Afghan Commander AAR Book
Currahee Edition
April 2014

In this edition of the *Afghan Commander AAR Book,* company commanders from across TF Currahee share their hard-earned knowledge with the profession.

4th BCT Currahees, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
May – September 2013: Khost and Paktya Provinces
October 2013: Khost, Paktya, Paktika, and South Ghazni Provinces
November 2013: Khost, Paktya, Paktika, South Ghazni, Logar, and Wardak Provinces.

This was produced by the leaders of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), with support from the Center for Company-level Leaders at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY.

Cover Photos: (top) Soldiers from Gunfighter Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conduct a partnered patrol in the vicinity of the Khost Gardez Pass in Paktya Province, Afghanistan on October 21, 2013. (bottom) Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, conduct a patrol in SE Asia in 1970. Courtesy U.S. Army.

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NOTE: A digital copy of this document is available in both the Company Command and Platoon Leader online professional forums, http://CC.army.mil & http://PL.army.mil.

Dedication to our Fallen Comrades

We dedicate this book to the memory of our fallen heroes from Operation Enduring Freedom XIII-XIV. You will not be forgotten.

2LT Justin L. Sisson, A Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Paktya Province, 3 June 2013.

SPC Robert A. Pierce, A Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Paktya Province, 3 June 2013.

SGT Corey E. Garver, B Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Paktya Province, 23 June 2013.

SSG Sonny C. Zimmerman, A Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Paktya Province, 15 July 2013.

SSG Octavio Herrera, B Battery, 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, Paktya Province, 11 August 2013.

SGT Jamar A. Hicks, B Battery, 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, Paktya Province, 11 August 2013.

SPC Keith E. Grace Jr., B Battery, 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, Paktya Province, 11 August 2013.

SSG Thomas A. Baysore Jr., C Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Paktya Province, 26 September 2013.

Overview of Task Force Currahee in OEF XIII-XIV

Introduction

The year 2013 was a time of frequent transitions for Soldiers of Task Force Currahee deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. When the brigade deployed in May of that year, they conducted a Relief in Place with the Rakkasans of 3rd BCT and assumed responsibility for Khost and Paktya provinces. By the time the brigade handed over responsibility to the 3rd BCT, 10th Mountain Division in November, the Currahees had responsibility for seven provinces, had closed one operational base and six combat outposts, and had transitioned from advising an Afghan National Army (ANA) brigade to an ANA corps – all while in contact with a determined and experienced enemy.

Preparation and Deployment

Having returned from the previous deployment to Regional Command-East in late 2011, the brigade spent the last year and a half conducting personnel and equipment reset, an intensive training cycle, and final pre-deployment preparation culminating with a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) at Fort Polk, LA in January 2013. Now the brigade was trained, ready, and organized as Task Force Currahee for the Security Force Assistance mission which was now the decisive operation in Afghanistan. During the MRX, the brigade had the opportunity to exercise the new organizational structure, with 1st and 2nd battalions as battlespace owners partnered with Afghan forces and 1-61 Cavalry Squadron task-organized to advise the Afghan Army brigade headquarters. Additionally, the task force stood up sixteen SFAATs[1] with organic Soldiers and additional officers and NCOs newly assigned for the mission.

Over the course of April and May 2013, the Currahees steadily flowed into Afghanistan to relieve the Rakkasans of 3rd BCT. The task force's initial set had 1-61 Cavalry advising the Afghan 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps at Camp Parsa/Clark, 1-506 Infantry responsible for Paktya, and 2-506 Infantry responsible for Khost. 4th BSTB was responsible for FOB Salerno management and local security as well as AO-wide route clearance, and 4-320 Field Artillery and 801st BSB provided artillery and logistical support across the area of operations. 4-320 also operated the Afghan Fires Center of Excellence (AFCoE) at Camp Parsa to further develop indirect-fire capability in the Afghan Army. Overall, the BCT was responsible for an area covering 37,024 square kilometers, home to 1.9 million Afghan civilians, and sharing 496 miles of border with Pakistan.

Operations in Khost and Paktya

1-61 Cavalry, TF Panther, found itself at the center of the BCT's effort to build sustainable capacity in the Afghan Army. The 1/203rd ANA brigade did not have a reputation as being among the strongest, so the leaders and Soldiers of 1-61 CAV set about their work to assess the Afghan brigade headquarters and develop a plan to prepare them for independent operations within six months. Fortunately, the 1/203rd commander, BG Nassir, possessed the

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[1] Security Force Advise and Assist Teams

skill and will to lead. It would take several more months of advising, however, to truly see the pillars of the Afghan security forces come together as a cohesive and effective unit.

With the arrival of the summer fighting season to Paktya province, 1-506 Infantry encountered a highly kinetic fight. COP Wilderness and the surrounding outposts held by Afghan security forces became the epicenter of the battle for control of the Khost-Gardez Road and other routes that provided movement through the Shinkay mountain range. Over the course of the deployment, the Red Currahees of 1-506 and the artillerymen of 4-320 FA would fire over 2,000 rounds of artillery in support of the Afghan security forces fighting to establish control over this key area and against insurgent rocket teams targeting COP Wilderness with deadly and accurate fire.

The Taliban in Paktya province would again prove their determination to maintain use of historic support zones in late June. While conducting ground exfiltration from a raid deep in Zormat district, the Afghan Combined Response Company supported by a force from 1-506 encountered an obstacle belt seeded with dozens of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). What should have been a rapid movement became 48 hours of almost constant enemy contact, but the combined force ultimately prevailed, demonstrating to the enemy the strength of the partnership.

In Khost province, 2-506 Infantry encountered a similar problem set as they sought to develop the Afghan capability to project force into areas previously regarded as insurgent support zones. With an incredibly strong partner in the Khost Chief of Police, BG Baqezoi, as well as 2nd and 3rd ANA Kandaks, the White Currahees assisted the Afghan forces in the eventual detention of 53 enemy combatants, some of whom using warrants issued in the Afghan judicial system. As the White Currahees worked to develop Afghan rule of law in Khost, they also coached and mentored their Afghan Army partners to extend the government's authority into western Sabari and Musa Khel districts. By demonstrating to both the insurgents and the local population that the government could operate in these areas, 2-506 helped the Afghan forces deny the enemy use of a critical line of communication.

Despite some isolated successes, however, the Afghan forces still lacked the capability to truly execute combined-arms operations and work together as a cross-pillar team with the Army and Police. The turning point would come during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, in July. While most Afghans were focused on visiting family and the daily feast of Iftar, President Karzai ordered the Army to conduct a humanitarian operation into the remote district of Azrah, in southeastern Logar, in order to deliver food supplies after floods had ruined the local crops. The mission was assigned primarily to 4/203rd in Logar and 1/203rd in Khost and Paktya, with 1st brigade as the main effort. The initial Afghan effort to project combat power into this difficult area was insufficient due to lack of leadership on the ground, and prospects for the success of Operation Semourgh[2] were not good. Recognizing the risk of failure, 1-61 Cavalry conducted a short-notice air assault with a small advising element to accompany BG Nassir, the 1st brigade commander, and his tactical command post to a staging area at the Jaji district center, about 30 kilometers south of Azrah. BG Nassir's presence made an immediate difference, as he directed the fight at the tip of the spear each day and returned to the district center each night to consult with his staff and advisors. The advising element from 1-61 soon returned to Camp Clark, but BG Nassir continued to fight north until mission completion, in almost daily contact with the enemy. During Operation Semourgh, the Afghan pillars demonstrated an unprecedented level of coordination and ability to integrate Afghan combat enablers such as D-30 howitzers, Mi-35

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[2] Dari for "Phoenix"

gunships, Mi-17 transports, route clearance, and other mobility assets. The operation was hailed in the Afghan and international press as the significant event that it was and, upon return to Camp Parsa, BG Nassir was decorated personally by a senior Afghan general officer.

Transition

As autumn approached, FOB Salerno began to look noticeably different. Since its initial establishment as a coalition airfield in 2002, FOB Salerno had grown from a population of about a hundred Soldiers to a major operational base for thousands. Now, only months from its final transfer to the Afghan government and the nearly complete withdrawal of coalition forces from the Khost bowl, large expanses of the base were leveled and the base once again approached an "expeditionary" status. To accomplish the feat of closing a small city while continuing to provide security, the Apaches of 4th BSTB worked night and day to reduce the size of the footprint by over 30% and deliberately retrograde 75 disparate civilian and military agencies. Working hand in hand, the 801st BSB Maintaineers reduced approximately 2,560 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units of property, 2,600 tons of scrap metal, and 80,000 pounds of unserviceable ammunition.

In late September, after months of detailed planning and preparation and only weeks after 2-506 transferred COP Sabari and Matun Hill to the Afghan forces, the BCT headquarters jumped from FOB Salerno to FOB Lightning, in Gardez, Paktya province. This transition was to set conditions for the eventual establishment of Training, Advise, and Assist Command – Southeast (TAAC-SE), an organization led by a brigadier general with the mission of advising Afghan forces in the seven provinces of RC-East south of Kabul.[3] To this end, the brigade headquarters quickly began integrating the existing advisor teams at FOB Lightning to create a single entity able to effectively advise the 203rd Corps headquarters on the adjoining FOB Thunder.

On the first full day after the arrival of the BCT headquarters main body to FOB Lightning, the task force received a sudden reminder of the insider threat posed by insurgent sympathizers when a Soldier from a different task force was shot and killed by an Afghan Soldier on FOB Thunder. For the remainder of the deployment, the risk of insider threats would remain a prominent feature for the Soldiers of Task Force Currahee, who would eventually lose one of their own in this way. Despite the endless hours spent developing relationships and planning to mitigate the threat, the insider threat was a risk which rightly kept Soldiers on their guard.

The month of October was, perhaps, the month with the greatest number of transitions for the task force. At the beginning of the month, as the 1st BCT 10th Mountain Division redeployed, TF Currahee assumed responsibility for southern Ghazni province. One week later, as 2nd BCT 10th Mountain Division redeployed and was replaced by 3-71 Cavalry from 3/10 MTN, TF Currahee assumed responsibility for Paktika province. This doubling in size of the task forces area of operations was followed only several days later by 1-506 Infantry's transfer of COP Chamkani to the 7th Kandak. Finally, on the last night of October, having transformed a major airfield into essentially a battalion patrol base, 2-506 Infantry conducted the final transfer of FOB Salerno to the 2/203rd, with the only Currahees in the Khost bowl being several hundred soldiers from TF Panther remaining to advise and assist 1/203rd at Camp Parsa. The operation was the largest of the deployment and truly a BCT effort, ending with the 1-506 Infantry's withdrawal from COP Wilderness in the Khost-Gardez Pass.

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[3] The seven provinces are: Logar, Wardak, Paktya, Khost, Paktika, Ghazni, and Bamiyan.

By the end of October, the footprint of TF Currahee in Afghanistan had been completely transformed. When they brigade arrived in the spring, rifle companies occupied joint combat outposts to conduct partnered operations with Afghan forces. Now, with the exception of COP Zormat only days from transfer, the only bases which remained open were those that facilitated advising at the Afghan corps and brigade levels. The BCT had successfully reduced the size of the force while doubling the size of its area of operations and transforming a traditional BCT headquarters into a TAAC tailor-made for the advising mission.

The task force closed its final company outpost, COP Zormat, as well as FOB Goode during November without incident and while conducting Relief in Place with the Spartans of 3rd BCT 10th Mountain Division. Upon Transition of Authority on 22 November 2013, the Spartans would assume responsibility for an operational area consolidated by the Currahees to include all seven provinces south of Kabul within RC-East.

Closing a Chapter in History

With the last of the Currahees returned to Fort Campbell in January 2014, the latest Rendezvous With Destiny officially ended. One more transition lay ahead: inactivation of the 506th Infantry Regiment as part of the overall reduction in the size of the Army. Just as the 506th was established during World War II on the slopes of Camp Toccoa and inactivated at the end of that war, then later reactivated during the Vietnam War, the colors that were last unfurled in 2005 at the height of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan were once again cased on 25 April 2014.

The Contributors

1-506th Infantry (Red Currahee)

2-506th Infantry (White Currahee)

1-61 Cavalry (Panther)

4-320th Field Artillery (Guns of Glory)

801st BSB (Maintaineer)

4th BSTB (Apache)

Combat Advising: A/1-506th Infantry Regiment in East Paktya during the 2013 Fighting Season

CPT Benjamin S. Scott (A/1-506 IN)

Able Company's mission was to advise and assist the ANSF NLT 22 MAY 2013, in securing the population and disrupting the Haqqani Network (HQN) in Paktya Province IOT increase ANSF capacity and confidence to maintain an enduring security environment through 2014.

Our key tasks were:

♠ Protect the force: preserve combat power through use of C-IED, C-IDF, and dismounted/mounted TTPs.

♠ Build ANSF capacity: conduct partnered planning and operations as well as training to produce a force capable of providing security after departure of US forces.

♠ Disrupt INS in zone: disrupt HQN support operations and the transit of men and materiel to Kabul and other strategic target areas.

♠ Secure key lines of communication: retain FOM on key routes for ANSF and Able Company.

Combat advising was crucial to accomplishing Able Company's mission in the area of operations. As such, Able Company partnered with 7/1/203 ANA, 2/2 ABP, 1/2 ABP, and AUP and ALP from six districts in East Paktya. Over six months, relationships with these units grew to varying degrees, dependent largely on terrain and geographic location. Additionally, the looming departure of US forces required a consistent message to the ANSF of, "Let's do what you need us to do to be ready for the next fighting season." This paper seeks to illustrate Able Company's successes and challenges faced during its deployment so that others can learn when faced with similar missions.

ANSF's leadership of operations was crucial to Able Company's role as advisors. With the eventual movement of US forces out of East Paktya, the ANSF had to be prepared to regularly execute unilateral operations without regular support from US forces. The security of the area of operations was the sole responsibility of ANSF. With this in mind, the ANSF had to maintain the lead on operations. This was vital to success after the removal of US forces for two primary reasons: the ANSF had to be capable of conducting independent operations; and the ANSF had to be perceived by the populace as capable of providing sufficient security.

Able Company sought to achieve ANSF leadership operationally through engaging ANSF leaders and focusing on their operational priorities. The result was partnered planning of ANSF operations to objectives of their choosing. While these objectives were not universally aligned with what might otherwise have been US priorities, they were generally in line with imperative security requirements throughout the 7th Kandak area of operations. Unilateral operations by US forces using air movements and token forces from our ANSF partners would have resulted in an increased operational tempo, more aggressive pursuit of the enemy, and fewer pockets of terrain ceded to the enemy. But such actions would have also produced a less-capable overall ANSF with less operational experience and interaction with the populace. While US-led operations were required at times by tactical necessity, Able Company tried to use the remaining precious time on maximizing ANSF planning, leadership, and participation. Given

thorough assessment, Able Company observed an ANSF force consistently competent at small-arms engagements while dismounted and mounted and able to sustain itself through the use of supply runs to various headquarters locations. Alternatively, Able Company saw inconsistent employment of effective C-IED TTPs and rudimentary employment of limited IDF across all portions of the ANSF. A specific area of growth and challenges was cooperative planning and operations. All portions of the ANSF displayed a dearth of US-style planning and rehearsals and instead used vague and general plans when preparing for operations. Although meetings to establish plans across ANSF organizations occurred, these generally produced the same vague plans and detail-starved coordination. These meetings were sufficient to orient multiple organizations on the same objective, at the same time, with a mutual understanding of task and purpose sufficient to accomplish basic operational goals.

Able Company relied greatly on Joint Troop-Leading Procedures when conducting partnered missions with ANSF partners in order to effectively achieve operational success. By simply following the eight troop-leading procedures, Able Company consistently took into account the following factors in order to facilitate successful joint operations:

Troop Leading Procedures with ANSF in Mind:

1. Receive the Mission

    a) Host Nation Forces (HNF) and Coalition Forces (CF) work together to identify a mission (one that is realistic and facilitates HNF Legitimacy).

2. Issue Warning Order

    a) HNF and CF receive the mission simultaneously and begin to work through friction points that could arise during the mission.

3. Make a Tentative Plan

    a) HNF and CF receive specified task and purpose

        i) HNF task and purpose are decisive to the operation. HNF conduct all parts of the operation that deal with interacting with the local populace (i.e., Traffic Control Points, entering buildings, clearing populated areas).

        ii) CF maintain support roles throughout the operation. Their task and purpose can and should facilitate HNF movement, but their presence in the operation should not set the pace for HNF or cause HNF to become overly reliant upon their presence.

4. Start Necessary Movement

    a) Conduct Partnered PMCS, PCCs, and PCIs

        i) Before every mission, conduct PMCS on vehicles, weapon systems, and communications with Host Nation Forces

        ii) Prior to SP, ensure all HNF have all mission essential equipment

        iii) Ensure a method of communication has been established between HNF and CF in order to facilitate effective communication during the mission.

        iv) Begin rehearsals with CF partners (i.e., TSE, Battle Drills, Movement Tactics).

5. Reconnoiter

   a) Reference imagery and aerial surveillance of the objective area.

   b) Work with HNF to exploit their knowledge of objective area.

6. Complete the Plan

   a) Finalize the plan, taking into consideration the ability of HNF and any issues that may have come up during the TLP process.

7. Issue the Complete Order

   a) Issue the order to all HNF and CF taking part in the operation.

   b) Construct a "walkable" terrain model that will be large enough for the given audience and allow HNF to brief off of.

      i) The terrain model should have markings in both the HNF and CF languages to eliminate confusion.

      ii) Ensure that enough interpreters are present to facilitate communication between both forces.

      iii) Specified link-up points and operational triggers must be thoroughly understood.

8. Supervise

   a) CF supervise HNF to ensure proper execution of the mission.

Able Company conducts Joint TLPs with ANSF at AP Chamkani

Joint TLPs were an essential part of Able Company's advisory role because they not only demonstrated to ANSF partners how to properly and effectively prepare for missions but also synced both ANSF and CF roles when conducting the operation. Often times, it was during Joint TLPs that Able Company convinced ANSF of their decisive role in the operation. Rehearsing their role, and then understanding Able Company's role in the mission, forced ANSF leadership to bear more responsibility and realize the limited decisive action that CF would make on their behalf.

While conducting joint operations in its AO, Able Company had its own limitations that were unfortunate realities when conducting partnered operations. The Company AO consisted of numerous valley systems and was heavily compartmentalized. Most population centers within the AO were accessible by only one mounted avenue of approach, and the severely restrictive terrain inhibited even dismounted movement in many places. MAXPRO-ISS vehicles with MSU were very survivable when confronted with IEDs, but these vehicles are cumbersome and top-heavy, and they were unable to negotiate most of the roads within the AO. Compared with the maneuverability of ANSF "Rangers" and HMMWVs, the MAXPRO cannot keep up off of paved surfaces and is unable to follow on the vast unimproved trail network that locals use for mounted movement. The restriction to a limited number of routes, paired with the limited avenues of approach in the AO, increased the enemy's ability to prepare IED or direct-fire attacks against partnered patrols. Similarly, the enemy was able to flee uphill to less trafficable areas once a patrol committed down a valley. While anticipated and mitigated with ISR and aerial weapons platforms, the enemy remained able to flee an objective area as long as he was willing to leave without a weapon. Further, Able Company was at times disrupted from full participation in planned partnered operations when inclement weather impacted coalition enablers. When this occurred, US leaders were forced to explain why ANSF would be conducting operations "unsupported" that were originally planned together. The result was a perception of US forces failing to meet commitments. Tactical concerns and the manner in which US forces employed force also created distance between ANSF and US partners. ANSF partners had to be educated on the capabilities and limitations of coalition and ANSF enablers. Numerous times, ANSF commanders and district-level officials pointed out "bad areas" and requested we "kill anyone in the mountain because they are bad people." When conducting partnered operations, the dispersion of so many ANSF organizations on the battlefield made target discrimination even more challenging. This complexity was further muddled by the presence of Afghan Local Police forces that often operated autonomously in various uniforms. Cell phone and FM communications were successful to varying degrees depending upon individual ANSF members' proficiency in map-reading, their familiarity with the area, and the level of consistency between local, US, and ANSF names for towns and areas. A TTP used by Able Company and ANSF partners was the establishment of TRPs around ANSF installations with a focus on likely and historic enemy staging and engagement areas. These TRPs would then be used when relaying SITREPs from ANSF over cell phones for coordination of illumination missions and commitment of the quick reaction force. We had varying levels of success using this TTP, and on occasion were sharply rebuked by ANSF ground commanders angry that we were unable to fire high-explosive rounds in support when we were not able to observe the target.

Throughout partnered operations, Able Company continuously focused on force protection. Partnered patrols desired by ANSF counterparts were used to conduct C-IED and C-IDF operations. With the focus on ANSF leading operations, Able Company followed behind our partners to force them to execute C-IED TTPs. This was accomplished with varying degrees of success, usually based directly upon the threat perceived by ANSF. C-IDF operations were more difficult to conduct based upon the severely restrictive terrain from which the enemy fired.

The advent of additional and more effective IDF attacks against AP Chamkani coincided with the start of Ramadan, adding a layer of complexity as Able Company sought to conduct area denial and cache clearance. Able Company adjusted to this threat through the planning of joint air assault operations to compensate for the reduced operational availability of the ANSF. An additional focus area was protection against potential "blue on green" threats. Able Company and Red Currahee took a two-step approach to protection against this threat. First, Able ensured maximum partnership and cooperation at all times while specifically avoiding causing unnecessary offense. This was achieved through constant coordination and regular interaction with ANSF partners as well as consistent and sustained cultural sensitivity training for all Able Company Soldiers. Additionally, "guardian angel" plans were briefed, rehearsed, and executed as part of each planned and recurring operation. This was a mitigation of risk, secondary to the primary protection of managing relationships.

When conducting partnered operations, Able Company put special emphasis on maintaining its advisory role. This was to ensure that ANSF were capable of conducting independent operations and that ANSF would be perceived by the populace as capable of providing sufficient security. This mission vignette provides a visual depiction of how Able Company conducted these operations with the end state in mind.

Mission: HNF IPW CF move to contact to clear OBJ DOG (IVO 12A BC 12345 678790) NET XXXXXXXXXXXX IOT disrupt INS facilitation and attacks against HNF and CF.

Partnered Operation Mission Graphic
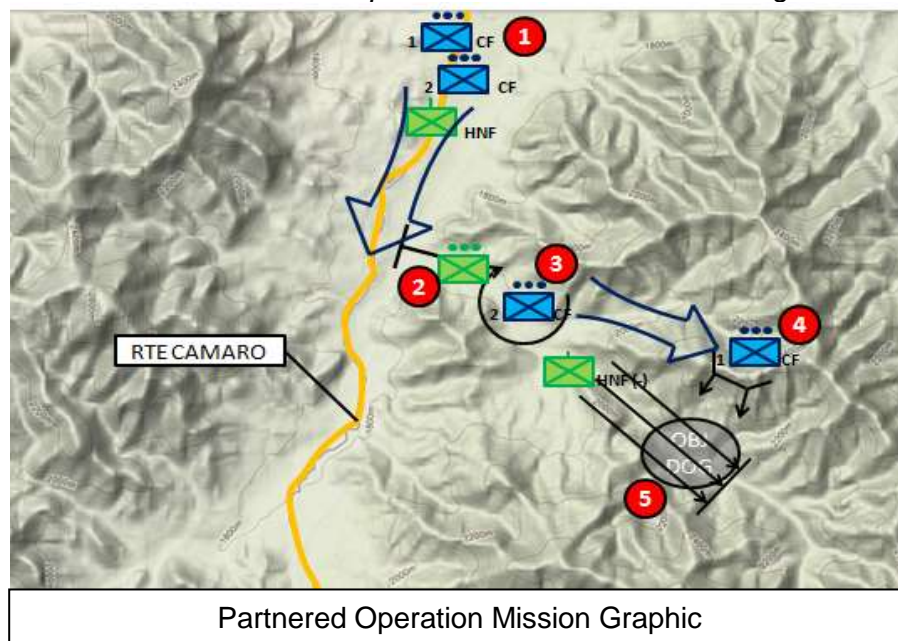
1. HNF and CF move mounted down RTE CAMARO to OBJ DOG. HNF take the lead in the movement conducting their own organic route clearance and deliberately showing the local populace that they are in the lead.

2. HNF set up a blocking position / Traffic Control Point at a critical intersection. HNF will search LN vehicles and be a visible enforcer to the local populace.

3. CF establish a Vehicle Patrol Base (VPB) in vicinity of OBJ DOG. The VPB serves several purposes: it is a mutually supporting position for dismounted CF; it provides a communication platform to higher echelons for consistent and accurate reporting, and it serves as the reserve force should HNF encounter a larger force or receive a substantial number of casualties.

4. CF dismount and clear the high ground surrounding OBJ DOG. Their task in the operation is to screen the high ground as HNF move to the OBJ as well as to establish an overwatch on the OBJ as HNF clear OBJ DOG. As HNF continue their mission, CF follow and support.

5. HNF clear to the OBJ both mounted and dismounted while being screened by CF on the high ground. HNF clear all buildings and interact with local nationals, strengthening their relationship and building their legitimacy with what is observed as limited CF presence. While conducting the clearance, CF maintain communication with HNF as they conduct their clearance.

Throughout its mission as combat advisors, Able Company sought the training desired by ANSF leadership for their organizations. This was paired with an assessment by warfighting function on tactical necessities and collective tasks. Able Company's officers and NCOs collaborated on this assessment of need and capacity using US doctrinal publications (specifically TC 3-21.10) and ANA doctrinal publications (ANA 7-8 MTP, ANA 7-10.1 Infantry Rifle Company, and ANA 7-10 MTP). With approximately 180 days to conduct partnered operations and train while geographically co-located, a special emphasis was placed on prioritized training requirements and inclusion of pre-mission rehearsals that reinforced these training priorities. Able's priority training focused on marksmanship, C-IED, maintenance, combat life-saving, employment of organic IDF assets, and TLPs. Operational support of ANSF operations focused on providing overwatch and leveraging US assets such as artillery and aerial platforms to allow the ANSF to gain repetitions in successful mission execution. Able Company generally executed mounted and dismounted overwatch from a combination of SBF positions and partnered blocking positions. This allowed for good situational awareness of ANSF maneuver while providing operational flexibility to leverage effects or maneuver in support of ANSF in-contact. Even on operations that were unlikely to require US support, Able Company would participate to further mitigate the risk of significant operational setbacks and the damage to confidence that would result from such a defeat.

