



# CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER

FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



## ANNEX 3-03 COUNTERLAND OPERATIONS

### DERIVATIVE MISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH COUNTERLAND

Last Updated: 16 April 2014

Derivative mission-types are frequently tasked to complement and support counterland operations. The following discussion briefly describes common missions associated with the effective accomplishment of, [close air support](#) (CAS) and [air interdiction](#) (AI).

**[Forward Air Controller \(Airborne\) \(FAC\[A\]\)](#)**. FAC(A) missions provide [terminal attack control](#) (TAC) for CAS aircraft operating in [close proximity](#) to friendly ground forces. Because of the risk of fratricide, FAC(A)s are specially trained aviation officers qualified to provide delivery clearance to CAS aircraft. The FAC(A) is the only person cleared to perform such control from the air, and can be especially useful in controlling CAS against targets that are beyond the visual range of friendly ground forces.

**[Tactical Air Coordinator \(Airborne\) \(TAC\[A\]\)](#)**. TAC(A) missions provide communications relay between the [tactical air control party](#) (TACP) and attack aircraft, as well as other agencies of the TACS, in the absence of [Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System](#) (JSTARS), [Airborne Warning and Control System](#) (AWACS), [control and reporting center](#) (CRC) or a FAC(A). The TAC(A) also expedites CAS aircraft-to-JTAC handoff during “heavy traffic” CAS operations.

**[Strike Coordination and Reconnaissance \(SCAR\)](#)**. SCAR missions use aircraft to detect targets for dedicated AI missions in a specified geographic zone. The area may be defined by a box or grid where worthwhile potential targets are known or suspected to exist, or where mobile enemy surface units have relocated because of ground fighting.

SCAR missions are normally part of the [command and control](#) (C2) interface to coordinate multiple flights, detect targets, kill targets, neutralize enemy air defenses, and provide [battle damage assessment](#) (BDA). SCAR aircrew perform a similar function for AI missions that FAC(A) provide for CAS missions. Typical tasks include cycling multiple attacking flights through the target area and providing prioritized targeting guidance to maximize the effect of each sortie. Aircrew on most fighters and some C2 platforms, such as the JSTARS, are trained to coordinate SCAR missions. Platforms like MQ-1/9 remotely-piloted aircraft can perform specific SCAR tasks such as locating, verifying, and cross-cueing other assets to positively identify targets and pass target updates. These platforms may also be able to engage targets on their own,

buddy lase for manned aircraft, and provide BDA for the same mission. Optimally, the control and sequencing of aircraft is best performed by an AWACS or a CRC.

Even though some SCAR responsibilities are similar to that of a FAC(A), *SCAR aircrew do not have the authority to conduct terminal control of CAS*. FAC(A)s undergo specialized training to effectively coordinate and integrate air-ground forces to conduct TAC safely during CAS—a SCAR aircrew does not have release authority, nor do they clear other aircraft for employment of munitions. The bottom line: a FAC(A)-qualified pilot can conduct SCAR but a SCAR pilot without FAC(A) qualification cannot conduct FAC(A) duties. Planners and commanders need to understand this important nuance when tasking XAI/armed reconnaissance missions or diverting airborne aircraft to an immediate CAS request since the AI aircrew may not be CAS qualified.

**Air superiority**. Counterland operations require freedom to act to be successful. **Counterair** provides the air superiority needed to conduct operations at a given time and place without *prohibitive* interference by an opposing force. By doing so, the aircrew can focus on target acquisition and weapons delivery parameters to achieve the desired effects. Operations prior to achieving the needed level of air superiority should be reserved for targets presenting an imminent danger.

---