Network Enterprise Centers help units prepare for war long before they arrive downrange

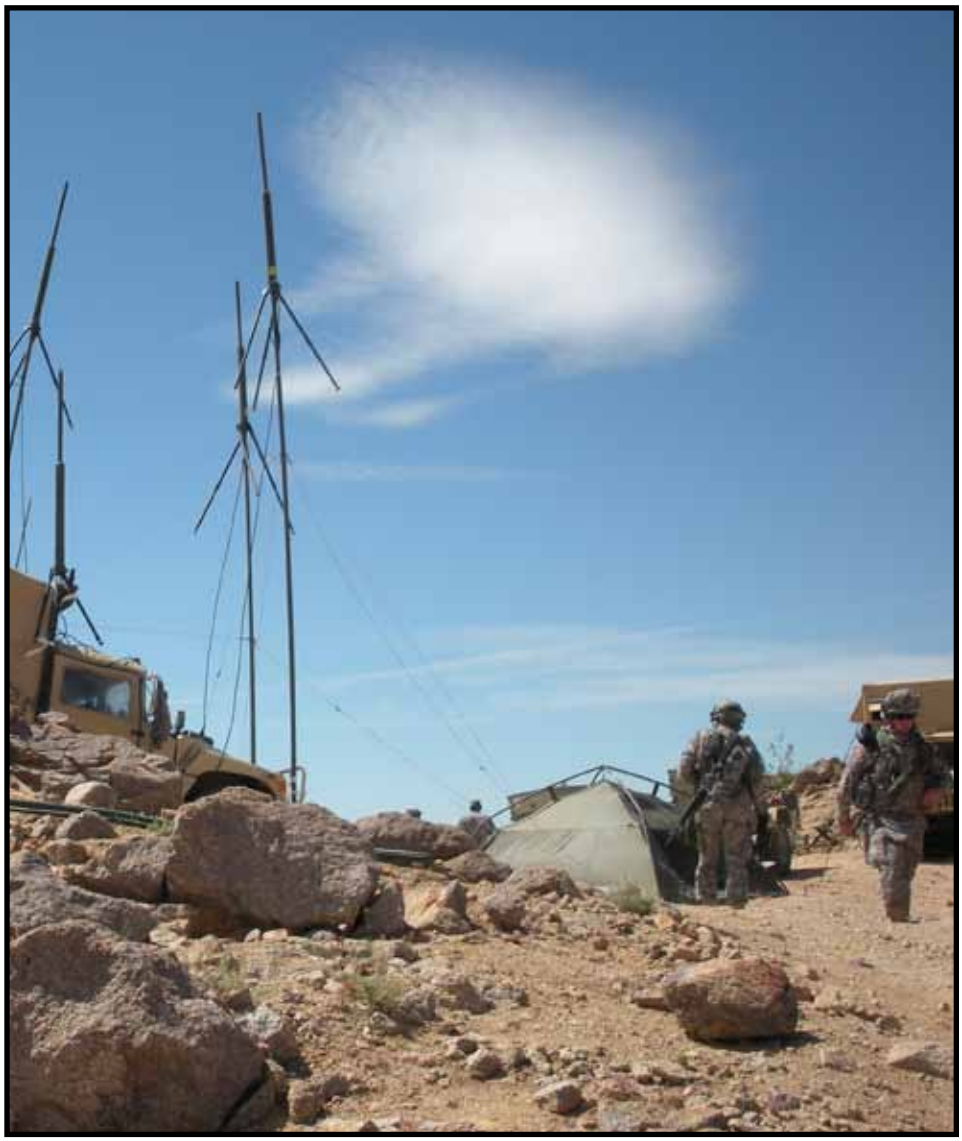
By CW3 Jason Dunn

Today units have the authority to train in garrison with their battlefield command and control system servers. They can have them physically plugged into the garrison installation campus area network using the network enterprise center provided backbone. This can be accomplished if the unit coordinates with the NEC and follows the guidelines established by TA 2006-006, dated May 2007. This applies to all operational forces; that is, any element that has a deployable requirement.