Persistent challenges for our development of the ANSF were in the areas of maintenance and employment of IDF assets beyond the use of mortars fired in direct lay. Key friction points were the absence of sufficiently trained mechanics, timely replacement parts, and the tools and facilities for regular maintenance. Able Company focused on user-level maintenance on weapons and vehicles to facilitate identification of maintenance deficiencies requiring further attention. To improve IDF capacity, Able Company conducted direct-lay training at each outlying AFCOP while centralizing further mortar training at AP Chamkani in coordination with the Battalion Mortar Platoon's training module. Key functions for the long-term effectiveness of 7th Kandak include various staff functions, especially operations and logistics functions. 7/1 SFAAT was a tremendous asset in the development of the Kandak staff as Able focused on the company-level and below. In conjunction with 7/1 SFAAT, Able successfully executed training through the SFAAT providing emphasis and achieving buy-in at the Kandak level and then Able Company platoons executing for platoon-sized elements . This relationship was vital throughout the partnership with 7th Kandak and was achieved through an immediate and sustained effort to be inclusive and coordinated in all our efforts. The SFAAT was also an excellent resource when attempting to bridge differences between ANSF and US military cultures. Through regular interactions and relationships built over time, the SFAAT had good capital to help smooth ruffled feathers when they occurred.

Two particular areas Able Company devoted great attention to in preparing ANSF to fight on their own in the absence of CF were utilizing fires and training the leaders of 7/1 KDK. Able Company worked intensely to enhance the indirect fire capabilities of 7/1 KDK by adapting training to what met the needs of ANSF. Additionally, other training such as C-IED, medical,

maintenance, and marksmanship focused primarily on training the leaders of 7/1 KDK in order to facilitate future training for years to come.

Conducting partnered training and operations presents unique and challenging issues. This was particularly true when attempting to develop partners in the area of fire support. Given the mission of the Field Artillery, which is to "deliver fires and integrate those fires and scalable capabilities to enable commanders to dominate their operational environment in unified land operations," how does one ensure mission success? The answer must be found first by acknowledging the inherent challenges that will be present in the partnered unit. When training and operating with the Afghan National Army, the most common challenges are cultural issues and the lack of fires equipment, observer equipment, and trained personnel. These challenges are significant, though not insurmountable. The U.S. Army 10-Step Training Model, coupled with the inherent knowledge the partnered unit possesses with regard to physical and human terrain, can prove quite reliable when conducting fires planning and execution. While partnering with 7/1 KDK, Able Company found that training had to be progressive in complexity, focused in scope, and appropriate in duration.

One of the issues that Able Company encountered with 7/1 KDK was that they did not possess many of the assets or training that the U.S. Army often employs. The unit had no artillery pieces, and as a result was severely limited in the range of their indirect fire systems. They did possess a number of mortar systems, but many were either incomplete systems or non-mission capable (NMC). Unfortunately, this was not the extent of the limitations under which 7/1 KDK was expected to operate. There were no trained observers, there did not exist a mortar section in its entirety, and they lacked communications equipment that would facilitate support more than a few kilometers away from the supporting unit. All of this informed the decisions that were made for future training and support. Once assessments were complete, training objectives were identified. In the case of 7/1 KDK, it was determined that they needed to become as proficient as possible in the employment of their mortar systems in direct lay. This was a reflection of the fact that they did not have any trained observers to facilitate true indirect fires. The ANA also required an artillery piece in addition to a fully trained gun team and fire direction center. This need was identified and the request was sent to higher to initiate movement. In light of the fact that the delivery of an artillery piece and its crew was outside of the Company's control, the majority of training focused on the former of the two objectives.

Another issue Able Company encountered with formally trained 7/1 KDK mortar men was that they were allocated throughout the Kandak's six districts. Often, the trained mortarmen could not attend training due to either geographical location or mission requirements. However, there were several individual ANA soldiers that had experience with their 82mm mortar systems. These individuals were identified and were selected to be a part of "train the trainer" classes. The goal of this training was to ensure a sustainable training program that would occur following Able Company's departure from the AO. Utilizing an interpreter to make products in the native language of the students was also a very useful practice. A rudimentary technique for developing both observers and mortar men firing in direct lay was accomplished by making such products. Such a technique was utilized by Able Company while training 7/1 KDK. Prior to training we had an interpreter write the words "target" and "impact" on two separate pieces of board in the student's language. Given these crude props, both observer training and gun drills can be conducted. The observer gives corrections given the target-location error while the gun crew manipulates the tube in accordance to the given corrections. The instructor then moves the impact nearer or farther from the target in accordance with the given correction. This process was repeated until the student achieves effects on the templated target. This is a simple, cheap example of how Able Company developed ANSF capacity. During subsequent

operations both the uniformed police as well as the ANA employed their mortar systems with varying degrees of success.

In addition to a lack of training, there was also a lack of fires equipment that the US Army would consider to be standard equipment. It is essential to get creative with the curriculum for training events. When attempting to apply the American model to your partners training, you must ask yourself if there is a more practical way to achieve a sustainable desired effect. A good example of such a limitation is the lack of lasing or ranging equipment that will be present in the partnered unit. Much success can be found in leveraging your partner's understanding of known points for distance estimation. Despite 7/1 KDK being fairly new to their area of operations, they did possess the ability to estimate range by utilizing villages and terrain features. This fact led Able Company to believe that this knowledge could be utilized to create known points that the ANA could use on operations that occurred on a frequent basis. This would most benefit them following the departure of Coalition Forces as it was simplistic in design and sustainable in execution. This technique was proven time and again in support of a local Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) station. During a visit to the police station, it was conveyed to Able Company that the enemy attacked from historic positions on almost a nightly basis. After identifying the terrain features from where the attacks originated, Able Company was able to fire the known points with illumination in support of the AUP.

Following sufficient training in the delivery and observation of fires with 7/1 KDK, it was necessary to begin joint planning. When conducting joint planning, it was essential for both units to understand the commander's intent for fires. Once the intent for fires is understood, then the Essential Fire Support Tasks (EFSTs) can be developed. The Commander's intent in conjunction with the EFSTs will inform the fires planning process. Key terrain, high-threat areas, and likely enemy engagement zones can be developed and prepared for fires employment. Often the partnered unit will be familiar with the locations where engagements are likely to take place. This knowledge can be vital when determining the method and timing for the employment of available assets. In fact, Able Company often implemented the intelligence passed from 7/1 to Able Company while conducting operations. This is particularly true with regards to aerial assets. NAIs and TAIs that originated from ANSF were often exploited by CAS, CCA, and ISR while on partnered operations. However, this is not the only way in which local knowledge can be leveraged. Your partners may have information with regards to newly constructed infrastructure or transient populations in the vicinity of a preplanned target. Aerial assets can and ought to be briefed when entering into the airspace on this sort of information. Not only will this assist in avoiding wasted station time of assets that might otherwise deem the populations a threat, but this intelligence can also be vital with regards to preventing CIVCAS.

The most important step towards the integration of a partnered unit is the fires-support rehearsal. It is essential that the commanders of both U.S. and partnered units are present. This is important to ensure that the partnered unit understands weapon capabilities and the restrictions placed on US forces that accompany collateral concerns. This can alleviate unrealistic expectations when considering the employment of fires. One of the most troubling facts of partnered operations is the lack of situational awareness with regards to the location of the nearest friendly unit to the target. The prevention of fratricide is an observer's first and most sacred responsibility. Maximum participation on the part of the partnered unit will undoubtedly help ensure that fratricide is not an issue on partnered operations. Partnered units can disseminate planned friendly unit locations which should result in preplanned Fire Support Coordination Measures (FSCMs) such as a No Fire Area (NFA) or a Restricted Fire Area (RFA). While conducting the fire-support rehearsal, a partnered PACE plan ought to be discussed as well. While on operations it was difficult to receive real-time reporting as the Afghans would

utilize cell phones to contact Coalition Force interpreters who would then relay the information to American decision makers. Unfortunately, poor reception and the preservation of "minutes" made the reporting short in duration and lacking in substance. This situation needed to be addressed as the partnered unit could act as an additional sensor by disseminating real-time battlefield intelligence resulting in greater situational awareness. The US portion of the PACE plan ought to incorporate the frequencies of the partnered unit's communications. This can prove problematic as the partnered unit will likely not be capable of utilizing American communication platforms due to communications security. However, a technique utilized by Able Company was to ensure that a key leader in the American element had a radio and interpreter in order to disseminate deviations from the predetermined plan. The implementation of a PACE plan that accounts for your partner's communication limitations will also assist in the avoidance of fratricide.

1-506th IN Mortarmen conduct training with ANSF

Although lethal fires have been the exclusive focus thus far, it is important to convey the role that 7/1 KDK played in the non-lethal fires fight. Your partners have a powerful tool that cannot be possessed by US forces. Afghans take pride in and identify with Afghan government officials. Able Company recognized this fact and ensured that during the months of Ramadan, following an attack on ANSF, and in the wake of an attack resulting in civilian casualties, there was an Afghan information response. Ensuring that ANA, police, and government officials swiftly and effectively condemned the actions of the enemy during the aforementioned times was critical. Putting an Afghan face on the issue generated reports from local nationals on enemy activity in the area and legitimized the local government.

Ultimately, the success or failure of partnered training and operations depends on the ability to think critically and problem solve. Limitations will hinder your ability to operate at optimum efficiency. However, if there is an accurate initial assessment of your partner's circumstances, progressive and focused training success is more than attainable. This is particularly true if US forces have the fortitude to understand and implement the local knowledge of the partnered force. The final step for a successful partnership is the relentless practice of conducting joint planning and partnered rehearsals.

Fire Support Training Check List

♠ Assess the current fires capabilities of your partnered unit.

  o What equipment do they have at their disposal?

  o Is the equipment properly maintained?

  o Is the equipment properly manned

♠ Identify required equipment and training.

  o Ensure that the equipment and training provided is maintained and sustainable.

♠ Evaluate the current level of fire-support training that your partners have received.

  o Are there trained observers in the unit?

  o Are there trained artillery or mortar men in the unit?

  o Is there an ANA soldier who has received formal training that can assist in training?

♠ Understand the unique abilities that your partners possess.

  o Partnered forces have operated with degraded capabilities in comparison to US forces.

  o The solutions that the partnered units have implemented are often innovative.

  o Understand, implement, and leverage their experiences to achieve a desired effect.

♠ Rehearsals should incorporate the interpreter as well as the trainers.

  o Interpreter understands material that is to be covered during training.

  o Trainer knows how to best employ the interpreter during training.

  o Trainers are proficient at the tasks covered during training.

Partnered Fire Support Planning and Execution

♠ Maneuver Commander disseminated his intent for fires.

♠ Essential Fire Support Tasks are disseminated and understood.

♠ Fire Support Officer plans targets in accordance with the Commander's intent and EFSTs.

- ♠ Fire Support Officer refines and sequences preplanned targets in accordance with battlefield intelligence that the partners have provided.

    - o Consider the time and location for the employment of available assets.

    - o Develop TAIs and NAIs based on partner's relevant reporting.

    - o Partner-derived TAIs and NAIs have been disseminated to CAS, CCA, and ISR assets.

    - o Observers receive target-list worksheet and fire-support execution matrix.

- ♠ Maneuver Commander provides guidance for ammunition loads for weapon systems.

- ♠ Conduct Fire Support Rehearsal.

    - o Supporting units are present to include firing battery / section (if available).

    - o Supported elements are present to include maneuver commander.

    - o Commander's intent for fires and for EFSTs is briefed.

    - o FSCMs derived from partnered planning are disseminated.

    - o All products are made Afghan-releasable and handed over.

    - o Partnered PACE plan is established and rehearsed.

"Train the trainer" blocks of instruction were an integral portion of combat advising that Able Company used. Often, 7/1 KDK already demonstrated proficiency at a number of tasks important to ensuring long-term security gains. However, it was important that Able Company identified deficient areas of knowledge and competency in order to implement a systematic method of re-mediating institutional shortcomings in the partnered unit. While it is more immediately expedient – and therefore tempting – to address these shortcomings through use of US cadre to teach directly to Host-Nation soldiers, long-term institutional proficiency gains are best solidified through development of experts in the partnered unit. Accomplishing this goal will help ensure greater longevity in the partnered unit post-US partnership. Discussion of Able Company's experience with "train the trainer" will follow a general how-to (planning, resourcing, executing and assessing), topics covered, Guardian Angel (GA) plans, and an examination of best practices.

The 10-Step Training Model serves as a useful starting point in the development of a group of experts in the partnered unit. Prior to any planning for a "train the trainer" program, it is necessary to conduct an honest evaluation of not only the partnered unit's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, but also their willingness to devote time and resources towards a given subject. Although the development of a large body of SMEs in a partnered unit is desirable and necessary in the long run, forcing them into training programs they see little value in will mainly serve to burn capital in a relationship that may be better spent with other initiatives. While each unit will have their own strengths and weaknesses, the preponderance of ANSF that Able Company advised demonstrated strength in dismounted patrolling but consistently fell short on marksmanship, C-IED TTPs, TSE, PMCS, command supply maintenance, logistical forecasting, and operational planning. While techniques for improving operational planning will be discussed later in relation to Partnered TLPs, this section will consider "train the trainer" initiatives in marksmanship, C-IED, and logistics. Planning these training events began first

with agreement with the relevant ANSF partner on the topic to be trained. While Able Company's priorities for local ANSF were logistics and maintenance, C-IED TTPs, TSE and then marksmanship, our partnered unit's focuses were marksmanship, C-IED, TSE and logistics. Additional planning for US trainers involved finalizing the task organization, Program of Instruction (POI), and rehearsals for the GA and Primary Instructors. An important facet of rehearsals will be integration of interpreters with the instructors so the linguists are comfortable with technical vocabulary. Following the agreement on priorities of training, the focus next shifted to resourcing. For the Afghans, this meant securing necessary personnel and time, especially important given that 7/1 Kandak had several outstations with Coys at each. In order to ensure dissemination of experts throughout the partnered unit, it is recommended that "train the trainer" initiatives attend from all locations. An alternative is to send Advisor Mobile Training Teams (MTT) to each outstation. Additionally, attendees should be free from other obligations (guard duty, KP, SOG, etc.) so they can focus entirely on the course. Other resourcing concerns involve standard land and material requests. One important facet of planning is ensuring the POI includes methods and materials that are Afghan-sustainable. For instance, marksmanship instruction should not include zeroing on the standard 25m zero targets. Instead, emphasis should be on teaching the Afghans to create their own zero targets with materials they have on hand so they are not reliant on an unsustainable methodology. Developing an understanding of assets and equipment the partner unit employs during the planning stage helps to prevent unforeseen adjustments during execution.

Able Company Soldiers train ANA Soldiers
on the M2 .50 Caliber Machine Gun

An important consideration during the execution of training is to ensure soldiers from the partnered unit understand the training value of scarce resources. During the Master Gunner course Able Company conducted for NCOs from 7/1 Kandak, it was agreed that all ammo would be provided by Able Company. Almost all of the NCOs attending admitted this was only the second or third time they had shot with live ammunition since their own initial entry training. Some, overseen by US instructors and safeties, saw that each round was utilized for maximum training value. Others, before the instructors and safeties stopped them, fired off most of their allotted rounds in an uncontrolled burst for entertainment and not training. Overall, expect attendees to demonstrate varying levels of motivation and competence that advisers will have to work through in order to develop SMEs. Important to the attendees' motivation is an understanding of their own scheduling restraints. Meals, prayer times, and other religious requirements should be identified and accounted for in the POI. However, the POI should also include opportunities for course participants to teach each other what they have just been taught. Building Afghan-to-Afghan cross training into the POI gives the US instructor, with linguist support, an opportunity to evaluate how the attendee may perform as a SME outside of the course.

Example Training Calendar: Master Gunner Course

	Morning	Evening
	Morning	Evening
Day 1	Course Introduction	Arms Room Organization
Day 2	M4 Instruction (maintenance, employment, fundamentals of safety and marksmanship)	M4 Zero & Qualification
Day 3	M249 & M240 Instruction (maintenance, employment, fundamentals of safety and marksmanship, machine gun theory)	M249 & M240 Zero and Qualification
Day 4	M2 Instruction (maintenance, employment mounted and dismounted)	M2 Range
Day 5	Graduation	

Assessment of course participants should occur throughout and ideally after the course as well. It is important to note that assessments during the course should come in at least two categories: personal competence and ability to instruct. Personal competence can be evaluated through course-related testing such as qualifications for marksmanship, correct documentation of deficiencies for maintenance, marking of command wire for C-IED, and proper identification and catalog of evidence for TSE. Just as important is an evaluation to judge the student's ability to communicate what he has learned. Possible methods include attendee-led review sessions, blocks of instruction, and even utilization of the attendee as coach. Post-course evaluation is often difficult, but is still important in tailoring future training programs. Monitoring the SMEs' performance in their parent units is a critical measure towards long-term partner sustainability. Another essential yet easily overlooked component to these courses is the graduation ceremony. This ceremony should help to recognize and certify the course graduate in front of his other peers, so that these peers are also motivated to the same level of competence as the original graduate.

"Train the Trainer" Best Practices

Works	Doesn't Work
• Early, persistent planning	• Ignoring partner priorities
• Communication about role and purpose of GA	• Schedules ignorant of military & cultural events
• Notable graduation ceremonies	• Students with insufficient supervision
• Students as checks on learning for each other	• SMEs impaired by their unit to develop others
• Morning instruction and afternoon PE	• Students with obligations other than training
• Small groups with multiple interpreters	• Coordinating with leaders who will not be present for the training event

Throughout the course, Guardian Angels were utilized to ensure protection of all US instructors and personnel. These GAs were at all times in full kit, with two facing out towards likely threat areas and two facing in towards the students at hand. While this level of protection is necessary to mitigate the risk of green-on-blue incidents, the GAs do not have to conduct themselves aggressively. It is important to explain before training ever begins and throughout the course that the presence of GA is not meant as insult or as suggestion of a lack of trust, but just as a measure to prevent what has happened elsewhere in the past.

An Able Company Soldier trains an ANA Squad Leader on zeroing an M16

Overall, there are a number of important facets to any "train the trainer" initiative with a partnered unit. The utilization of the 10-Step Training Model should help guide the combat adviser through a majority of the potential pitfalls in building a capable body of SMEs in their partnered unit. The preceding notes consist of the lessons Able Company learned from "train the trainer" initiatives.

An Able Company Medic trains an 7/1 KDK Medical NCO

The final and persistent challenge in combat advising was the presence of sometimes divergent priorities between US and ANSF chains of command. This was often expressed by differing desired locations for operations and hesitance to execute aggressive patrolling and searches in populated areas. To mitigate this, ANSF priorities were supported at every opportunity and US priorities were then tied-in with scheduled ANSF operations. Able Company regularly shared all available intelligence with the ANSF to illustrate the tactical necessity of partnered operations.

Overall, the foundation of Able Company's successes in combat advising remains tough and realistic training based on conventional METL tasks. The ability of Able Company to conduct offensive, defensive, and security operations was an indispensible capability. While Soldiers were trained on partnership-specific tasks, the skills to partner would have been for naught without fundamental combat competencies. A Company unable to conduct the tasks and operations it requires to teach a partnered force will find failure, while a capable Company will have the elements needed for success.

Combat Advising in Paktya Province

CPT Alex Kaivan (B/1-506 IN)

Baker Company, 1-506th Infantry Regiment, deployed to Paktya Province from May 2013 until December 2013. The company's mission was to advise and assist Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in order to disrupt insurgent activity, with a focus on building ANSF capacity to protect the populace during the 2014 fighting season. Baker accomplished this goal using the crawl-walk-run model to develop ANSF via partnered Troop Leading Procedures (TLPs) and operations. From the initial phase of partnership, where Baker Company led TLPs and operations, to the final phase, where Baker assisted in Afghan TLP development and took a follow-and-support role, Baker Company used specific steps in planning and operations to advance partnership. This paper will discuss each of those steps and their uses by Baker Company and ANSF.

Prior to deploying, Baker Company sent one Soldier per platoon to language training, which ensured that every patrol had at least one Soldier capable of conversing with the locals to augment the interpreter enablers. Baker Company leaders also conducted battlefield familiarization via classified "read books" created by the S2 shop from information from the previous unit, Bulldog Company, 1-187, and historical sources to better understand the enemy, civilian, and physical terrain of the area. These steps were key to later successes because they revealed to the leadership more dimensions of the fight, enabling better preparation for the mission, and provided every unit organic communication ability with Afghan forces and people.

Baker Company entered Afghanistan at the beginning of the fighting season and quickly set a high operational tempo. Within the first month, Baker conducted Key Leader Engagements (KLEs) at all district centers and AFCOPs in the Company Area of Responsibility, conducted clearance operations in all major population centers in Ahmadabad and Sayyid Karam Districts, and extended a security bubble around FOB Gardez through night dismounted patrolling.

Baker Company operated within the Central Valley of Paktya Province, comprised of the Gardez, Ahmadabad, and Sayyid Karam Districts. In these districts, Baker's main partners were various Ministry of Interior (MOI) agencies and services, with occasional Afghan National Army (ANA) support. The MOI units included the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the Provincial Response Company (PRC), and the Combined Reaction Company (CRC). Baker was challenged with conducting operations throughout the battalion battle-space with a variety of other Afghan units.

On the initial operations, Baker took the lead with partnered forces as part of the "crawl" phase of partnership. Baker Soldiers briefed Afghan leaders on schemes of maneuver and clearance plans, and Baker platoons partnered with and strongly pushed Afghan units to be in the lead while conducting clearances. As the summer progressed, Baker transitioned from the crawl phase with the ANSF and began more and more combined planning as part of the walk phase. By the final combined operations, ANSF were planning and executing their own plans in coordination with our plans as the run phase of partnership. They would set up their own blocking positions and have unilateral clearance teams as well as combined clearance teams.

During the first "crawl" month, Baker quickly discovered the capabilities and shortcomings of each unit. The PRC and CRC were the most capable of the ANSF forces. As elite police

reaction forces, they were most akin to SWAT units in metropolitan US police forces. They drew a disproportionate number of police raids and targeted operations and are more highly trained and motivated than standard AUP. The NDS was most useful in tactical questioning and detainee operations as it is primarily an intelligence organization. The AUP and ANCOP had varying degrees of motivation and talent, but generally required the most Coalition Force (CF) support to be effective.

The only ANA *Toli* in the company battle-space was 1/7/1, headquartered at AFCOP Mach, Sayyid Karam District. Their *Kandak* was headquartered in Chamkani District, which meant that they had little support, re-supply, or oversight. They were reluctant to conduct operations outside their own perimeter and only appeared on missions with strong prodding from senior ANSF leaders. As such, Baker Company learned not to depend on their attendance for mission success. The lesson learned from 1/7/1 *Toli* was twofold: first, that *Kandaks* should be given boundaries that match local governance; and second, that garrison locations must have secure logistical support to function.

Intelligence *shura* at FOB Gardez

When the partnership transitioned to the 'walk' phase, Baker Company incorporated the ANSF into our TLPs and developed combined TTPs. As the ANSF grew more proficient, they assumed more and more of a role in the TLPs. These improvements resulted in more cohesive movement and maneuver between the CF and ANSF.

A weekly intelligence *shura* was key to the Baker Company and ANSF partnership and drove the mission-planning process. The intelligence included every local AUP, NDS, ANA, and PRC/CRC district commander. Each leader shared their most recent intelligence summary and current operations within their district. Intelligence summaries mostly came from the NDS and generally covered Taliban commanders residing in their areas and their activities. CF took the role of synchronizing the operations of every district's ANSF leadership and planning future operations with ANSF based on their own intelligence. At the end of each week, the immediate operations for the next week were confirmed and operations further in the future were discussed and initially resourced via commitments from each of the ANSF leaders. By use of the intelligence *shuras*, ANSF began to complete steps 1 and 2 of the TLP process: Receive the Mission and Issue Warning Order.

Once an operation was planned, CF conducted steps 2 through 5 within Baker Company. This included doing all coordination for CF assets such as RCP, EOD, and fires and getting CONOP approval through US channels. Baker Company would confirm the plan with the overall ANSF commander for the mission before issuing any orders. After step 6, Complete the Plan, was accomplished with the ANSF commander, Baker would brief two orders, to US forces alone and then in a combined OPORD brief with ANSF commanders and key CF leaders 24-48 hours in advance in order to resolve any final coordination issues. Step 8 of the TLPs was conducted up to and during the partnered operation between ANSF and CF units by communication between the ANSF and CF commanders, mediated by an interpreter and his cell phone.

Walk Phase Partnered TLPs

1. Receive Mission → Intel Shuras
2. Issue Warning Order
3. Make Tentative Plan
4. Initiate Necessary Movement
5. Conduct Reconnaissance
6. Complete Plan → ANSF CDRs Brief
7. Issue Orders
8. Supervise and Refine — Partnered OPN

Based on experience gained during operations with ANSF and lessons learned, Baker Company developed a number of TTPs to better coordinate with and aid its ANSF partners. TTPs included keeping key leaders of ANSF and CF partnered units together on the battlefield, turning off DUKE systems in the Vehicle Drop-Off point to let ANSF coordinate, and briefing ANSF sub-commanders only on the morning of an operation.

During a clearance of the village of Rabat, the value of close personal communication between CF and ANSF forces was demonstrated. In this complex village clearance, there were five CF platoons and units from all ANSF in the region coordinated to move through the village along multiple axes. The two platoons of Baker Company that cleared to the north and south of the main route, respectively, with PRC and CRC units let the PRC and CRC move ahead of them during the clearance. However, each platoon leader kept the ANSF commander next to him as they moved, which led to rapid sharing of intelligence from ANSF and CF sources. Specifically, when an ISR asset conducted a kinetic strike against insurgents in the area, all CF and ANSF were able to quickly identify where the strike had been conducted and to take precautionary measures against any additional insurgents near the strike. In all future operations, leaders of units conducting clearing operations kept ANSF unit commanders next to them for intelligence sharing and command and control.

