

FM 3-04.120 (FM 1-120)
February 2007

Air Traffic Services Operations

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Headquarters, Department of the Army

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Air Traffic Services Operations

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***This publication supersedes FM 1-120, 22 May 1995.**

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Preface

Field manual (FM) 3-04.120 serves as a doctrinal guide primarily intended for the Theater Airfield Operations Group (TAOG), Airfield Operations Battalion (AOB), and air traffic services (ATS) company commanders, subordinate leaders, and assigned personnel. It is applicable for use by the division, corps, Theater Aviation Command (TAC), Theater Support Command (TSC), as well as the Army aviation community including members of allied, coalition, special operations, and civil support forces requiring air traffic and airfield management support. It also assists Army branch schools and joint military services in teaching Army ATS operations.

Army transformation and future force development of ATS will enable the tailoring of ATS capabilities as well as embedding an airfield management capability at theater airfields. This manual describes structure, mission, employment and sustainment of ATS units supporting major combat, stability and civil support operations. It establishes responsibilities and duties of key personnel and discusses planning considerations required for training, operations, and combat. FM 3-04.120 is authoritative and prescriptive but is not inflexible. Situations in combat are resolved by the intelligent interpretation and application of this doctrine. Standardized ATS operations at division and theater level are necessary for the success of modularity, readiness, and effective maneuver support operations.

This FM applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, the United States Army Reserve, and the Army civilian employees of the transformation force unless otherwise stated. FM 3-04.120 builds on collective knowledge and experience gained through recent operations, exercises, and the deliberate process of informed reasoning. Its principles and fundamentals address new technologies and evolving responses to diverse threats. It will also assist Army branch schools in teaching ATS operations.

The proponent of this publication is Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Send comments and recommendations on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to publications and Blank Forms) or automated link (<http://www.usapa.army.mil/da2028/daform2028.asp>) to Commander, United States Army Aviation Warfighting Center (USAAWC), ATTN: ATZQ-TD-D, Fort Rucker, Alabama 36362-5263. Comments may be e-mailed to the Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) at av.doctrine@us.army.mil. Other doctrinal information can be found on the Internet at Army Knowledge Online (AKO) or call defense switch network (DSN) 558-3551 or (334) 255-3551.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

This publication has been reviewed for operations security considerations.

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Chapter 1

Organization and Missions

Over the last century, warfare became increasingly complex. Army organizations changed from large division sized organizations to today's brigade-based combined arms teams. To meet this challenge ATS organizations have undergone a transformation to better enable aviation to meet the requirements of the changing battlefield. ATS organizations are now designed to efficiently support Army aviation and joint, interagency, interdepartmental, and multinational (JIIM) forces. ATS organizations enable safe and efficient use of positive and procedural control measures with a designated airfield management structure managing high-density and congested airfields at theater level. The organizational tenets for this design are doctrinally balanced, logistically supportable, modernized, multifunctional, and modular.

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

1-1. ATS organizations are an enabling component of the modular, scalable and tailored Army aviation force. Responsiveness requires a capability to support forcible and early entry contingency response and conduct simultaneous operations immediately on arrival. Air traffic operations are conducted overseas within contiguous and noncontiguous areas, throughout the spectrum of conflict, and during all phases of campaign themes. Air traffic organizations conduct civil support operations in response to natural or manmade disasters, accidents, and incidents within the United States and its territories.

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1-2. ATS companies assigned to a combat aviation brigade (CAB) conduct operations as organizational elements of the general support aviation battalion (GSAB). This command relationship maximizes efficiency of operations, serving as a combat enabler for Army aviation and divisions. The company must be able to operate and complete its mission with the CAB or as a member of an aviation task force supporting JIIM forces. The company and its elements may operate within an aviation battalion task force in a direct support (DS) or general support (GS) role.

1-3. AOBs and TAOGs are additional ATS forces that support theater-level requirements. The AOBs have an airfield management element as well as air traffic personnel and equipment to execute airfield and air traffic responsibilities. One TAOG is capable of supporting five theater airfields as required. TAOGs and AOBs are deployed based on METT-TC and may operate from a single base, or conduct split-based operations in multiple locations within the theater of operations.

