



Non-Kinetic/Counterinsurgency Operations

A Study in Command

11 August 2006

“We have made the development of local security forces into our exit strategy in both theaters. This is certainly a valid plan, but how is this plan being resourced? If you don’t resource your main effort appropriately, you reduce your chances of success.”

Lieutenant Colonel C.I. Woodbridge, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

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Prologue

The observations, analyses and assessments summarized in this document are based on the candid comments and reports of those who have fought the battles, supported the forces, and led our Marines in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)/Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). The high level of professionalism and military aptitude demonstrated by individual and unit performances during OEF/OIF are a hallmark of these conflicts. Just as the enemy changes their tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), we too must quickly change and adapt to the fight at hand. The Marine Corps has an enviable reputation for innovation and adaptation, and maintains the highest standards of excellence in the art of warfare. It is with a conscious intent to maintain this reputation that the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned offers the observations and commentary within this report. Please take the information provided, build on it, and report back on its applicability. Comments and feedback are welcomed and encouraged.

This is one of many documents and briefings covering a wide variety of topics that have been put together by the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL). The MCCLL library of lessons and observations are not sole source or authoritative, but are intended as a means of informing the decision making process and effecting needed changes in our institution. It is of the utmost importance that individuals and units continue to provide their lessons and observations so we can ensure the next unit to deploy has the benefit of hard-earned experience prior to crossing the line of departure. Getting your observations and lessons into the Lesson Management System early enough to impact pre-deployment training is crucial to increasing the effectiveness of follow on units and saving the lives of our Marines.



M. E. Dunard

Colonel, United States Marine Corps Reserve
Director, Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

Executive Summary

This paper summarizes the responses of six Marine battalion commanders who served in stability and support operations (SASO) and counterinsurgency (COIN) environments of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). These commanders were interviewed on their approach to their duties, how they exercised their authority and balanced the use of kinetic and non-kinetic effects in accomplishing their myriad missions and tasks. The content of this report may serve to guide future commanders.

Organize

Commanders built their task organizations based upon the threat as each understood it. There was some minor re-organization once in theater, but most expressed satisfaction with the support offered.

Train

The training packages and tools included the Revised Combined Arms Exercise (RCAX), Stability and Support Operations (SASO) training, Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) training, and live-fire training at Camp Lejeune, Twentynine Palms and March Air Force Reserve Base. All were considered effective and helped them prepare for their eventual deployments.

Operations

“You must understand every level of the chessboard and ensure that tactical operations that are successful in the near term do not have operational or strategic level implications that will be counter-productive in the long term.”

-Lieutenant Colonel W. A. Buhl, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines

Command and Control

There were no real chain of command issues expressed by these commanders. There were, however, coordination issues with U.S. Army and Special Forces units – mostly due to a lack of a common communications picture.

Language and Culture Training

“Recommend more training in basic language skills as opposed to sending Marines to longer courses, since it is such a perishable skill. Marines lose it fast and we need large numbers who can do the basics vice small numbers who have a potentially greater capability.”

- Lieutenant Colonel W.M. Journey, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines

Equipment

“I have used less than lethal weapons in the past. I would recommend their availability but I would only use the ones that still give a Marine the ability to go lethal and less than lethal. For example, M16 with 5.56 but his M203 can employ a stinger type round. You are not negating his inherent capability to self defense by arming him this way.”

- Lieutenant Colonel W. M. Journey, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines

Medical Support

The Navy Forward Resuscitative Surgical System (FRSS) units, positioned in the Battalion forward operating bases (FOB), were universally praised for their service in helping to save the lives of numerous seriously wounded Marines. Marines and soldiers that made it back to the FOB had a superior chance of survival.

Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA)

“Don’t change the present process however do not conduct a RIP/TOA during a major named operation. Higher headquarters should not plan a changeover during a major named operation as well.”

- Lieutenant Colonel C. I. Woodbridge, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines

General

“We’re doing State Department, that is, DOD (Department of Defense) is doing the State Department stuff right now, trying to. It’s the Imperial Grunt – if you’ve read that book from Kaplan – it’s that Captain/Major/Gunny/1stSgt/MSgt out there that is conducting State Department business right now.”

- Lieutenant Colonel J. D. Alford, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines

The remainder of this report details these and other aspects of the Commanders’ experiences.

Background

At the conclusion of the Commanders' Program on 16 March 2006, Colonel John Toolan, Director, Command and Staff College, mentioned that he has observed commanders who appeared adept at balancing the use of kinetic and non-kinetic effects in today's stability and support operations/counterinsurgency (SASO/COIN) environment. He suggested that there are fundamental changes in the manner that these commanders approached their duties, recognizing the shifts in mission, training and methodologies. How these commanders exercised their authority to accomplish their myriad tasks is a study in command. This is a collection of the responses of six battalion commanders who led units during recent Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) deployments. Results are in the search-enabled MCCLL database and summarized in this topical paper.

Purpose

The intent of this report is to capture the command philosophies, observations and lessons of commanders whose units operated in primarily non-kinetic environments in order to disseminate essential lessons learned to future commanders and leaders of units deploying to OEF and OIF. MCCLL conducted interviews with selected commanders in order to capture their philosophies, TTPs and methods of command utilized in non-kinetic operational environments.

Participants in the Study

Lieutenant Colonel Scott D. Aiken, USMC – CO, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines
Command: June 2004 – June 2006
Deployment: OIF III, September 2005 – April 2006

Lieutenant Colonel Julian D. Alford, USMC – CO, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines
Command: March 2004 – May 2006
Deployments: OEF I, May – December 2004; OIF II, August 2005 – March 2006

Lieutenant Colonel Willard A. Buhl, USMC – CO, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines
Command: June 2003 – May 2005
Deployments: OIF II, June 2004 – January 2005

Lieutenant Colonel William M. Jurney, USMC – CO, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines
Command: October 2004 – present
Deployments: OIF II, March 2005 – October 2005; to re-deploy, September 2006

Lieutenant Colonel James J. Minick, USMC – CO, Task Force 2d Battalion, 2d Marines
Command: February 2005 – May 2006
Deployment: OIF III, July 2005 – February 2006

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher I. Woodbridge, USMC – CO, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines
Command: August 2003 – June 2005
Deployments: OIF I, August - October 2003; OIF II, August 2004 – March 2005

Methodology

Answers to questions are grouped as a synopsis of the six Battalion Commanders' responses to interviews conducted during April and May, 2006 (see Attachment 1). Direct quotes have been included where appropriate and to add emphasis. Most of their comments have been included with minimal editing by the MCCLL staff. Quotation marks (“ ”) and *italics* are used to add emphasis to commanders' comments.

Organize

Commanders built their task organizations based upon the threat as each understood it. The following lists the attachments and units assigned in support of these battalions, though their total numbers of personnel varied from battalion to battalion. Future Battalion Commanders can expect any mix of these same external attachments:

- Tank Platoon (attached)
- AAV platoon (attached)
- Combat engineer platoon (attached)
- Truck platoon (attached)
- Public Affairs Marine (attached)
- Staff Judge Advocate (D/S)
- HUMINT Exploitation Team (D/S)
- Civil Affairs Detachment (D/S)
- 4 X Military Working Dog teams (D/S)
- EOD Detachment
- Military police platoon
- US Army MEDEVAC Detachment;
- USN FRSS & STP.
- HMLA (2x AH/3x UH) with all associated support
- MWSS and MWCG to operate the FOB.
- Medical trauma detachment
- Sensitive Site Team, Radio Battalion
- 4 ISF battalions under tactical control (TACON) with military transition teams (MiTT).

In addition, a variety of units were “cooperatively co-located” (a non-doctrinal term used when seemingly no one at higher headquarters wants to make the hard decision about command/support relationships, so commanders at the tactical level are left to work things out¹). Examples included: 2d Force Reconnaissance Company, U.S. Army Special Forces operational detachments, other government agencies (OGA) and the Defense HUMINT Service (DHS).

Internally, companies were task organized within the battalion. In 2/6, the weapons platoon within the rifle company formed a fourth rifle platoon. Weapons Company was task organized into three combined anti-armor teams (CAAT) and one 81mm mortar section. The 81mm mortar platoon formed two more CAAT teams (for a total of five). Marines from throughout the battalion formed the camp guard force (64 Marines), five entry control point

(ECP) detachments (approximately 100 Marines), the training cadre (6 Marines), the battalion detention facility (4 Marines) and the personal security detachment (PSD), (18 Marines). The H&S company task organized a security motorized platoon to provide for ECP operations.²

Each of the respondents acknowledged that there was some “tweaking” of their different task organizations after their arrival in country. Most had received the task organizations of their predecessors during their pre-deployment site survey visits and made the most use of this information by designating key officers, SNCOs, and NCOs in leadership positions before deployment. Task organization changes were made by company commanders based on emerging requirements or identified efficiencies in manpower. “*You make it work.*”

*“Standard USMC infantry battalion T/O with exception of 81mm Platoon split into two equal sections and designated as Battalion Combined Action Platoon, organized to train Iraqi National Guard Companies at (2) separate sites. We also joined a Judge Advocate for operational legal requirements in a counter-insurgency/SASO environment.”*³

- In response to the question, “How were you organized for deployment?”