Additionally, a number of higher-level commanders were present at the Vehicle Drop-Off point (VDO) for the duration of the Rabat clearance. In order to let them properly coordinate with their sub-units, Baker Company turned off DUKEs at the VDO. The VDO had been pre-cleared by RCP using minerollers and


Combined B Co and ANSF AAR in the field

Huskies utilizing Ground-Penetrating Radar to ensure that no IEDs were present. The TTP of turning off DUKEs once set in position was used on future missions to let the ANSF coordinate their own units via radios that would otherwise have been jammed.

Because of OPSEC leaks which caused insurgents to leave the area immediately before ANSF/CF arrived to set up blocking positions on some of the early village clearances, Baker Company asked ANSF leadership to refrain from briefing their men until the morning of an operation. Baker started to brief the plant too just the top-level leadership 24-48 hours in advance and then coordinate so all ANSF would arrive at the closest district center to the operation before dawn. There, the ANSF leaders would brief their men and conduct final coordination for the operation to prevent OPSEC leaks.

As the fighting season progressed, the nature of the partnership transitioned again from the "walk" phase to the "run" phase. As part of this phase, Baker Company let ANSF take the lead in planning for themselves and during the operation. Baker Company continued to push into all areas of the company AoR and started to repeat clearances of major population centers. Baker visited the area around Wach Garak, Kowsin Valley, and Rabat multiple times. The ANSF units began to display greater coordination and effectiveness, culminating with the last two major clearances conducted in partnership with Baker Company--Chapparay and Kowsin Valley. During these two operations, the ANSF were fully in the lead with CF trying to keep up with their main forces.

B Co and ANSF maneuvering at Chapparay
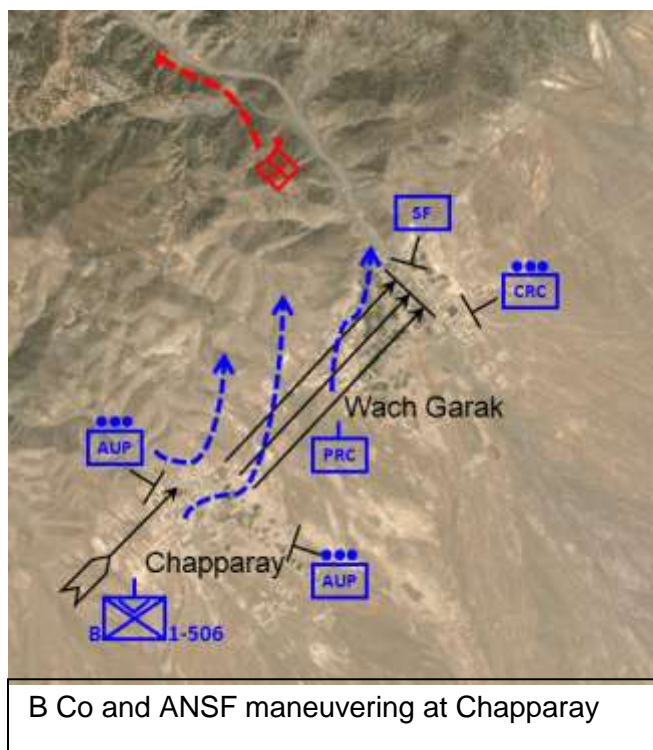
During the clearance of Chapparay (which ultimately included Wach Garak and Tan Garak), a large assembly of ANSF from Central Paktya, including CRC, PRC, and AUP and NDS from multiple districts, effectively established blocking positions throughout the northern portion of the central valley with little assistance from Baker Company. While Baker cleared the village of Chapparay, the ANSF took contact to the northeast near Wach Garak and engaged the insurgents with the assistance of an ODA team. Baker Company pushed north onto the ridgeline above Wach Garak and observed various ANSF forces also pushing to the high ground. Ultimately, the arrival of A-10s repulsed the insurgents and forced them deeper into the mountains between the Russian Valley and the Central Paktya plain. This operation demonstrated that ANSF were, with CF ground and air support, willing and able to decisively engage insurgents in Ahmadabad district.

The next large clearance operation occurred in Kowsin Valley, aimed at the villages of Kowsin, Kalgar, and the cave complex near Lackeray. The ANSF gathered for this operation included CRC, PRC, ANA, and AUP and NDS from multiple districts. The Afghans set up blocking positions around the mouth of the valley and cleared the valley before CF arrived to conduct their clearance. When Baker Company dismounted to clear, ANSF had already passed through,

so Baker platoons followed in support and examined buildings that US-gathered intelligence had templated as caches or bed-down locations for insurgents. This operation was the climax of ANSF coordination during operations, encompassing units from all over Baker's AoR and highlighting that ANSF could unilaterally clear areas with overwhelming force when necessary.

Baker Company developed a PCI list for Afghan leadership to ensure good coordination and partnership. During the "run" phase, this PCI list was used as a check prior to initial movement from the FOB to ensure that ANSF had completed TLPs and inspections. Baker Company supplied an MBITR or cell phone to ANSF leaders to maintain good communications during missions. Many ANSF leaders had personal GPS systems;

ANSF Leader PCI

☐ Communications Check (MBITR or Cell Phone)
☐ GPS with Waypoints
☐ Laminated Map
☐ Pens/Paper
☐ Food and Water distributed
☐ All vehicles fueled
☐ IR Chem Lights (for night operations)
☐ US Interpreter/PL Link-up

Baker gave them important coordinates so that they would reach the correct places. Baker Company ensured they had a map in Dari or Pashto along with pens and paper for note-taking. CF provided logistical support in the form of food and water for soldiers and fuel for vehicles for long operations if the Afghan logistical system was unable to support their own soldiers. IR chem lights were given to Afghan officers and NCOs for night operations. The chem lights were placed in shoulder pockets to identify friendly leaders for better coordination at night. The US interpreter and platoon leader finally ensured that a good face-to-face meeting occurred so that the ANSF leader could find the platoon leadership on the battlefield. Use of this PCI checklist along with standard Red Currahee PCI checklists ensured that units and leaders were always ready to conduct operations.

The local population gained a favorable perception of the legitimacy of the security forces and government. Within Gardez District, the majority respects the government and police, and pockets of insurgency are confined to outlying villages, such as Dinar Khel and Rabat. Within Ahamadabad, a focus on operations in Chapparay and Wach Garak has improved the security situation in the area. Though some insurgents still remain active around Wach Garak and Tan Garak, most of the security issues were the result of foreign fighters transiting the Central Valley, and local elders have begun to rely more upon the government for support. Within Sayyid Karam, the picture is less promising. IEDs targeting ANSF between the district center, Chineh, and Mach are common, confirming the lack of effective policing on major routes in the district. ANSF are unwilling to venture far into Kowsin Valley without either overwhelming numbers or strong coalition support and have yet to effectively clear Dam. Because of the limitations of the Sayyid Karam police and 1/7/1 ANA *Toli*, the valleys to the southeast of Sayyid Karam form a zone of support for the insurgency and will aid facilitation of MWE northwards during the next fighting season.

In Baker's AoR, ANSF's past performance has been mixed and their potential is uncertain. While some units are extremely capable and, at times, operate unilaterally, the majority of the security forces are too cautious to wrest control of all three districts from the insurgents and their sympathizers. ANSF remain over-reliant upon CF RCP, artillery, and air assets. On multiple occasions, ANSF refused to move without or ahead of coalition RCP elements, even when Baker Company had cleared the route. ANSF always requested both air and indirect assets

when on partnered patrols and when under attack, despite the fact that these assets will be unavailable when coalition forces withdraw, as the ANA does not yet have a competent air force and lacks powerful artillery support like that of the US Army. Future efforts at training host-nation security forces should focus on using fires and assets within their inventory, such as D-30 howitzers and 82 mm mortars, as opposed to providing CF assets. Unless the security forces can improve their internal security and professionalism and begin to operate without CF assets, the current security situation will likely degrade after the withdrawal of CF in 2014. The police forces will likely be able to maintain a security bubble around the district centers and Gardez City with occasional large operations to disrupt major insurgent activity.

Overall, Baker Company's partnership with the Afghan forces has led to measurable successes and improvement in the ANSF's capacity to secure their own population. Operations with Baker Company resulted in the capture of one Joint Prioritized Effects List (JPEL) High-Value Target (HVT). Each operation had the effect of disrupting the movement of fighters and material transiting Paktya Province, forcing the insurgents to use different routes to push men further into Afghanistan. Additionally, through all phases of partnership, Baker Company pushed the ANSF to patrol in every major population center in their AoR, something not done by previous CF units. By the end of the "run" phase, the ANSF were capable of going in force unilaterally, if necessary, anywhere in the central portion of Paktya, and they routinely patrolled more of the area than at the beginning of the fighting season.

Company Intelligence Support Team (CoIST) Efforts at COP Wilderness

CPT Michael Finch (C/1-506 IN)

Introduction

In the late spring of 2013, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry (Task Force Red Currahee), 4th BCT, 101st (Airborne) Air Assault deployed to Paktya Province, Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) XIV. One of thirty-four Provinces within Afghanistan, Paktya is situated along the Pakistan border less than 120 kilometers from Kabul. With over 11 entry points from Pakistan, the province is widely used as a staging and facilitation zone for Haqqani Network (HQN)-based insurgents to move men, weapons, and equipment to the Afghan Interior. The disruption of this facilitation network has been a continuous target for Coalition Forces (CF) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) since the initial arrival of CF Forces in 2001. To meet and defeat this challenge, Infantry companies within 1-506 IN relied heavily on their Company Intelligence Support Teams (CoISTs) to effectively target insurgents within the province.

The US strategy has been focused on countering insurgent facilitation and freedom of maneuver along major lines of communication from the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan to the Afghan capital of Kabul. In the early stages of the war, this strategy was executed unilaterally by CF. The end state was to train ANSF on offensive operations, enabling them to run independent operations without assistance. In 2013 the focus was ANSF intelligence-driven, planned, and executed operations as responsibility transitioned to the ANSF to lead all operations with the exception of force-protection patrols.

The largest challenge for CF was to ensure that ANSF had accurate and timely information enabling successful offensive and defensive operations against the insurgents within Afghanistan. This was conducted by increasing the capability of ANSF intelligence collection to provide situational awareness for ANSF Commanders and enable intelligence-driven operations. An additional challenge was fostering intelligence sharing and collection to drive operations across all elements of the ANSF. The last challenge was to provide Afghan-releasable intelligence from CF channels to enable unilateral ANSF operations. All of these challenges were met by mentoring at the Afghan Kandak level through Security Forces Advisor Teams (SFAATs) and Company Intelligence Support Teams (CoISTs).

One of our larger intelligence meetings with the ANSF; most included a meal from the ANA cooks.

Success was achieved through direct contact-- CF would pass reporting to ANSF, and ANSF would inform CF of ANSF reporting and threat streams. Often, intelligence was collaborated and shared at weekly intelligence shuras and bi-monthly intelligence seminars. In addition to this, 1-506 IN compiled the information provided by ANSF and overlaid it with CF reporting to use Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms to confirm or deny intelligence gaps and reporting. Daily, manned and unmanned armed assets flew in support of partnered intelligence collection operations. Prime areas for

targeting insurgents with ISR assets were isolated locations that neither CF nor ANSF could reach without conducting an air movement.

Through the use of CF ISR, Gunfighter Company was able to lethally target insurgents in order to ensure ANSF success. The successful use of kinetic targeting through indirect fires and manned and unmanned aerial platforms created standoff in space and time for ANSF to tackle the challenges of the 2013 fighting season as well as the impending challenges of 2014, post-CF withdrawal.

Commander
· Provides guidance and resources.

NCOs
· Lead, train, and mentor COIST Soldiers.

Soldiers
· Collect, assess, and produce intelligence.

SOPs
· Must be flexible and comprehensive guides.

Perseverance
· Requires consistent commitment.

COIST company intelligence support team   NCO noncommissioned officer
SOP standing operating procedure

A conceptual illustration of the crucial components of an outstanding CoIST Cell (ref. 4BCT CoIST SOP)

CoIST selection, preparation and training (pre-deployment)

PIRs/IRs ANSWERED
Provide information pertaining to Priority Information Requirements (PIRs) or Information Requirements (IRs). List PIR or IR #.
PIR/IR # ANSWERED

PATROL NARRATIVE
Describe the important events of patrol. Include 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why). Provide Digital Photo #.

	What to report when you don't know what to report:
	Local population's reactions/attitudes
	Upcoming events
	Conditions of schools/clinics
	Status of electric power
	Condition of crops/harvest
	Map corrections
	New construction/material
	New military weapons/vehicles/tactics/capabilities
	minefields/IEDs
	Billboards/poster/leaflets
	New damage or vandalism
	What's new and on sale in shops
	Black market activity
	Upcoming market days
	Number of houses in town
	Stretches of bad road
	Buses and who is in them
	New antennas or wires
	NGO presence/stickers
	Possible gang/criminal activity
	Local address system (street names and numbers)

ATTACHMENTS
List attachments or enclosures to this debrief. Example: sketch, disk with digital photos, captured documents, political rallyposter, confiscated weapon, etc. Ensure that any attached item is described in the PATROL NARRATIVE above.

Other:

Attitude of General Population Towards CF/ISF (Select One): Favorable / Neutral / Unfavorable

Describe key locations visited during patrol (town, ethnic minority neighborhood, school, market, religious bldgs., etc.)

Location:	Grid:	OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS (e.g. BETTER OR WORSE?) DIGITAL PHOTO #

PESNNEL ENCOUNTERED					
List important/interesting persons encountered. Describe what they said/did that was significant in the PATROL NARRATIVE.					
NAME (LAST/First)	SEX	ETHNICITY	Hometown	TAG # (if detained)	Description (or Photo)

VEHICLE ENCOUTERED						
List passengers in PERSONNEL ENCOUNTERED (above). Discuss significant vehicles in the PATROL NARRATIVE						
Passenger (LAST/First)	COLOR	MAKE	MODEL	LIC NO	LOCATION	Description (or Photo)

CAPTURED EQUIPMENT				
Explain circumstances leading to capture of equipment in the PATROL NARRATIVE.				
ITEM DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	TAG #	SERIAL NUMBER	DIGITAL PHOTO #

A standardized format for patrol debriefs will aid in establishing a battle rhythm

Establishing the CoIST cell early in the training cycle was crucial in its successful application during the deployment. Nine months prior to the deployment, Gunfighter Company's CoIST team was designated and organized as a fire team. Each platoon had a designated representative, and the Company analyst acted as the team lead. This allowed for intelligence to flow from the bottom up. Factors such as self-reliance, motivation, maturity, reliability, intelligence, and the ability to think critically were taken into consideration in selecting platoon-CoIST representatives. The Gunfighter's analysts' qualifications varied from a college degree in criminal justice to a prior job as a bounty hunter.

Much like a rifleman conducts PMI, zero, and qualification ranges, and buddy-team live fires before company live fires, CoIST analysts must be able to execute a similar "individual to collective" training path. In order to ensure standardization and adequate preparation, 4BCT developed a Brigade SOP detailing the proper training and employment of CoISTs, which was crucial during the train-up phase. During the Company's individual training phases, CoIST analysts attended multiple courses which provided the framework for the CoIST. These courses were through the FT Huachuca and JRTC MTTs and additional broadening training such as TIGR NET, CPOF, Attack the Network, Negotiations and PKSOI training, Biometrics Training, and the Weapons Technical Intelligence Course. These courses increased their knowledge base, critical thinking skills, and data-mining and dat-sharing capabilities.

As the Company progressed through the training cycle into team, squad, and higher live-fire exercises, the CoIST analysts were continually developed on a broader scale. During every situational training exercise, whether it was a team or company exercise, the Company's command post (CP) was established to allow for CoIST and Battle Captain integration into the training events. Prior to the execution of events, the CoIST would develop intelligence products and graphics in conjunction with the battalion S2 section, and provide patrol pre-briefs to the elements executing the lanes. As training progressed to the platoon- and company-level live-fire exercises, the CoIST developed and briefed the enemy situation during the operations order. During the execution of the exercise, the CoIST would be provided intelligence reports through injects which would support the ground commander and ensure the CoIST remained actively involved in the training. Additionally, the CoIST and the battle captain would battle-track the patrol, enemy SIGACTs, and current updates to the enemy situation. Following the completion of each patrol, the CoIST would conduct a standardized patrol debrief in conjunction with providing a storyboard to the Battalion Intelligence Section. This allowed for a smooth transition into the deployment where de-briefs and storyboards played a major role in developing the current enemy SITEMPs and the resourcing of assets for targeting purposes.

District Governors were included in the CoIST's intel *shuras* whenever possible

These TTPs were developed during the course of numerous pre-deployment training exercises, including the Brigade's "Warfighter" exercise. Although typically a brigade- and battalion-level event, the "Warfighter" also integrated the companies' CPs to allow for an additional repetition in their training and to refine the Brigade's CoIST SOP. During JRTC this SOP was validated as the companies once again used their CPs to execute operations that included high value individuals and lethal targeting. These major, brigade-sized exercises were crucial in the refinement of CoIST TTPs and reporting procedures.

Following the Battalion PDSS, the CoIST as well as the Battalion Intelligence Section ensured each company was fully aware of the enemy they would face in their respective areas of responsibility. As the Battalion S2 developed the daily "read book" for the Battalion Commander, the CoIST extracted intelligence of value and developed a daily AO brief for the company. The CoIST was also able to develop RFIs based on current intelligence gaps and contact their counterparts in country via established SIPR and CX-I computer labs, ensuring leaders and Soldiers across the company had the most current information regarding their future battle space. Additionally, the pre-established computer labs allowed the CoIST to conduct deep dives of their areas in order to compare historic activity with emerging trends prior to deploying.

Despite efforts to cover every possible area of concern prior to deployment, there were several areas that would have benefitted from additional attention. Post-deployment AAR feedback indicated that additional training in document exploitation and the use of US Army intelligence collection systems such as CIDNE would have been extremely helpful.
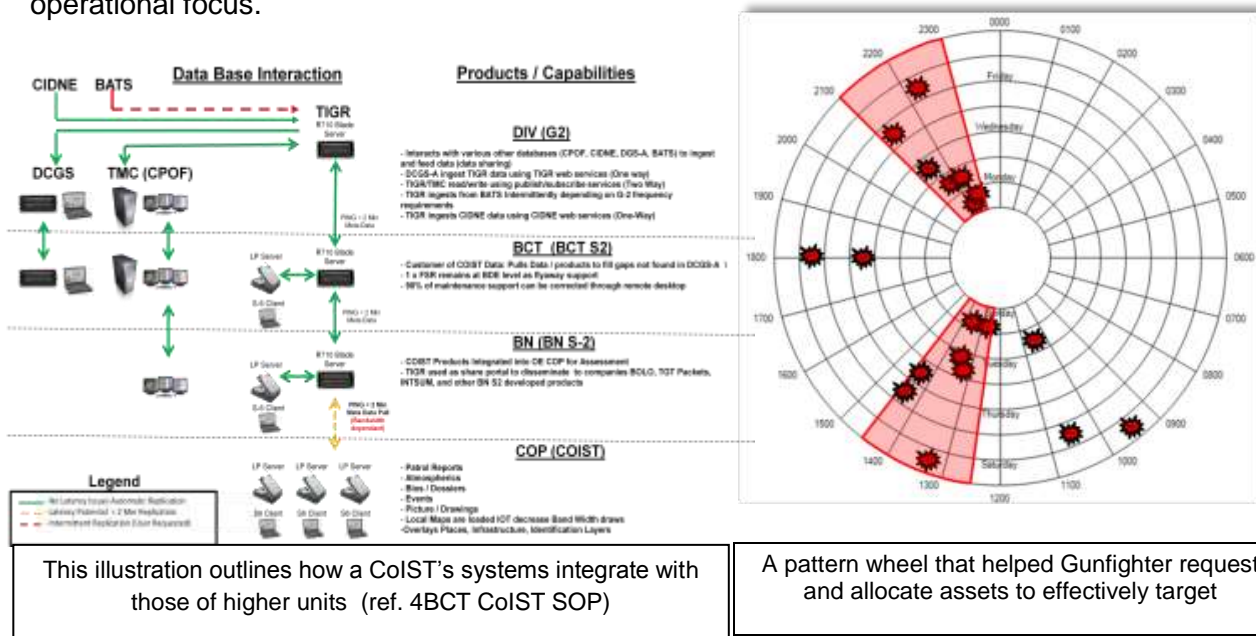

Partnership in all we did was essential to success; whether it was presenting awards or targeting insurgents, it was partnered.

Operation Enduring Freedom XIV

An important component of the success of the CoIST during the Battalion's deployment to Afghanistan was the command post. The Fire Support NCO, the Battle Captain, the JTAC, and the CoIST analyst were all collocated and had connectivity to the Battalion "Transverse" window. Tracking and reporting of significant actions (SIGACTs) was handled by the Battle Captain and RTO who reported to Battalion, usually in a SALTUR report. The CoIST analyst could immediately pass relevant and timely information to the FSO or JTAC to facilitate a necessary strike and he could capture this "raw" information and post it into the Company's Graphic Intelligence Summary (GRINTSUM), TIGR and the JCR.

Every day, the Battalion S2 would hold a CoIST sync with each Company CoIST member to ensure intelligence sharing was fluid across the AO. Additionally, each night Gunfighter's CoIST cell would conduct meetings to cross-level information and refine assessments within the Company's AO. The attendees at these meetings were the senior analyst, platoon reps, SFAAT S2, FSO, JTAC, the company commander, and the platoon leaders. Our ANSF partners would conduct an intelligence sync meeting weekly with the CoIST Analyst, SFAAT S2, Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) and National Directorate Service (NDS) chiefs from within the AO. During these meetings the CoIST analyst would provide releasable GRINTSUMs built to ensure the ANSF had the same understanding of the enemy situation as Coalition Forces, and he would collect additional information from our partners such as targeting, intelligence gaps and operational focus.

This illustration outlines how a CoIST's systems integrate with those of higher units (ref. 4BCT CoIST SOP)	A pattern wheel that helped Gunfighter request and allocate assets to effectively target

In locations such as COP Wilderness (located in Dzadran District, Paktya Province, situated along the Khost-Gardez Road), CF and ANSF units would traverse through the AO on a consistent basis. That, coupled with the numerous ANSF outstations along the route, created a lot of SIGACTs for the CoIST cell to analyze. Ambushes on CF or ANSF convoys, machinegun fire at passing aircraft, IEDs emplaced targeting CF, ANSF, and GiROA officials, and IDF against all outposts to include COP Wilderness were very common at the beginning of the deployment. Gathering intelligence and analyzing the threat was the first task for Gunfighter's CoIST. The CoIST cell was tasked to conduct a detailed time-and-event-pattern analysis on indirect fire points of origin (POO) and ambush locations, insurgent movement times and routes

in and around their support zones, local leadership, and facilitators. This pattern analysis, usually depicted with pattern wheels and satellite imagery showing movement routes, developed into the company establishing named areas of interest (NAIs) and targeted areas of interest (TAIs). These NAIs and TAIs were posted in the CP and passed up through all channels to ensure that Battalion staff, adjacent units and the supporting aviation task force had them in their possession. Additionally, Gunfighter's CoIST provided enemy-threat reporting streams and predictive analysis on the facilitation of MWE through the area in order to enable the BN S-2 to request assets to the proper location at the right times. As a result, adjacent units would rely on Gunfighter's CoIST for situational awareness and enemy situational updates.

Anytime an asset or friendly unit traversing through Gunfighter's AO checked in with its CP, Gunfighter would pass preplanned NAIs and TAIs for the asset/unit to scan for enemy activity. As more aerial reconnaissance was conducted on these areas, additional intelligence was gathered to answer the BN PIRs. On seven occasions, Gunfighter Company was able to conduct kinetic strikes within these NAIs and TAIs because of the proper merging of intelligence and assets. Often, the BN S2 passed control of ISR assets to Gunfighter Company due to the effectiveness of the NAI and TAI plan. The success of CoIST's initiatives throughout the company area of operations can be made apparent by several telling statistics. Over the first two months of the deployment, ANSF convoys were targeted 12 times, AFCOPs received IDF and heavy machinegun fire ten times, CF convoys were ambushed on two occasions, and COP Wilderness received IDF on a daily basis. Following the in-depth analysis by Gunfighter's CoIST, CAS, UAS, and rotary wing assets were able to employ kinetic strikes on four indirect fire teams, and two squad-sized elements moving towards or away from ambush sites. By the fourth month of the deployment, IDF against AFCOPs as well as ambushes against ANSF and CF convoys had ceased. Late in the deployment, one CF convoy was ambushed, and due to the CoIST's template of enemy movement patterns, Gunfighter was able to positively identify the insurgents moving back to their safe haven and conducted a strike that resulted in eight EKIA.

The CoIST was also instrumental in streamlining the COP's counter-fire battle drill by cataloguing points of origin (POO) and enabling their rapid clearance by submitting detailed terrain analysis that enabled the approval authorities in the Battalion TOC to quickly and confidently clear the ground of collateral damage and permit a counter-fire. The rapidity with which the artillery and mortar teams at COP Wilderness were able to counter-fire caught the enemy completely by surprise. Reporting indicated effective counter-fire

An effective CoIST enabled the Afghans to target effectively, setting the conditions for our handover

missions on ten separate occasions. Enemy mortar teams needed to be replaced on a monthly basis, and enemy rocket teams were forced by attrition to use very risk-averse TTPs that limited their effects on surrounding ANSF and Coalition installations. Even then, after positively identifying enemy personnel on known POO sites, kinetic strikes reduced these attacks to once a month.

REQUEST FOR COLLECTION			
POC CONTACT INFO	Organization		
	Name		
	Secure Phone		
	SIPR Email		
Imagery Sensor requested (EO/IR/RADAR/MSI, FMV)			
Date of Request			
Collection Start/Stop Date			
NIIRS Required			
Target Information	MGRS	BE Number (if available)	Tgt Name/Description
Justification (Who, What, When, Where, Why)			
Essential Elements of Infromation (EEI)			
Intel Report That cued Collection (if available)			
Reporting Instructions (IPIR, etc…)			
NOTES or COMMENT			

A standardized ISR request will enable the battalion S2 Cell to justify support for surveillance missions deemed essential by the CoIST and Company leadership.