UNIT SUPPORT CAPABILITY

- 1-4. The ATS company, AOB, and TAOG must be prepared to support—
- Strategic deployment planning and execution.
 - Administrative and tactical movements.
 - Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).

- Employment of communications systems.
- Force protection/sustainment.

PLANNING

- 1-5. The ATS company, AOB, and TAOG headquarters must be able to simultaneously—
- Plan, prepare, execute, and assess current and future operations.
 - Visualize, describe, and direct subordinate elements to accomplish missions.
 - Protect and sustain their forces.

ENVIRONMENTS

- 1-6. All units must train for and accomplish operations under the following conditions:
- Near ground forces.
 - Day or night.
 - Under limited visibility (instrument meteorological conditions [IMCs] proficiency is critical).
 - All environments such as desert; mountain; rolling hills; dense forest; jungle; plains; urban; hot, basic, cold and severe cold weather; and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN).

ORGANIZATION

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES COMPANY

1-7. The ATS company (figure 1-1) is organic to the GSAB for training, safety, standardization, leader development and sustainment. It is inherently dependent on the GSAB for ground maintenance, logistics, personnel actions, feeding, health care, and other sustainment support services.

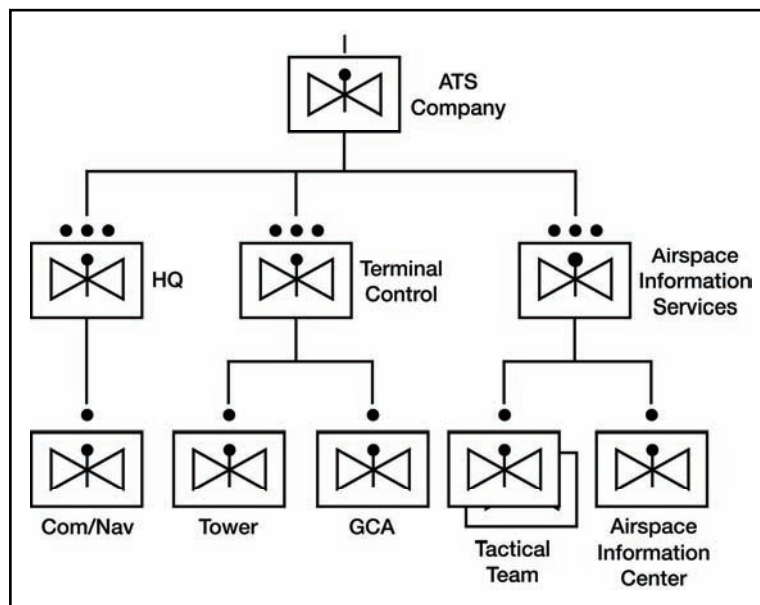


Figure 1-1. ATS company organizational chart

AIRFIELD OPERATIONS BATTALION

1-8. The AOB (figure 1-2) is composed of several staff and operational sections/platoons required for the management and execution airfield activities at designated airfields within the theater of operations. The AOB has organic ATS forces, airfield management headquarters, and sustainment personnel.