Plan

Commanding Officer Involvement in Planning

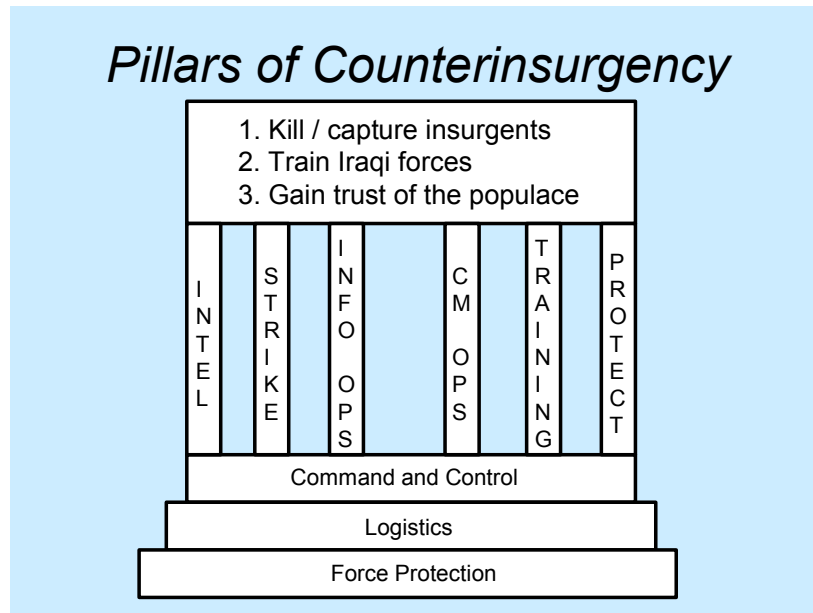
Each Battalion Commander was of course, very involved. One commander related how he was able to take advantage of the staggered deployment of 1st Marine Division units to plan his battalion training to maximum advantage.

*“My Regimental Headquarters (RCT 1) deployed in January 2004, as did much of the 1stMarDiv. I reported to CO, 5th Marines for training but had direct liaison authorization (dirlauth) with 1st Marine Division Rear. This provided me with great flexibility in any white space on my TEEP. In addition to the mandatory RCAX and 1st Marine Division SASO FEX, I scheduled two additional Battalion FEXs at the Camp Pendleton MOUT Facility and at George Air Force Base in San Bernadino County. We also requested and received tanks and AAVs in support of our SASO FEX at March Air Reserve Base (first infantry battalion to receive this) and I was able to receive extra ammunition and training support to work CAS and additional convoy live fire reaction to contact training at RCAX and aboard MCB Camp Pendleton. With reference to deployment dates, these were generated by higher and we executed as ordered. As mentioned earlier, we deployed at a staggered time in between the main waves on the 1st Marine Division rotation – this facilitated prioritization for schools and personnel fills as well as for training area usage. This was a tremendous advantage.”*⁴

Assumptions

Each Battalion Commander used a different set of criteria in establishing assumptions. The following quotes address the factors that shaped their planning processes.

*“Generally, I provided the following assumptions: Assume the relieved units’ force disposition completely; force dispositions will be changed after the relief in place (RIP) as local conditions require. Plan for a balanced counterinsurgency operation (COIN), not just strike operations. Use all of the “pillars” shown below.”*⁵



(Figure from LtCol Aiken’s notes)

“We received constant updates from RCT 1 and were told months ahead of schedule we would relieve 1/5. We put great emphasis on language training and cultural awareness training for the Battalion, especially our Combined Action Platoon (CAP). We also watched the events in Fallujah in April 04 very closely and assumed that we would be committed to MOUT. Based upon these assumptions we emphasized tank/mechanized infantry coordination training, employment of our CAAT Platoon in mobile assault operations, strong emphasis in urban sniper employment, use of supporting arms (air/artillery/mortars), etc. These assumptions were validated in every regard.”⁶

“Assumption was that the key to successful COIN was the ability to “transition” from the individual level to the battalion level. Using the three block war construct... the ability to transition across the full spectrum of conflict meant an individual had to be able to “transition” from a permissive situation while providing site security for civil- military operations (CMO) to engaging in full on direct combat operations... and then just as quickly “transition” back. And yes, this assumption proved to be true.”⁷

“-Our main effort would be working with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.

-Our fight would be less kinetic.

-The level of violence in the AO would continue at a steady state (except for spikes leading up to the national elections).

All of these assumptions proved valid, although the level of violence leading up to the 15 December election turned out to be less than expected.”⁸

This was my second tour in Iraq as a battalion commander, and in between tours I was the acting commander for 7th Marines (rear) in 29 Palms. As such, I was tracking the course of

*operations for the regiment in country for seven months prior to 1/7's deployment. I did not have to make many assumptions since I had the facts required to plan effectively. I did not fully appreciate the impact of Operation Al Fajr (Fallujah II) on my unit and my area of operations (AO). When this operation became the MEF/Division main effort, 1/7 became the economy of force for the division. This meant that many of my attachments were stripped off to support the main effort in Fallujah, and my battalion's AO expanded to the size of Rhode Island. The troop to task calculations became extremely difficult. What we (me and my S-3) were forced to do was to break the battalion down into "rifle squad equivalents" in order to put forces against the myriad tasks assigned to the battalion. We had three mission essential tasks: disrupt the insurgency; develop Iraqi security forces; maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq (Syrian border security/control). We also had three enduring tasks:" Force Protection/FOB security; MSR clearance & convoy security; critical (Iraqi) infrastructure security. All of this translated into more than even a reinforced battalion can do when the AO stretched from the Syrian border to Haditha. We are doing better at this now."*⁹

Train

Pre-deployment Training Packages

Battalion Commanders detailed their pre-deployment training programs. Each attempted to maximize the time available through aggressive planning and creative scheduling where possible. The training packages and tools included the Revised Combined Arms Exercise (RCAX), Stability and Support Operations (SASO) training, Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) training, and live-fire training at Camp Lejeune, Twentynine Palms and March Air Force Reserve Base. The following are quotes from Battalion Commanders regarding their predeployment training and preparation:

*- "The battalion developed a pre-deployment training plan (PTP) that tracked the status of the battalion as it trained to individual standards as well as collective tasks. This PTP was updated and used to modify the weekly training schedules to achieve the end result. This was the overarching document for our pre-deployment workup and was effective in keeping us on track. The battalion conducted three, six-day urban combat packages at the Camp Lejeune MOUT Facility. This allowed the battalion to integrate new joins, develop SOPs and gain urban experience. The six-day package started with individual techniques and culminated with a company blank fire (MILES) attack. This training was effective for MOUT operations in Fallujah. Additionally, the battalion participated in the Revised Combined Arms Exercise (RCAX) and Stability and Support Operations (SASO) training at Twentynine Palms and March Reserve Air Base, California, respectively. Both exercises were excellent in preparing the battalion for combat. More important, based on in-theater input, both programs of instruction have been modified based on lessons learned. Company level training was based on the CG, 2d Marine Division's training guidance. The battalion conducted its own SASOFEX at Camp Lejeune to exercise convoy operations, urban patrolling, MOUT, CASEVACs, and cordon/search operations. Additionally, the battalion conducted a decentralized live fire and maneuver training plan. The live fire was conducted in a progressive manner. Live fire training culminated with a company live fire attack at Camp Lejeune's G-6 Range. This live fire attack training was conducted by the battalion. The battalion increased the numbers of all categories of trained Marines by more than what was recommended by the Division."*¹⁰

- *“The battalion planned and conducted a SASO training package for 7th Marines based on our experience during phase four of OIF I. We then employed this same package for ourselves. Next we participated in RCAX and finally we went through the 1st MarDiv SASO FEX conducted by the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL) at March ARB. All of these were very effective, but in retrospect the fundamental combined arms and C2 skills trained at RCAX were the most valuable.”¹¹*

- *“Our training block that we set up after we got back from Afghanistan – we started February of '05 – and I set up four training blocks the way I believed that we should progress. First was just the rifle range, but we made the rifle range a training evolution. We moved the whole battalion to the rifle range for a three week period. We lived in the barracks, opened up the all ranks club on a couple of nights, conducted some professional military education (PME) courses; we conducted grass week and a full firing week. In the third week, we actually moved out of the barracks into the field, set up a combat operations center (COC) and did field firing day and night, used all of our optics and that was really the kick off of our training package. The second piece was going to Fort A.P. Hill for 12 days and concentrated our training at the platoon and squad level. Company Commanders ran training supported by the battalion – we lived in the field up there in tents and did nothing but live fire for 12 days. The third block of training was done at the MOUT facility for a month. We volunteered for the CAPEX (capabilities exercise at Camp Lejeune) that gave us the MOUT facility, combat town, the company battle course and then the MOUT Assault Course (MAC) ranges that are urban live fire ranges, so we did a round-robin with the companies there for a whole month, during the month of May. In June, we went to Twenty Nine Palms and out to Matilda Village out in March Air Force Base. We were the last few that went through that package out there at SASO before it moved all to Twenty Nine Palms which is not Mojave Viper. We got back in July and did remedial training; cleaned up the many small things that you have to do before deployment. We took some leave and then we left the third week in August.”¹²*

- *“We also trained with mine detectors, had EOD and Combat Engineers, the Project Metropolis SASO training, training from Special Operations Training Group, San Bernadino County Sheriff's Dept for evasive driving, Vietnam CAP Officers for PME, cultural briefs from professors at Marine Corps University, Naval Post Graduate School, etc. All proved valuable – if I have any constructive criticism, it was a question of training time and resources, with the bulk of my personnel fills arriving at 90 days prior to the Battalion's deployment. Our leadership was made up of approximately 35% OIF I veterans and many were going on their 3rd consecutive deployment with the Battalion – this proved to be sufficient to rapidly train a large group of Marines and Sailors who did not have combat experience. The battalion “heavy barreled” Marines into the combat lifesaver's course, machinegun training, Survival Language Arabic Course (SLAC), HMMWV driver's course, etc. This paid dividends in theater.”¹³*

- *“Perhaps the best training the battalion received was a field visit from the Joint IED Defeat Task Force, who visited the battalion in country for a week about seven weeks into our deployment.”¹⁴*

Three best pieces of advice for non-kinetic counter-insurgency operations

The responses are grouped into three answers per commander :

LtCol Aiken, CO 2/6:

