrison with a feeling of pride and satisfaction in knowing that you have played an important role in the successful accomplishment of your unit's mission.



CPT A. Christopher St. Jean is a former Chemical Corps officer. He graduated with a BA degree in 1983 from Loyola College in Maryland. CPT St. Jean has attended the chemical officer basic course, the Air Force ground operations specialist course, and the TACFIRE fire support element course. While assigned to the 1st Armored Division in West Germany, he served as a battalion chemical officer, field artillery battery executive officer, division artillery chemical officer, DIVARTY liaison officer to the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, and as a target analyst and assistant fire support coordinator in the division fire support element. CPT St. Jean is currently attending the aviation officer advanced course.