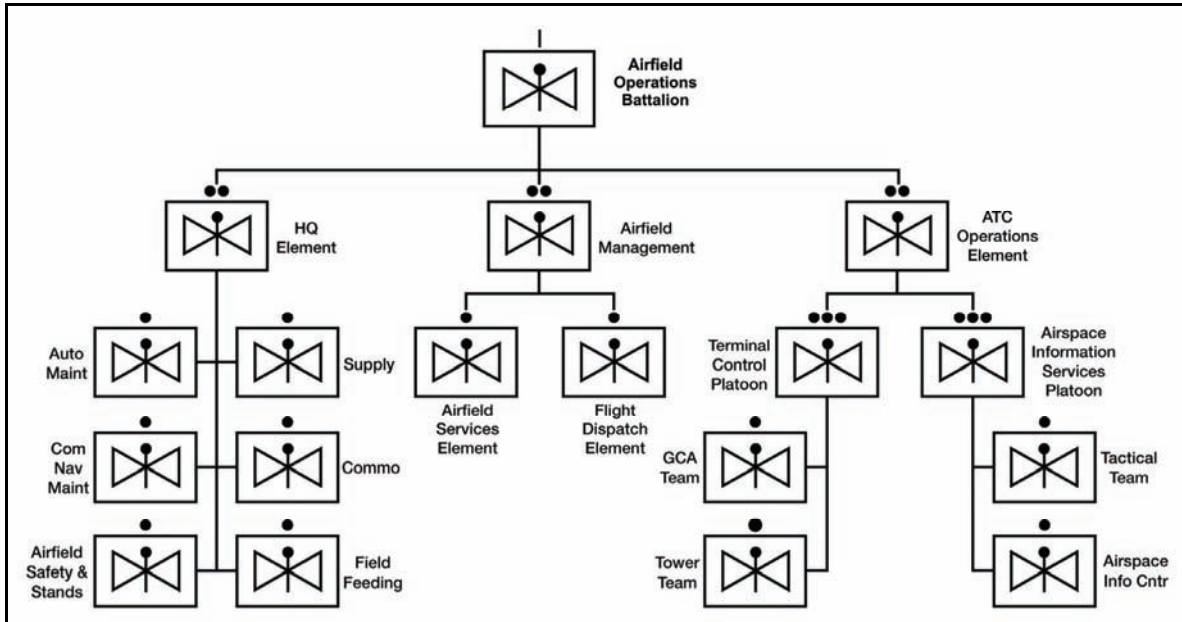


Figure 1-2. AOB organization

THEATER AIRFIELD OPERATIONS GROUP

1-9. The TAOG (figure 1-3) is organic to the theater aviation command. A TAOG consists of a headquarters and headquarters company (HHC), and five AOBs. The TAOG provides theater airfield command and control (C2), planning, and oversight throughout the theater of operations.

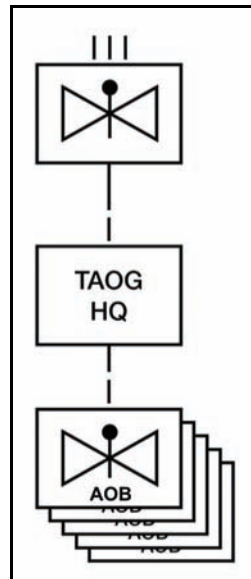


Figure 1-3. TAOG organization

1-10. Figure 1-4 depicts the TAOG headquarters organization.

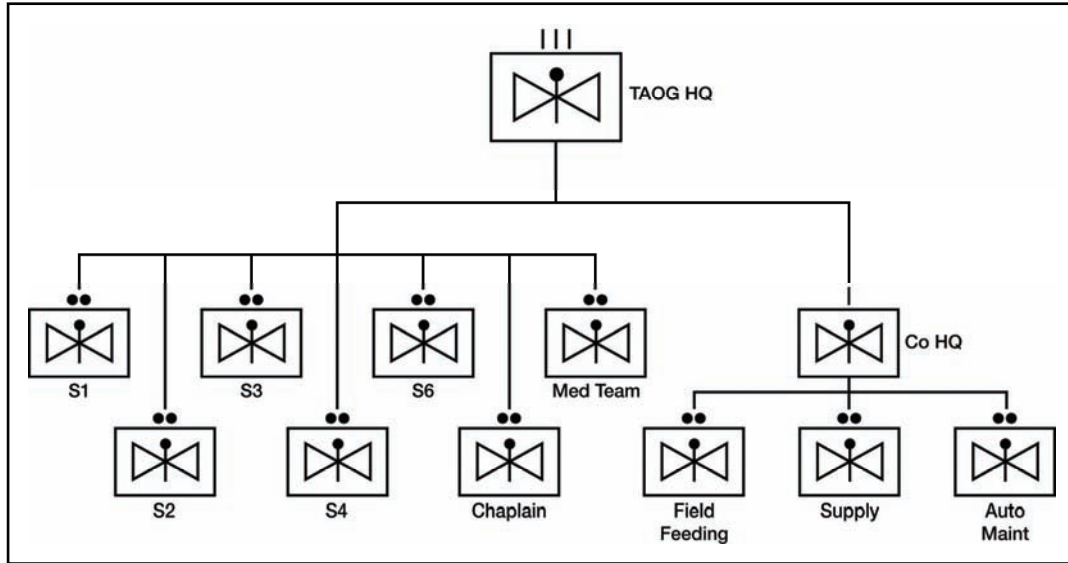


Figure 1-4. TAOG headquarters organization

MISSION AND SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES COMPANY

1-11. An ATS company supports CABs by providing terminal area and en route airspace information and control services. ATS companies provide services to support CABs throughout full spectrum operations. ATS companies are composed of a control tower, ground control approach (GCA), airspace information center (AIC), and two tactical aviation control teams (TACTs). They also deploy as part of the CAB and are an integral part of the brigade's readiness.