- *Plan for a balanced counterinsurgency operation (COIN), not just strike operations.*
- *This war is a “Three Block War” and a war of the Strategic Corporal. Both of these Marine Corps concepts are valid; we lived them every day.*
- *Train for high intensity (in accordance with the Infantry T&R Standards), those skills sets are harder to get a unit proficient in. You can back down the spectrum of warfare later in the training/pre-deployment cycle as required.*

LtCol Minick, CO TF 2/2:

- *Identify the right people to influence your non-kinetic fight. If the non-kinetic effects are a collateral duty of a less stellar Marine, the results will be poor. If the non-kinetic effects are a primary duty of a capable Marine, the results will reflect. “If it doesn’t hurt” to give up that Marine, he probably isn’t the right Marine for the job. In particular, those Marines who work as liaison personnel for the Iraqi Army/ Iraqi Police must be higher-caliber Marines.*
- *Place more emphasis on ROE and Law of War training. Due to the distributed nature of the counter-insurgency fight, young leaders (Cpl-Lt) will be placed under extremely high levels of stress and forced into moral dilemmas that, in the past, might have fallen on the shoulders of more senior Marines. Marines will not learn the ROE from lectures; they must be drilled into their memory through situational exercises and role-playing.*
- *At the small unit level, actions speak louder than words. A rifle company’s “IO plan” is to treat people with respect and perform acts of kindness/ charity. Every time a U.S. unit is seen, people should be able to associate that unit’s presence with their own personal benefit.*

LtCol Buhl, CO 3/1:

- *Prepare for Kinetic Counter-Insurgency Operations. Every unit must be prepared to conduct combat operations across the spectrum of conflict. STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF CONTINUING ACTIONS AT EVERY LEVEL (unit and personal Force Protection) MUST BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES – ZERO TOLERANCE. I am certain that we brought many home that otherwise would’ve been KIA if I had not set a tone of strict enforcement of the above. Also, if I were in a position to redeploy to Iraq as a Battalion Commander with a dream task organization, I would have had company sized scout - sniper, engineer and CAAT units, joined by a platoon of HET (Human Intelligence Exploitation Team), Civil Affairs in our Battalion and the standard rifle, weapons, and headquarters companies.*
- *Develop and inculcate our Marine Corps Ethos in junior officers, SNCOs, and NCOs. General Mattis’ “Flat Ass Rules” for the 1st Marine Division were the foundation of our ethical conduct through OIF II.*
- *Emphasize Cultural Awareness training and integrate it into everything done ACROSS the spectrum of combat training (3-Block War).*

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LtCol Woodbridge, CO 1/7:

- *Prepare for KINETIC COUNTERINSURGENCY first and foremost.*
- *Take advantage of culture and language training and push this down to the lowest levels possible.*
- *Train junior leaders and ensure you breed the proper ethos, decision-making, and tactical restraint at the corporal/squad leader level.*

LtCol Journey, CO 1/6:

Start with mastery of the basic war fighting core.

- *Train small unit level leaders (squad) in decision making.*
- *Train to hit what you are shooting at and patrol from A to Z, whether on foot or from a vehicle.*
- *Establish the training environment that ensures every single Marine understands the nature of the situation and how his individual actions have second and third order effects.*

LtCol Alford, CO 3/6:

It's a mind-set.

- *You have to talk to your Marines about the importance of what they're doing – they have to understand what they're doing.*
- *They have to understand why not to pull the trigger is more important than pulling the trigger sometimes . . . a lot of the time . . . most of the time.*
- *How important it is to integrate and work with the Iraqi soldiers over there and the Iraqi Police Force. That is our exit strategy – that's winning.*

The NCOs mainly have to understand that. I think it's just a mindset that you've got to preach to them and they have to understand it.

"Surprises"/ unanticipated issues

Battalion Commanders reflected on those issues that tested their ability to meet unplanned situations with unrehearsed actions:

More billets than leaders. There were more billets than available leaders. The following billets had to be filled 'out of hide' (listed with the Marine who performed those duties):

- Iraqi Army Liaison: H+S Company Commander
- Iraqi Police Liaison: Arty FO
- IO Officer: Collateral duty for Arty Liaison Officer
- PSD Platoon Commander: NBC Officer
- PSD Platoon Sergeant: Assistant Operations Chief

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- Electronic Counter Measure (ECM) Officer: Collateral duty for Communications Officer.¹⁵

*“Losing a company commander, platoon commander, section leader KIA, and platoon sergeant WIA in the same day is a BIG SURPRISE. Trying to replace these leaders and hold a unit together while continuing the mission is not a task that you can actually train for. The key is to ensure that every unit going in country is aware that these things do in fact happen, and you need to have practical and personal contingency plans in place prior to leaving CONUS”.*¹⁶

ISF Training. Training Iraqi Security Forces was also quite challenging, though we had arguably the most success with this in the entire 1stMarDiv and our ISF participated very effectively in Operation AL FAJR through sustained high intensity urban combat operations.¹⁷

*“One of the things you have to do is to get over that ISF are not Marines and you need to talk to your Marines about it. They wear the baseball caps and they wear flips flops around the camp sometimes. You got to get over that part; the beards, the long hair, you talk to the Marines about what they do and why they’re so different than you are and how you’re going work with them. Then you have to bring them into your fold. If you show them that you’re there to help with whatever they need, they will respond. I treated them like – which they were Task Force was the supported effort – we were the supporting effort, but within three weeks they were all calling me “boss”, so I believe it’s all personality driven. Sharing information with those guys, they have so much gear and ways to find the bad guys. If you’re in with them, then you’re going to win.”*¹⁸

IO training. No specific training was available for the Information Assurance (IA) liaison, IP Infrastructure Protection (IP) liaison, or ECM officer. While IO training was available, the Marine who served as the IO officer did not attend it due to arriving in the battalion shortly before deployment.¹⁹

Legal. The legal aspects of war consumed greater resources (time and manpower) than anticipated. This included Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) violation investigations, standard investigations (government property damage/loss, non-battle injury/death, etc.) and escalations of force (EOF) training and investigations. We received a Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) to assist, and he handled the tricky cases, but a lot of leadership’s time was involved, nevertheless.²⁰

Intuition. To work well in counterinsurgency operations (COIN) you have to be a problem solver. You have to be able to do a little bit on the fly and that comes from intuitive decision-making, whatever you want to call it. Being able to work with all the other agencies that you work with; it’s a lot of personality, a lot of hand-shaking, working with the Task Force, Special Forces, and the agencies – CIA, FBI – working with the Civil Affairs teams and getting them on your team on your side. A lot of that is personality driven by the Commander, Company Commanders, Battalion Commander being able to do that.²¹

Preparing Marines for the next deployment

Officer assignments. The commanders felt it is important to “fire” weak or questionable officers early. The idea of training officers is valid and must continue but carrying a weak leader along so he “develops” needs to become a relic of the old peace-time/cold war Marine Corps. We just can’t afford to be this “nice” anymore.²²

Operations. Change very little if deploying to the same operating environment. They did the best they could with what they had, and it was sufficient to facilitate great success in combat across the spectrum of conflict from complex counterinsurgency operations to high intensity urban combat to humanitarian operations in Fallujah post clearing of the city.²³

Counter-IED training. Based on knowledge gained about the IED threat, they would have worked more practical application training on countering IEDs.²⁴

Driver training. Driving up-armored HMMWVs/MTVRs, particularly on narrow roads, requires additional night driver training (NVG ops) – most log re-supply was conducted at night.²⁵

Escalation of Force (EOF) training. Plan for more EOF training in a less sterile (more crowded) training environment. Make the environment less predictable.²⁶

Marksmanship training. Develop more marksmanship training on “bobbbers and weavers.” The battalion was well trained on the known distance (KD) course of fire out to 500 yards, and the Enhanced Marksmanship Program (EMP) at ranges of 50 yards and shorter. The Battalion did not do as well against moving targets at 50-300 yards.²⁷

Language training. More basic level Arabic for larger numbers is more useful than a smaller group getting more advanced. They lose it before deployment anyway. The average Marine ought to be able to speak local phrases with the local people. It shows that you care about them and what they’re doing and it shows them respect. One probably needs only 20 or 30 basic phrases that the average Marine could learn. Trying to teach Marines to speak Arabic, which is a very difficult language, is problematic, except for a few people who have aptitude for language. The cursory SLAC training ended up being a Saudi Arabian dialect that was totally opposite of what was needed.²⁸

Training shortfalls

Overall assessment. Nearly all the training received was effective. Some of the SLAC-trained Marines were better than others, but some language training is better than nothing. There is a need for more marksmanship training against moving targets at 50-300 yards. Also maintain or increase the amount of “Second Block” (separating opposing factions/warlords in the “Three Block War” metaphor) training in an urban environment.²⁹

Small Unit Leadership. The most significant area where units need work is small unit leadership; getting NCOs, SNCOs and junior officers to enforce tactical discipline and force their Marines to not “take the easy way” was a long-term challenge. Units need to get early buy-in from junior leaders that those leaders are responsible for the tactical discipline of their units.³⁰

Continuing actions. The biggest issue was internal to the unit. It is vital to develop a uniform standard for all squads, platoons, and companies so that there is a “full magazine” of small units to put in the fight. If one unit is less capable, then one has less combat power and

they will not become more capable once they make contact. Some units will by default become FOB security or detention facility security because they are less capable of other tasks. The trouble happens when there is no alternative but to send one of these units outside the wire.³¹

Designated marksman. Expand on a designated marksmanship capability; a school trained sniper is not necessarily needed. More precision shooting reduces collateral damage and having a greater capability across the force with SAM-R or MK11 (7.62) should be looked at.³²

Crew-served weapons. The Marine has to be confident with his weapon system and to be confident on all machine guns. The average Marine would find himself on a machine gun: a 50 cal or a M240G. For non-kinetic operations, the Mark 19 was rarely used unless the intent was to “kick a**” and commanders knew when they were going to do that. The 50 cal. and mortar were used, but the best – more importantly – was the M240G, a smaller weapon system. The Mark 19 is a great weapon for high kinetics and you want to blow everybody up. For training, we should be more proficient on machine guns for what we’re doing over there.³³

