



# Counterintelligence/Human Intelligence Exploitation Team (HET) Operations in Iraq

## Quick Look Report

6 August 2008

*"The HET teams produced more reporting... than any other intel asset we have out there."*

Former Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Multi-National Force -West <sup>1</sup>

This MCCLL report, like others on a wide variety of topics, is an "initial impressions" summary that identifies key observations or potential lessons from a collection effort. These observations are not service level decisions.

Observations highlight potential shortfalls, risks or issues experienced by units that may suggest a need for institutional change or corrective action. The intent is to pass these observations to those responsible for how Marine forces are organized, trained, equipped and provided to combatant commanders. This unclassified document has been reviewed in accordance with guidance contained in United States Central Command Security Classification Regulation 380-14 dated 9 June 2005. This document contains information EXEMPT FROM MANDATORY

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Col Monte Dunard, Director MCCLL.

**Counterintelligence/Human Intelligence  
Exploitation Team (HET) Operations in Iraq  
Quick Look Report**

**Purpose:** To inform D/Cs CD&I, PP&O and M&RA, COMMARFORPAC, COMMARFORCOM, COMUSMARCENT, COMMARFORRES, CG TECOM, Director of Intelligence, and others on results of subject collection effort.

**Bottom Line Up Front:** HET is viewed as a highly valuable and effective intelligence generating asset which, in conjunction with other intelligence sources, provides a significant amount of actionable intelligence during operations in Iraq. *"The HET teams produced more reporting ... than any other intel asset we have out there."*<sup>2</sup> *"HETs have been the pointy tip of the spear in this counterinsurgency fight. Two-thirds of MNF-W operations are directly driven by HET operations."*<sup>3</sup> **Key observations from this collection include the following.**

- **Short dwell times in CONUS between HET personnel deployments required a prioritization of mission oriented training over annual training requirements and professional military education (PME).**
- **Interviewees stated that the addition of the counterintelligence (CI)/HUMINT SNCO to the TTECG staff has resulted in the insertion of more realistic HUMINT scenarios during Mojave Viper (MV). HETs typically link up with their supported battalions for the first time at MV.**
- **1st Intelligence Battalion and CI/HET Company leaders stated that they were manned at 70% of their linguist requirements, and that time for language training was insufficient: *"There's just not enough time for the language piece."***<sup>4</sup>
- **Interviewees stated that very little HUMINT is being gathered by Marines from the female portion of the Iraqi population. Without female CI/HUMINT Marines, it is difficult to gain access to Iraqi females in view of cultural norms relating to females being alone with males not related to them. The majority of those interviewed favored allowing women into the CI/HUMINT field.**

The remainder of this report contains more detail and recommendations on the above and other topics.

**Background**

This in-theater collection was conducted in Iraq over a 60 day period from April to June 2008, and was a continuation of the focused collection effort on units participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF and OEF), as directed by the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and endorsed by the Commanding Generals, I and II Marine Expeditionary Force. The collection sought to examine the mission, scope, successes, shortfalls, equipment, manning and emerging issues associated with human intelligence exploitation teams that deployed to Iraq during OIF 08.1.

The CI mission is to conduct counterintelligence activities to identify and counteract the threat posed by foreign intelligence capabilities and by organizations or individuals engaged in espionage, sabotage, subversion or terrorism.<sup>5</sup> The HET mission is to collect and report timely, accurate and mission focused information from human sources in order to fulfill tactical, MEF, theater and national level intelligence requirements.<sup>6</sup>

**Key Points:**

With a dwell time in CONUS of five months between seven month deployments, completion of pre-deployment training was challenging for the members of CI/HUMINT Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion from which the HETs were sourced. Post-deployment leave and multiple holidays further reduced available training time. To successfully complete mission specific training, annual training and professional military education (PME) were sacrificed.<sup>7</sup> Time available for language and cultural training was viewed as insufficient. The cumulative effect of multiple deployments added to the impact of a short PTP period for CI/HUMINT Marines.<sup>8</sup>