An effective CoIST contributed greatly to the overall success of the mission in the Khost-Gardez Pass through effective analysis of the enemy's tactics, techniques, and procedures that led to the dynamic allocation of intelligence gathering and strike assets. Throughout the deployment, information that was collected, analyzed, and disseminated by the CoIST cell proved instrumental in disrupting enemy operations and movement throughout several Afghan districts. While the formation of a CoIST cell requires careful planning and a time-intensive train-up process, the addition of a small group of Soldiers trained in critical thinking and intelligence gathering, on a parallel path to maneuver elements, drastically increases the ability of an infantry company to successfully target insurgents anywhere.

An effective CoIST led to unilateral ANA intelligence-driven operations by the end of the deployment

Task Force Red Currahee's CoIST Training Path in descending order of priority	
Attack the Network	
COIN Seminar: Fort Leavenworth, KS	
CT I and II (Critical Thinking Course)	
COIST MTT (Conducted at JRTC)	
MICO Capabilities brief	
Biometrics Training	
Warfighter Exercise (With integrated CPs)	
TSE/SSE course	
Foreign Disclosure Training	
CP Exercised during all STX and Live Fires	
Analog Training at JRTC	
AfPak Hands (MTT)	
Negotiations Training (MTT)	
TIGR Net Training	
Weapons Technical Intelligence Course	
CPOF	
Patrol Pre-brief and De-brief class	
Classes Gunfighter CoIST recommends but was unable to attend	
DOCEX	
DCGS-A	
Analyst Notebook	

RIP/TOA Checklist	
AO link diagram Familiarization	
NAI/ TAI development	
SIGACT Battle Drills	
ISR Callsign/ Platform familiarization	

Systems overview
 	
  o BAT
 	
  o SEEKII
 	
  o TIGR
 	
  o CIDNE
 	
  o BI2R
 	
  o Cellex	

Assistance Platform ForcePro: An Assessment and Best Practices of AP Zormat, Afghanistan from April to November 2013

Captain John Caddell (D/1-506 IN)

This paper will address the TTPs and considerations utilized in reference to Force Protection during the occupation of Assistance Platform (AP) Zormat, Paktya Province, Afghanistan.

Dealer 1-506th IN occupied AP Zormat from April 2013 to November 2013 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. We took over the AP from a Security Transition Team and a SECFOR (about 45 pax) and replaced them with a Weapons Company and Security Forces Assistance Transition Team (about 115 pax with attachments). We immediately had to increase the capacity of the AP and established new Force Protection procedures that more closely fit our requirements.

During our occupation we conducted partnered operations, partnered training, and eventually transitioned the AP to our Afghan counterparts. This paper will highlight how we addressed specific areas and adjusted them as we prepared for and ultimately executed our transition.

We will focus the discussion on the following areas:

      I.   Mission Command

      II.   Force Protection Planning Process

      III.   Threat Analysis

      IV.   AP Layout

      V.   Perimeter Security

      VI.   Internal Security

      VII. Protective Construction

      VIII. Incident Response and Consequence Management

      IX.   Communication

      X.   Training and Exercises

I. Mission Command

This is perhaps the most difficult concept to master when occupying an Assistance Platform (AP) during Operation Enduring Freedom. The reality is that, at the APs within our AO, both operational/security force (SECFOR) elements and Security Force Advise and Assist Teams (SFAATs) exist. Because both Coalition Force (CF) elements interact with the Afghan counterparts based at each location, this drives *the need for the SFAAT team and SECFOR element to agree upon a common set of goals—and to come to a common set of operating procedures.* We saw the ineffectiveness that resulted from poor coordination and

communication between the SECFOR element and the SFAAT initially, but experienced tremendous improvement and growth over the course of seven months.

Most SFAATs are led by a captain or major, and the SECFOR elements tasked to secure these teams are typically led by a captain or lieutenant, depending on the size of the SECFOR element. In our experience, it is critical that the SECFOR leader and SFAAT leader sit down and communicate their respective goals. This process must continue to remain a priority throughout the time these elements operate out of the same AP. Below are some of the broader key aspects and questions that need to be addressed when determining unified and complementary goals between elements.

Combat Advising

♠ *Who takes the lead in communicating with the overall ANSF leader based out of the AP?*

In our case, the company commander of the SECFOR element took the lead with interacting with the KDK commander while SFAAT focused their efforts on the KDK staff. This system proved to help develop our relationship with the KDK commander and he appreciated the clear and consistent communication this system enabled. As a result, the KDK commander gradually became more supportive when partnering with CF for operations and training.

♠ *Who takes the lead in determining what missions the ANSF plan on conducting?*

Almost all of the joint mission sets were a result of SFAAT and company leadership meeting with the leaders and staff of our ANA counterparts. In these meetings, mutual goals would be discussed and intelligence would be exchanged. Eventually the intelligence that both CF and ANSF leadership exchanged would determine where there needed to be a military presence, what missions would be conducted, and how CF could most effectively support the ANSF.

♠ *Who determines what ANSF units are going to support a CF effort/mission?*

For example, when CF conduct construction along a roadway or simply conduct movement to another area, who coordinates with the ANSF to determine who will participate (IOT meet the requirement that ANSF lead during movement of every mission)?

♠ *During ANA-executed operations, what CF members participate and what are their respective roles?*

When the ANSF conduct operations, determining which members of the SECFOR and SFAAT element participate is critical. We supported several KDK-level operations and continued to refine who participated. During missions, we typically had the SFAAT leader, S-3, and S-2 communicate most directly with the KDK leadership. This freed the SECFOR leadership to focus on security which ultimately provided consistency with interaction between the ANSF and CF during missions.

Battle Tracking and Reporting: As mentioned previously, during KDK-level operations, the SFAAT members conducted a large portion of the battle tracking of ANSF elements. Battle tracking was conducted both on ground with the main ANSF elements conducting the mission (typically where the KDK commander and his staff were) as well as with the ANSF elements that remained behind to secure their side of the AP. While at the AP, an SFAAT member would pull information from the leader left in charge. Oftentimes, the ANA RTO was the most informed person of all the personnel that remained behind during missions. Whenever SFAAT received

SITREPs of ANSF locations, contact received, etc., they reported this information to the SECFOR Battle Captain, who then communicated these updates to the SECFOR commander as well as higher headquarters (in our case, the Battalion TOC since it was overall responsible for the AO).

II. Force Protection Planning Process

One of the key components of any Force Protection Planning Process is establishing relationships (JFOB 2-3) prior to deployment. This was especially important given AP Zormat's nearly completely retrograded status at that time. Only one line platoon and the SFAAT partners remained at the AP prior to Dealer Company's arrival. This allowed the incoming commander and first sergeant to easily communicate with their respective counterparts since they had already redeployed. This gave the incoming first sergeant (who was focused on force protection) ample opportunity to ask pertinent questions in order to begin his assessment and even begin planning force-protection improvements and augmentation prior to ever having boots on ground in theater.

Another critical portion of the Force Protection Planning Process is the continuous reassessment of the threat (JFOB 2-10). For the duration of Dealer Company's deployment, insurgent TTPs changed significantly to include an emerging HPA threat stream. Dealer Company was required, in the span of 3 days, to make a substantial and labor intensive overhaul of the AP's Entry Control Point. This required the labor of a platoon-sized element dedicated strictly to force-protection augmentation, LN contractors, heavy equipment, and coordination with our ANA partners stationed at AP Zormat in order to mitigate the HPA threat stream in a timely manner. The importance of continuously evaluating a military installation's force protection capacity in order to meet the changing threat cannot be overstated.

Part of continually reassessing the threat included establishing a Guardian Angel plan during our partnered operations. This was mostly present during Key Leader Engagements, when SFAAT would go to the ANA side to meet with the leadership while Soldiers went to the range to confirm zero on their weapons systems. During Key Leader Engagements by either the commander or SFAAT, for every two individuals requiring a guardian angel, there were two Soldiers in proper PPE, at least one of which was a SAW gunner, who provided security. When Soldiers would reconfirm their zero at the range, there were at least two safeties who served as guardian angels for the firers.

III. Threat Analysis

The following questions are instrumental to conducting a thorough and effective threat analysis of the enemy (JFOB 3-14):

- ♠ *What are the primary weapons used against CF?*

- ♠ *What are the enemy's current TTPs?*

- ♠ *What is the probability of attack?*

- ♠ *What is the enemy's capability to launch an attack?*

The intelligence prepared from the previous unit, the Battalion S2 analysis of the Dealer AO, and the analysis completed at the company level by the COIST allowed the commander to

effectively answer the preceding questions. In Dealer's case, the analysis of historical SIGACTS revealed that the insurgents' primary means of attacking CF in the Dealer AO were through IDF attacks with a recoilless rifle weapon system on a bi-weekly basis in the vicinity of civilian structures in order to mitigate effective counter fire. However, due to several factors (kinetic strikes, retrograde operations, limited effects on CF, etc.) the insurgents shifted their efforts from conducting IDF attacks to the emplacement of substantially larger IEDs targeting CF CLPs along the MSR in the Dealer AO. This shows that constant analysis, completed at all levels of the organization, is necessary in order to anticipate and reduce the insurgent's ability to attack CF or reduce our freedom of movement.

IV. AP Layout

When we deployed, our AP was already established. During the first couple of weeks, we spent time analyzing how it operated and what could be improved upon. At one point, the entire AP held a BN-sized element of CF, in addition to the ANA. Given that the number of CF forces operating in our AO was decreasing, the CF footprint at AP Zormat was much smaller. In recent years, the decision was made to divide the AP into CF and ANA sides with a large HESCO barrier wall (stacked two to three high, with C-wire on top). When we arrived, the ANA controlled about three-fourths of the AP (size-wise) and CF controlled about one-fourth of the AP (with the HLZ on the CF side). Both sides were able to operate autonomously if necessary, meaning we did not utilize the same basic commodities like latrines, DFACs, Aid Stations.

ECP: In our case, there were two main entry points to the ANA side of the AP: the turn-style gate and the ECP. Originally, the ECPs were separated and the exits for both were several hundred meters apart. This proved challenging both when conducting operations (specifically link-up prior to SP) and in preventing the VBIED threat. The decision was made to combine the ECPs into a unified one, while still maintaining a gate to prevent access to our side of the AP. As a result, we improved our ability to follow right behind the ANA during SP for operations, and this allowed the ANA to conduct initial inspections on any vehicles sent to the cooling yard, prior to entry onto our side (i.e., food trucks, fuel trucks, etc.).

Turnstile gate: The turnstile gate created a clearly defined entry and exit point for dismounted personnel. Although it seems somewhat divisive in terms of building trust with our counterparts, it ensured nobody was able to gain entry without our knowledge. We physically sent runners (like the Sergeant of the Guard) to let personnel through. During high-threat times, we locked the turn-style gate completely, as well as the connex it was built into. Minimizing the freedom of movement of local nationals and interpreters to and from the ANA side during these times was critical.

HLZ: The HLZ was on the CF side of the AP. This meant that we were able to control all incoming aircraft without limitations or restrictions from the ANA. On this same note, we were able to facilitate and support ANA efforts to increase their air-assets capacity.

More of the layout is discussed during the sections on perimeter security, internal security, and protective construction

V. Perimeter Security

Due to the terrain surrounding AP Zormat, we were only limited by our imagination and equipment as to how to improve upon the fundamentals of perimeter security.

***Standoff*:** From the AP's outer wall to the nearest structure or road were 100 meters of relatively flat ground that was restrictive to vehicle traffic. With concertina wire, foot traffic was

limited as well. There were clear observation and fields of fire from the AP's three towers and four supplementary fighting positions.

A Soldier assumes tower guard at AP Zormat.

Although there was a significant HESCO barrier wall between the U.S. and Afghan National Security Forces, there was no standoff between the two sides of the AP.

Physical barriers: As mentioned, AP Zormat had no terrain to serve as natural physical barriers or in which to tie in man-made obstacles. Other than the outer wall, the only physical barriers were located at the ECP. These barriers channeled traffic coming in and out of AP Zormat into a control point approximately 100 meters long. However, over the course of the deployment, we were able to close off the existing ECP (the one described above and in the section on AP Layout) and relocate it to join with the ANA's ECP.

Entry control points: By moving the ECP to connect with the ANA's ECP, we completely closed off the U.S. side of AP Zormat to the outside. The ECP we created required us to move our vehicles through the ANA side of AP Zormat to their ECP. Not only did this help with the partnership (link-ups with ANA units could be conducted within the security of the AP rather than the two elements, one U.S. and one ANA, meeting outside of the AP after exiting their respective ECPs), this also reduced the weak point in our perimeter security, our original ECP.

For individual personnel moving between the US and ANA sides, we utilized the turn-style gate. The only controls to operate the gate were located on the US side and required a Soldier to operate. When individuals moved from one side to the other, a slant was sent to the CP via radio, the movement was monitored on a camera at the turn style, and a Soldier conducted a face-to-face when anyone moved to the US side from the ANA.

Having a clearly defined ANA side and clearly defined CF side is essential. The reality is that there continues to be a large "insider" threat as demonstrated through the various attacks

that occurred throughout our BN AO and neighboring AOs. This drives the need to keep a clearly defined boundary between CF and ANSF when operating out of an AP.

Security lighting: Due to the small size of AP Zormat, light was limited on the AP to improve the visibility of the towers during times of limited visibility. Furthermore, during high-threat times, IR and white-light illumination missions were conducted from the AP over Named Areas of Interest.

Hardened fighting positions: AP Zormat had three hard structure towers to secure the U.S. side of the AP. Upon arriving at AP Zormat, we were able to create supplementary fighting positions on the outer wall to be utilized in the event of an attack. Also, on the interior of the AP, we created a series of bunkers to provide cover in the event the Alamo Plan was initiated.

Soldiers man a supplementary fighting position during a MASCAL drill at AP Zormat.

VI. Internal Security

As mentioned previously, AP Zormat had completely separate US and ANA sides in which traffic from either side was easily controlled. Because of the limited size of the AP, the CP acted as the BDOC with all information flowing through the battle captain on duty (a Platoon Leader or Platoon Sergeant). The Security Force consisted of the elements currently assigned to the towers and the platoon on QRF. Current reporting and current activity in the AO determined the level of readiness for the QRF. As reporting or SIGACTs came through the CP, information was pushed to leadership to adjust the force-protection posture. In the event of an attack (be it direct or indirect), radios as well as a central PA system notified the entire AP as to the nature of the attack.

VII. Protective Construction

The most widely used protective construction at AP Zormat was compartmentalization. Due to the flat terrain and the overall layout of the AP, many of the areas frequently inhabited were broken up by large HESCO walls. In the event of an effective rocket or mortar round hitting one of the living areas, gym, CP, or dining facility, it would limit that amount of damage to the periphery.

Scattered throughout AP Zormat (mostly in highly trafficked areas) there was a large system of bunkers. Concrete structures with an additional layer sandbags (three deep) protected Soldiers from incoming indirect fire. In addition, this same system was used to store ammunition and mission-essential equipment throughout the AP.

Lastly, each hard-structure tower was reinforced with several layers of sandbags on the side walls and the roof. While we were at AP Zormat, we were also able to create supplementary fighting positions that were semi-hard structures. These fighting positions were built into the outer wall of the AP with overhead cover consisting of layered sandbags. Ladders were used to climb up on the HESCOs and into position.

VIII. Incident Response and Consequence Management

In the COP/AP environment there was never a shortage of people who contributed to a major incident (direct/indirect fire attack, MASCAL, etc.). There is a sense of community in the small group based out of a COP/AP that is not found on a larger FOB. The challenge is managing personnel and not making the situation worse by congesting an area with people trying to help. With the absence of a formal BDOC, initial coordination of assets falls on a combination of rehearsed battle drills and the COP/AP's Battle Captain and Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) who most likely have the best common operating picture of the incident. In those critical first minutes, reporting accurately, adjusting the force-protection posture, and executing preplanned battle drills can dramatically change the outcome of a situation before the installation commander can take control of the situation. Most COPs/APs will at a minimum have a Force Protection (FORCEPRO) element and Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that can be utilized in the event of a major incident. As with larger FOBs, the 5 Phases of Incident Response can be applied to the COP/AP environment.

Soldiers assist in casualty evacuation in a
MASCAL drill at AP Zormat.

Preparation Phase: This is the most important phase and can be broken into two components: developing a plan and conducting rehearsals. When developing the overall force-protection plan, general consideration should be given to any type of hostile act (direct fire, indirect fire, VBIED, breach, insider threat, etc.). Medical personnel should have a plan for a variety of different numbers and types of patients and a contingency plan for where to treat them. The plan for command and control for an incident should include dissemination of information to responders and a contingency plan for a TAC in the event the main command post is unusable. Publishing the plan so that it's understood by every Soldier, civilian, and contractor, as well as the unit's higher headquarters, is perhaps the most important part of developing a plan.

Rehearsals should be conducted at least monthly to ensure all elements are current on their understanding of the incident response plan. At the COP/AP level, it is not difficult to get everyone involved, so making the scenarios complex would be extremely beneficial. If located at an instillation shared with host-nation security forces, it would also be valuable to include them in the rehearsal. At a minimum they should be notified of the plan and that you are executing a rehearsal.

Response Phase: When responding to an incident at the COP/AP level, the two primary moving pieces will be the FORCEPRO and QRF elements. A successful strategy is increasing the force protection posture with the FORCEPRO unit and utilizing QRF to conduct local response (clearing, moving casualties, extinguishing fires, etc.). As the situation dictates, more units may be needed or available at the commander's disposal, but the QRF and FORCPRO units are usually the most prepared to deal with a situation.

Occupation: Some level of platoon leadership (PL/PSG/SL) should be on the scene managing the situation, sending reports to the commander. As a general rule, the PL or equivalent will manage the security piece while the senior SL/PSG/1SG manages casualties.

Support Phase: Because of the limited number of assets at a COP/AP, higher headquarters must constantly be informed of the situation so that they can provide the assets possible. Reporting falls on the commander and battle captain.

Recovery Phase: The physical restoration of the incident area should be started as soon as possible. This may be delayed because of investigation or lack of resources but security should never be compromised longer than necessary.

As soon as an incident has ended, the commander enters into consequence management. If reporting was adequate during the incident, the higher headquarters should have a clear understanding of the events and can start management with respect to US military and the media. At the COP/AP, the unit commander must respond to the host-national security forces and local nationals. The best way of dealing with host-nation security forces is to be honest about the situation. They will generally be understanding and may even be able to assist in further consequence management. Informing local nationals should be conducted on two levels: first, notify the local leaders, and second, inform the local populace. We found that utilizing the RIAB (radio tower on the ANA side of the AP) was extremely effective in getting messages to the general public.

IX. Communications

Communication is pivotal when operating a COP/AP that is far away from a higher headquarters. The most important initial task is establishing a proper Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency (PACE) plan with higher and subordinate units. Beyond the hardware

required for communication, a solid plan for reporting, communication checks, and maintenance is required to keep all systems effective and fully mission capable. Below is a list of considerations and best practices we found when operating a company-sized AP.

Requirements: We fell in on a variety of different communication platforms that provided redundancy and secure communications. They included FM communication (ability to monitor 4 nets), FBCB2, TACSAT, DTCS, SNAP capabilities (SIPR, CXI, NIPR with battle captain monitoring Transverse, and SIPR/NIPR phone lines), Satellite Phone, and commercial cell phone. We also had an S-6 representative available for maintenance and trouble shooting.

Security: COMSEC changeover occurred once per week for radios and once per month for JCR. One challenge was planning COMSEC into the operations schedule. COMSEC changeover can be time consuming and bring an operation to a standstill until complete. Consideration should be given in planning operations when COMSEC changeover will take place during the operation.

Power: Power is a constant concern when operating a COP/AP CP/TOC. We found that having a jump TOC out of a QRF vehicle was essential when we lost power. We also had a back-up generator available, but changing out generators was sometimes a time-consuming event even when conducted by mechanics.

Maintenance: The S-6 representative was essential in conducting maintenance of communication equipment. Frequent maintenance was required for the SNAP server which constrained communications with higher to JCR, TACSAT, or DTCS. Maintenance was also a factor in the generator providing power for the TOC/CP. It required regular PMCS in order to stay fully mission capable.

Hardening: Network vulnerability was never a concern at our level. The only associated challenge was insuring computers received required updates. If enough updates were missed, the computer was required to be re-imaged, leaving that computer dead-lined for several days.

Flexibility: It is imperative that each element leaving the COP/AP has a solid PACE plan with the CP/TOC. The limitations of any single form of communication were seen on every mission. At the COP/AP, hourly checks of the primary and alternate forms of communication should be tested and a daily check of the entire PACE plan. Execution of the PACE plan became especially important when power to the TOC/CP was lost or the SNAP server was down for maintenance.

X. Training and Exercises

Missions: In terms of training and developing ANSF capacity, mission execution was the most challenging topic in which to mentor the ANA. At our AP, the KDK Commander considered the insider threat high among the ANA soldiers; therefore, he would withhold a tremendous amount of information about specific upcoming missions. In his mind, this minimized the amount of intelligence being pushed to the insurgents operating in our area prior to mission execution. He felt this benefit outweighed the benefit of increased planning and rehearsals conducted at the company (*Toli*) level. The result of tightly held mission plans at the KDK level was that when it came time to coordinate for missions with the ANA at the company or platoon level, we oftentimes had little time to plan and rehearse with our counterparts. Specifically, the platoon leaders would go over the morning prior to discuss an upcoming mission and the *Toli* commanders would have no idea about the upcoming day's missions. Their typical response was: "The KDK commander has not told us yet. He will tell us tonight, and we will execute

whatever he tells us tomorrow." In hindsight, this is something we should have fought for from the beginning—increased lead time at the *Toli* level so we could better plan and rehearse with our partners.

Conducting a joint patrol brief prior to a force protection patrol with the Afghan Uniformed Police.

At the same time, this was an area where we experienced growth over time. The KDK commander improved his communication with us and his commanders about specific missions. On several occasions, we were able to determine which platoon or company would be executing a mission with us the following day, with enough time that we were able to invite our partners over for rehearsals. Specifically, one of the best instances of partnered planning was when we invited a platoon over to our MWR and discussed the various ways they reacted to contact, reacted to IEDs, etc. We then explained how we conduct these battle drills and were able to develop a solid, partnered plan prior to executing a mission. In our minds, this served as a model/goal that we tried to accomplish as frequently as possible.

Some key recommendations to executing partnered planning and partnered missions:

♠ *Push for the KDK Commander (or whichever ANSF leader you are working with) to establish a set training schedule and mission schedule.*

Preferably, this should be at least a month-long calendar. If this can be attained, it will greatly improve the CF's ability to coordinate for supporting assets and ability to fully support the ANSF in executing the missions.

♠ *CF should have a schedule that clearly shows platoon taskings for the upcoming month.*

For example, with four platoons in our company, we clearly showed what platoon was on FORCEPRO of the AP, what platoon was on QRF, and which platoons were able to conduct missions at any given time. This provided the SECFOR Company with consistency and also allowed us to better predict which platoon would be linking up with the ANA for a mission, depending on the day or week the mission occurred.

♠ *Encourage the KDK Commander to inform his subordinates of upcoming missions a little earlier than the night prior.*

Even if the KDK Commander did not reveal specifics of the mission, during our time here he began giving his subordinate leaders a brief WARNO that they would be conducting a mission with CF the following day. More specifically, he told them that we would be supporting them the following day so they expected us to contact them for coordinations and planning.

Marksmanship: This is one of the easier tasks to train with the ANSF. Typically, they are very eager to participate in marksmanship training and this requires little resourcing on the CF's part. On several occasions, we executed marksmanship training on the M16/M4 with the ANA, as well as the M240 and M249. We recommend that you run these ranges how you best see fit, but the following are a few recommendations from our experiences:

Have a plan prior to executing this training. Specifically, identify who will be the primary and alternate instructors, guardian angels, and translators prior to conducting the training. Some interpreters are better than others when it comes to discussing certain tasks. We found that some interpreters had quite a bit of experience discussing weapons characteristics, functionality, etc. and using them proved essential.

Weapons Maintenance: Weapons maintenance requires minimal planning and can be executed when time allows, even last minute. There were several occasions when we went to assess "broken" weapons and realized that the ANSF simply did not understand the complete picture when it came to weapons maintenance. In these instances, we were able to take an hour to two hours and train whatever audience was available on weapons cleaning, disassembly/assembly, and functions checks. Obviously, if you want to reach a wider, or more targeted audience, you can invest time and plan more deliberately.

Teaching the Soldiers of the Afghan National Army how to properly conduct maintenance on an M249 automatic rifle.

Map Reading: This topic was difficult to train, but we feel confident that soldiers came away with a solid understanding of how to read a map—and that they will at least maintain this basic knowledge over time. The key to conducting map reading training was that we first trained the interpreter who had the most prior experience with a map. After identifying the interpreter with the most experience, we refreshed him on how to actually read a map, so there was much less "learning on the spot" when the interpreter translated concepts and techniques to the ANSF. This was an event that the ANSF rotated personnel through a lot. The same guys did not show up consistently, so it was challenging to progress beyond anything more than basic map reading.

Mortar Training: The mortar training was one of the most effective training programs implemented during our deployment. One of the keys to the success of the mortar training was permanently equipping the ANA with the mortar system the training was to be conducted on. By providing the ANA with a new mortar system, they were motivated to attend and excel at the training in order to become proficient with this new weapon system. A significant portion of the training focused on practical exercises. Practical exercises were an effective means at training the ANA on an unfamiliar weapon system because it limited the need for an interpreter and relied heavily on a kinesthetic training style. The two important learning points taken from this training experience were the importance of incentivizing and motivating ANA and using a hands-on training approach.

Vehicle Maintenance: This was another relatively easy task for us to train. Our mechanics were able to conduct training with the ANA on a fairly regular basis. This is one area where we had planned to conduct a more thorough class, but never were able to make this a priority. With the number of NMC vehicles on the ANA side, this is an area that could be addressed more specifically in the future.

Conclusion

While each AP/COP will be different, the major takeaway from our experiences were communication and having a common goal. Talking with your CF and host-nation partner to unsure you have a common goal or at least mutually supporting goals is imperative. We managed to do this through a series of formal and informal meetings that ensured we understood each other's desired end state. This allowed us to adjust our perimeter to facilitate eventually transfer and increase our force protection, establish training plans, and facilitate each other's missions. We've attempted to condense our lessons learned and a checklist that we thought would be useful if we were to attempt this mission again.