Driver training. *“One thing that we’re lacking terrible is vehicle driving.”* Every Sergeant and below needs to be a vehicle driver and it needs to be on an up armored vehicle. One commander had 210 vehicles and two deaths from rollovers. Of 126 drivers, most were in Weapons Company and H&S Company, but every rifle company had 9 up armored HMMWV’s for a Mobile Assault Platoon plus a spattering of up armored high-backs which is the most dangerous vehicle over there because we pile all the armor on it and the suspension is not made to haul that amount of weight. We say they have to have a license, but we give them a license back at Camp Lejeune that teaches them how to drive a soft skin HMMWV on a hardball road and they turn their blinkers on correctly and wear a seatbelt and drive for 50 hours. That’s worthless driving. They need to be able to drive in the sand and the dirt with these heavy vehicles and it needs to be every Sergeant and below to be able to get behind a vehicle and drive it anytime. Additionally, they need to be driving those heavy, up-armored vehicles. The high back vehicles are dangerous. The enemy has caused us to pile all this armor on there by blowing us up and it’s caused deaths in other ways when you’re conducting distributed operations all over the battlefield like we were – 14 different battle positions – everybody’s got to be able to drive when you have 210 vehicles.³⁴

Effective training packages

RCAX and SASO. We also trained with mine detectors, had EOD and Combat Engineers, the Project Metropolis SASO training, training from Special Operations Training Group (PSD), San Bernadino County Sheriff’s Department for evasive driving, Vietnam CAP Officers for PME, Cultural Briefs from professors from Marine Corps University, Naval Post Graduate School, etc. All proved valuable. The primary training package external to the battalion driven was RCAX at 29 Palms and SASO at March AFB. They were both effective.³⁵

Operations

Advice on balancing kinetic and non-kinetic effects in COIN operations

“You must understand every level of the chessboard and ensure that tactical operations that are successful in the near term do not have operational or strategic level implications that will be counter-productive in the long term. I could give many examples of this. Of course all this has to be balanced by force protection – protecting the lives of our Marines and Sailors is paramount. Restraint must be used to the maximum extent possible, maintaining the inherent right to self-defense.”³⁶

Security. Everything starts and finishes with security. Many of the activities that produce positive non-kinetic effects can only be accomplished in a permissive environment. The non-kinetic effects will only “count” when basic security is established and maintained. For example: refurbishing and opening a school can have great potential non-kinetic effects; however, when the local man that did the plastering and painting is decapitated by the insurgents for working with the Americans, the non kinetic effects of his murder far outweigh the positive potential of a new school. This is the reality of western Al Anbar province.³⁷

Study the environment. Cultural intelligence and get the word down to the most junior Marine/Sailor, with emphasis on junior leaders. All hands must understand the impact of their actions operating in a COIN environment. Communicating with the people is of the highest importance and much of the intelligence a unit gains on the enemy is provided this way. Also, much of the intelligence on perceptions of the local populace is gained in the same manner and this is every bit as important in order to mitigate potential grievances in the communities you operate in; undertake both at the same time. You may be doing them in varying degrees across your AO but you are still looking to leverage all concurrently. You would never think of taking a hill without supporting arms so why would you discount any supporting arm that will get you effects on target...CMO and IO are supporting arms. They may very well be those factors that bring decisive action and the kinetic as shaping.³⁸ “Put an Iraqi face on things,” it is better to have the Iraqi Security Forces go kinetic instead of U.S. forces.³⁹

Clearing operations. *“We went into an area that was completely controlled by the foreign fighter. Americans did not go up there unless they went up on the river line, up in the villages; the towns in battalion-sized elements, so we did a battalion sized clearing operation. More importantly what we did, I literally drug D9 bulldozers behind my lead elements and we built battle positions as we went and dropped off platoons and immediately started conducting back patrolling and living in the area that we had cleared. We didn’t go back to our big camps. We did clearing operations in order to be able to conduct counterinsurgency operations, not to try to kill the bad guy. That’s how you balance it. The people have to know that when you come through, you’re going to stay, and once they knew that, they’re going to pick the side that they think is going to win and that’s going to help them the most. If you just come up there and blow everything up and kill a few bad guys and then go back to your camp, you’re wasting lives and money and the people are not going to get behind you. You have to live among the people. That was our whole thought behind what the two*

operations – Iron Fist and Steel Curtain – that we did. It was a means to an end. It was in order to get to the important part, which was the counterinsurgency.”

Advice for commanders involved in non-kinetic operations relative to setting a suitable command climate

Empathy. The Marines have to feel some sense of empathy for the average Iraqi citizen. They have to understand what the average Iraqi feels when his house is searched by people who can't speak his language, when he has to pull off the road for a convoy, etc. Leaders have to engage their Marines to be able to “put themselves in the Iraqis' shoes.”⁴⁰

Explain the “why.” You have to make sure your Marines understand the full spectrum of tools you plan to bring to the mission... this shapes attitudes. If they understand that the CMO project gives them a tactical advantage they are more likely to support it. You see units who down in the ranks are confused about “why” they are doing something because nobody has explained to them why they are doing it.⁴¹

Distributed Operations. Focus on decentralized operations that are planned, synchronized, supported and monitored at the battalion/regimental level. Company and platoon commanders will be the “details men” who know their subordinate areas of operations better than any other echelon of command. Focus on training “Strategic Corporals.”⁴²

Deploy outside of Forward Operating Bases (FOB). Get out of these damn forward operating bases (FOB) that have [Kellog, Brown and Root] KBR support, a nice gym and showers and internet and telephones and move out into the villages and live there. You must be a cop on a beat until they actually have real cops on the beat. There will not be true security in there until the Army goes home and the cops are running the streets just like any town in America. You have to do the same thing with the police; you have to live with them for a good while.⁴³

Issues that most affected your ability to perform your duties/ accomplish your mission

Ineffective insurgent detention processes. There is a broken detention system that required extensive physical evidence in order to detain someone, especially if referring that detainee to the Theater Detention Facility, i.e. Abu Ghraib Prison. Insurgents were adept at IED operations and could observe and detonate on vehicles/personnel and then walk away unarmed. Without forensic capabilities the rules of evidence would enable them to avoid detention. Another example is caches buried on property borderlines, there is limited ability to determine which property owner was truly responsible for concealment.⁴⁴

Insufficient numbers. The troop-to-task ratio was daunting. It was difficult to mass combat power for preplanned operations, since there were frequent calls to reinforce adjacent units or provide support to Iraqi Army operations.⁴⁵

Force protection. The constant force protection concerns made dealing with the local populace problematic. It was tough to convince many Marines that long term security was enhanced by increased interaction with the local population, even if that meant taking some risk in the short term.⁴⁶

Restrictive engagements. The CENTCOM targeting policy effectively ties the hands of the tactical commander. This crosses into the classified, but in essence we have hamstrung ourselves and taken away our firepower advantage rendering this a very “fair” infantry-on-infantry fight.⁴⁷

Rules of Engagement/Escalation of Force Issues

Counter fire restrictions. Indirect fire from populated areas was very troublesome – we could not counter fire into urban areas with exception of Fallujah during AL FAJR. This is the correct ROE, although it has a tremendous effect on the morale of our Marines who were attacked daily by IDF at firm bases.⁴⁸

Communications. Specific rules of engagement (ROE) were not passed in a timely, comprehensive manner. We received the generic ROE card from the Division, but it did little to answer specific questions. Some of the friction induced with ROE entailed circumstances such as the following two examples :

- Authorized to engage men using binoculars, but the authorization to engage men using cameras was less certain.
- The number of weapons and ammunition allowed in a house was subject to misinterpretation throughout the deployment.⁴⁹
- Several Marines did not understand what they could or could not ask civilians to do. For example, some Marines thought that it was acceptable to ask or pay Iraqi civilians to move a suspicious object (possible IED) on the side of the road; the Marines did not realize that this was a violation of the Law of Armed Conflict.⁵⁰

Escalation of Force (EOF) – specific. EOF is a huge issue. We had seven suicide car bomb attacks in seven months, so that the suicide car bomb – I say only – it only killed three Marines, but what it does is drive a wedge between us and the people, and the insurgent knows that. It makes that Lance Corporal pull the trigger on a car that’s not following the Escalation of Force signals; wave a flag, shoot a piece of red pyrotechnic (grenade) at them, shoot warning shots at the deck to the flank, all those things before you shooting into the passenger and kill people that shouldn’t be killed, and the enemy knows that and that’s why he uses suicide car bombs. The insurgent knows that it is a psychological weapon and it causes us to shoot innocent civilians and in turn causes the innocent civilians to not back us. We killed five civilians that were ultimately found not to have been a threat because they failed to acknowledge EOF warnings. We’ve got to learn to co-exist with the Iraqi people and right now we’re running everybody off the road. How would you feel if you were driving up Route 1 here and the Army made you get off the road every time that you drove? So we’ve got to learn to co-exist, but the enemy uses the suicide car bomb to keep us from co-existing. Marines were never told they couldn’t shoot, but they were told to use common sense. We have never heard of a car full of people blowing up. It’s always a single guy – usually in an old car that’s weighed down because it’s full of bombs, so you can profile those cars, although its easier said than done because they’re coming fast. Being on the road 8 to 10 hours everyday with a personal security detachment (PSD), we went five months without shooting at a single car.⁵¹

Investigations. The amount of time and manpower spent investigating escalation of force incidents and possible violations of the Law of Armed Conflict were a heavy tax on the battalion. The time and energy spent by the SJA, Battalion XO, and investigating officers was time taken away from the primary mission of defeating the insurgency. Every hour spent on an investigation was an hour not dedicated to training the IA, working on an IO message, or just supervising Marines.⁵²