MCCLL note: Commenting on a draft of this report, the lead CI/HUMINT officer at Intelligence Department (IOC), HQMC noted that, *"The high operational tempo affects not just CI/HUMINT Marines, but the entire intelligence community. Our SIGINT Marines are currently in a 1:0.9 dwell right now as opposed to a 1:1 for CI/HUMINT."*<sup>9</sup>

Pre-deployment training was viewed as effective in achieving mission specific training goals. Mojave Viper served as a cohesion building experience for HETs and their supported battalions, and provided an opportunity to educate the battalions on HET capabilities.<sup>10</sup> The addition of the CI/HUMINT SNCO to the TTECG staff resulted in the insertion of more realistic HUMINT scenarios during MV. Some HET Marines expressed the opinion that they did not need MV military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and tactical training but rather just the FINEX. Specialized courses provided by private contractors received positive reviews. These courses included the interrogation and source operations course provided by C-HET Solutions; the Reid Associates Detainee Operations Course and the Harris Radio Course.

Interviewees stated that training for Mine Resistant Armor Protected (MRAP) vehicles, crew-served weapons, language and cultural knowledge was insufficient. Limited training time was most often cited as the problem. The extended length of time needed to develop an effective language capability was a strong concern since this is considered a critical HET skill.<sup>11</sup>

MCCLL note: The Tactical Iraqi Language and Culture Training System (TILTS) is a personal computer based, scenario-oriented software program that can be used for pre-deployment or in-country training to give Marines a usable grasp of Iraqi culture, gestures, and situational language. The goal of TILTS is to shrink language and cultural training time from several months of traditional classroom learning to 80 hours or less of hands on computer based interactive training.<sup>12</sup> This training can be taken in increments, integrated with existing pre-deployment training. Other languages available are Pashtu, Dari and French. Commenting on a draft of this report, the Operations Officer, Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL) notes that *"CAOCL has developed a multitude of other classroom and distributed learning (DL) training products. TLTS is a DL product designed for use as a tool in-conjunction with other CAOCL sponsored training modules in an overall blended learning environment*

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*with respect to the PTP Continuum," that CAOCL can provide units targeted training, and that language and regional expertise requirements must be identified far enough in advance so that required training and funds can be projected.* <sup>13</sup>

HETs in direct support of infantry battalions are dependent on their supported battalion for mobility and security. With Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) assuming increasing responsibility for security, and as USMC infantry units begin to go into an overwatch posture, HETs are faced with the challenge of how to continue to operate in their AO. There is a strong feeling that HETs should be provided with their own organic mobility and security in the future. At the start of the OIF 08.1 deployment, 1st Intelligence Battalion recruited a convoy security element from infantry and reservists who volunteered to deploy for this purpose. This test concept proved effective but is probably not the long term solution needed. Those planning to deploy HETs in upcoming deployments must consider their mobility and security needs in a changing operational environment. <sup>14</sup>

Interviewees stated that very little HUMINT is being gathered by Marines from the female portion of the Iraqi population. This is attributed to cultural norms relating to females being alone with males not related to them, and the fact that female Marines are not currently allowed to enter the CI/HUMINT field. <sup>15</sup> The majority of those interviewed favored allowing women into the CI/HUMINT field. Similar views were expressed by II MEF G-2 personnel interviewed in March 2008, shortly after their OIF deployment.

*"We're losing access to fifty percent of the Iraqi population by not having females who can effectively interact with one half the population. ... There are a lot of scenarios where it may not be feasible to have female Marines on the HET, but I would argue that you've got the Lioness program <sup>16</sup> out there where you've got females operating with the infantry battalions on a daily basis. We've had females training Iraqi female police officers, the ... Sisters of Fallujah. So there is precedent already to utilize female Marines with infantry battalions in the battlespace. And, I really think we're missing out because we're not sending our best female intel Marines to be CI/HUMINT Marines and utilizing them in that type of a role.* <sup>17</sup>

*"We should consider the important and vital role that our women Marines could provide if assigned MOS 0211, counterintelligence specialist."* <sup>18</sup>

There was concern that if women are brought into the 0211 MOS, that they be given an equitable share of "hardship" field assignments with their male counterparts, and not just assigned to higher headquarters billets.