Lessons Learned:

Concentration Area	What Worked Well	What we could have done better:
Command and Control	A reliant and efficient system for battle tracking was developed by the ANA and well coordinated between SFAAT and SECFOR. Coordination between SECFOR and SFAAT regarding locations of ANA elements enabled greater transparency of information.	Establishing mutual goals between SECFOR and SFAAT would have helped maintain situational awareness between SECFOR and SFAAT.
FP Planning Process	Continually reassessing the threat and refining force pro posture according to the threat allowed the company to adapt in a manner that best countered the ever-changing threat in the area.	Establishing relationships with outgoing leadership prior to deployment would help allow us to gain information regarding the current posture, what worked well for them and how they refined Force Protection on a regular basis.
Threat Analysis	Utilizing multiple sources of intelligence allowed leaders to create a diversified assessment of the threat in the AO and drive operations based upon the assessment.	Although significant efforts were made to utilize more than one source of intelligence, consulting the ANA commanders on a regular basis would contribute to intelligence gathering and sharing while solidifying relationships and trust with one another.
Layout	Maintaining separation between ANA and US forces was essential for safety and reduction of insider threat. We were able to achieve utilizing a common and mutual ECP, while maintaining separation between ourselves and the ANA.	Vast improvements were made to the pre-existing AP Layout on the US side. However a common standard for both ANA and US tower guards has been difficult to refine.
Perimeter Security	Creating a partnered ECP was one of the best changes we made.	Spot checking the ANA more frequently would ensure their security efforts were adequate, especially during times of elevated threat level.
Internal Security	Rehearsing key FORCEPRO battle drills regularly established confidence in our ability to minimize as well as respond to threats.	We could have increased communication with the ANA with respect to internal security, considering we share the same external walls.
Protective Construction	Continuously evaluating and improving fighting positions proved beneficial and minimized threat of HPAs.	We could have established internal fighting positions for the Alamo plan earlier.
Incident Response/Consequence Management	Assigning duties and responsibilities to key personnel in the event of an incident to include sergeant of the guard and platoon leadership. In the event of an incident this would prevent congestion of people who are offering help and assistance.	Conduct rehearsals that incorporated the 5 Phases of Incident Response to allow personnel to be assigned specific duties down to the squad and team level.
Commo	Having an S-6 representative at AP Zormat helped tremendously to troubleshoot problems with communications. Additionally, maintaining a PACE plan for operations as well as for the AP allowed the company to maintain communications at all times. In the event that power was lost in the TOC, communications were still open through a QRF vehicle.	Although the S-6 representative helped, he was often times busy with SFAAT operations. Having a dedicated S-6 rep with computer/SNAP expertise would have helped problems with communications. Additionally incorporating COMSEC changeovers into the operations schedule would have prevented any stand-still in mission readiness.
Training Exercises	Identifying the interpreter with the most experience and getting him caught up to speed on the topic aided in training, as there was less learning on the Spot. Additionally, finding ways to incentivize and motivate the ANA soldiers proved to increase effectiveness of training.	Receiving guidance about training with little and short notice impeded on our ability to effectively conduct thorough training with the ANA.

Lessons Learned Checklist:

Concentration Area	Checklist
Command and Control	☐ What dedicated platform is there to contact the ANA on both the American and ANA sides? ☐ What mutual goals have been established between SECFOR and SFAAT to set the tone of the relationship with ANA counterparts? ☐ How often do SFAAT and SECFOR meet to exchange information?
FP Planning Process	☐ What prior coordination and exchange of information has been established with the outgoing unit? ☐ What methods, procedures and assessments has the outgoing unit made to refine force protection in accordance with the current threat? ☐ What routine unannounced rehearsals will you plan to incorporate to refine force protection and identify areas that need improvement? ☐ What standard do the guard towers follow? Are cardinal directions marked on the inside? Are range cards routinely revised?
Threat Analysis	☐ How are you diversifying intelligence to make an assessment of the threat? ☐ How will you formulate your operations based upon the intelligence and current threat? ☐ How often are you meeting with ANA commanders to discuss threats in the area?
Layout	☐ Does the current posture allow reduction of insider threat but not impede the relationships with your counterparts? ☐ Where can the unit establish supplementary fighting positions? ☐ Is there an alternate means of entry to and from each side, other than a main gate? ☐ Who controls the HLZ and what system of coordination is there between ANA and US aircraft utilizing the HLZ?
Perimeter Security	☐ Is there adequate stand-off from AoA? ☐ Can we increase effectiveness of the existing stand-off? ☐ Is there a physical barrier between the ANA and CF side of the AP? ☐ Are there an adequate number of alternate fighting positions to use in event of a HPA?
Internal Security	☐ Are there clear FORCEPRO battle drills in place? ☐ Do we rehearse these battle drills enough? ☐ Are there enough alternate fighting positions in event the Alamo plan is initiated?
Protective Construction	☐ How adequate are the existing fighting positions in terms of cover and stability? ☐ Can we devote more resources and PAX to improving the AP? ☐ What resources do we need to request IOT achieve our goals?
Incident Response/Consequence Management	☐ Have clear tasks been assigned to key personnel, sergeants of the guard, platoon leadership and each individual in the company in the event of an incident? ☐ Does the unit conduct rehearsals that follow the 5 Phases of Incident Response? ☐ Who will send reports, gain accountability and treat casualties? What dedicate platform of communication will be used
Commo	☐ Is there an S-6 representative available to troubleshoot systems? ☐ How will you incorporate COMSEC changeovers in a manner that do not interfere with mission readiness? ☐ Is there a dedicated "alternate TOC" such as a QRF vehicle that will enable communications with battalion in the event of a power outage? ☐ How often are generators PMCSed and what plan does the unit have for an alternate power source in the event a generator goes down?
Training Exercises	☐ Use the interpreter with the most experience and have a newer interpreter accompany him to develop his abilities as an interpreter during training exercises ☐ Do you have adequate time to plan, rehearse and refine before executing joint training?

Transferring a Province

CPT Kinard Egleton (FSC/1-506 IN)

The Forward Support Company of Paktya Province, Afghanistan

During our mission analysis we got our first idea of how hard we would have to work to close three Assistance Platforms and one Forward Operating Base within our assigned province. We were deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the coalition footprint was shrinking rapidly. We were faced with some challenging questions: what is needed to survive? What is the security threat? What is the timeline to close a COP/FOB? What can be sold as scrap? How much equipment is on the post? And what is the mode of travel to retrograde different items? For each COP/FOB the situation will be and was different, and the right strategy for one may not be the strategy that will work for all. We all had to deal with a shrinking FML and

the resultant shortfalls. The limits on our combat power were evident with the Forward Support Companies: organically postured with four FSCs, our brigade only deployed three of them, and all with capped force manning levels of 65 Soldiers. Echo "Wolfpack" Forward Support Company, tasked to provide logistics support TF Red Currahee (1-506th), was in the middle of it all.

In this article we will lay out our challenges and successes in our efforts to retrograde our province while sustaining the force.

The Lift

In Afghanistan, the "fighting season" starts in April. At the time of our Relief-in-Place/Transfer of Authority, Task Force Red Currahee was postured at three Assistance Platforms (Chamkani, Zormat, and Wilderness) and at Forward Operating Base Gardez, all within Khost and Paktya Provinces, Afghanistan. Our Brigade was tasked to transfer and/or close seven FOBs and/or

Assistance Platforms. At end state, the presence of Coalition Forces within the Khost Bowl and Paktya would be very minimal. An advise-and-assistance command would remain as the main effort at two remaining locations in order to mentor and train Afghanistan Security Forces. By USFOR-Afghanistan standards, Assistance Platform are small footprints within existing GIRoA bases with resident US/ISAF personnel serving as advisors or enablers. APs are

characterized by a lifespan of weeks to months. Given the terrain, our needs for logistical support had to be expanded due to unpredictable weather patterns and mountain pass conditions.

The Lessons Learned

Balance: When faced with the task of simultaneously retrograding equipment and targeting enemy forces, a unit must strike a balance. In order to draw down, you lose certain capabilities to target the enemy. When turning in equipment, there are items that can go first and don't affect the targeting mission. Critical decisions need to be made dealing with combat power. Ultimately, commands must assess where they can assume risk in order to meet the closure/transfer date. A good tool that we utilized was incorporating retrograde milestones into our targeting cycle and critically assessing what we could do without. Once the decision is made to close a location, a deliberate retrograde operation needs to begin almost immediately.

Timeline Task List: The development of a codified timeline can play a decisive role in planning, manpower, and resource allocation over time. During mission analysis, our battalion staff established and utilized a simple Gantt Chart (example below) in order to display and layout key dates and tasks.
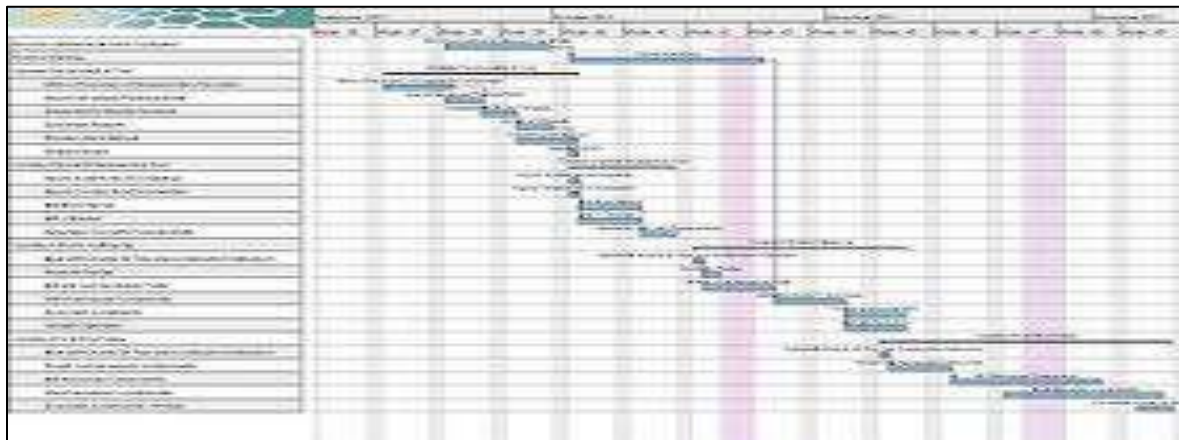
Tenant Management: Nowadays our Forward Operating Bases and Assistance Platforms are outfitted with a wealth of advanced equipment to help do what is necessary to complete the mission. LOGCAP Contractors and Enablers (i.e., Persistence Ground Surveillance System [PGSS] and FLUOR) provide an extraordinary capability to the ground unit and in many cases account for over 30% the requirement when transitioning locations. It is absolute necessary to bring in all tenant units and enablers in order to identify the total number of twenty-foot equivalent units required to move off the FOB. In doing so, we were able to identify and reserve cargo space on combat logistics patrols in order to maximize efficiency.

Enablers

One of the things that enabled us to be successful in closing down our location was tapping into the expertise of the CENTCOM Material Retrograde element. Early on in the deployment, we realized we needed to establish a retrograde yard at FOB Gardez, our largest location, in order

to properly store and segregate retrograde material and prepare it for movement to Bagram Air Field and FOB Shank. The retrograde yard gave us the ability to pull and store equipment from our APs. The DLA Dispositions team was a major key to the success of closing our FOB. They are able to take all scrap items and sell to local contractors. In most cases, they have the ability to sign for items that are scheduled for turn-in to DRMO. Additionally, they were a movement multiplier with the ability to order host nation trucking outside of the coordination of the movement control team. Another team that came in very useful was the Mobile Retrosort Team. They worked hand in hand with the DLA team. Our unit on the FOB would take equipment to the Retrosort team, and they would sort the equipment into like items. If the item could not be used for defensive or offensive purposes then it was scrapped and turned over to the DLA team to be sold. If the item was not scrap, they would send it in containers to one of the bigger FOBs' Retrosort yards to move the equipment out of country, so the Government could recoup some of the cost of that item. The last enabler we used was a movement control team (MCT), which enabled us to put in orders for local national truck drivers. We were able to make more out of our missions utilizing local national trucks. On our trucks we could only utilize about 7 TEUs. By the end of our deployment, we were moving with upwards of ten local national trucks equating to 20 TEUs worth of equipment. However, we must express two cautions about host nation trucking. The first is the reduced show rate during prominent holidays (e.g., Eid and Ramadan). Secondly, many of the trucks are not well maintained and tend to breakdown during a combat logistics patrol.

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Retrograde Enablers

BASE CLOSURE ASSISTANCE TEAMS

Base closure assistance teams (BCATs) began as a military-resourced solution to assist the regional commands with base transfers and closures. BCATs provided direct property support to units tasked with closing or transferring a base.

The teams assisted, assessed, and advised units on real and personal property. They also assisted with de-scoping contracts, providing information technology, and coordinating transportation for the retrograde of non-mission-essential items. Each team included three military personnel and six contractors.

RETROGRADE SORT YARDS

Retrograde sort yards (RSYs) received, sorted, and identified materiel and ensured that its accompanying documentation was correct. RSYs brought to record excess non-mission-essential equipment and materiel and provided disposition instructions for redistribution, retrograde, or disposal.

MATERIEL REDISTRIBUTION TEAMS

Materiel redistribution teams provided onsite support. These teams sorted through containers and identified, segregated, processed, and brought to record excess non-mission-essential equipment and materiel. These teams were originally all military but eventually had two military members and 10 contractors. The teams served in RSYs or materiel redistribution yards when they were not on mobile missions.

CUSTOMS AND AGRICULTURAL INSPECTION TEAMS

Customs and agricultural inspection teams ensured materiel met U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Department of Agriculture standards. These teams operated in conjunction with the redistribution property assistance teams and RSYs. The inspection teams were joint and included Army and Navy customs border clearance agents.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE AND CLEAN UP TEAMS

Environmental response and clean up teams were designed to provide environmental expertise in managing deconstruction activities for projected base closures and transfers. These contracted teams also reviewed site closure surveys.

EXPEDITIONARY DISPOSAL REMEDIATION TECHNICIANS

Expeditionary disposal remediation technicians were part of a Defense Logistics Agency element that provided technical expertise and assistance in demilitarization, disposal, and disposition of unserviceable materiel, equipment, and scrap.

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Relationship with the Army Field Support Brigade

Understand the process. One of the most important relationships we made during the entire deployment was with the Wholesale Officer at our nearest Redistribution Property Assistance Team (RPAT) yard and the utilization of the AMC Theater Property Equipment Planner (TPE Planner). TPE Planner is a system in LIW that you input the equipment that you are planning for turn in. A contractor then looks at the equipment and determines whether the equipment is going to be shipped wholesale back to the states or laterally transferred to another unit in country. The process of vetting a piece of equipment through the planner can take up to three weeks. A good working relationship with the TPE team is the only way to speed up that process in order to meet a condensed timeline for retrograde. After the equipment is vetted into the system, all turn-in documents are generated. The next biggest constraint in the system is getting the DA Form 1348 with a watermark back from the TPE team. This process can take from 48 hours to two weeks.

TPE Planner Process Map
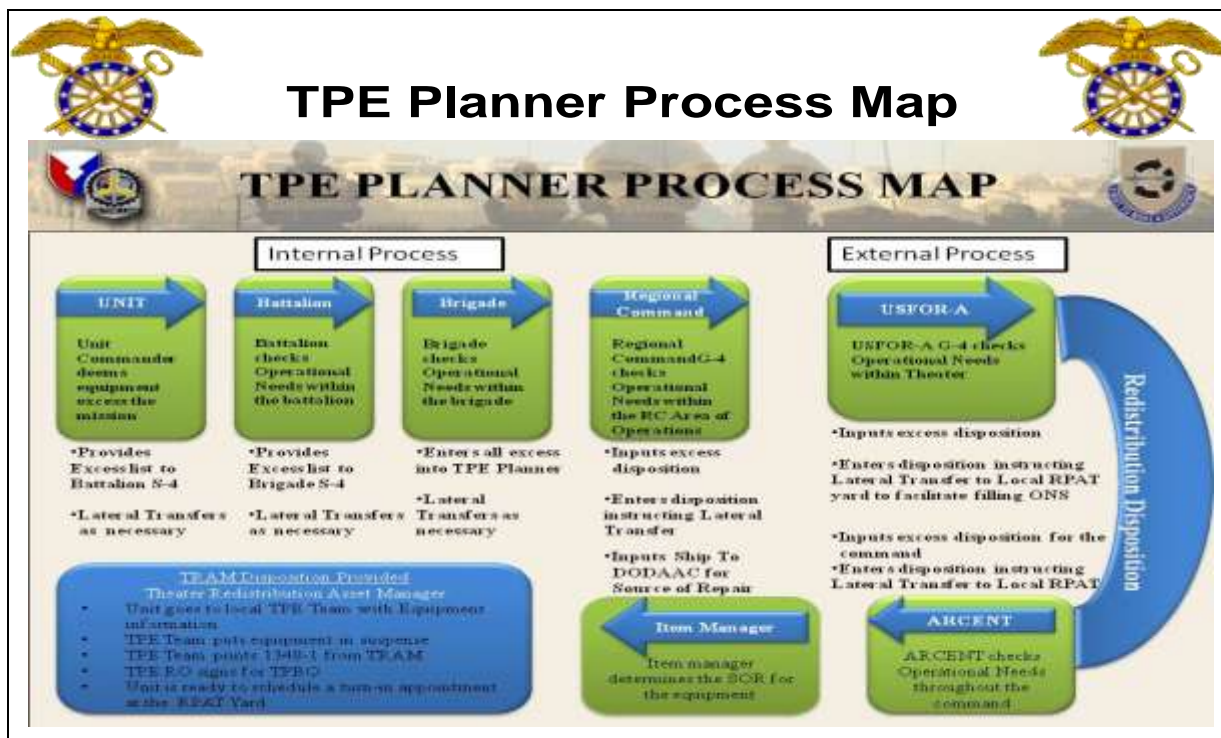
The relationship with the RPAT Wholesale Officer is key as well, particularly, when the unit is not co-located with a supporting RPAT Yard. Coordination must be made before the arrival of a substantial amount of equipment in order to prevent exceeding the capability of the yard. We were making trips each day delivering over 20 pieces with a very short window to turn in the equipment. Building our relationship enabled us to achieve the throughput we needed in order to remain on time and gave us the ability to store equipment within the yard. The bottom line is that we all had to understand our role and responsibilities.

Our responsibilities were to:

♠ Receive disposition from TPE Planner to turn in equipment to nearest RPAT.

♠ Verify equipment in the TPE Planner against TPE hand receipt. This is the unit's opportunity to ensure all equipment and components have been vetted and received disposition.

♠ Coordinate with RPAT for turn in schedule.

♠ Prepare RPAT turn in packet(s).

♠ Take completed packets to the unit's supporting Theater Property Book Team for validation and document numbers (unit must verify PBUSE generated documentation against equipment, thereby ensuring that documents match equipment data plates).

♠ Take packets that have been validated by the TPB team to the RPAT turn-in appointment.

♠ Turn in equipment to the RPAT yard.

As the chips fell and we began to execute our plan there were many things we did wrong. Our plan was not perfect by any means; however, we were able to close all of our locations on time. The biggest take-away from this experience is to include all the players in the game. LOGCAP standards utilize the 180-day model, but in many cases you won't have that much time. Understand your fight and your timeline, set milestones, build relationships with your enablers and allow them to enable you, and adjust where necessary.
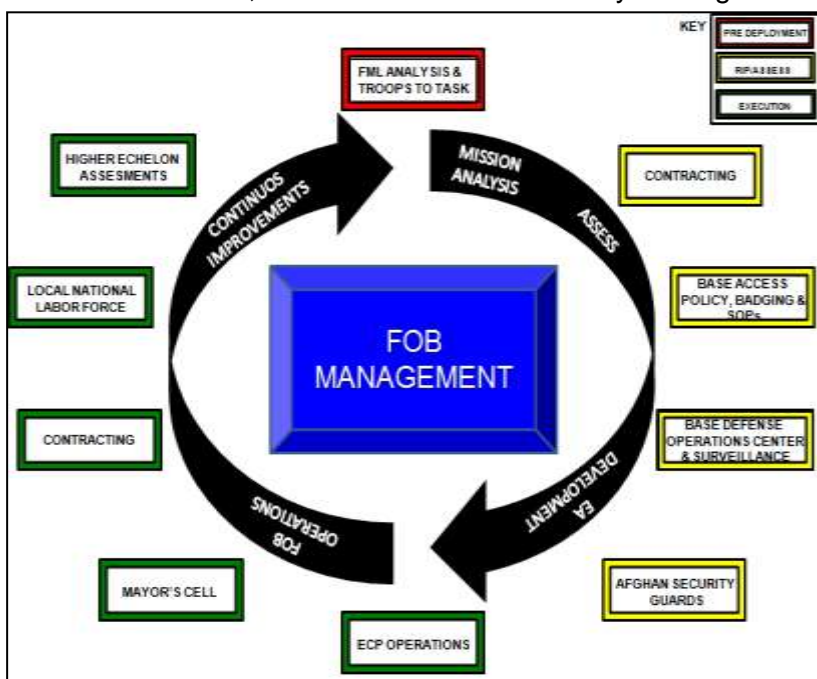
Forward-Operating-Base Management

CPT Tad Reed (HHC/1-506)

O.K., Ranger, you are a commander about to deploy and you have been tasked with managing a Forward Operating Base (FOB). This article's intent is to give you a basic guideline for preparation, assessment and execution of your tasking. Although the majority of small FOBs in Afghanistan will be closed by the spring of 2014, this tasking may arise elsewhere in the world in the near future. This article will assume that you are falling in on an existing FOB. Building a FOB would be another article altogether.

This article will attempt to logically follow the FOB Management flow chart, with tasks broken down into three phases: the pre-deployment phase, the RIP/ASSESS phase, and the execution phase. By no means is it exhaustive or all inclusive, but it should serve as a very basic guide and prevent you from missing any key elements in your planning.

Security, Security, Security!

It is likely that you have little to no training in FOB Management and you are madly looking for resources. Reference the *GTA 90-01-011: Joint Forward Operations Base (JFOB) Protection Handbook*, which focuses almost entirely on protection and defense. Our team has not found an all-encompassing FOB Management handbook that includes force protection with logistics, public works, ECP operations and foreign security-guard utilization. There are few readily available or easily found references encompassing the massive creature that FOB Management is. It must be said that FOB Security should be your primary concern in all matters, and ALL of FOB Management is encompassed by the Security Lines of Effort of any military unit.

Forward Operating Base Management is a complex task involving many players: civilians, local national contractors, and various military cells. Prior to taking over the management of a FOB, an incoming unit needs to determine manning requirements for FOB operations, including the contracting team, water and sanitation services, the Mayor's Cell, the Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC), the Entry Control Point (ECP), and FOB defense. A strong analysis of manning requirements, with a primary focus on security, will help the incoming unit to allocate Soldiers to FOB management tasks, fill in gaps with contracted services, and finally to synchronize all efforts to ensure overall effectiveness.

Force-Manning-Level Analysis and Troops to Task

Make early contact with the unit you will replace. Seek them out if they have not contacted you. You will likely have difficulty with high-side secure communications with the forward unit, but you should be able to receive basic Troops to Task from the forward unit which will assist you in conducting your initial company mission analysis. Critical to your decision-making when deciding how to distribute your Soldiers to the critical tasks will be your Unit's Force Manning Level (FML), or essentially your Unit's Force Cap.

Once you have the forward unit's Troops to Task and compare it with your FML, you may recognize a need for adjustments. It is significant if the unit you are replacing is managing a FOB with 170 Soldiers and your FML is 120. This may affect where you distribute your team. Mission analysis may also indicate that additional Soldiers must be pulled from other companies within your battalion to accomplish the mission. If able, it is recommended that you send a representative on the Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) with an eye on FOB operations and Base Defense Operations to determine recommended Troops to Task by the FML for your own element.

Pick your team wisely. If it does not hurt when you lose a key NCO or officer to fill a critical FOB Management role, you have likely not selected the correct Soldier. Consider that your FOB defenses and Mayor's Cell will require responsible and knowledgeable officers and NCOs with a cadre of enabling Soldiers to assist them. Select the leaders who are able to operate independently and who will ruthlessly enforce standards, policies and procedures.

A few recommendations prior to deployment which will save you headaches later:

- ♠ Qualify EVERY Soldier on every weapons system that will be utilized in FOB defense, to include but not limited to: M9, M4, M249, M240, M2 .50 Cal, Shotgun, M203 and/or M320, the CROW system, and less-than-lethal munitions. At some point it is possible that EVERY Soldier will be responsible for a weapon system on guard duty which they must be able to operate and theater policy will dictate they must be qualified to operat).

- ♠ Train EVERY Soldier on your company/battalion SOPs for signal and communications as well as the use of the equipment/items.

- ♠ Ensure that EVERY Soldier is Combat Life Saver qualified.

- ♠ Ensure that there is redundancy built into your certifications for contracting officers/NCOs: they may change duties mid-stream and you can't be left attempting to paddle upstream with no paddle.

- ♠ Conduct Escalation of Force (EOF) training repeatedly.

- ♠ Conduct Rules of Engagement (ROE) training.Give clear and concise guidance in writing to the subordinates that you will assign the tasks of Mayor, BDOC and ECP OIC/NCOIC.

Qualify every Soldier on all force-protection weapons systems prior to deployment, beginning with PMI.

Contracting

Immediately assess what contracts that the FOB holds. The majority of FOB contracts are unclassified. It is feasible to request copies of these from the forward unit prior to deployment for analysis. An essential first step for an incoming unit is to determine which services can be met by the unit and which should be met by local national contracts (without risking the security of the FOB). Unit commanders and the Mayor's Cell can help identify which contracts are necessary and which are not, and they will be the first to notice gaps in service that need filling. Applications for renewing or starting new contracts can take as long as 45 days, so there's no time to wait; extraneous contracts should be terminated immediately.

In that initial stage of decision-making with commanders and the Mayor's Cell, and for the duration of a unit's time at the FOB, the key to contracting is relationships: with contractors, supervisors, unit commanders, interpreters, Soldiers in the Mayor's Cell, Soldiers at the ECP, and good and bad employees. For anyone involved with contracting, it is critical to get to know everyone involved. Soldiers at the ECP will spot anomalies and negative influencers. Interpreters will do the majority of the communicating, so if you want your messages to get through, make sure to build a relationship with your interpreter(s). And a decent relationship with a contractor—based, mostly, on the prompt processing of his payments—can ward off trouble. Strong relationships with both your interpreters and the local-national workers on your FOB can pay dividends when it comes to not only security but gaining local intelligence as well.