Force protection concerns

IEDs. IEDs were the primary threat and thus armor on vehicles and counter IED tactics were a top concern, with emphasis on vehicle borne IEDs (VBIED) at vehicle check points (VCP) and firm bases (we were attacked by five VBIEDs during our seven-month deployment with the first killing two of our Marines at a VCP – all others were unsuccessful), and rocket and mortar protection at firm bases.⁵³

FOB security. Our forward operating base (FOB) and three company firm bases were secure, but numerous outposts, observation posts and entry control points (ECPs) were less secure and required an almost continuous effort at position improvement. Additionally, our routes were infested with IED cells, requiring several deliberate counter-IED operations.⁵⁴

Bivouac sites. We had Marines living and operating out of a dozen permanent locations over the course of the deployment. At no time did the number of fixed sites drop below seven. Aside from the force protection issue of hardening these sites, moving to and from these sites by vehicle became increasingly dangerous.⁵⁵

Armor protection. Initially the armor was lacking but was fixed before we left. We did most of our operations dismounted, in the city. We lived in the city 24/7.⁵⁶

Suicide VBEIDs. The number one concern was SVBIEDs — these have a catastrophic impact when they succeed against a patrol.⁵⁷

“Live among the people.” The way to establish force protection is to live among the people; not with more armor, not with more bases, not with more SAPI plates. We should be going in the other direction with SAPI plates. It’s not very politically correct right now, but we should be taking off armor. To do COIN, we should be taking off armor – taking off our helmets and showing a softer look when talking with people, when amongst the people as we did in Afghanistan. We went with SAPI plate carriers worn underneath our blouses. We went with soft covers and deuce gear vice flak jackets and helmets for a couple of reasons: one, humping through the mountains, and two, the people would deal with you a lot quicker than if you came in ‘all armored up’ looking like a robot. When you’ve got your gear on and you come into a town, they know you’re coming there to kick their butt. The way you carry your weapon is an important part of force protection. That’s all a part of COIN that we’re reluctant to go to right now because the enemy is using the IED and the suicide car bomb, so the way we’re trying to counter it is with more gear. We should be doing the exact opposite to win this thing. Live among the people, eat off the local economy and the people will tell you where the bad guys are, where they’re hiding their weapons, and where the IEDs are.⁵⁸

Cultural Issues

Marine-ISF living issues. In some instances, we had Iraqi soldiers and Marines living in the same firm base. Such difference in culture and living standards produced occasional minor friction. They stand up when they relieve themselves. We use toilet paper, they use water to clean themselves, so you got a bucket full of water, and how do you burn a bucket full of water that's got waste in it? We poured diesel fuel in it and set it on fire and burn it because ours is full of paper and waste. Theirs is full of waste and water [and] water doesn't burn, so you have to dump it. We ended up digging a six foot hole filling three feet of the hole full of gravel, and then the water runs through the gravel, the waste sits on top and you set it on fire on top and down in the hole. That's the way you get rid of it. It took a while to figure that out.

It's important that you can show that you're with their people – which for us are the Iraqi Army – and they see that Marines will do everything together including live together, another thing that most units aren't doing. The Iraqi's live in one camp and the Marines live in another. Our Marines and soldiers actually slept in the same area. You do have to deal with two different kinds of latrines and that's very important. Waste disposal is a big issue when you live together like that. You eat together; you eat off the local economy. Toward the last couple of months, we didn't send a lot of MREs out battle positions. The disbursing officer went out twice a month so they had money to spend money on the local economy and that's where the intelligence comes from. It gets to where the Company Commander, Platoon Commander, Squad Leader are actually having dinner with the local village leaders. *"I would eat with the Sheiks once a week – the five main Sheiks from five tribes. The money came from my \$50.00 a payday from my split pay. It's just like buying a pizza back here. We actually got it to where they would start delivering. It was like calling Domino's. They would deliver plastic sacks full of sheep kabobs and flat bread. The Marines like it, and then you talk to the delivery man and he tells you about the IED he's seen put down in the road or he tells you about a weapons cache'. You've got to live among the people and operate with them."*⁵⁹

*"I interacted with tribal leaders and military and government officials from 5 different cities, US Army leadership at Abu Ghraib Prison, and media on a daily to weekly basis. There were cultural issues involved in every aspect of these relationships whether dealing with US, Coalition, or local population."*⁶⁰

Sectarian concerns. We were positioned in and around a largely Sunni city. Our counterparts in the Iraqi Army were largely Shia. This produced a lack of trust between the two sects and near continuous friction.⁶¹

Community leadership. One of the toughest issues was to ascertain who the key leaders were in the community- is it the mayor and other civil officials, is it the Sheiks, the Imams, etc? An associated issue was how to get our message out to leaders- how to get them to come and meet with our leaders (or failing that, how to communicate with them).⁶²

Information operations (IO). Getting the unit's message out to the Iraqi people is also problematic. Local leaders are not likely to carry the unit's message to the locals out of fear of being branded as collaborators. The best means were to use psychological operations

speakers (especially the foot-mobile version) and put our message on things that the Iraqis were likely to use (such as water bottles).⁶³

Female detention and searches. Unaccompanied, unmarried females will be killed by their male relatives even if you saved their lives by evacuating them. Detention of females will cause tremendous tension among the very local/tribal leaders you are trying to make common cause with. We had to use female Marines to search Iraqi females at our ECPs.⁶⁴

Command and Control

Please describe your chain of command.

“I reported to RCT-2 which was in Al Asad. I was out in Al Qaim which was an hour helicopter flight to Al Asad [to] my Regimental Commander – Regimental Combat Team – and he reported to Major General Huck [who] was the Division Commander and then we had a II MEF forward which was Major General Johnson. In Afghanistan, the first two months 6th Marines was a Brigade Combat Team. They were a fill-in for four months over there. They left in July and then I worked for an Army brigade which was an artillery Brigade Commander. The Division Commander – the Task Force 76 or JTF 76 – was the 25th ID Division Commander. Good experience, real good experience working with the Army. I had a Marine battalion and he had two Army battalions in the brigade; very positive, good soldiers, different than us. They’re amazed at what we can pull off, how we can task organize, we can break down to the platoon level and operate, they’re really amazed at how we do that.”⁶⁵

Chain of Command Issues

There were no real chain of command issues expressed by these commanders. There were, however, coordination issues.

U. S. Army coordination. Boundaries with the U.S. Army often created seams for insurgents to operate in, particularly when staging for attacks and IED emplacement, and when employing IDF from Army sectors. Insurgents were well aware of unit boundaries requiring adjustments to be made at battalion and company levels during Operation AL FAJR.⁶⁶

Special Operations units. Coordination with special operations units operating throughout the country (to include the battalion’s zone) was poor, largely because of the “I’ve got a secret” mentality of special operations forces. At times, the battalion could have driven down the street and detained the target that special operations forces planned a nighttime raid to capture.⁶⁷

ISF/Iraqi Police coordination. Coordination with the Iraqi Army was good, and facilitated largely by the military training teams (MiTT). Coordination with the Iraqi Police was conducted through a joint coordination center (JCC) that was manned 24/7 by the applicable agencies within Fallujah. The JCC, although overworked, worked extremely well.⁶⁸

Language and Culture

Language training

Many in the battalion received the training and, overall, the quality of instruction and our Marines' ability to pick up basic phrases were impressive. We are not producing Iraqi linguists in the infantry, but even a few keys words helps, sometimes.⁶⁹

We received two 30-day classes with 30 seats each and were able to send a few more to an additional class. A select few members of the battalion had a total of 90 days of instruction. Those who repeated the courses served as assistant instructors for the Iraqi national (Titan contractor) teaching the class. The training which also served as cultural awareness training – we could have used more seats and more time but this was balanced against operational training requirements and was unrealistic based upon op-tempo/pers-tempo. We selected students from rifle companies based upon cultural backgrounds/2d language capabilities/volunteer enthusiasm/etc. The 81mm Platoon sent the bulk of the unit to at least 30-days of training as designated Battalion CAP.⁷⁰

Recommend more training in basic language skills as opposed to sending Marines to longer courses, since it is such a perishable skill. Marines lose it fast and we need large numbers who can do the basics vice small numbers who have a potentially greater capability.⁷¹

Interpreters

Interpreters were and are very valuable to each command. The perceptions offered by each Battalion Commander are significant and included below.