Career progression was a general concern among CI/HUMINT officers (MOS 0204) interviewed. Some expressed the opinion that considerable experience was lost when limited duty officers (LDOs) in the CI/HUMINT MOS were eliminated, and that the program should be brought back. <sup>19</sup> The senior 0204 at the time of this collection was a major (04), and the perception was that there was no 0204 advocate to provide senior policy input or sit on various selection boards.

MCCLL note: Commenting on a draft of this report, the lead CI/HUMINT officer at Intelligence Department (IOC), HQMC stated that *"There are so many career*

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*progression opportunities for HUMINT officers that we cannot fill them all. We even created an additional course for officers that started in early July 2008 just to fill some of these billets. The LDO program has been researched several times throughout the past 15 years and is not a viable option. We have unrestricted intelligence officers and an increased warrant officer community to fill these billets. For enlisted, we have increased opportunities in the supporting establishment and MARSOC, and educational opportunities in the National Defense Intelligence College, Defense Language Institute and advanced CI and HUMINT training courses."*<sup>20</sup>

Supported commanders in interviews stated that the role of HET is critical to operations, and there were no notable concerns from their perspective. HETs at the RCT level and below appeared to be fully involved in the planning process with their supported units and received sufficient guidance.<sup>21</sup> MCCLL note: The criticality of supported unit interaction with and employment of HET is discussed in numerous MCCLL Lesson Management System entries.<sup>22</sup>

Noting that HETs in direct support "serve two masters, the G-2X and the supported unit," two CI/HET interviewees suggested that HET capabilities could be better used to full advantage in supporting operations, and that the inclusion of a CI/HUMINT representative on operational planning teams (OPTs) at higher levels would result in more focused intent and guidance to feed into the intelligence cycle and drive action on the ground.<sup>23</sup>

An RCT intelligence officer provided his perspective: *"The most successful HETs that I saw—there was a synergy that enabled them to be successful. One, it was an S2 that employed them correctly. Two, it was a command environment that permitted HET to operate effectively. ... The S2 'got it' and the company commander and battalion commander included them on everything they did, and actively sought out HET's opinion and advice."*<sup>24</sup>

An interviewee noted that standard operating procedures (SOPs) in 1st and 2nd Intelligence Battalions were different, and that this complicated the relief in place/transfer of authority (RIP/TOA) between incoming and outbound units.<sup>25</sup>

HET often conducts the initial field interrogation of a detainee, typically at the battalion holding facility, or earlier, at the point of capture. Most actionable information comes from interrogation before a detainee overcomes the shock of detention and builds a cover story, and a poorly conducted initial interview has the potential to adversely affect all future interviews. HET needs to work with everyone subsequently involved in the interrogation process.

Although modified uniforms and other regulations are often authorized for CI/HUMINT Marines, they can become a source of friction with other Marines, including those in the units supported by HET.<sup>26</sup> This friction can best be prevented by addressing the issue when initially joining a unit as part of a more comprehensive HET capabilities brief. When Marines up and down the chain understand the necessity for modified standards, they tend to better accept and support HET procedures and practices.

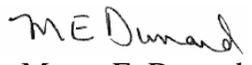
Several communications related issues were mentioned in interviews. HET has a critical need for tactical satellite (TACSAT) radios to send secure voice and data transmission to file spot reports from the field. HET members also expressed the need for a dedicated satellite channel.<sup>27</sup>

**Recommendations.** The following are suggested by content of interviews.

1. Continue efforts to increase CONUS dwell time to permit completion of PTP, mission oriented training, PME, and other requirements prior to deployment.
2. Review and broaden awareness of career progression opportunities within officer and enlisted CI/HUMINT MOSs.
3. Consider modifying current MOS and assignment policies to allow women to serve in the 0211 MOS and in HETs. MCCLL note: The occupational field sponsor for CI/HUMINT stated that the MOS manual was updated in May 2008 to allow females to serve in MOS 0211, and a revision to the assignment policy is in staffing. One of the changes being considered is allowing females to serve in the 0211 MOS.<sup>28</sup>
4. Consider revision of CI/HUMINT Company T/O&E to ensure HETs have the organic mobility, security and communications equipment to perform current and anticipated future missions.
5. Consider use of Tactical Language Training System and other alternatives to improve quality and content of language and culture training for HET personnel.