Contracting Team
- ☐ Identify which current contracts are necessary / extraneous
- ☐ Renew expiring contracts
- ☐ Identify need for new contracts and submit contract application packets
- ☐ Gain & maintain contact with contractors, supervisors, and key employees
- ☐ Immediately implement contract inspection schedule
- ☐ As a modification of the Guardian Angel SOP, assign armed Soldiers wearing their personal protective gear to escort local national contractors during work on the FOB

Once the unit is involved, it should stay involved; the performance of a contractor, like the performance of a Soldier, will correspond with a unit's level of involvement. A consistently inspected contractor will perform well, while a neglected contractor will shirk his work.

During our transition, septic tanks overflowed, trash piled high, Porta Johns stank, and water tanks ran dry. The fix was simple: we refused the employees exit from the FOB until they

completed their work, we demanded better service from the supervisors, and we exchanged emails and phone calls with the contractors.

After those first few intensive days, weekly inspections and spot corrections were generally sufficient. U.S. escorts provided additional quality assurance: Soldiers were tasked with escorting contracted employees during their work on the FOB to monitor their performance and maintain security. Under the watchful eye of a Soldier escort, a contractor's performance improved dramatically.

It must also be understood that each of the contracts that require frequent access to and from the FOB are serious security concerns. For example, on our FOB, black water, gray water and trash were contracted for removal by local Afghan contractors. The locations where disposal occurred were kilometers from the FOB (although visible by the Persistent Threat Detection System or PTDS). The low-volume collection vehicles had to enter and exit the FOB several times each day to be able to keep up with demand. We established an extensive tracking system for these vehicles and contractors, and we implemented additional redundant search procedures to mitigate risk that these contracts caused.

Contracting issues—like truck damages and fuel theft—are unfortunately common. But strong relationships, good record keeping, and firm demands for fairness can prevent these problems from escalating into crises. Ultimately, those efforts will save the U.S. Military time, effort, and money, and they'll help make Soldiers' lives cleaner and safer.

Base Access Policy, Badging & SOPs

You will likely fall in on an existing Base Access Policy. There are mechanisms in place across the Afghan theater of operations to ensure that access policies exist and are up to date. Be sure to become intimately familiar with the policy and to ruthlessly enforce it. Develop it as necessary to support your mission. Critical to the policy will be stating who has access to the base, when, for how long, and with what privileges. The policy needs to also include mechanisms for tracking all personnel that are given access to include foreign country nationals, local nationals, contractors, field support representatives and technicians, as well as visiting US Soldiers or government agency personnel.

The Mayor is the proponent for oversight of the Base Access Policy and the FOB badging protocols. However, it is likely that the ECP will be the hub of base-access activity for local nationals and transients and is responsible for enforcement of the policy and ensuring that proper tracking and badging procedures are adhered to and enforced. The Mayor will track personnel flown onto the FOB to include assigning their billeting. Tracking mechanisms for these civilian and military arrivals need to overlap with FOB perstat in the event that

Ensure both analog and digital tracking exist at the Entry Control Point, and utilize a badge-tracking system.

an emergency or FOB attack occurs. Every person must be able to be accounted for. Assess the mechanisms in place by the unit to track FOB personnel, transients, contractors as well as locals that have entered through the ECP.

By policy, prior to a local-national worker being allowed on the FOB, we required a copy of the worker's identification and proof of a recent medical exam, followed by a counterintelligence (CI) screening and a background check. Every six months, the badge holders were rescreened to verify that they were not security risks. This is very standard within the Afghan theater of operations.

Rebadge every badge holder on the FOB. Consider it an initial census. You will discover deficiencies or discrepancies. Security badges were color-coded according to access and privileges on the FOB. For example, machine operators were given a purple badge and authorized specific privileges, while day laborers and DFAC workers were given red badges and required US escorts to move around the FOB.

The vetting of certain employees/contractors was more in depth, allowing for unescorted travel. When specific employees and supervisors demonstrated reliability and independence, coupled with CI vetting (to include polygraph if necessary) their privileges may have been upgraded so that they were able to escort other local national workers, have cell phone access or perhaps have DFAC privileges.

The Mayor's Cell also controls the day-to-day operations of the contracted workforce, and, as such, the Mayor should be one of the most active Soldiers in the FOB Management team. Specifically, the Mayor has oversight of daily FOB tasks such as preventive generator maintenance, fueling of generators and refrigeration equipment, and general maintenance work orders. Although he does not necessarily complete the work himself, it pays great dividends in time and manpower to have a Mayor who is adept at problem solving and delegation. Each evening the Mayor must conduct analysis of the next day's specific assignments for contracted laborers and equipment operators.

Having a Mayor who is a Jack-of-all-trades as well as a diplomat will save you time and manpower.

Mayor's Cell
☐ Prioritize tasking requests for contracted personnel & equipment
☐ Track work orders until completion
☐ Run facilities meeting with contractors and unit contracting team
☐ Ensure all environmental issues are resolved (e.g., water purification)

As a note, selecting the right FOB Mayor is critical and he/she will work closely with the contracting team. The Mayor must be a Jack-of-all-trades. He will deal with individuals on a personal level as well as get his hands dirty on all manner of projects. He must have the ability to clearly communicate, verbally and in writing, and he must possess strength of character in his constant dealings with the local nationals. Like the contracting team, the Mayor needs to establish solid relationships with civilian and local-national contractors to manage their efforts and to enable his position of authority over them.

The Base Defense and the ECP SOPs must be immediately reviewed. Ensure that what is policy is actually being enforced. Review each of the specified procedures, sections, and all annexes or appendices. You must ensure that you annotate procedures which must be added post-TOA. The SOPs must be accessible to every appropriate element on the FOB (use a unit portal page or shared drive). During the RIP process, request that the departing unit conduct Base Defense/MASCAL drills as many times as it is necessary for you to assess all aspects of the defense. Incorporate your leaders as necessary to make their own assessments.

Assess unit assignments, reaction times, primary and alternate fighting positions, stand-off guard positions, vehicle emplacement at the ECP (this is intended to survive a catastrophic VBIED at the ECP), Local National Security Guard interactions/reactions (they will most likely operate on unsecured handheld radios – how is their communication during the defense?), casualty collection and movement to the designated Aid Station, reporting procedures, and related TOC battle drills (how involved and efficient is the parent unit, likely a battalion or brigade, in fighting the fight and reallocating forces?). Capture what must be changed or added to the SOPs immediately.

The ECP SOP should include the primary aspects of the Base Access Policy, going further to specify procedures for every aspect of ECP operations. This should include on a basic level: vehicle and personnel entry and exit search procedures; BAT/HIDE or SEEK2 procedures; tracking procedures for personnel and vehicles; monitoring and tracking of Movement Control Team (MCT) arrival reports (which list what large local national trucks to expect in a 24-hour period by Transportation Movement Request (TMR) number); badge issuing; designated guard positions to include K9 assets; maintenance schedule

Be sure to include local national security guards in all base defense and MASCAL rehearsals. Notice the presence of their badges, per SOP.

for each of the barriers and surveillance equipment of the defense in depth to include power generation as well as vehicles and weapons associated with the ECP; a schedule for fueling; a schedule for interpreters; and posted FOB-access rules in the relevant local/native language and with caricatures or pictures (local literacy rates must always be a consideration).

Base Defense Operations Center & Surveillance

The Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) is primarily responsible for FOB security. Prior to deployment it is essential that manning requirements for FOB defense are known by the incoming unit. This analysis will drive the incoming unit's Troops-to-Task. Again, it is recommended that a BDOC representative accompany the PDSS party ti enable mission analysis of appropriate manning requirements and to assess where additional assets or personnel may be required upon arrival.

Consider moving the BDOC adjacent to the Brigade / Battalion TOC in order to allow seamless communication and battle

Immediately upon arrival, assess guard positions, manned tower positions, vehicle positions, fallback positions, the ECP, bunkers, casualty collection points and the force protection patrol matrix (see attached BASIC BDOC ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST). Not all gaps in security identified by the BDOC need to be filled by more US Soldiers. Afghan Security Guards (ASG) were essential to our base defense plan. An incoming unit must assess the ASG's loyalty, competence, and level of involvement in FOB defense during the Relief-in-Place (RIP) process.

It is critical to have Sergeant of the Guard conduct consolidated Guard Mount procedures. This allows for PCC/PCIs and dissemination of critical information. Reference Guard Mount checklist.

The BDOC and contracting team should also closely review any active ASG contracts. When we arrived at our FOB, the ASG were manning only three guard towers, which fell well short of their contract requirements. After a close reading of the contract, we were able to increase their manning of positions around the FOB and emplace them at ten different guard positions, including additional ASG at the ECP, where they assisted in searching personnel and vehicles. Again, strong relationships—this time between the contracting team, commanders and the ASG supervisor—allowed us to increase their involvement and synchronize their work with our own Soldier's guard duties.

For your base defense drills, fires planning are critical and must be rehearsed.

Constantly improve the fox hole. Along with FOB-defense manning requirements, the BDOC is responsible for physical defensive assets like weapons systems, surveillance equipment, guard towers, and barriers. Assuming the enemy will attack, where do you want him to attack? How do you shape that and layer your defenses from there? Utilize the fundamentals of *Engagement Area Development (FM 3-21.8 (FM 7-8) Chapter 8, Sec IV, 8-68)* as you seek to make continual improvements. Consider the non-lethal engagement area of the FOB. The majority of contact with the enemy may actually be on your FOB. Know it and plan for it.

An initial assessment should consider: dead space around the FOB; obstacles and barriers; friendly and enemy observation and fields of fire; avenues of approach; the locations of guard towers; and sectors of fire of weapons systems. The BDOC should constantly assess, improve, adjust, and rehearse the defense plan. Ensure that surveillance equipment is fully mission capable at all times, and emplace useful assets like the Expendable Unattended Ground Sensor (E-UGS) to monitor dead space.

The BDOC is responsible for FOB defense drills, which train Soldiers, ASG, and contracted civilians on the FOB to respond effectively to mass-casualty (MASCAL) situations, indirect fire, direct fire, perimeter breaches, and insider threats. The only way to ensure that the FOB is prepared for an emergency is to rehearse the response to that situation, making sure to incorporate contractors and ASG. Consider who is watching your reactions during drills (LNs working on the FOB who reside elsewhere each night or even children watching from outside of the ECP).

ECP Operations

As a virtual breach in your FOB perimeter, the ECP will likely be readily reconnoitered by the enemy as a target of a direct attack. Because of this, the ECP should be a primary focus of Base Defense Operations. ECP operations require attention to detail, constant checks on performance, leader involvement, and coordination. Every local national that is employed on the FOB must pass through the ECP, and contracted vehicles, along with US convoys, enter and exit the FOB via the ECP. All of this traffic must be coordinated with the BDOC, BN TOC, S8, and the Mayor Cell in order to ensure that everyone is authorized to enter and exit the FOB. Contracted vehicles must be registered by the S8 and cleared by the ECP personnel prior to their entry, and the entry and exit of local nationals must be logged.

We compiled and analyzed the data from

BDOC / ECP Daily Checklist
☐ Daily force -protection improvements
☐ ECP personnel and vehicle searches (SOP enforcement)
☐ Surveillance equipment status
☐ ECP barriers/equipment status
☐ Guard mount procedures
☐ 2062s hand receipts for all guard property (required every shift change)
☐ PMCS schedule of FOB Defense vehicles and all equipment to include weapons systems
☐ Tower/truck checks
☐ SOG checklist
☐ Update briefing slides as directed
☐ Daily roll-up (ECP) – Analysis of what/who came on the FOB and off of the FOB paying attention to anomalies
☐ Coordination with Movement Control Team (daily arrival reports)
☐ Daily trackers (vehicles, workers, U.S. convoys)
☐ Outstation equipment status if applicable

our ECP logs in daily, weekly and monthly trackers to identify patterns of activity. Deviations from normal patterns could reveal concerns with specific local national workers or groups, indicate the effects of local holidays or significant events, and even indicate warning signs of an impending attack.

Immediately seek a contact list for the Field Site Representatives for every system which your Base Defense employs. In Afghanistan there are centralized contacts on Bagram at the ECP Help Desk available 24 hours a day. If they do not have an answer to your problem, they will assist you in finding it.

Seek to change and/or improve your ECP immediately. You must stay inside of your enemy's decision cycle, or Observe, Orient, Decide, Act (OODA) Loop, and the most efficient way to do that is to constantly improve and vary your defenses. Utilize the Help Desk to request additional assets. Always consider a defense in depth. Build redundancy into your obstacles and surveillance capabilities. When one fails, another will prevent a catastrophe.

Never neglect deception operations in your base defenses. It is unlikely that the full capabilities of your robots such as the Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle (SUG-V) are known. Utilize your robots in your search procedures periodically, regardless of whether they are ineffective at searching – the enemy does not necessarily know this. Curiously obvious hide sites built overnight appearing to contain sniper positions or new surveillance positions may get inside the enemy's decision cycle and push off an unsuspected attack. Utilize your Soldiers' creative minds in deception operations and see the possibilities with your "Red" hat on.

Conduct scheduled and regular training on technical equipment.

Execution

Enforce a battle rhythm for the FOB Management team to include daily or nightly synchronization meetings, as well as facilities meetings. The facilities meeting should be headed by the Mayor with a posted agenda and include every entity that holds a stake in the operations of the FOB. This should be civilian contractors to include Morale, Welfare and Recreation representatives, specialized maintenance contractors (vehicles and mine rollers, CREW systems, base defense equipment or systems) and the overall lead contracting agency for Department of Public Works, power generation, and firefighting and DFAC operations (on FOB Gardez, this was FLUOR and its contracted subsidiaries). Information flows both ways in the meeting, offering an opportunity for all parties to address concerns and disseminate relevant information.

Continually review contracts and understand that no contracts happen overnight. You must anticipate future needs. As winter approached, we anticipated needing snow removal equipment and salt. This required a seasonal contract. At one point our FOB was intended to grow nearly two fold in the number of residents in a very short period. After analyzing the ratio of personnel to toilets and showers, we knew we would be in trouble if we did not plan for and contract additional latrine shower trailers. This of course had a cause/effect relationship with the number of contracted waste removal vehicles and workers as well as the need for additional fresh water holding tanks and trucks.

Do not treat your local national labor force with disrespect or disdain. The relationship you build (or, more specifically, the relationship that the Mayor builds) with them will have a direct impact on operations in the vicinity of your FOB. In our case, the young leader of our labor force was actually the son of an elder who owned the land that our FOB resided on. This allowed the land owners to keep tabs on their land but it also allowed us to build rapport with the locals. When a very serious Escalation of Force incident occurred near the FOB, the family involved recognized our relationship with the land owners and knew our unit's integrity was unquestionable. They

proved to be very understanding because of this. Accept the fact that they are collecting information on the FOB.

Once you have earned the respect of the local national laborers, they will do astounding amounts of manual labor to accomplish the continuous improvements to the FOB and its defenses and facilities. Seek special skills in your laborers and utilize them. There may be carpenters, painters, welders, and even mechanics in their ranks.

Continue to invite assessment. This can be from Central Command, your Regional Command, your brigade and even adjacent units. Utilize the assessment outcomes and recommendations as necessary and leverage the assessments for additional assets, equipment, and necessary contracts.

Proper and successful FOB Management protects the force and enables combat operations. Utilize the simple flow chart and checklists provided to assist your unit in accomplishing a task which is difficult to quantify as a whole. Support and protect the warfighters wisely.

Basic BDOC Assessment Checklist

- ☐ Does the FOB have defense in depth?
- ☐ Assess the Surveillance Overlay/s(What cameras or surveillance is where and what dead space or avenues of approach does they cover- should overlap with force protection weapons systems)
- ☐ Assess the Force Protection/MASCAL Battle Drills
- ☐ Assess Policies/Procedures related to defense and access
- ☐ Review TOC battle drills for the parent unit of the FOB (how are they involved in day-to-day FOB operations and what are their battle drills?)
- ☐ Walk the perimeter (interior and exterior) to asses any gaps in perceived or actual coverage and points of vulnerability as well as were physical improvements must be made immediately
- ☐ Assess Range Cards (Should be panoramic photographic if possible and should cover both exterior and interior of the FOB)
- ☐ Assess Guard Mount procedures
- ☐ Assess the Local National Security Guards (are they manning positions with wpns, scanning sectors and do they have radios, binoculars, night vision capability?)
- ☐ Assess WPNs maintenance
- ☐ Assess other Force Protection Equipment
- ☐ Review maintenance schedules and procedures for all weapons and force protection equipment to include power generation
- ☐ Assess Force Projection and Posture (How does the ENY see our FOB? Our Soldiers? Our ASG?)
- ☐ Assess obstacles (outside of perimeter, at the ECP, on/around the airfield or HLZ and interior to the FOB)
- ☐ What is the FOB Defense Fires plan
- ☐ What system is used for informing the FOB of impending or current attack or threat, functionality and brevity codes (Big Voice speakers)
- ☐ Assess general distribution and knowledge of brevity codes and FOB Defense plans around the FOB (poll Soldiers, Civilians and Local National Security Guards what the plan is and what their role in defense is)
- ☐ Review the Local National Security Guard contract for specificity as to the number of Guards permitted by contract, the number/type of positions they are able to man, their limitations (they generally have no authority outside of the FOB by law), their privileges (are they authorized cell phones, DFAC access?), and most importantly their weapons accessibility (weapons must be left in towers or guard positions and can only be transported on the FOB by specified leadership).
- ☐ Assess the relationship and situation concerning the Host Nation Security Forces (are they tied into your defense, how do you communicate when needed, battle drills)
- ☐ Assess MEDEVAC procedures/times/locations
- ☐ Review and be familiar with policies for dealing with wounded or ill Host Nation Security Force personnel, local nationals and/or contractors to include U.S. contractors
- ☐ Assess local force protection patrolling (Are they patrolling with a task and purpose based on PIR? Is the unit tracking the patrols by time and route on a combined overlay and producing a heat map of their routes to avoid pattern setting? Are patrols coordinated with adjacent units? Are these patrols included in the unit synch matrix?)

Sergeant Of The Guard: Daily Checklist

- ☐ In-brief incoming SOG
- ☐ Guard Mount
- ☐ Review BDOC/ECP SOPs
- ☐ Hourly radio checks
- ☐ SKL for radios filled
- ☐ Batteries for radios charged
- ☐ Personnel BTL roster numbers are recorded
- ☐ Ensure towers are maintained
- ☐ Ensure weapon system PMCS and status
- ☐ Check ammunition for cleanliness
- ☐ Hand receipt all property, including ammunition, to guard shift
- ☐ Complete SOG hand receipt
- ☐ Bring class I to towers
  Reference FM 22-6, Chapter 5, Main Guard

Guard Mount Checklist

- ☐ PCC/PCIs
- ☐ Uniform
- ☐ ROE Review
- ☐ EOF Procedures
- ☐ BOLO list personnel and vehicles
- ☐ Hand receipt all property, including ammunition, to guard shift
- ☐ Assign / review sectors of fire

Continuous and realistic base defense / MASCAL drills will save lives.

Property accountability is an integral part of FOB Management and must be included in all Base Defense and ECP SOPs as well.

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- ♠ **BDOC OIC/NCOIC- 1LT Thomas Frain and SSG Shaun Reightler**
- ♠ **ECP NCOIC- SGT Jesse Deel**
- ♠ **S8 Contracting Officer- 1LT Patrick Kelly**
  Photos courtesy of Red Currahee NCOs

Combat Advising in Khost Province and Securing Uplift Advisors in RC-East

CPT Louis Cascino (E/2-506 IN)

Easy Company, 2-506th Infantry Regiment, deployed to Afghanistan from May 2013 until January 2013. The company's first mission was to advise and assist Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in order to disrupt insurgent activity with a focus on building ANSF capability and confidence to lead to long-term capacity to protect the local population during the 2014 fighting season. Easy Company built on nearly eight years of coalition force work in Khost Province to accomplish this mission. The company's second mission was to withdraw from Khost to Bagram Air Field (BAF) with 21 organic armored vehicles and eight support attachment vehicles. Finally, Easy Company was tasked with securing 4/101 uplift advisors at three different locations permanently and three additional locations temporarily.

As part of our first mission, we conducted several company-sized partnered operations with 2nd Kandak 1st BDE 203rd Corps Afghan National Army (2/1 Kandak). One of the first company-sized, partnered operations we conducted with 2/1 Kandak was a two-and-a-half day operation conducted in the Musa Khel District of Khost Province. Our mission was for Easy Company and 2-506 mortar platoon to provide overwatch (Support by Fire) and indirect fire support as Joint ANA/AUP/NDS elements cleared named objectives, conducted weapons searches and engaged the populace to gain information on enemy activity. The purpose of the operation was to build on 2/1 Kandak's confidence, capability and to expand their tactical reach outside of their normal checkpoint and observation bubbles.

The key to success in this operation was putting the ANA first and allowing them to take the lead in all things. With some of our REL-AFGHAN (declassified to allow ANA to observe) targets as well as their own information sources, 2/1 Kandak chose which objectives to clear on which days. This was extremely frustrating for my leaders, who wanted to plan every route and alternate route to very specific objectives. Instead of building a half-dozen courses of action, we decided to build an agile plan that could be easily adapted to whatever the Afghan commander on the ground decided to do. This plan mainly focused on developing options for overwatch positions, support-by-fire positions and most importantly air MEDEVAC helicopter landing zones and ground casualty evacuation routes. We placed these locations on a common-operating picture and distributed to all leaders. The plan and objective locations were changing all the way from the initial briefing until during the combined-arms rehearsal. With Afghan/ISAF intelligence and US Infantry in support, 2/1 Kandak conducted clearances in villages that had not been touched by ANSF/CF in over five years. On the third day of our operation, Easy Company and BN Mortars drove back to Salerno as 2/1 Kandak pushed farther for an additional three days. They found mortar systems, mortar ammunition, and various small arms without our support. In this example of assisting ANSF, we were able to bring a company in support of an Afghan Battalion to get the operation started successfully. We then walked away and allowed the Afghans to achieve more on their own and build up their confidence moving into the 2014 elections.

Easy Company also partnered with the Khost Provincial Response Company IOT advise and assist them in conducting targeted operations to disrupt EoA activities throughout Khost Province. The BN scouts did all of the deliberate training of the PRC at FOB Salerno, and those Soldiers deserve the credit for most of the PRC's gains in capability. The PRC also received excellent training in Kabul from August until October 2013. Our efforts were merely to validate this training. What worked for Easy Company on the majority of our combined operations was a brief rehearsal at the beginning of every operation. This allowed room for error if the patrol leader was switched out at the last minute and allowed us to inject any new intelligence into the plan. Additionally, as a rule, the PRC would always lead on the objective. They had the final say on whether to arrest or not arrest all targets. We were able to build and maintain the trust built from our predecessors as well as build up our own relationship with the PRC. As a result of our efforts, the PRC that remains in Khost Province today is much more confident and capable of conducting targeting operations against EoA.

As a follow-on mission after our departure from Khost, Easy Company was tasked to support a sister BCT for additional force protection. For the movement from BAF to FOB Fenty (180km), 4/10 MTN coordinated to have a combined-arms route-clearance operation (CARCO) clear Highway 7. This element consisted of 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers who were attached to 4/10 MTN. This convoluted command relationship was mitigated by having two company commanders present for the operation, one from the CARCO and the Easy Company commander. We were able to conduct a joint ramp brief, commex, and rehearsals together as well as share common graphics on analog as well as via Blue Force Tracker and JCR graphics. This would serve us well when the convoy was engaged by Enemies of Afghanistan (EoA) along HWY 7. EoA engaged the route-clearance element with multiple RPGs and small-arms fire. I was able to monitor the initial contact report on the CARCO command net; however, once the lead element(which was 15-30 minutes ahead of us in order to not all be ambushed together) sent the initial report, we lost radio communication. The CARCO commander was able to send me a distance and direction of the enemy forces as well as his status (no casualties, no disabled vehicles, continuing mission) via JCR. Redundant communications systems and rehearsals allowed Easy Company vehicles to identify and engage EoA and ultimately continue the mission unhindered.

From FOB Fenty, we received orders to send one of our platoons, with vehicles, to FOB Wright, 100km N into Kunar Province. TLPs were once again conducted, and adequate assets synchronized to support our movement. We were informed, however, that the company operating out of FOB Wright had a nearly 1:1 ratio of MRAPs to Soldiers. The troop commander asked why we didn't just use his vehicles there. In both of these examples, a better analysis of assets available at the BDE level and up could have saved fuel and man hours.

Overall, Easy Company's partnership with the Afghan forces led to measurable successes and improvement in the Khost Provincial Response Company as well as 2/1 Kandak's ability to secure their population. After operations with Easy Company, 2/1 Kandak operated unimpeded in areas they had previously thought completely hostile. Their expanded tactical reach will create the space necessary for safe and secure elections in April 2014.

Fox Company After-Action Review

CPT Jon Oglesby (F/2-506 IN)

1. ISSUE: COP Retrograde

DISCUSSION: Sequentially transferring two different COPs by one company was difficult but feasible. The early planning and resourcing proved to be crucial in the execution phase. The work done by the Company XO in concert with BN staff allowed the company to focus on operations and still prepare for the transition. By gathering the logistical requirements for removal of equipment from all parties on the COP, we prevented any surprises at the last minute. The multitude of civilian agencies on the two locations required the coordination for the removal of their equipment in addition to the Company's property. These additional requirements were forecasted by the Company XO who resourced their movement through additional FSC support. The Combat Logistic Patrols conducted by our FSC allowed us to rapidly and predictably echelon our retrograde.

RECOMMENDATION: The teamwork required from all parties involved in a base transition or closure is intensive. Having the right individuals in key jobs (e.g. Company XO) makes this task possible with minimal issues. Developing working relationships through training programs within the BCT and during deployment with civilian agencies is critical. The planning must begin immediately once transfer or closure is a possibility. The time and effort it takes to conduct a transfer requires the most time available due to all the external factors.