- Interpreters varied in language capability, fitness for rigorous combat operations, reliability, etc. Overall, they were a huge force multiplier and provided our Marines with ability to engage local population as well as filters to understand cultural nuances encountered in the operating environment.⁷²

- Some interpreters were great, others were lazy, and others were 'cry babies.' The battalion's experiences covered the full spectrum. We had about 15 interpreters for a table of organization of about 50.⁷³

- Not near enough. The last deployment the Task Force had 40 interpreters to support the battalion. When we arrived, we had eight. Some of the eight were broken or on leave.⁷⁴

- Mixed, some were great and some were completely ineffective.⁷⁵

- The TITAN Corporation interpreters were generally good. A few were exceptional. We had few in number, especially out in the far west where some had been killed in the past.⁷⁶

- In Iraq I had 24 in the battalion and that was the max I had. When we first got there and we were going through the kinetics and we were moving out and living amongst the people, we probably had over half of them quit. They thought we were crazy because they were used to living on a nice base and eating KBR chow, shitting on toilets and the rest. They didn't like that living in the field stuff, so we did have issues. We lost a lot of interpreters because they weren't used to that and they knew that they could quit and go back to other units. Titan was so short on interpreters and they could live on nice bases. Titan I think bitched a little bit about us at first because we were making so many of them quit. Then we stabilized the guys that were good that wanted to stay and they were great. They are a must and you

become connected with these guys. I had the same guy the whole seven months – both in Afghanistan and Iraq – and you stay connected to these guys, you give them gifts and they become part of your team. You've got to make them part of your team. They are some patriotic people. They are risking their lives. What I think we ought to be doing with these guys – especially some of these young guys – is we need to be bringing these guys to America, putting them through our colleges and universities, getting them into our CIA and then implanting them back into their country to do HUMINT. This is an 8, 10, 12 year program, but we need to do that and these are the kind of people that would do that. They are fighting for their country. They're getting paid, but some of them are very, very patriotic and they hate the insurgents. They hate the bad guys. I had a very good experience with some of our interpreters in Afghanistan also. They're doing it for the right reason; not only for the money, but because they want to see their country free. Just bring them in and show them that you care about as part of the team and they'll do wonders for you. Don't treat them like outsiders. Make them part of the family and you'll get more out of them.⁷⁷

Recommendations for handling interpreters

Interpreter interaction

- Careful handling of interpreters is essential for retention as well as operations security. One company commander was relatively intolerant and his company had only one interpreter left at time of the relief in place (RIP) in January 2005. Other commanders nurtured their interpreters and had as many as nine on the rolls in their company at time of RIP (the overages were those who refused to serve in that company that had none.)⁷⁸
- You must walk a fine line between holding interpreters accountable and retaining their services. Remember, if you fire one, you may not get a replacement. Arm them despite Titan rules and regulations. They are in combat and need to protect themselves (most are handy with an AK-47).⁷⁹
- The interpreters need to know you will work with them and take care of them. A degree of trust must be established early. However, the interpreters also need to know they cannot manipulate the unit. One interpreter was fired because he wanted to shift to a billet that was less dangerous and was 'inside the wire.' He was given a few reasonable options in an attempt to reach a compromise. He challenged my authority and was let go; otherwise, the remaining personnel would have demanded the same.⁸⁰

Expectations

- Do not expect too much from the interpreter; he cannot physically accompany every squad patrol. At times, you will have to keep him with the quick reaction force (QRF) to preserve his longevity.⁸¹
- We had several interpreters on the payroll. However, few will do the dangerous and difficult work of supporting infantry battalions.⁸²
- At the battalion level, you need to assess and distribute according to capabilities in line with anticipated mission requirements. Retain the ability to surge them all to one company if the mission requires it.⁸³

- Common sense: know your people and employ them in accordance with their abilities. You don't want a 65 year old man out with a rifle squad, and you don't want a 20 year old with limited English working for the Commanding Officer at a provincial council meeting.⁸⁴

Equipment

Quality and quantity

Weapons and body armor. We had sufficient equipment. We had sufficient rifles and rifle optics, although we could have used some more machineguns for firm base and ECP security. We had more than enough vehicles, although during the first few months of our deployment we did not have enough up-armored HMMWVs. (We obtained sufficient quantities throughout the deployment.) We also received upgrades to our body armor in the form of ESAPI and Side SAPI. We had an increased number of radios, but the battalion was stretched thin on communications gear since we had several observation posts and ECPs that we manned.⁸⁵

Vehicle armor. Vehicle armor was lacking initially but was corrected during the deployment as was inter small unit communications with the addition of personal role radios (PRR) in sufficient quantities. Recommend the muzzle launched grapnel hook, to preclude Marines from moving up on potential IEDs and/or dispatching EOD when not required. Also, recommend developing an IR trip flare capability. Arming HMMWVs was slowly but surely remedied thanks to the best efforts of all involved and has been almost completely rectified by now.⁸⁶

Missing equipment/capabilities

Forensics equipment. We need forensics equipment to take fingerprints, a system that enables battalion/company level units to query a biometrics data system across the theater, a hand-held device more sophisticated than gunpowder residue paper to detect explosives, dog teams, a Dragon Eye equivalent system that could laser designate, better IED jamming systems, more Command Launch Units (CLU) for the Javelin or equivalent thermal capabilities, more thermo baric warheads, better armor for vehicles, additional BFTs down to squad level in vehicles, an additional wrecker, more welding capability high powered generators in firm bases, MWR equipment for firm bases, telescoping aluminum collapsible ladders, etc.⁸⁷

ECP operations. We wanted equipment to support VCP/ECP operations, i.e., lightweight tire strips, lightweight warning signs in Arabic and green lasers. All items were requested, and none arrived before our tour ended.⁸⁸

Night vision capability. The problem has been substantially solved but every weapon should have an optic and every Marine needs night vision capability. At the time, some of this equipment was a turnover item and meant that you had to BZO (battle sight zero) once in country. It also meant during the RIP that somebody lacked a critical capability during the RIP. Optics should be part of the weapons system.⁸⁹

Non-lethal weapons

Availability

- *“I have used less than lethal weapons in the past. I would recommend their availability but I would only use the ones that still give a Marine the ability to go lethal and less than lethal. For example, M16 with 5.56 but his M203 can employ a stinger type round. You are not negating his inherent capability to self defense by arming him this way.”⁹⁰*
- We had the Non-lethal Capabilities Set (NCS) and we never used it. We had the quad containers (quad cons) full of all the non-lethal equipment and was not used in either theater. The Long Range Acoustic Detection System (LRAD) was tested before we left. It was just a long range acoustic device. We could have used that on one our checkpoints, but we didn’t have it at the time. That would have been a good piece of non-lethal gear. In the escalation of force, we went to a lot of non-lethal things like pen flares and equipment similar to that. We trained with shot guns firing bean bag rounds. We also used some stun grenades going into houses. We did use warnings with pyrotechnic grenades vice fragmentary grenades.⁹¹

Equipment that should have been left behind

No Battalion Commander expressed a desire to *not have* equipment available.

Equipment related issues during operations in Iraq/Afghanistan

Overall. As mentioned earlier, vehicles wore out and were lost in combat; we lost individual equipment in MOUT combat in Fallujah, the supply system worked better than great with regards to weapons, radio, and vehicle repairs.⁹²

Vehicles. Recoverable item reports (WIR) for destroyed vehicles and equipment took about thirty days to resolve before a replacement was obtained. This is too long. Vehicle repairs at third echelon could take weeks instead of days, largely because of parts shortages.⁹³

UAV. UAV feeds to the battalion level were inadequate. Forward looking eyes, MRS, and rover III were in short supply. PEB for maintenance of optics, weapons, and vehicles was outstanding and turn around was unprecedented.⁹⁴

Armor. Replacement/repair of combat losses and other missing/degraded equipment was problematic. Given the length of the supply line (literal and figurative) to the far west of Anbar province it was amazing that any parts or PIE replacements made it. One policy related problem was the requirement for FSSG-level approval of cannibalization. We could approve selective interchange at battalion level, but complete cannibalization had to be approved at HHQ and required the “hulk” to be transported back to the rear greatly delaying the process of local repairs.⁹⁵

Medical Support

“From the individual Corpsman to the trauma surgeon, every care provider was well trained and “top notch.” We got all of our wounded (priority and urgent) to Fallujah Surgical - Company well within the one hour “Golden Hour.” We did not lose a single Marine from the time of MEDEVAC that was not mortally wounded.”⁹⁶

Battalion-level medical support

The Navy Forward Resuscitative Surgical System (FRSS) units were universally praised for their service in helping to save the lives of numerous seriously wounded Marines. They were positioned in the Battalion FOBs. Marines/soldiers that made it back to the FOB had a superior chance of survival.⁹⁷

Team medical personnel

Combat first aid.

- Cannot overemphasize the importance of medical training – particularly combat first aid. Squad medic program saved lives as did having an additional battalion surgeon attached. Forward BAS is a must.⁹⁸
- “Best medical support I have ever seen.”⁹⁹
- It was like a M*A*S*H unit but smaller. They worked for the MLG – they’re out of our MLG but with Surgeon augments. They had a building where they could have basically four surgeries going on at once – up to four.¹⁰⁰

Medical Augmentation Program (MAP)

- The Battalion Aid Station (BAS) was well trained, quite capable, and rose to the challenge of an urban counterinsurgency. They were augmented by sixteen medical augmentation program (MAP) Corpsmen from across the Navy. With the MAP, each platoon had two Corpsmen. MAP was a success; each MAP Corpsman was motivated and integrated into the BAS quickly.¹⁰¹
- Augmentation corpsmen that are activated and come from places like Bethesda need to come to the unit at least 45 days prior to block IV (MV 29 Palms, CA). You are supposed to have completed block I and II training prior and typically you do not get these augmentation corpsman in time to complete.¹⁰²

RIP/TOA

The top three factors that led to a successful RIP/TOA

The responses are grouped per Battalion Commander.

LtCol Buhl, CO 3/1:

-Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS)

-Staff Planning

-Right seat/left seat

LtCol Aiken, CO 2/6:

-We had plenty of time for RIP/TOA.

-We were able to conduct a PDSS.

-Good in-theater SOPs are firmly in place at the battalion, RCT and MEF/Division level.

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LtCol Minick, CO TF 2/2:

- Good communication before, during and after the RIP/TOA.
- Organized and prepared beforehand (both units).
- The mind-set is to make the AO better for the follow-on unit. 3/8 did this for us and we attempted to do the same for 1/1.

LtCol Journey, CO 1/6:

-I sent the primary staff and the company commanders. The "A" team went on the advance party. Allowed them to assimilate on the ground and prepare for what was going to occur immediately following the RIP. You have to look beyond just turning over gear and moving into your new home... truly understanding real time what the atmospheric are doing to the company AO is critical.

-30 days out we were doing weekly operations/intelligence briefs down to the individual Marine level... they were tracking in significant activities what was going on... once the company commanders were on the ground – in addition to the standard operations/intelligence brief, Marines were hearing what the situation was and what to expect straight from their boss. Confidence was up, somewhat desensitized to the level of violence so not to send them into shock once on the ground, and refinements to the plan and expectations were being made in advance. Electronic cross talk early and constant is essential.