Technical Authority 2006-006 is the TA signed by Network Enterprise Technology Command providing the technical guidance for properly connecting tactical units into a NEC. Copies of this document can be found by contacting AKO, at the link below or your theater Signal brigade/strategic Signal brigade, respective theater Signal command, NETCOM G5, or the author of this document. (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/22333422). The TA effectively lays out the procedures and requirements that must be met by the OF unit before being allowed to connect in garrison to the ICAN. Under this guidance all NEC's are required to accommodate OF information technology needs. This does not give the OF the authority to connect everything,, but it does provide specific guidance for program manager fielded systems and several other scenario's that directly support war fighter needs. All systems must be on the CoN list and must be IA compliant. Visit the link: https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/137030.

The TA has good overall detail, but can be confusing to new readers. One of the key requirements of approval to connect is ensuring a healthy IA posture. This can be accomplished through the service level agreement or a memorandum of agreement that is completed between the OF and the network service provider.

In the SLA/MOA, it should be specifically spelled out how a unit will ensure IA compliance through detailed scans and how these scans will be reported to the installation IAM, and exactly which tools will be used. There are two acceptable methods to accomplish this. One method allows the NEC access to conduct scans and the other is for the unit to conduct routine internal scans and forward the results to the



Signal Soldiers with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and 63rd Expeditionary Signal Battalion setting up a communications site at the National Training Center.

installation IAM. While both methods have merit, I would encourage every S6 to conduct and report his/her own scans. This will allow units to become very familiar with the process and help sustain this capability with operations and training when the unit deploys. Either method will need to be clearly articulated and agreed upon by the both the unit S6 and the IAM. Note if an agreement cannot be met on this or any related issue, then the supporting theater Signal brigade/command should be notified and a request for further guidance generated. Often a simple phone call between the network enterprise support team leadership, brigade, or Signal command, and the NEC / OF can quickly resolve any discrepancy.

Other key components of the TA are the issue of "persistent, but nearly empty state" of the AD organizational unit structure. This basically means that the current AD OU structure should only have a few administration accounts populated. The original intent was OF units who needed to deploy to the field for any operations or training would coordinate with NEC and receive a copy of their user populated garrison OU's via an approved provisioning tool (e.g., Electronic Data Systems – Provisioning) prior to movement. This would be done in conjunction with the de-advertisement of the IP scope and other pre-movement requirements. Obviously this inhibits rapid deployment capability. It is under review to be completely removed in the next iteration of the TA.

At this time, the current OU provisioning tool, EDS-P has not been approved by the CIO-G6. Thus units will continue operating a fully populated OU structure. However, just because units will have fully functional servers and full OU structures, does not mean that units should replace their NEC as the primary service provider. The TA does not support an OF unit being its own service provider while in garrison. This does provide a means for your systems to maintain a "fight upon arrival" capable and that a small number of system administrators should be both training and maintaining these servers on a regular basis. It is NOT the intent of FORSCOM or NETCOM for any unit to operate as its primary service provider while in garrison. These systems should always be online and updating. Server training in garrison is highly recommended and encouraged.

TA 2006-006 is currently under revision. Updated drafts are under development by NETCOM G5 and should be up for approval soon. A working group was established and input was provided by 7TH Signal Command, FORSCOM, PEO-C3T, and others to help develop a revised version that is more current with our current systems and structures. NETCOM G5 has the lead to refresh the TA and publish expanded guidance. Until the new TA is published, NEC's are still referring to the original copy signed by BG [Carroll F.] Pollett [commanding general U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology command] in May 2007. This version has many antiquated names and does not reflect the current naming structure of NETCOM and FORSCOM. All references to regional chief information operations should be replaced by strategic Signal brigade. All references to department of information management should be replaced by NEC. Also deployable forces are currently being referred to as operation forces.

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Acronym QuickScan

AD – Active Directory
ATC – Approval to Connect
BG – Brigadier General
BCCS – Battlefield Command and Control System
BDE - Brigade
CMD – Command
CoN – Certificate of Networthiness
DF- Deployable Forces (replaced by OF in newer versions)
DOIM – Department of Information Management
EDS-P – Electronic Data Systems – Provisioning
FOB – Forward Operations Base
FORSCOM – Forces Command
FY – Fiscal Year
IA – Information Assurance
IAM – Information Assurance Manager
ICAN – Installation Campus Area Network
IT – Information Technology
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement
NEC – Network Enterprise Center
NEST – Network Enterprise Support Team
NETCOM – Network Enterprise Technology Command
OF – Operational Force
OU – Organizational Unit
PM – Program Manager
RCIO – Regional Chief Information Operations
SC – Signal Command
SLA – Service Level Agreement
SSB – Strategic Signal Brigade
TA – Technical Authority