2. ISSUE: Switchblade (LMAM – Lethal Miniature Aerial Munition System)

DISCUSSION: The equipping of a rifle company with the Switchblade (LMAM) exponentially increased capabilities. This one weapon system gave us an entirely different ability on the battlefield. It was implemented in both COP Defense as well as operations in support of ANSF. The most limiting factor was only having one operator. There was an opportunity to utilize the weapon but the operator was at a promotion board at a different location. The Switchblade's minimal CDE concerns allow units to engage enemy even inside villages with nearby structures and civilians. The 'wave off' feature proved successful when a child approached a known IED emplacer at the last minute.

RECOMMENDATION: Every rifle Company should be equipped with multiple operators of this weapon system. It gives the ground force commander an additional ability that no conventional weapon system has. This tool is critical, especially when CDE concerns are a priority.

3. ISSUE: ANA Training

DISCUSSION: US advisors' desire to give ANA additional training outweighed the ANA leadership not wanting the additional training requirements. On multiple occasions US leadership placed deadlines on the ANA to give the names of soldiers to participate in training. Each time the ANA failed to; they explained their reasons which were legitimate operational

concerns. The US advisors continued to change these deadlines, even after being told by ANA leadership there was no one available for training. These actions reduced our credibility as advisors after we repeatedly told them they must provide names or there would be no training and then never cancelling the training. The result was teaching MDMP to ANA E5s, in an abbreviated class two weeks late.

RECOMMENDATION: US advisors must be willing to accept No as an answer from the ANA. If we set deadlines and consequences and do not enforce them, we only damage our own reputation. We must be willing to accept answers from our counterparts that are not in line with what we are used to in our Army.

4. ISSUE: ANA integration into COP Defense

DISCUSSION: Three different locations required the integration of HNF into our own defensive plan. This required extensive communication and rehearsals but proved to be effective. We utilized the ANA and ANP in a layered defensive plan. Having the HNF in the outer layer provided us with an ability to allow locals to approach and speak with their national forces that understand them best. Our joint rehearsals allowed us to deconflict fires and mission command. Each element had areas of responsibility, and the Company CP had RTOs from ANA and AUP which provided a common operational picture.

RECOMMENDATION: Building a relationship with the HNF via joint planning and joint rehearsals will improve not only your rapport but your defense plan. All aspects of the plan must be taken into consideration as well as the possibility of their infiltration by enemy. When a holistic approach is used, it enhances the base defense as well as the perception from locals.

Active Force Protection Patrolling and AUP Partnership

CPT Benjamin Flores (W/2-506 IN)

While deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XIII-XIV from May-November 2013 to Khost, Afghanistan, my company had the task of providing external force protection for FOB Salerno. This mission set entailed us having to conduct active patrolling in an approximately 100-square kilometer area oriented generally to the immediate west, north, and east of the FOB in order to interdict and disrupt enemy activity directed at the FOB. During our time operating out of FOB Salerno Whiskey Company conducted hundreds of force protection patrols that focused on engaging the local population, assisting local AUP checkpoints, and disrupting enemy activity. By the time our battalion transferred FOB Salerno to the ANSF, the FOB had not experienced a high profile attack or a single round of indirect fire during our entire deployment. I attribute this complete mission success largely to Whiskey Company's proactive and aggressive patrolling and to our partnership with the local Afghan Uniformed Police.

The decision to dedicate Whiskey Company – an infantry weapons company – as a FOB Salerno defense force came from the 4BCT staff. Since FOB Salerno suffered a high profile attack the previous summer and earned the moniker "Rocket City" from years of indirect attacks, the brigade saw it vital to protect critical mission command assets and enablers (brigade headquarters, three battalion headquarters, the Khost Province SOF compound, various division level enablers) located at the FOB with a force highly trained and capable of offensive operations. The unit we replaced from TF Rakkasan was an engineer company, A/3BSTB "Zone", augmented with a support platoon as an additional maneuver platoon. One thing to note about our predecessor was that they also had the assignment of providing Route Clearance for all of Khost in addition to their force protection requirements. While Zone performed admirably they lacked the offensive proficiency of an infantry company and they also lacked the capability to allocate all their time and resources to the FOB Salerno security area they designated as the GDA or Ground Defense Area. Seeing TF Rakkasan's limitations, TF Currahee OPCON'd Whiskey Company to the 4th Special Troops Battalion from 2-506 IN in order to synchronize the defense and sustainment of FOB Salerno and ensure that a well trained infantry weapons company would have the sole mission to execute the external defense of FOB Salerno.

Upon taking over the GDA, which 4BSTB renamed AO APACHE, I took a different approach to how I would run day to day security patrols. I decided to break up AO APACHE into 4 specific platoon battle spaces – AO TURKEY, AO CROWN, AO JACK, and AO MAKERS to my 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Platoons respectively. I aligned these AO's around the major villages in each sector as well as dominant terrain features. AO TURKEY consisted of the mountainous and largely unpatrolled terrain to the northwest, AO CROWN centered around the historic HPA facilitation hub of Kunday Village, AO JACK centered around the dispersed village of Khoni Kawar, and AO MAKERS consisted of the villages immediately surrounding FOB Salerno to the south and west. The previous unit had not incorporated platoon battle spaces and as such each one of their platoons patrolled every aspect of the former GDA. I decided to change this because I felt it

important that each platoon develop their own area and be able to identify their own specific problems and personalities. By doing so each platoon could apply the appropriate amount of attention and resources on their unique problem set. This also aided my mission set by breaking down the disruption focus of each platoon based on their AO. 1st and 3rd Platoon would focus on the disruption of indirect fire attacks in TURKEY and JACK and 2nd and 4th Platoon would patrol to prevent a high profile attack on the FOB. In addition to breaking down disruption responsibilities, this decentralized approach gave me subject matter experts on every major village and personality in the AO which I could draw from when I needed to conduct a company level operation. This gave me maximum flexibility at the company level and it allowed me to maintain situational awareness across the entire AO.

Once the platoon AOs were set I directed my platoons to take a more aggressive and proactive approach to patrolling AO APACHE. I ordered that they get out of their vehicles and engage the local population, maneuver mounted and dismounted through terrain that had not been patrolled, and exert their presence across the AO. These were not presence patrols rather they were active interdiction and disruption operations. If there was a platoon out in sector focusing on historic enemy facilitation sites then the enemy was much less likely to attack the FOB. I made sure that intelligence – whether developed at the platoon or battalion level – drove our operations. Every day we had a platoon out in sector gathering intelligence, interdicting enemy facilitation, and disrupting enemy movement. In a sense we executed an aggressive defense in depth around FOB Salerno with the idea that our forces would engage and disrupt the enemy before they had the opportunity to attack the FOB. The AUP we worked with on a daily basis only complimented this aggressive approach.

Upon assuming control of AO APACHE I did not have much of a plan to incorporate the squad of AUP on FOB Salerno dedicated to conducting force protection patrols with us in AO APACHE. This was partially due to the way our predecessors utilized them. During our RIP with A/3BSTB I noticed that there was not a great deal of trust between the AUP and the American Soldiers that worked with them. As opposed to being viewed as enablers, I assessed that the outgoing unit saw the AUP as more of a requirement to go on a patrol. Initially, I assumed this same point of view regarding the Salerno AUP. This was only exacerbated by an early flare up that occurred between me and several of the AUP – to include their de facto leader Kamal – over the use of an LMTV. Prior to leaving, A/3BSTB told the AUP that they could use the LMTV to move personal items off of the FOB. When I did not agree to this the AUP became angry and threatened to quit. At first I was furious over their behavior but after thinking through the problem set I took this as an opportunity to set the right tone between Whiskey Company and the Salerno AUP. Through several dialogues between me, the 4BSTB commander, and Kamal we established expectations between the groups and also pledged to respect each other. I also told Kamal that I would treat him and his AUP the same way I would treat my own Soldiers. While relations remained icy at first, both groups slowly warmed up to each other and by the end of the deployment, through a deliberate charm offensive, Whiskey Company and the Salerno AUP were closely bonded and ready to support each other's interests.

The charm offensive was a very deliberate campaign to win over the Salerno AUP. This campaign ended up serving two interests – at the outset to prevent a Green on Blue attack and later, to enable our patrols out in sector. This successful strategy started with the early dialogues between Kamal and I. I felt that it was important to stress that I would be fair to him and his AUP and that I would respect them. In order to show Kamal that I was serious and to build rapport I backed my words up with actions. My Soldiers and I made a point to get to know each AUP on an individual level. In order to ensure the AUP always had access to me I assigned one of my NCOs to act as the AUP liaison so the AUP would know they always had a voice. On one occasion I very publicly reprimanded a Soldier on gate guard who disrespected two of my AUP. And like I promised early on, we treated the AUP like they were American Soldiers. Through 4BSTB I was able to get each AUP a badge so they could walk around the FOB unescorted – something previous units had never done. I also recognized the AUP in front of the entire company for their hard work by giving each of them a company T-Shirt. These were not small gestures but a very calculated way to build trust and respect and make the AUP feel like they were part of our team. This paid dividends as the AUP became combat multipliers.

As opposed to wrongfully seeing the AUP as just a patrol requirement like I did in the beginning, I now saw the AUP as an important enabler for our force protection mission. Kamal began reporting to us on a near weekly basis on intelligence he heard from local contacts thus driving operations. As opposed to lingering in the back or middle of our patrols, the AUP began leading from the front. They became more active when interacting with the local villagers and would tip us off on subtle cultural cues that we failed to pick up on during our engagement. The AUP also fearlessly protected our patrols because of this solid relationship. Many times the AUP rushed in front of the patrol to search a pedestrian or a car that was about to move through our formation. This had the dual affect of protecting our Soldiers as well as sending a message to the locals that we did not have a lax security posture. With the help of our AUP we made ourselves a hard target for any dismounted attack. Another consequence of turning our AUP into enablers was that we increased their confidence and capacity. The culmination of this came one night when our AUP sprinted to our CP and demanded their weapons so they could go out on patrol and pursue an insurgent who was harassing one of their contacts. They did not request our help nor did they ask for assistance with enablers. They just wanted their weapons – which we stored for force protection purposes – and a ride to the gate so they could catch an enemy in the area and protect the local population. It was a proud moment for me and it made me realize that the charm campaign was merely the catalyst that improved the capacity of the AUP we worked with.

Our deliberate and successful campaign to win over and incorporate our Salerno AUP extended to the AUP checkpoints across AO APACHE. Much like the Salerno AUP, these checkpoints became combat multipliers across the AO. While we did not have to spend as much time charming these AUP we did increase the amount of time going over patrol schedules and operational plans for the checkpoints. This built trust in a different way because we showed a willingness to listen to our partners and incorporate their agenda into our own plans. The result of increasing their capacity was apparent. By fostering that trust and respect between us the AUP were able to find over ten IEDs across the AO and detain five insurgents. They gathered the intelligence from their own contacts, planned how to approach the problem, and then

requested our assistance to execute the operation. Through their actions these AUP shattered my notion that they could not greatly assist me in my mission to secure an American FOB. This was probably my greatest learning point from the deployment that effective partnership can assist with force protection of American assets.

Complimented with proactive and aggressive patrolling, the partnership experienced between Whiskey Company and the AUP in and around FOB Salerno was vital to our mission success of defending FOB Salerno from high profile and indirect fire attacks. By conducting aggressive patrols focused on area denial and local engagement we shifted the enemy's focus away from FOB Salerno to countering our offensive actions across AO APACHE. The company experienced four attacks from the enemy out in sector (three IEDs and one direct fire) and had over a dozen IEDs laid for our patrols however none of these resources were utilized against the FOB. I mistakenly saw partnership as a way to delegate force protection in the beginning but as I soon discovered, I was not delegating my responsibility to defend the FOB to Afghans. I was in fact empowering the local AUP to take the initiative against the enemy and as a result I increased our ability to disrupt and interdict enemy designs on FOB Salerno. I am proud that FOB Salerno, despite having the reputation of being a rocket and VBIED magnet, was never attacked during our deployment.   The credit for this accomplishment is due to the hard work and dedication of the infantrymen of Whiskey Company and the Afghan Uniformed Police we worked with side by side.

Sierra Company After-Action Review

CPT Tanner Durham (FSC/2-506 IN)

Sierra Company, 2-506 Infantry recently returned from a seven-month deployment in Khost Province, Afghanistan, as part of Task Force White Currahee. Prior to the deployment, TF Currahee, TF White Currahee, and Sierra Company participated in a thorough pre-deployment train-up which included: a Leader Training Development Program and Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Polk, LA; squad, platoon, company and battalion-level field exercises; and numerous other individual training events in preparation for the eventual deployment. For Sierra Company, the train-up and deployment proved to be challenging, rigorous, and rewarding. In hindsight, Sierra's train-up produced outstanding results for both the company's readiness and combat effectiveness and also enabled and ensured the accomplishment of the mission. Although, given these successes, key shortfalls were identified in the JRTC rotation that, arguably, could have produced even better results for the company. Additionally, Sierra Company's actions and accomplishments during the deployment were numerous and proved to be integral to the success of the higher headquarters mission set, but these accomplishments would not have been possible without key pieces of equipment that are not, but should be, organic to the Forward Support Company.

JRTC Scenario

During the pre-deployment training process, the Brigade's culminating training event was a one-month rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, LA. This rotation was essential to Sierra Company validating its readiness for the upcoming deployment. During the JRTC rotation, Sierra was able to effectively exercise all of its Mission Essential Tasks List (METL). These tasks included: conducting convoy and distribution operations: conducting field level maintenance and recovery operations: and conducting CLI/III/V sustainment operations.

All of these tasks and more were fully exercised and validated during JRTC and subsequently executed while in Khost Province. Yet, while in Khost, our mission set was not solely to conduct sustainment operations, conduct convoys, and conduct recovery and maintenance. In fact much of Sierra's mission in Khost involved retrograde of equipment and Joint Combat Outpost (JCOP) closure. While Sierra was able to execute the complete retrograde and closure of two JCOPs and FOB Salerno with precision, it was not a mission set that the company had formally trained for while at JRTC. Unfortunately, the JRTC rotation did not incorporate any type of scenario that involved retrograde or JCOP closure. Although not having a JCOP closure or retrograde scenario did not prevent Sierra from having the skills and training necessary to accomplish the real-world retrograde missions in Khost Province, such scenarios could have provided valuable repetitions and lessons learned prior to the deployment. It is highly recommended that future JRTC Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) rotations incorporate some type of retrograde scenario for future units that anticipate having this type of mission set while deployed.

Sierra FSC stages its vehicles for a CIED STX lane at JRTC in Fort Polk, LA in preparation for an upcoming deployment to Khost Province, Afghanistan

MTOE Equipment

During the deployment, Sierra successfully retrograded two JCOPs and assisted in the closure of FOB Salerno. These undertakings required tremendous planning and external support from both 801st BSB and 4BSTB, although much of the retrograde and removal of equipment was conducted by Sierra Company internally.

Multiple Sierra FSC M1120 LHS systems with M1077 Flatracks load equipment for retrograde from AFCOP Sabari in Khost Province, Afghanistan

Sierra Company's prime assets for conducting these retrograde convoys were the M1120 LHS and associated M1077 flat racks as well as the M916 and M870 lowboy trailers. Without these TPE assets at our disposal, Sierra Company, as an FSC, would not have been able to effectively support the retrograde mission for the battalion. The M1120 LHS, M1077 flat rack and M916/M870 systems were absolutely essential to the success of the FSC's mission. Yet, these systems are not part of the FSC's organic MTOE. Given the constantly changing mission sets that an FSC faces, it is imperative for a Forward Support Company to have the necessary equipment, including the M1120 and M1077, necessary to accomplish these missions and fully support its parent unit.

While the above comments are by no means all inclusive, they do represent two of the AAR highlights that the company leadership continually referred back to. In the end, Sierra FSC is an agile unit capable of accomplishing any mission required to logistically support the White Currahee Battalion. "Currahee, Stands Alone."

Sierra FSC at the top of Radar Hill on FOB Salerno, Afghanistan

India Company After-Action Review

CPT Christian Greenleaf (HHC/2-506 IN)

The purpose of this paper is to provide a readable and simple after-action review. The content is specific to my company, HHC (India) 2-506IN, related to our train-up and deployment to Khost Province, Afghanistan from May 2013- January 2014. While the content applies more to HHCs or a unit going to Khost Province, the information can be valuable to any company commander or staff preparing for an advise-and-assist deployment to Afghanistan. I cannot say enough how proud I am of the Soldiers who helped get this mission accomplished given very difficult circumstances. I hope this content can help a future commander or staff in winning the modern fight in Afghanistan

Deployment Synopsis

For India Company 2-506IN, the latest rotation to Khost Province, Afghanistan, proved to be nothing short of diverse in every area from task organization to operations. HHCs are often used in complex problem sets, and this deployment was no different. After completing a full-spectrum operations train-up for the deployment, India Co was reorganized following the leader PDSS to Khost Province where 3BCT 101st was currently operating. Khost Province was not a very kinetic area with the exception of two places: Sabari and Southern Tani. Most attacks were targeting ANSF, not CF. While the area was not kinetic, Khost served as a major staging area for insurgents conducting operations from Pakistan west into Paktika and Paktia. Our structure would function similar to the 3BCT unit we would replace in May 2013. Our scout platoon was selected to serve as the Mobile Strike Force (MSF) for 2-506IN, while the mortar platoon would serve as the Tactical Security Element (TSE) for our battalion commander. The medical platoon would operate two forward aid stations at AFCOPs Sabari and Matun Hill, with the remaining medics working shifts as part of the C-MED Brigade Aid Station at FOB Salerno. In addition to diverse missions conducted by the specialty platoons, India Company was force-capped to meet BOG mandates. We left approximately 20% of HHC at Fort Campbell to man our rear detachment.

The battalion ADVON party included my XO and supply sergeant and arrived in theater three weeks ahead of main body to begin the property inventory process. Our operational RIP with 3BCT was stellar and the best I have seen in the Army with the primary reason being that 3BCT did not "check out" of operating which enabled us to hit the ground running after they left in June, not leaving us to struggle gaining our step over the first 30 days. TF White Currahee sustained the weekly targeting cycle model that 3BCT had composed during their rotation. Shortly into our deployment, things started changing in terms of operational focus and reach. It was realized that we had a very limited window in which to operate before retrograde would become the primary focus. With the approaching retrograde came updated focuses from higher headquarters and evolving mission sets for adjacent units. 1. TF Red Currahee to the West had a much more kinetic fight that rightfully took more assets to support. 2. Armed ISR assets were pulled mainly to SOF for use in their targeting operations. 3. Aviation assets were pulled, limiting

our ability to conduct AASLT operations which made targeting more difficult. 4. Weather during the summer of 2013 was very turbulent in the Khost-Gardez pass, which limited ISR asset integration at least every other day. 5. Retrograde began to take hold. Closing FOB Salerno and setting conditions to do so became the paramount focus for the organization. Assets had to be diverted to cover large-scale movements of material out of the AO. The previous five points can also be attributed to a significant push to hand the AO over to total Afghan control. Afghans were not only in the lead; they were the only ones out in sector. Retrograde served as a forcing function for turning the AO over to the ANSF. June-August 2013 was the primary operating time for India Co prior to retrograde operations starting on a larger scale. Our TSE conducted mounted patrols 4-5 days per week securing our BN CDR while he met ANSF leaders and conducted battlefield circulation (BFC) to our two AFCOPS, in addition to providing a mounted security element for our BN CDR on any large-scale operations where he was the ground-force commander. The MSF conducted 3-4 targeted operations weekly in addition to serving as QRF for SOF, Battalion QRF, and operating as a maneuver element during combined battalion operations. Our Strike Force was partnered with policemen from the Khost City Reserve/QRF Kandaks and later the AUP Provincial Response Company (PRC) after it was established. In July 2013, the Khost AUP selected a company(minus)-sized element to undergo PRC training in Wardak Province. This left our MSF partnered with the AUP "B Team" for most of the deployment until the much better-trained PRC returned. India Co conducted two major training events for ANSF during the summer, including an AUP TSE/Targeting course taught by the MSF and a Medical (Tabee) training program taught by BN medics to AUP/ANA medics in Khost Province. In September 2013, retrograde operations began to take priority. Battlefield-circulation patrols decreased only slightly at first but more significantly later when AFCOPs Matun Hill and Sabari were transferred to Afghan control.

Targeting operations decreased as well, due to lack of assets and decreasing area of operational reach. In October 2013, we began to close FOB Salerno and cease operations. ANSF were operating unilaterally, and our function became completely focused on advising. On 15 October, a sizeable portion of India Co that included medics, staff, and part of the Company HQ moved to Bagram Airfield (BAF) to prepare for the next phase of operations. The remainder of India Co operated the Battalion TAC consisting of 15 vehicles with capabilities based off Warfighting Functions. The HHC 1SG and I became consumed during October 2013 with transferring FOB Salerno and ensuring that departing units had properly cleared their areas for transfer to Afghan control. During this time of the rotation, there was extensive visibility placed on FOB Salerno safety and force protection, given the soft target the FOB presented. Scouts and mortars provided inner cordon for the BN HQ as well as operated sniper positions as a counter-breach element. On 31 October 2013, India Company operated the mounted TAC consisting of the BN HQ (15 vehicles, 74 PAX) during the BN night exfil from FOB Salerno. We arrived at FOB Gardez the following morning and Bagram Airfield two days later. At this time a significant portion of HHC redeployed while a cell consisting of my XO, 1SG, and staff members operated the Redeployment Operations Cell (ROC) at BAF charged with coordinating pax movements and flights to Manas AFB for redeployment of the rest of 4BCT. The last elements of India Co redeployed to Fort Campbell on 26 January 2014.

As a company commander, I focused my PLs on three areas from their initial counseling to combat operations:

1. Location of critical leaders by phase. You will succeed if you put the right leaders in the right places to control forces. This applied to everything from PCC/PCI to operations and recovery.

2. Understanding the common operating picture. Specialty PLs have to think at levels above their peers. They need to have complete adjacent-unit understanding. Understanding the COP also applies to combat operations; e.g.,Can your weapon systems and optics effect what they are looking at? Do you have spatial awareness?

3. Personnel accountability. Never leave someone behind. I enforced constant headcounts and leader chokepoints on patrol (essentially the anti-DUSTWUN protocol).

Issue: Focus on the Squad during preparation

Discussion: India Co focused heavily on developing squad leaders and leaders in SSG billets during the train-up for deployment and JRTC

Recommendation: Put simply, if your squads can operate efficiently and take/understand guidance, you will be successful in combat. Strong squads and SSGs will make a flexible mission set easier to accomplish because accomplishing the mission will require less involvement at higher-leader levels. Focusing live fires and putting more responsibility on squads will make platoons better in every area from property accountability to seizing objectives. Critical to this process is effectively evaluating squads during training. We did this by using the Army Training Network (ATN) and the tasks listed for squads within the specialty platoons and sniper section for all collective training events. Master these tasks and you will build a doctrinal base that carries over to all elements of patrolling and administrative functions.

Issue: Flexibility at JRTC

Discussion: HHC did not know its exact deployment mission set at JRTC, as it was not totally determined until the leader PDSS. Our Scout PLT was asked to operate in multiple capacities during the rotation, including: utilizing recon teams to support rifle companies during pre-force on force lanes; traditional recon role observing NAIs as a PLT; as an isolation element for rifle company raids; and as a QRF maneuvered to problem areas in the battle space to augment rifle companies. Our Mortar PLT operated from a FOB separate from the BN HQ and was integrated into their FOB-defense construct. This tested the BN's fire-support communications platform and built a platoon that knew the right things to do independently. Our medics were integrated into the main FOB-defense plan and supported BN-level operations outside the FOB as well.

Recommendation: Asking your platoons and squads to operate in multiple capacities during JRTC creates a more adaptive organization. A unit that can handle a 5-day exercise with the most possible stress will enable the company to transition to any mission set during deployment, from advise[and[assist to full-spectrum operations.

Issue: Mounted maneuver

Discussion: The fight within Khost Province is a mounted maneuver challenge. Distance to objectives and constraints on air-assault operations made driving an absolutely critical area that would make or break our success. Reflagging into a motorized rifle unit poses challenges in multiple areas, the first being drivers themselves. No amount of driver training can prepare Soldiers for driving in combat, let alone the Khost Province. Our MSF and TSE drove high mileage during day and night operations. Driver error en-route to an objective will cause the mission to fail and force integration of other assets to recover vehicles or fix them in sector. Working partnered with ANSF poses another challenge because you will not be able to communicate with the ANSF drivers and TCs. Put simply; our driving procedures worked because we were careful and took our time to get them right.

Recommendations:

1. Identify drivers prior to the deployment and ensure they get as much time driving MRAPs as possible. Getting them as many reps as possible during RIP TOA will build confidence when the stakes aren't as high.

2. Ensure your XOs have a solid drivers-licensing program in place. Everyone from the BN XO and Maintenance Chief down to the Company Master Drivers must be on the same page in regards to licensing and maintaining/dispatching vehicles. Whatever program is in place during the train-up must be sustained during deployment or you will risk having to revise your program while operating in combat. If your vehicles break down, your force is useless, so maintenance is critical. With a slightly lower OPTempo, I recommend taking the time to correctly maintain your fleet. This was critical to our retrograde as vehicle maintenance assets disappeared closer to the transfer of FOB Salerno. Essentially, your maintenance program will pay off when you need it to, or let you down when you need vehicles the most. Again, involve squad leaders in the maintenance and driver training programs and you will be successful.

Issue: Targeting Cycle with ANSF Factor

Discussion: During our rotation, we were forced to face the facts when it came to targeting with ANSF. At the beginning of our rotation, ANSF were essentially the keys to get us in the door of our target compounds (TC). The idea here was that we were building ANSF capacity by buying them time and space through our partnered targeting. As the deployment progressed we switched to a warrant-based targeting system where we had essentially two target decks: One being ANSF targets that would be actioned partnered or unilaterally by ANSF using a detention warrant signed by the district saranwal (Afghan judge/prosecutor); the second was a more high-value target where the ANSF would essentially be the keys again, essentially not allowing them to fail.