LtCol Woodbridge, CO 1/7:

-This is a complex issue: the equipment turnover is most similar to what goes on with UDP battalions on Okinawa, while the tactical part of the RP is a combat operation with units (often) in contact with the enemy while RIP is conducted. Establish a solid timeline/schedule with your counterparts; remember the enemy gets to throw in a wrench so plan extra time; above all TRUST each other and make your best good-faith effort to balance the accounts.¹⁰³

-Don't change the present process, however do not conduct a RIP/TOA during a major named operation. Higher headquarters should not plan a changeover during a major named operation as well.

LtCol Alford, CO 3/6:

-I did five changeovers in Afghanistan. I moved five different times. In Iraq, we changed with 3/2. I think it's very important down at the squad/platoon/company level. I think 14 days is what they end up being [and] that's a little long. When you're coming in, after two or three days you think you've got it and you're ready to take over, but I think they got it scheduled down to 10. My turnover with 1/7 ended up being 14 days. The Battalion CO and I became really good friends. I don't think it was an issue, but he was ready to take it within a week. I took him out everyday, introduced him to all the Sheiks. When I took over for 3/2, none of that happened because they set up in the towns. 3/2 was short one company most of their seven months there, so there were no civilians to meet, no city council, no Government

or any of that information. When I turned over with 1/7, there was all of that, so the two changeovers were completely different I think. You go in, you listen, and you feel it out. It's not rocket science. I think we got it about right; about 10 days is what it takes to get the whole battalion to RIP.

-The Army is different. Like I said, we were doing a lot of stuff on the fly. We were leaving faster than we were getting there. There was no standard RIP, but then I turned over to 3/3 – a Marine unit and it was a full 10 day RIP and TOA, ceremony and the whole bit. I lived through a lot of different experiences during the two years of deployment.

-What we tried to do was mainly the leaders – the fire team leaders, the squad leaders and Platoon Commanders spent the time. When 1/7 replaced us, they went into areas that couldn't hold two full platoons, so most of the young Marines had to leave as the new ones came in, but we left all the leaders in place for 5, 6, 7, 8 days.

General

"Unexpected consequences"

Positive

- *“I placed each company into its zone based on the company's strengths and weaknesses. I feel that I placed the right people in the right company area of operations.”¹⁰⁴*
- *“The Battalion Sergeant Major and I hand-picked the SNCOICs for the Battalion Detention Facility, Personal Security Detail, and ECPs. Having mature, intelligent SNCOs that you trust allows you to concentrate on other areas.”¹⁰⁵*
- *“Fully embracing combined operations with ISF and living together, standing security together etc. resulted in the individual Marine coming to appreciate the Iraqi people more. I think Marines come to see them as real people more which resulted in a more balanced professional approach when faced with EOF, ROE, or daily interaction.”¹⁰⁶*

Negative

- *“Although we knew ROEs and EOF issues were considerable friction points going into the conflict, we still struggled with getting small units (squads/platoons) to properly execute and understand the importance of getting these procedures done correctly. I would have focused even more training on this aspect and driven the training at the battalion level. We did this in country but we should have done more prior to deployment.”¹⁰⁷*
- *“The decision to use my weakest company primarily for FOB security ensured that after seven months, this entire unit was capable of was FOB security—ensure all subordinate units are equally capable of all potential missions, and avoid the “go-to-guy” syndrome. The enemy is brutal, smart, and adaptive: use the roads and expect IEDs use the desert and expect mines; train the Iraqi security forces and they, not you, will be targeted. Work with the local leaders but remember that they lie—all the*

time—this is how they stayed alive and in charge under Saddam. Bottom-line: when you think you've got it figured out, STOP take a step back and reassess what's happening around you."¹⁰⁸

Fundamental changes caused by current GWOT

No fundamental changes. *"I think the Marine Corps is better suited to this kind of conflict because of our ethos and the quality of most of our small unit leaders. Unfortunately the real problems in the GWOT are not at the tactical level. The fundamental changes need to occur at the operational and strategic levels. No amount of "wins" down at the tactical level will amount to anything if the strategy is based on bad decisions and filtered information and if the operational concept is based on artificial restrictions on resources--especially manpower."*¹⁰⁹

Marksmanship training. More varied marksmanship training. The KD course and EMP are good, but we need to develop additional marksmanship skills applicable for a counterinsurgency.¹¹⁰

Information Operations. There should be more training in information operations. The battalion concentrated on deception, OPSEC (operations security), electronic attack, PSYOPS (psychological operations) and counterpropaganda.¹¹¹

All commanders need to better understand the importance of training and developing the IAs and IPs. We talk about it, write about it, but rarely do we commit the assets to accomplish it in regards to personnel or time. RCTs could better orchestrate the coordination and execution of IA and IP development. Individual task force commanders should not be given the autonomy to run or not run an aggressive IA or IP development program.¹¹²

"Either you get in or you get out." You get in by moving into firm bases in the city and you stay there. You live there with ISF. You work the streets and you conduct COIN. Living in some big FOB disconnected from the populace and "driving to work" does not work and will only get people killed. If you're not going to do it right then pull back and get out of the way... doing otherwise only creates IO wins for the enemy, gets people killed needlessly, and helps the insurgents paint our efforts as the bad guy. Specific to IEDs for example: you fight the IED planner, maker, and emplacer... not the IED. You work the populace to report and assist. You see key terrain as the people and you do those things that give you a tactical advantage to secure/control that terrain... taking away/reducing the population support base allows you to isolate and deny sanctuary. You have to see that you can do this through non-kinetic means just as effectively, if not more effectively, as you can by trying physically to isolate a piece of ground. Figure out what will influence that populace the most... then husband that from the insurgents to influence; moreover, undertake actions that not only maintain but improve the "perception" of stability and you further divide or at least gain tolerance. Sometimes a tie is a win. Always doing the above through a combined effort... the way ahead is that the people have to perceive that their security force and government are capable of providing that safety net.¹¹³

In the Marine Corps we about got it right. We can break down to platoon level. We can live out amongst the people, we can operate on foot. I think a lot of our Army units are heavily mechanized units or married to their vehicles. They don't understand counter-insurgency.

They think going out on patrol on vehicles and coming back to a main base camp is doing patrols, is doing presence.¹¹⁴

LAV employment. Our light armored vehicles (LAV) do a pretty good job. Marines transition out of those things pretty good. To make the LAVs viable, one commander put two rifle platoons with the LAV Company, and took one of their platoons so they had more infantrymen. The LAVs are great with the vehicle platform, but you have to be out on the street talking to people. That's where the intelligence comes from, not from some machine. That's how you beat the IED, not with some electronic countermeasure. There's not a silver bullet to beat the IED. It is a holistic effect and the main thing is you have to be out amongst the people. They'll tell you where the IEDs are and who's building them. They're stuck between a rock and hard place, but if they believe that you're winning – if you're the side that they think is going to win, they're going to pick the side that they think is going to win. The large majority of both Afghans and Iraqis are fed up. They're going to pick the side they think is going to win. *"This s--t ain't rocket science."*¹¹⁵

ISF training. One battalion commander ended up with a whole brigade of Iraqis – three battalions and ended up with a platoon of Marines and a company of Iraqis in a lot of positions. To stay after we cleared was the most important thing and to build living spaces in the middle of these villages; to find an open lot, push up a berm. We built our own three sided bunkers to live in. We put beams on top of plywood, sandbags and built racks inside and eight Marines lived inside a bunker and eight soldiers – Iraqi soldiers – four bunk beds.

When the people saw that we were doing that, it changed the whole atmosphere of the area out there. You have to live among the people to win counter-insurgency. As the Iraqi Army gets to a certain point, we need to pull back, but we need to leave real advisors in place. By "real advisors," that means active duty SNCOs and officers have to be the Iraqi Army advisors for a while with a radio on their back that can call in joint fires, MEDEVAC, QRF and logistics. There's going to be a significant amount of time before the Iraqi Army can call in a 500 pound bomb to kill the bad guys or a helicopter to shoot rockets and guns. We're going to have to do that for them for a significant period of time.

It's also going to be a long time before they can call a helicopter to come and get them if they get shot and take them back to a FRSS type medical facility. We have to do that for them. No matter how good the Iraqi Army is – and they're getting to where they're pretty good – but if a soldier out there knows that if he gets in a serious trouble that there's not going to be a bomb dropped for him, or if he gets shot, the helicopter's not going to come and get him to patch him up, he's not going to fight. We have to do that for him for a long time with real advisors and we're starting to put the right guys in there.

Military Advisors. A 1stLt National Guardsman ended up as the battalion advisor for an Iraqi battalion. God bless his heart, but he's not qualified to advise a Battalion Commander - he's never been on active duty. We have to put Majors and Lieutenant Colonels to advise the Battalion Commanders. We need Lieutenants and Captains down at the company level. We need SNCOs at the platoon level because that's the level we need to get to for a while to make that exit strategy. We need to get to the point where we're wearing their uniforms and carrying their weapons like we did in Vietnam in '70, '71 and '72. That's the level we need

to get to win this thing because the American living out among the villages starts to wear on the people and in counterinsurgencies, go against what the insurgent is trying to do.

We need to realize that, but we can help the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police force to win this thing with the right advisors. We're Americans; they're probably never going to like us. They respect us, they're glad we're there helping them, but they're never really going to like us or trust us because the Arab culture is not going allow it. They're different – and we're different.

National Guard and Reserves. We ought to be using the National Guard and Reserve personnel with the police. If you take any Reserve unit, probably one-third to one half of the unit is some kind of law enforcement individual. Those are the guys that should be making up the Police Transition Teams. They have the experience, and they have enough military that they can connect with the military that's out there. But at the same time, it's a hard thing to do.