1-12. ATS companies have the following capabilities:

- Deployable within 96 hours of notification, and are equipped and capable of operations in any environment.
- Control tower operations upon 30 minutes of arrival in an area of operation (AO) and become fully operational within 1 hour of arrival.
- Provide self-sustaining operations for 72 hours upon arrival in an AO.
- TACTs in austere/tactical environment operational 15 minutes after arrival in an AO.
- Support aircraft recovery operations including personnel recovery, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), and assistance to aircraft in distress (battle damage, inclement weather, and disoriented aircraft).
- Provide airspace management operations in support of manned and unmanned air operations for its designated airspace sector by providing updates of airspace information.
- Provide navigational assistance to friendly aircraft.
- Coordinate air traffic control (ATC) procedures with military C2 agencies and civilian agencies/organizations, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- Provide personnel for survey/reconnaissance party team; ensuring air traffic procedures, ATS equipment emplacement criteria, and terminal instrument procedures (TERPs) are considered and addressed during site survey.

- Provide personnel as required for integrated aviation planning and management of air operations.
- Provide precision and nonprecision navigational aids (NAVAIDs).
- Provide essential situational awareness (SA) information for use in activation and execution of the airfield base defense zone (BDZ).
- Provide ATS subject matter experts to assist with the CAB's mission area relating to the JIIM force.
- Provide ATS operations across the spectrum of conflict to include civil support and homeland security operations facilitating restoration, revitalization, stability, and sustainment services.

AIRFIELD OPERATIONS BATTALION

1-13. The AOB provides airfield management, base operations, and ATS services at designated airfields throughout the theater of operations. The battalion also provides battle command to other airfield service support assets. The AOB establishes an airspace information center for airspace management and interfaces with the theater airspace system.

1-14. The organizational design of the AOB does not include the associated equipment and personnel needed to provide a full range of airfield activities in support of aviation operations. An ATC operations element, airfield services element, safety/standardization section, and communication/navigation (COMNAV) maintenance section are organic to the AOB. Aircraft crash rescue; hazardous material handling; up and down loading of cargo; weather services; petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) section; and the base defense operations center (BDOC) are external support elements.

1-15. AOB has the following capabilities—

- Conducts airfield safety inspections.
- Develops local flying area/rules and hazards map.
- Transmits flight movement messages.
- Develops and coordinates the preaccident plan.
- Coordinates local flying rules on theater airspace.
- Provide personnel for survey/reconnaissance party team, ensuring air traffic procedures, ATS equipment emplacement criteria, and TERPs are considered and addressed during site survey.
- Aircraft fuel, refueling services.*
- Hazardous material handling.*
- Cargo up and down loading.*
- Force protection/security/quick reaction force (QRF).*
- Provides liaison with the airspace authority joint force air component commander (JFACC)/Combined Air Operations Center.
- Establishes airfield crash system and provides flight dispatch services.
- Processes/disseminates air tasking order (ATO)/airspace control order (ACO) and special instructions (SPINS) information.
- Provides weather service.*
- Processes ACM requests for terminal areas.
- Provides airspace common operating picture (COP).
- Establishes terminal ATS (tower and GCA).
- Establishes Airspace Information Centers.
- Interfaces with theater or corps command, control, and communications (C3) air on airspace, aviation procedures guide (APG), or heliport procedures guide.

Note: * Capabilities requiring augmentation.