### **Summary**

Lessons and observations from this collection will be distributed to appropriate advocates and proponents, in the interests of improving how Marine forces are organized, trained, equipped and provided to combatant commanders.

  
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Colonel, USMCR

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Pollock, Colonel John, USMC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, II MEF, formerly G-2, Multi-National Force - West, interview with Mr. Chris Wilk, MCCLL Liaison to II MEF, 14 March 2008. Cited hereafter as Pollock, Wilk interview. Also, Taylor, Major James T., USMC, S-2, Regimental Combat Team 6, interview with Mr. Chris Wilk, MCCLL Liaison to II MEF, 18 March 2008. Cited hereafter as Taylor, Wilk interview.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock, Wilk interview. Also, Taylor, Major James T., USMC, S-2, Regimental Combat Team 6, interview with Mr. Chris Wilk, MCCLL Liaison to II MEF, 18 March 2008. Cited hereafter as Taylor, Wilk interview.

<sup>3</sup> Veeris, LtCol Christian, USMC, Commanding Officer, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 12 May 2008. Cited hereafter as Veeris, Donigan interview. Also, MCCLL Lesson Management System (LMS) entry 42145, "Humint Exploitation Team Operations," (OIF 05-07): "HET operations provide the majority of theatre intelligence. It is important for all operations to be coordinated and planned with the supported battalion."

<sup>4</sup> Connor, Major William, Executive Officer and Operations Officer, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 12 May 2008. Cited hereafter as Connor, Donigan interview. Also, Ost, Major Derek, Commanding Officer, CI/HET Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 14 May 2008. Cited hereafter as Ost, Donigan interview. Also, Veeris, Donigan interview.

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<sup>5</sup> Duckworth, Major Neal, USMC, CI, HUMINT, and Ground Intelligence Plans & Policy, Intelligence Department, HQMC, personal email to Mr. Al Luckey, Senior Analyst, MCCLL and others, " RE: Human Intelligence Exploitation Team Operations in Iraq Quick Look," 24 July 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Christensen, 2nd Lt Rhett W., USMC, Officer in Charge, HET 5, CI/HUMINT Co, 1st Intelligence Bn, (direct support to 3rd Bn 6th Marines) briefing, "CI/HUMINT Capabilities," 22 January 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Veeris, Donigan interview. Also, Conner, Major William, USMC, Executive Officer/S-3, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 12 May 2008. Cited hereafter as Conner, Donigan interview.

<sup>8</sup> George, SgtMaj Donald, USMC, Sergeant Major, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview by Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 14 June 2008. Also, Connor, Donigan interview: "*Marines going 7 months over here, 5 months back, 7 months over there. ...that is not sustainable. You can do that for a short amount of time but for the long term affect it has on families and just the affect it has on burnout, you're going to get Marines that are going to obviously choose to get out.*"

<sup>9</sup> Duckworth, Major Neal, USMC, CI, HUMINT, and Ground Intelligence Plans & Policy, Intelligence Department, HQMC, personal email to Mr. Al Luckey, Senior Analyst, MCCLL and others, " RE: Human Intelligence Exploitation Team Operations in Iraq Quick Look," 16 July 2008. Cited hereafter as Duckworth email, 16 July 2008.

<sup>10</sup> This point is supported by MCCLL LMS entry 42145, "Humint Exploitation Team Operations," (OIF 05-07): "The emphasis during Mojave Viper for the HET Marines should be on developing a working relationship with the supported unit... The HET Marines should be allowed to work with the infantry units, giving them classes and instructions on how to conduct HET missions such as source meets, sensitive site exploitation (SSE), and proper detainee handling procedures. The HET should assign at least one Marine to each company."

<sup>11</sup> Ost, Donigan interview.

<sup>12</sup> Source: <http://www.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/trasys/trasysweb.nsf/All/430117D0D1928D4B852573B100583E51>. Last viewed on 6 August 2008. This website contains information on other language training tools as well. See also MCCLL report, "Tactical Iraqi Language Training System," 2 July 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Shannon, Major William D., "CI/HET Quicklook," personal email to Mr. Al Luckey, Senior Analyst, MCCLL and others, 5 August 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Veeris, Donigan interview. Also Ost, Maj Derek, USMC, CI/HUMINT Company Commander, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 14/15 May 2008.