Active Duty Marines. We need active duty Marines. What they need to be doing is sending back guys with experience to be a brigade and division advisors. Experienced company commanders need to be going back. Marines who are battalion S-3s, battalion XO's need to be going back as advisors. We need to be doing the same thing, and we're starting to.

If a Lieutenant Colonel goes over there and he's a brigade MiTT for a whole year, that's harder than being a Battalion Commander and we should be treating him well and rewarding him; give him school and give him a future promotion at a future command. That's an extremely tough job that they're doing if they're doing it right.

Size of advisor teams. A MiTT right now for a battalion is about eight Marines; it needs to be 24. There are four companies in a battalion; each company has three platoons. You need a staff NCO at each platoon. You need a 1st Lieutenant or a Captain at the company – that's 16 Marines per company.

Then you need eight Marines on the battalion staff to really teach the battalion how to be a battalion staff. You need a Battalion Commander advisor which needs to be a Major or a Lieutenant Colonel. You need a senior SNCO – First Sergeant/Sergeant Major – maybe even a Gunny – but a First Sergeant would probably be best. Then you need a 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and a medical representative with experience – that's eight people. You add those up and that's 24 per battalion and that's a lot.

Each one of these Marines needs to have a radio on his back and have access to the SIPRNET in order to get intelligence fed to him. He needs to be able to call in the QRF from some enclave within a Marine infantry battalion. He needs to be able to call a MEDEVAC if a soldier gets shot – an Iraqi soldier – and he needs to be able to call joint fires, aircraft, rotor wing, CAS. The Iraqi Army is good enough to beat the insurgent – if he had the support that they aren't going to have and they aren't going have for a significant period of time. They can win this thing if we help them. We can't win it for them though and that's what we're still trying to do.

The Iraqi soldier needs medical support and fires and a QRF to come to help. It's no different than a Marine out there.¹¹⁶

“The Imperial Grunt”. The State Department is not there and this is a political conflict. We were starting to get State Department representatives in the PRT – Provincial Reconstruction

Teams in Afghanistan. However, there were plenty of gaps. Two State Department reps out of the four wouldn't go to two of the areas - because it was too dangerous. DoD is trying to do the State Department stuff right now. It's the Imperial Grunt – if you've read that book from Kaplan – it's that Captain/Major/Gunny/1stSgt/MSgt out there that is conducting State Department business right now. They're conducting the engagement. They're untrained, don't really know what they're doing [and] figuring it out as they go. We cannot win this thing militarily. It's got to be won politically and we need their help more than we're getting. I don't think it's quite all their fault; some things will have to change with the State Department.¹¹⁷

Issues to improve training and preparation for operations in Iraq/Afghanistan

In essence, the following points were made by these Battalion Commanders:

- Continue to emphasize the “Strategic Corporal” and the “Three Block War.”¹¹⁸
- Continue to study the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) from past counterinsurgencies.¹¹⁹
- The IED Defeat Task Force folks were superb. Their training and expertise needs to be formalized into all units' training. They do not focus on the “silver bullet” or technology. Rather they talk about pragmatic execution of procedures that save lives and kill the enemy.¹²⁰
- We have made the development of local security forces into our exit strategy in both theaters. This is certainly a valid plan, but how is this plan being resourced? If you don't resource your “main effort” appropriately, you reduce your chances of success. *“Answer this question: what % of the total spending on OIF is going to organize train and equip the ISF, and what % is being spent on “quality of life infrastructure” contracts (KBR chow halls, movie theaters, etc)? Even the GAO can't follow this money trail.”*¹²¹

Acknowledgement

The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned thanks each Battalion Commander for his time and thoughtfulness in completing this topical report. These officers have carried a tremendous responsibility by leading our Marines in combat and we are most appreciative for their responses to the interview.

The Way Ahead

The intent of this report is to provide Battalion commanders with some insight on how to conduct COIN operations based upon the observations and comments from experienced commanders. This report will be posted on the MCCLL website – www.mccll.usmc.mil, making it available to the operating forces, Headquarters advocates and proponents, and the supporting establishment for use in how we organize, train, equip and provide Marine forces.

Attachment 1: Non – Kinetic/COIN Interview Questions

I am Mr. _____ of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned. This interview will cover areas of interest related to your experience in non-kinetic counter-insurgency operations while in command.

The purpose of the interview is to gather information that may improve the effectiveness, efficiency, preparedness and war fighting capabilities of the Marine Corps. This interview will be available for review by Marines and other officials who may be granted access to the Marine Corps Lessons Management System (MCLMS).

(RANK, NAME OF INTERVIEWEE) _____, your complete candidness during this interview will assist us in identifying those areas where we, as a Corps, can improve and better assist us in achieving our mission. This interview is unclassified.

If you prefer that the entire interview or any part of the interview be conducted on a non-attribution basis, we can honor that request. Please note that our purpose here is not to be a sounding board for witnessed criminal activity—Judge Advocates offer that service and we cannot offer immunity. Do you have any questions before completing this interview sheet? If so, please call me at 703 432 1273 or DSN 378 1273.

For the record, please provide your name, rank and the position you held.

ORGANIZE

How were you organized for deployment?

Did you have to modify your organization after you arrived in country? If so, why?

Were the changes effective? Why and why not?

PLANNING

To what degree were you involved in deployment planning and execution for your unit?

What assumptions did you use for planning? Did they prove to be valid?

TRAIN

What tools or training packages did you use to prepare for deployment and operations in theater? Were they effective? If not, why?

What are the best three pieces of advice that you could give to someone preparing for non-kinetic counter-insurgency operations?

Were there any "surprises" or unanticipated issues that you or your staff had to deal with or for which you or your staff were not sufficiently trained, resourced, or supported?

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What would you do differently next time in preparing your Marines for the deployment?

From your perspective, what areas of training appeared effective? What areas need attention-- What training shortfalls did you discover after conducting operations in theater?

OPERATIONS

What advice do you have relating to balancing kinetic and non-kinetic effects in COIN operations?

What advice do you have for commanders involved in non-kinetic operations relative to setting a suitable command climate?

What issues most affected your ability to perform your duties/ accomplish your mission?

Did you have any rules of engagement or escalation of force issues that impacted the mission?

Were there force protection concerns for your unit?

What cultural issues did you encounter that required special consideration?

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Please describe your chain of command.

Were there chain of command issues that hindered mission accomplishment?

Were there coordination issues with other units that hindered mission accomplishment?

LANGUAGE

Did you receive language training? Were you satisfied with it?

Did your team members receive language training?

Tell me about your experiences with interpreters.

Are there any recommendations you have for dealing with interpreters?

EQUIPMENT

Did you have the right equipment in sufficient quantities to accomplish your mission?

Did you have non-lethal weapons available? If so, were they used? Were they effective?

What equipment would you like to have had that you did not?

Did you take any equipment that you did not need or use that should have been left behind?

What equipment related issues rose to your level during operations in Iraq/Afghanistan?

MEDICAL

Where did you and your team receive medical support? Was this effective?

Did you have medical personnel on your team? Do you have recommendations in this area?

RIP/TOA

In your involvement with Relief in Place and Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA), what would you consider to be the top three factors that led to a successful RIP/TOA?

Was your RIP/TOA with a Marine unit or with an Army or coalition unit?

What would you change in the way you conducted your RIP/TOA in theater?

GENERAL

What were some of the "unexpected consequences" of decisions you made that resulted in either positive or negative effects on operations?

What aspects of the current conflict and the GWOT do you feel will require fundamental changes within the Marine Corps in order to better able the next commander to accomplish your mission?

Are there any other issues that you feel should be documented as lessons learned or inputs to improve training and preparation for operations in Iraq/Afghanistan?

End Notes

¹ Comments from LtCol Christopher I. Woodbridge – CO, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

² Comments from LtCol S. D. Aiken, USMC – CO 2d Battalion, 6th Marines.

³ Comments from LtCol Willard A. Buhl, USMC – CO, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines.

⁴ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.

⁵ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.

⁶ Comments from LtCol W. I. Journey, USMC – CO, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines.

⁷ LtCol Journey, 1/6.

⁸ LtCol James J. Minick, USMC – CO, Task Force 2/2

⁹ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.

¹⁰ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.

¹¹ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.

¹² Comments from LtCol Julian D. Alford, USMC, CO, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines.

¹³ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.

¹⁴ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.

¹⁵ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.

- ¹⁶ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ¹⁷ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ¹⁸ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ¹⁹ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ²⁰ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ²¹ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ²² LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ²³ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ²⁴ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ²⁵ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ²⁶ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ²⁷ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ²⁸ LtCols Journey, 1/6 and Alford, 3/6.
- ²⁹ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ³⁰ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ³¹ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ³² LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- ³³ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ³⁴ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ³⁵ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ³⁶ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ³⁷ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ³⁸ LtCols Minick, TF 2/2 and Buhl, 3/1.
- ³⁹ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁴⁰ LtCol Minick, 2/2.
- ⁴¹ LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- ⁴² LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁴³ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ⁴⁴ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁴⁵ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁴⁶ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ⁴⁷ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ⁴⁸ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁴⁹ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁵⁰ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ⁵¹ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ⁵² LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ⁵³ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁵⁴ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁵⁵ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ⁵⁶ LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- ⁵⁷ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ⁵⁸ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ⁵⁹ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ⁶⁰ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁶¹ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁶² LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁶³ LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- ⁶⁴ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ⁶⁵ LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- ⁶⁶ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- ⁶⁷ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁶⁸ LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- ⁶⁹ LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- ⁷⁰ LtCol Buhl, 3/1.

- 71 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 72 LtCol Buhl, 3/1.
- 73 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 74 LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- 75 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 76 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- 77 LtCol Alford, 3/6.
- 78 LtCol Buhl, 1/6.
- 79 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 80 LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- 81 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 82 LtCol Minick, TF 2/2.
- 83 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 84 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- 85 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 86 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
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- 93 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 94 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 95 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
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- 103 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
- 104 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 105 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 106 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 107 LtCol Aiken, 2/6.
- 108 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.
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- 120 LtCol Journey, 1/6.
- 121 LtCol Woodbridge, 1/7.