THEATER AIRFIELD OPERATIONS GROUP

1-16. The mission of a TAOG is to provide oversight, technical expertise and standardization for its assigned AOBs. The TAOG executes theater airfield operations and synchronizes air traffic in a joint environment. It establishes theater airfields in support of reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) requirements, seaport of debarkation (SPOD), aerial port of debarkation (APOD) and JIIM operations. The TAOG coordinates and integrates airspace use requirements with the Army airspace command and control (A2C2) element of the controlling headquarters. The TAOG coordinates and schedules flight checks, reviews and processes TERPs procedures, and provides quality assurance of controller, ATC maintenance, and flight operations training and certification programs. It also supports the Army Service Component Command (ASCC) on Title 10 ATS issues, liaison responsibilities with host nation airspace authority, and other United States and combined services and agencies.

1-17. The TAOG has the following capabilities:

- Develop and validate theater ATS force requirements.
- Interface with appropriate theater staff elements for the planning and execution of airfield and ATS mission sets.
- Reviewing and processing TERPs for terminal areas.
- Providing personnel for survey/reconnaissance party team, ensuring air traffic procedures, ATS equipment emplacement criteria, and TERPs are considered and addressed during site survey.
- Conduct flyability checks for theater NAVAIDs.
- Providing expertise to ASCC on Title 10, host nation, and ATS issues, including contract ATC and ATS systems support contractors.
- Coordinate and synchronize ATS field service representatives.
- Synchronize theater ATS maintenance efforts.
- Identify ATS equipment staging/reset requirements.
- Executing ATS liaison responsibilities as required by ASCC with host nation airspace authority and combined/joint air operations center.

Chapter 2

Command and Control

The C2 system is defined as the facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel essential to a commander for planning, directing, and controlling operations. C2 is an essential element of the art and science of warfare. No single specialized function, by itself or combined with others, has a purpose without it. Although commanders are responsible for C2, it also applies to staff officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs).

SECTION I – BATTLE COMMAND

2-1. Battle command incorporates three vital components: decision making, leadership, and control. Decision making entails knowing whether to decide, then when and what to decide. These judgments are tactical and operational, but can be strategic as well. Control is inherent in battle command; it monitors the status of organizational effectiveness and identifies deviations from standards. Control provides the means to regulate, synchronize, and monitor forces and functions.

These tasks, performed through collection, fusion, assessment, and dissemination of information and data, allow commanders to lead from critical points on the battlefield, delegate authority, and synchronize unit actions with other battlefield operations. Skilled staffs work within command intent to direct and control units and resource allocations to support the desired end.

2-2. C2 gives commanders the structure and means to make decisions and evaluate developing situations. Units translate decisions and higher-level intent into productive actions by using information derived from the C2 process consisting of the following steps:

- Acquire information.
- Assess whether new actions are required.
- Determine what these actions should be.
- Direct subordinates to take appropriate actions.
- Supervise and assess.

2-3. Effective and efficient C2 begins and ends with the commander. The commander must develop techniques and procedures that promote an expeditious flow of information throughout the C2 process. These techniques and procedures should be in the unit's tactical standard operating procedures (SOPs). FM 6-0 and FM 1-02 provide techniques.

ORGANIZATION

2-4. How the commander organizes the C2 system can complicate or simplify execution. Organizing effectively requires commanders to apply the fundamental principles of organization for C2 and manage the staff for continuous C2. Organizational decisions establish the chain of command and task organization directly affecting C2. Each of these tenets can influence where commanders obtain facts, whom they rely on for advice, and how they supervise. Organizational decisions affect the flow of information to

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commanders. In essence, organizations establish formal communication channels and determine how commanders distribute their forces.

2-5. Organization serves the important function of providing sources of group identity for Soldiers assigned to the command. A command operates most effectively when Soldiers consider themselves members of one or more groups characterized by high levels of loyalty, cooperation, morale, and commitment.

2-6. Information flows vertically within the chain of command, but an organization should not limit its flow to the chain of command. Information also must flow horizontally among adjacent, supported, and supporting units. Information flows informally and unofficially between individuals according to personal relationships, as well as within formal channels. Information channels provide important redundancy.

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES COMMAND AND SUPPORT RELATIONSHIPS

Air Traffic Services Company

2-7. The ATS company is assigned to the GSAB within the aligned CAB. The ability of the ATS company to operate teams independently is paramount to mission success. Elements of the ATS company may be required to operate for short or extended periods separated from the main body of the company.