<sup>15</sup> MOS 0211, counterintelligence specialist, is among the list of MOSs in which women may not be classified, per "Marine Corps Personnel Assignment Policy," MCO P1300.8R, 4 October 1994.

<sup>16</sup> "*The purpose of the Lioness Program is to increase the military female presence on the border to reduce the smuggling of weapons, explosives, and currency, by conducting female body searches, and vehicle searches.*" I MEF Headquarters Group FragO 1032-06, "Lioness Program," 14 November 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Pollock, Wilk interview. Also, Secretary of the Navy policy states that women "may be assigned TEMDU or TEMADD to units, closed to the assignment of women due to direct ground combat exclusion, that are not expected to conduct a combat mission during the period of temporary duty. If women are so assigned to a unit that is closed and the unit is subsequently assigned a combat mission, every reasonable effort will be made to remove the women prior to execution of such mission." Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVINST) 1300.12C, "Assignment of Women in the Department of the Navy," 8 December 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Nemec, MGySgt Benjamin J., USMC, G-2 Chief, II MEF, former G-2 Chief, Multi-National Force - West, interview with Mr. Bruce Poland, MCCLL Liaison to 2nd Marine Division, 14 March 2008. Also, Veeris, Donigan interview, and Udvig, GySgt Adam, USMC, Operations Chief, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 30 May 2008. Cited hereafter as Udvig, Donigan interview.

<sup>19</sup> Krissoff, 2ndLt Austin, USMC, OIC HET-10, CI/HUMINT Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 22 May 2008. Also, Udvig interview. Also, Hite, MSgt Larry,

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USMC, Chief, CI/HUMINT Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 25 May 2008

<sup>20</sup> Duckworth email, 16 July 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Malay, Col Patrick, Commanding Officer, RCT-5, MNF-W, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 1 June 2008. Also, visit with LtCol Williams, Commanding Officer, TF 3/4, RCT-5, MNF-W, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 2 June 2008.

<sup>22</sup> MCCLL LMS entries from OIF I to OIF 06 08 and from a variety of supported units have addressed the importance of HET employment, including LMS 37811 (MWSG in OIF I), "Effectiveness of HET Teams," LMS 42909 (Iraqi Security Force training in OIF 05 07), "Criticality of Humint Exploitation Team Support," LMS 42667 (MLG in OIF 05 07), "Counterintelligence/Humint Exploitation Teams," LMS 43379 (OIF 06 08), "Increased Interface between Company Level Humint Collection and the RCT S-2 on Political/Tribal Development). These and numerous other LMS entries are available on the MCCLL website, "My Binders," binder # 1026 entitled "CI/HET." See also binders 957, "Humint Exploitation Team," and 119, "Humint and Counterintelligence."

<sup>23</sup> Flach, CWO4 Thomas, USMC, Deputy G-2X, MNF-W, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 28 May 2008. Also, Hite, MSgt Larry, USMC, Chief, CI/HUMINT Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 25 May 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, Wilk interview. Also, in "Increased interface between company level HUMINT collectors and the RCT S-2 on political/tribal developments," one RCT operations officer recommended developing a weekly battlefield circulation schedule for the RCT S-2 to visit company-level HUMINT collectors with the resident battalion S-2s for an informal debrief. MCCLL Lesson Management System (LMS) entry 43779, from "RCT 6 After Action Report," 24 January 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Hite, MSgt Larry, USMC, Chief, CI/HUMINT Company, interview with Mr. Henry Donigan, MCCLL Liaison to I MEF, 25 May 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, Wilk interview.

<sup>27</sup> Veeris interview. Also Conner, Donigan interview; and Udvig, GySgt Adam, USMC, Operations Chief, 1st Intelligence Battalion, interview by Henry Donigan, MCCLL, 30 May 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Carr, MSgt Stephen, USMC, Occupational Field Sponsor, CI/HUMINT (MOS 0211), IOP, HQMC, email exchange and phone conversation with Mr. Craig Penrose, Collections Analyst, MCCLL, 14 July 2008.