Airfield Operations Battalion

2-8. AOBs are assigned to the TAOG and operate in a GS role to the theater. An AOB deployed separately without a TAOG operates in a DS role to a geographical unit within the area of operation.

Theater Airfield Operations Group

2-9. The TAOG is assigned to the TAC. When deployed separately the TAOG may be under the operational control (OPCON) of the TSC.

SECTION II – COMMAND AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES COMPANY

COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

Commander

2-10. The company commander is a military occupational specialty (MOS) 15B aviation officer responsible for the command and integration of the unit with Army aviation or joint agencies. The commander provides critical flying expertise to the ATS mission set that better enables planning and execution of ATS. Unique responsibilities of the ATS commander include—

- Providing operational understanding of aircraft performance characteristics in establishing airspace and air traffic procedures.
- Integrating aircrew and aircraft training progression into the ATS collective training scheme.
- Evaluating ATS procedures and controller proficiency through routine flight assessments.

First Sergeant

2-11. The first sergeant (1SG) is an MOS 15P noncommissioned officer with an MOS 15Q ATC background. The ATS 1SG is the commander's primary advisor on enlisted Soldiers and provides unique operational experience in air traffic training, procedures, and air traffic regulation. Unique responsibilities of the ATS 1SG include—

- Monitoring air traffic training development, proficiency, and assignments.
- Identifying, planning, and assessing Soldier training tasks to support the performance of collective (unit) tasks of the mission essential task list (METL).

- Providing recommendations on ATS reclassification, medical suspensions, and flight fitness actions.

Platoon Leader

2-12. The platoon leader is an MOS 150A air traffic and airspace management technician warrant officer. He supervises employment of platoon personnel and equipment. The platoon leader also—

- Manages and supervises enlisted ATC personnel.
- Is thoroughly knowledgeable of procedures and standards for separation and control of manned and unmanned systems, airports, and airspace.
- Provides standardized training and quality assurance of certification programs.
- Reviews and revises TERPs packets and assists in the certification process of associated NAVAIDs and facilities.
- Assists in development and revision of controlled and special use airspace.
- Provides technical expertise on installation and operation of ATC equipment.
- Applies standards, time limitations, and policies for issuing controller qualification, certification, and facility ratings to ATC personnel.
- Applies procedures for cancellation, suspension or reissuance, and withdrawal of certificates and facility ratings.
- Provides ATS input for the development and revision of APGs.

Platoon Sergeant

2-13. The platoon sergeant is an MOS 15Q40 air traffic controller. The platoon sergeant is the primary assistant and advisor to the platoon leader concerning all aspects of operations, personnel, administration, ATS services, and equipment emplacement. The platoon sergeant may serve as an ATC specialist/control tower operator (CTO) examiner in accordance with Army regulation (AR) 95-2 and appropriate FAA Orders (FAAOs). The platoon sergeant assumes responsibilities of the platoon leader in his or her absence. As the lowest level NCO involved in company METLs, the platoon sergeant teaches collective and individual tasks to Soldiers assigned to the platoon.

2-14. Using tough, realistic, and intellectually and physically challenging performance-oriented training, the platoon sergeant ensures Army standards are met and maintained. Additionally, the platoon sergeant conducts cross training to promote critical wartime skills within the unit, evaluates the effectiveness of the platoon, and provides training feedback to the commander and 1SG during after-action reviews (AARs) on unit collective training.

COMMUNICATION/NAVIGATION MAINTENANCE SECTION

2-15. The COMNAV maintenance section, organic to the ATS company, consists of an ATC Systems Maintenance Supervisor and four equipment repairers. The ATC Systems Maintenance Supervisor is an MOS 94D30 NCO. The maintenance chief is responsible for coordinating field maintenance of ATS equipment assigned to the company.

TERMINAL CONTROL PLATOON

2-16. The terminal control platoon consists of a control tower team with nondirectional beacon (NDB) and a GCA team led by a platoon leader and platoon sergeant. This platoon is responsible for providing terminal control services to establish one airfield with associated precision and nonprecision approaches.

Control Tower Team

2-17. The control tower team is responsible for control of friendly aircraft operating within terminal airspace. This airspace is typically limited to an area visually observed and surveyed from the tower (approximately a 5-nautical mile radius from the center of the airfield with an altitude based on operational

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