Recommendation: Sustain having two target decks. The ANSF we partnered with were very hesitant to action targets unilaterally. They would almost never detain a suspect unless a warrant was present. We lost the detention center on FOB Salerno within three weeks of RIP TOA; therefore CF detentions were made more difficult. Individuals detained by ANSF would

always be released if: a) There was no warrant in place, or b) They did not directly engage ANSF with SAF or IED. The end state here is that "type A" personalities have to accept the reality of where OEF is at this point. Any large-scale target will be on SOF radar or be targeted by a kinetic strike. The individuals targeted by an infantry battalion strike force will be low-level Enemies of Afghanistan (EOA). Getting the ANSF repetitions and ensuring they are doing things correctly is the name of the game. Anyone who is not willing to accept that will be left frustrated beyond belief. You will have to let the ANSF fail and potentially risk losing an EOA in order to train them properly.

Issue: Strike Force Operations on the ground

Discussion: Our MSF was task organized into 5 elements

1. Mounted element (Sniper section served as drivers/ gunners)

2. Isolation: Lead dismounted element of the patrol that secured the compound prior to Tactical Call Out (TCO).

3. TCO/TSE Team: Element that with ANSF and interpreter conducted the tactical call out and later searched buildings with ANSF. The TSE team also conducted all biometric enrollments and collected evidence.

4. PLT HQ: Included PL, JFO, RTO, FET Team, Interpreter, and (JTAC/Co CDR if present on patrol).

5. ANSF mounted/dismounted element.

Our MSF conducted three primary missions. 1. The reconnaissance operation: We used this reconnaissance to get a handle on areas we knew had EOAs operating in them. 2. Focused Biometric Enrollments in Named Areas of Interest (FBNAIs): Utilized to strike previous problem areas or suspected bed down locations. In essence, the FBNAI avoids enrolling LNs in the SEEK system with no focus or intel backing. 3. Clearance or targeted detention.

MSF operations all started with mounted maneuver. If you could not get to the objective, then you would lose the target. The next piece is navigation. Every target hit time was at BMNT in order to avoid night searches, so dismounted navigation to the correct compound, quickly, in the dark was essential. Afghan buildings are not as simple as they seem, and isolating them to prevent squirters is very important. The most important factor for our MSF was the TSE element. This element conducted the partnered search of the target compound with the ANSF and started the DNA swab/bio enrollment process which for many TCs was a very time-consuming process. Many TCs we entered had already been actioned previously, and re-enrolling local nationals and questioning them was the primary mission. We attempted to limit our time on target to no more than 60-70 minutes. This allowed for thorough tactical questioning and time to conduct BIO enrollments. When the TC was secure, we would call "Alamo" signaling that the isolation element would collapse on the TC, essentially securing our TSE element. We always used an alternate route for exfil back to our vehicles if possible. Given that skeleton crews remained in the trucks, moving the vehicles to an alternate LU point was not generally

possible. The most important aspect of every operation is ANSF development. We used the principles of patrolling to evaluate them and had an AAR with the AUP platoon leader on the objective prior to exil.

Recommendations:

- It all starts with TLP time. With the OPTEMPO lower than past deployments, our MSF did not become complacent and was dialed-in on every operation. Giving your team enough time for TLPs will result in a smoother element on the ground.

- I would highly encourage any unit assigned as an MSF to coordinate with the Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) for their Focused Targeting Force Course. The course taught us the basics in tactical call out and solidified our task organization. AWG will also patrol with you any time and provide candid feedback on your operations. This course was essential to our success in Khost Province.

- I would also sustain using ladders for your isolation element. AWG can point your team in the right direction for the ladder type, but they allow you to see the TC prior to TCO and observe the behavior of the TC occupants during this process.

- Our JFO and RTO operated on the TC roof to gain comms once "Alamo" was called.

- FET integration: If you do not have FETs, you will fail. They are absolutely essential to TSE and cultural awareness.

- The primary job of your MSF PL must be tracking intel. If your PL takes the time with the CDR to do the research and intel analysis, it will allow NCOs to focus on security and TSE.

Issue: Sustaining a permanent Tactical Security Element (TSE)

Discussion: Our BN MTR PLT was tasked as the TSE before the deployment. They drove our TF CDR for all BFC patrols and provided a section on any larger for any operation he was involved in. Not changing the TSE allowed the PLT to become familiar with all BFC locations and to always know what the TF CDR wanted in terms of security and guardian angel procedures.

Recommendation: Sustain having a predesignated TSE that does not change. They will patrol often and serve a vital role in unified land operations, especially where mounted maneuver is the primary means of transportation.

Issue: Rear detachment can be as easy or difficult as you want it to be

Discussion: Picking a solid leader to manage your rear detachment is very important. This person will not only manage personnel actions and whatever issues you were unable to handle prior to deployment, but will also sign for a large amount of property that you will have to eventually re-sign for after redeployment. Their last major responsibility will be related to your

FRG. Not only will there be a rear detachment FRG but any FRG-type issues for families staying local will fall on the rear-detachment NCO for managing.

Recommendation: If you do not trust this person, then they cannot do this job. If the person is borderline competent or not very intelligent, do not put them in this position. I would recommend choosing a driven NCO who simply needs a break from deploying; driven being the key attribute.

We did not allow enough time for the rear-detachment property split prior to deployment, which caused problems later as we noticed things had been taken forward or left behind with the wrong property custodian.

Stay in touch with your rear detachment as much as possible. I would schedule phone calls every other week and e-mail constantly. This lets them know that they are being monitored but also that you care about them. Not caring about rear detachment or the leader in charge of it is a big mistake.

Issue: Administrative functions during transitions

Discussion: During our deployment we had multiple transitions that made admin tracking challenging: 1. BDE HQ moved to another location four months into the deployment 2. We went for about 40 days with severely degraded connectivity as a BN during the transfer of FOB Salerno 3. Half the unit redeployed early and thus did not have continuous access to e-mail for extended periods of time. Our HHC held a weekly admin meeting to iron out all these issues

Recommendation: Attention to detail is paramount. We started completing End of Tour awards within 30 days of RIP TOA. This may sound ridiculous, but with transitions occurring, staying ahead was the best admin weapon we had. NCOERs, awards, and UCMJ are easy when everyone is co-located and connectivity is solid, so having deadlines where all admin transactions are completed well before the transition is the key to success. Also, do not lose focus on rear-detachment admin functions; they will eventually be your problem again. I would sustain a weekly meeting with NCOICs to stay on top of admin issues.

Issue: Operating a Redeployment Operations Cell

Discussion: After arriving at BAF, India Co transitioned to managing the ROC for 4BCT units leaving theater for CONUS. The major steps in the process are listed here: 1. Receive flight information from Division/ Air Force LNOs 2. Ensure the flying units have accurate manifests and the correct number of PAX slotted. 3. Hold meetings nightly within the 72-hour window with flight leaders to pass information regarding changes in flight times. 4. Coordinate for any TMR requests on BAF to move Units to PAX terminal and customs brief.

Recommendation: Our ROC operated successfully with involvement from four people: Co CDR, HHC 1SG, S3 Air OIC, and an S3 NCO (SSG). People will not give you a hard time going home. The best advice I can offer is to simply trust but verify. Selecting the right people to manage the ROC is critical. I feel that any ALOC can handle this as well; in our situation, most of the ALOC had redeployed so it fell on HHC.

Attack Troop After-Action Review

CPT Mark Dudek and 1LT Josh Dean (A/1-61 CAV)

Deployment Preparation

- ♠ Physical Training

    o PT cannot be stressed enough. To say the terrain in Afghanistan is extremely challenging is an understatement. In the initial stages of the deployment, patrols would have to take security halts to allow the Soldiers time to catch their wind and prepare for the next leg of the patrol. This is a given, regardless of how well you train prior to deployment. However, the time it takes you to acclimate will be affected by your train-up. Our Soldiers were able to adapt quickly due to the extensive physical training plan conducted by the leadership of Attack Troop.

    o Strongly recommend incorporating large volumes of rucking (focused on endurance/distance, not speed) and step-ups. Not to sound like a salesman, but the Afghanistan Deployment Preparation Program by Military Athlete is a great tool that gives Soldiers the legs and lungs they will need for the mountains of Afghanistan.

- ♠ Mastering the Basics

    o There are so many variables present in the operating environment in Afghanistan that it would be impossible to train on all the scenarios that you may face. However, if you focus on mastering the basics and understanding the concepts behind them, Soldiers will be able to apply those to the situations they face.

    o Driving: plan a lot of time to get drivers licensed on MATVs and MAXXPROs. You go everywhere in vehicles; rarely did we execute a purely dismounted patrol. If you have to make a long movement or are on patrol for a long period of time, you may want to swap out drivers for safety reasons, and having additional drivers gives you flexibility within your formation.

    o Marksmanship: Again, master the basics before moving on to the "cool-guy" training. Soldiers need to qualify on every weapon system that you can (M4, M203/M320, M249, M240, Mk48, M2, Mk19, etc.). The more Soldiers you have qualified on different weapon systems, the more flexibility you have to shift Soldiers around in your formation as you see fit. This includes getting Soldiers qualified on the CROW system. This will be a limiting factor, especially if you fall in on a CROW-heavy unit.

    o Medical: Recommend getting all deploying Soldiers CLS-certified. This should not require an explanation, as there have been numerous MASCAL situations in the past where CLS personnel have made the difference. Soldier First Responder (SFR) or the unit equivalent is the bare minimum; make the time for CLS training.

o   Battle Drills: do not just blindly rehearse these drills; ensure Soldiers understand the idea/concept behind the battle drill. This way, Soldiers can apply them to a situation, rather than falter in the heat of the moment due to an unforeseen obstacle or variable. Hold a LPD for squad leaders and up and conduct a physical rehearsal/walk-through with them. Then have them do the same thing at the platoon level. This way, every leader starts off knowing what right looks like. Use the crawl-walk-run progression; start out on a sand table or on a white board, progress to physically walking through, and then start adding in variables (gear, varying terrain, casualties, etc.).

♠ Equipment Training

o   If you have access to the equipment that you will be using on deployment, get Soldiers trained on it. Understandably, you will not be able to train all your Soldiers on all the equipment that you will fall in on due to lack of time or equipment not being available. However, if you have a few Soldiers who are trained up, they can train others. A prime example of this was a communications system we fell in on. Many Soldiers had not seen a Harris radio prior to deployment. However, our communications NCO was able to train the platoon RTOs, who in turn trained the platoons on this equipment.

During Deployment

♠ Property Handover

o   Check, check, and re-check. Do not inventory the item until it is laid out to the standard you set. My recommendation is to have all the items under a single LIN laid out, with the BII or COEI laid out in the order listed in the technical manual, a shortage annex present and completed with any shortages, and a TM component listing present for every LIN. This way, you can look in the TM and compare it to the item you physically have on hand. If it is civilian off-the-shelf equipment (COTS), then have a civilian component listing present and some sort of picture reference available. They do exist; do not accept anything else.

o   Any items missing serial numbers should be documented by a missing-data-plate memo (signed by an O-5). Anything not inventoried using a TM or a civilian manual should be annotated on a COTS memo (signed by an O-5).

o   Check to ensure you have enough radios to fill the radio sets on your hand receipt. We got burned by the outgoing unit; we were unaware that the radio (for example, RT-1523) was a component of the radio set (VRC-92F, -91F, -89, etc.), and as such, had to jump through hoops to fill shortages. Additionally, by laying out all the items for a single LIN at one time, you reduce the risk of units swapping parts around and creating the illusion that all the property is present. It should not be this way, but it is.

♠ Battle Drill Refinement/Rehearsals

o   Once you arrive at your final destination and get settled, begin learning the battle drills for your FOB/COP. Rehearse these frequently, iron out the kinks, and gradually increase the complexity. If you are on a joint base, ensure you coordinate with the other forces that are

on the base with you (ANSF, ISAF, etc.). Put some thought and effort into making these drills are as realistic as possible (e.g. use real people to role-play as casualties, allow medics to simulate treatment as much as possible). Enforce participation in the rehearsals; these will make or break you when something actually happens.

- ♠ Mindset = Mission

    o This could apply to pre-deployment as well, but ensure your mindset reflects your mission. If you are on an advise-and-assist mission, you are not going to be kicking in doors. You will be in a supporting role to whatever ANSF unit you are attached to. Prepare your Soldiers for your mission is, not what you want your mission to be. This will pay huge dividends during your deployment as your Soldiers will have an idea of what to expect.

- ♠ Training

    o Utilize the down time, but do not monopolize the down time. Allow Soldiers personal time, but keep in mind that too much personal time allows Soldiers to think about home, about issues, etc. Training keeps them sharp and focused. Have platoons develop informal PT plans (time that they go to the gym, play sports, etc.). Generate training for any new equipment that you have or upgrades you receive. Conduct AR350-1 training to fulfill your annual requirements and to avoid having to do it after getting home. Conduct battle-drill rehearsals as mentioned previously.

- ♠ Retrograde

    o This will be a rapidly growing mission set for units deploying to Afghanistan. Upon your arrival, begin reducing the amount of excess material you have on hand, especially if you know you are going to be closing or transferring your base.

    o Begin the process 1-2 months out from your execution date. Identify items for turn-in and begin pinging TPE for dispositions. Paperwork will be your biggest friction point, so ensure you are receiving and completing the necessary paperwork well in advance.

    o Retrograde is a battalion-level operation. An advance party should be sent to your turn-in site at least a week in advance to ensure paperwork is up to par and to schedule your turn-in appointments. Recommend you push for a member of S4 (OIC or NCOIC) to accompany this advance party.

    o Generate a plan once on the ground to sterilize vehicles and prepare them for turn-in. Have a member of your advance party check off the vehicles IAW information they gathered from the turn-in agencies/locations and direct you to the various turn-in sites.

- ♠ Redeployment Counseling

    o Counsel your Soldiers prior to redeployment on what to expect when they do go home and what resources are available, especially those who are on their first deployment. Ensure that your leadership is aware of any potential problems with family, finances, or the

Soldier, and that those problems are brought to your attention. This will be your biggest problem upon return, especially as you close in on the R+90 mark.

Post Deployment

- ♠ Identify High-Risk Soldiers

    o   Based on your redeployment counseling and observations gathered from current and past behavior, use your leadership to identify your high-risk Soldiers. This is a proactive measure, focused on getting them the help/resources they need; it's not a witch-hunt. This is junior-leadership heavy (i.e. your Team Leaders and Squad Leaders), so make sure they understand the significance of this task.

Conclusion

By no means is this an all-encompassing list. These are just areas where we reaped the benefits or paid the price. Read, ask questions, review vignettes, and learn all you can. You owe it to your Soldiers, regardless of what leadership role you fill.

Diamondback Troop After-Action Review: Retrograde and High-Priority Part Request

CPT Kurt Findlay (FSC/1-61 CAV)

Diamondback Troop's primary mission was to provide maintenance, distribution (via ground and air), and o/o field feeding services to TF Panther. A secondary mission, though progressively increasing in significance, was to conduct retrograde operations in support of eventual transitioning or closure of Camp Clark. The basic concept of retrograde was to transport all excess equipment, property, ammunition, and containers to the applicable collection point (Brigade SSA, ASP, "retrosort" yard) located on FOB Salerno. The continued retrograde of equipment was designed to responsibly reduce the U.S.-occupied area on Camp Clark while still enabling continued support operations to the SFAAT teams advising the ANSF operating out of FOB Parsa.

The execution of the retrograde mission was extremely planning-and-labor intensive. The Squadron and Troop did several things very well that ensured the timely and successful completion of retrograde. First, the Squadron XO along with Troop XOs actively took responsibility for all containers and storage areas on Camp Clark. This helped identify the proper and accurate extent of the task at hand. They did this by walking the entire camp, opening every container, assigning responsibility to the applicable unit, and appropriately classifying every item in each container based upon operational need (to retrograde or not to retrograde). Second, the establishment of weekly Squadron retrograde-based working groups served to synchronize efforts from within and outside the Squadron (Salerno-based LNOs, base-closure teams, timelines for Squadron CLPs and BSB CLPs, etc). This ensured all necessary tasks were promptly identified, assigned accordingly, and given a strict timeline for execution. Third, the Squadron determined the camp's end state (number of personnel, projected mission, equipment density) in order to established priorities of retrograde which in turn provided the necessary time and guidance for Troops to develop retrograde plans to accomplish all necessary tasks. The dissemination of the retrograde priority and equipment end state was essential for the maintenance section to reduce the level of bench stock and shop stock on hand in a responsible manner; too heavy handed and maintenance would suffer, too light and the amount remaining at the end would overburden the turn-in process. All these steps were instrumental to the overall retrograde success. The proactive approach ultimately enabled a high level of flexibility, which proved beneficial as the decision for Clark's closure to transfer to assistance platform remained unclear for several months.

The key friction point experienced through the retrograde process was centered on requesting and receiving high-priority parts. As part of the retrograde process, the amount of bench and shop stock on hand had to be reduced. Coinciding with Camp Clark's reduction was the eventual closure of the SSA located on FOB Salerno. These two factors, coupled with the continuing requirement to maintain an operational fleet, led to the importance of high-priority parts. In this process, a unit identifies a CL IX repair part that is on hand at another location's SSA (Bagram, Kandahar, Bastion, etc). The request is sent through the BSB to the Sustainment Brigade for redistribution of that part to the BCT's SSA. The overall process is

time sensitive such that the redistribution task must be received before that SSA issues the part to another customer. The BCT overcame the challenges associated with receiving parts from distant SSAs by continuing to use the High-Priority Parts tracker as a critical tool both in the weekly maintenance-and-LOG Synch meetings. Once parts were identified and ordered, the standard method of shipping them was by Afghan National Trucking contract, which was implemented to build local Afghan capacity but could take up to eight weeks to receive the parts. In these high-priority cases, battalion LNOs located at FOB Salerno would travel to the distant location by military air, pick up their unit's part as well as any others required by units in the BCT, and return in a matter of days. In this way, units were able to mitigate reduced parts availability associated with SSA drawdown and time delays associated with sourcing parts from distant locations.

Hellraiser Troop After-Action Review

CPT Patrick Kuiper (HHT/1-61 CAV)

Introduction

Hellraiser Troop's task organization was identical to a MTOE Headquarters organization with S1 through S6 Shops, Command Group, Medical Platoon, and Troop Headquarters element; however, due to the additional area security and life support mission required of Hellraiser Troop while deployed, we were assigned a section of personnel to act as the Mayor Cell and Base Defense organizations. Additionally, the Security Force Advise and Assistance Teams (SFAAT) were assigned to Hellraiser Troop, bringing our total strength to 145 personnel.

Mission

Hellraiser Troop provided security, sustainment, and mission command support to 1-61 Cavalry from 01MAY2013-31NOV2013 in order to prepare the Afghan National Army to defeat all enemies during the 2014 fighting season.

Execution

Given the Scope of Hellraiser Troop's mission, we have broken our assessment of combat operations into the applicable war-fighting functions and, given the SFAAT mission, we added advising and training.

Fires

Issue : TAC support for split operations

Discussion: Through the deployment, A Troop continued to operate under its Squadron colors with a TAC set up as the administrative arm of HHT.

Recommendation: Continue to employ this approach any time a Scout Troop operates in a split-operations environment. This ensures that the employment of assets is best managed for the tasking ground unit commander and the specialized needs found in Squadron.

Issue: Air Ground Integration (AGI) Training

Discussion: A Troop and the entire Squadron conducted AGI training with our maneuver battalions and it paid huge dividends. The AGI training provided the maneuver battalions an outlook of our capabilities and they discovered the best ways to utilize the AWT asset.

Recommendation: Continue to conduct AGI training and provide the training to the lowest level. The training should include Platoon Leaders/Platoon Sergeants and first-line supervisors.

Sustainment

Issue: Property Accountability while Deployed

Discussion: Property accountability is extremely difficult in a deployed environment given the large amount of equipment, transactions, strenuous mission requirements, and personnel turnover. Commanders must develop an effective and simple Command Supply Discipline Program, consistently enforced.

Recommendation: Every Command must develop a detailed counseling statement for all Organizational Sub-Hand Reciepts and ensure that every Sub-Hand_Reciept Holder inventories all assigned property and re-signs their PBUSE-generated Organizational Hand Reciept every month.

Protection

Issue: Base-Defense Drills

Discussion: Hellraiser Troop regularly executed full-dress base-defense drills on camp, exercising a range of attacks including: indirect fire, direct fire, insider attacks, and MASCAL.

Recommendations: Continue to execute full-dress battle drills at least twice a month. Be sure to vary the conditions and difficulty of drills by incorporating and combining random friction points such as: communications-systems breakdown, multiple attacks, and large numbers of casualties. Have a small working group that includes Intelligence, Mayor Cell, Base Defense, Medical, Tactical Operations Center, and resident maneuver units to plan, prepare, execute, and assess base-defense drills. Always have the S2 act as the "red force," initiating and dictating the enemy scheme of maneuver.

Issue: Leverage Afghan Security Counterparts

Discussion: The first line of defense and most important component of our area security plan was leveraging and improving the tactical capabilities of our Afghan counterparts. Our position was guarded first by our partnered Afghan security forces. Hellraiser Troop allocated significant resources towards supervising, mentoring, and developing our Afghan security-force partners, with daily interactions on gate and perimeter security operations. This focus paid off; the Afghan security forces proved to be extremely knowledgeable, technically and tactically competent Soldiers. Hellraiser Troop's base-defense leadership worked daily to assesses and improve our

Afghan partners' capabilities, significantly contributing to both our own security and the decisive operation of teaching Afghans to effectively defend themselves.

Recommendation: Organizations responsible for security operations with local security forces must leverage their partners for common area security. Local security forces will prove to be extremely effective at policing civilians and identifying potential threats. Only augment their systems with US technology and firepower when American lives are threatened. Mentor their leadership daily and ensure rigorous security standards are enforced. Execute basic individual training exercises. Most importantly, treat every member of your security team with dignity and respect.

Training

Issue: Develop and Maintain an Individual Training Plan while Deployed

Discussion: Hellraiser Troop planned, resourced, and executed a series of individual training events while conducting combat operations. These events focused on basic skills including: marksmanship, physical fitness, and technical competencies. These events allow Soldiers to maintain skills they built prior to deployment, maintain focus when off duty, and transition successfully upon redeployment back to home-station operations.

Recommendation: Once deployed, after Relief in Place is complete, a Commander should sit down with his First Sergeant and place essential individual training events on a calendar, and ensure these events are planned, prepared, and executed while deployed. Combat operations will always take priority, but execute training too. The focus should be on basic combat skills, such as marksmanship and physical fitness assessments – including the APFT.

BoneCrusher Battery After-Action Review: Ammunition Management

**CPT Clint Galloway (B/4-320 FA)**

Introduction

In April of 2013, Bravo Battery 4-320th was given the mission of Direct Supporting Fires for 4 BCT "Currahee" 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in both Khost and Paktya Provinces Afghanistan (RC East). Bravo, organically a two-platoon, eight-gun (M119A2) firing Battery, was required to man four firing points and support a fifth. Each firing point was a hybrid consisting of at least one M119A2 and one M777A2 howitzer, providing fire support coverage at all times.

Our mission: Bravo Battery in partnership with ANSF provides direct supporting fires in support of TF Currahee in Khost and Paktya provinces in order to build ANSF capacity and transition firing responsibility to capable Afghan artillery crews.

Each of the five firing points located in COPs, Camps, and FOBs spread thorough AO Currahee supported both Infantry Companies and Battalions and all required ammunition re-supply to be conducted by air. Without the support of a distribution platoon, the battery was required to order and organize transport for all ammunition.

This AAR will cover challenges at the Battery level to provide Indirect Fire Support throughout AO Currahee.

Not all months are created equal

BRAVO BATTERY

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	
BRAVO ROUNDS FIRED	260	272	634	369	434	311	0
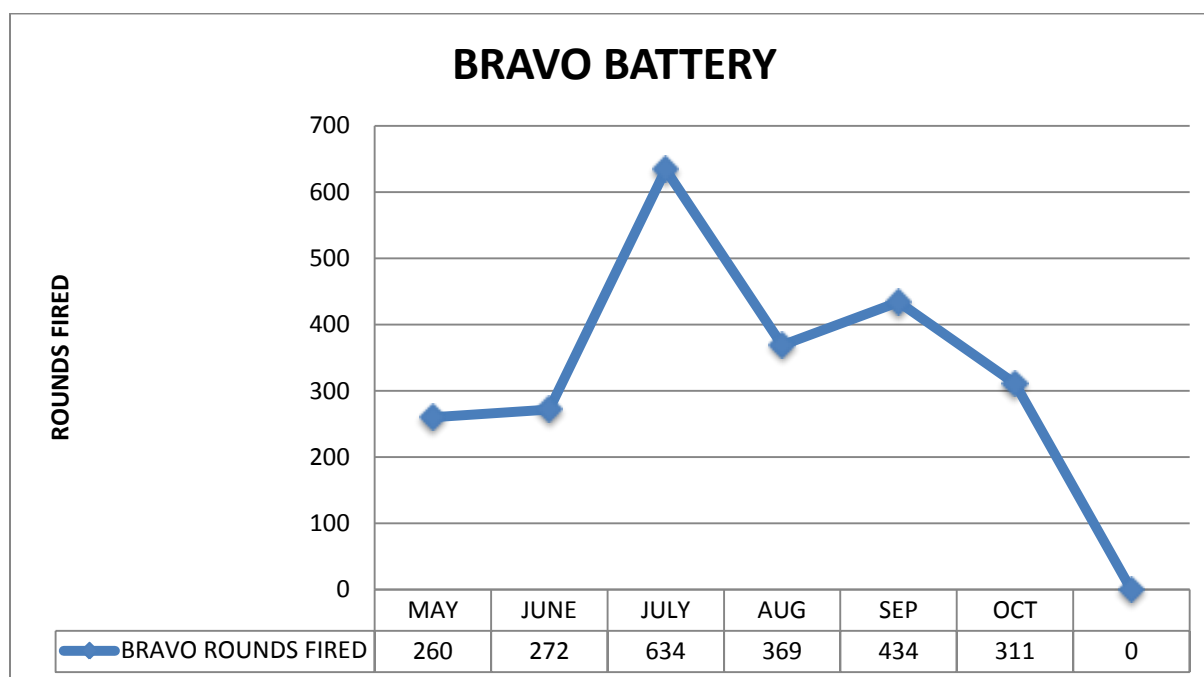
Not all Firing Points are created equal

TOTAL ROUNDS FIRED

■ CMK ■ WILD ■ SAL ■ CLARK ■ GDZ
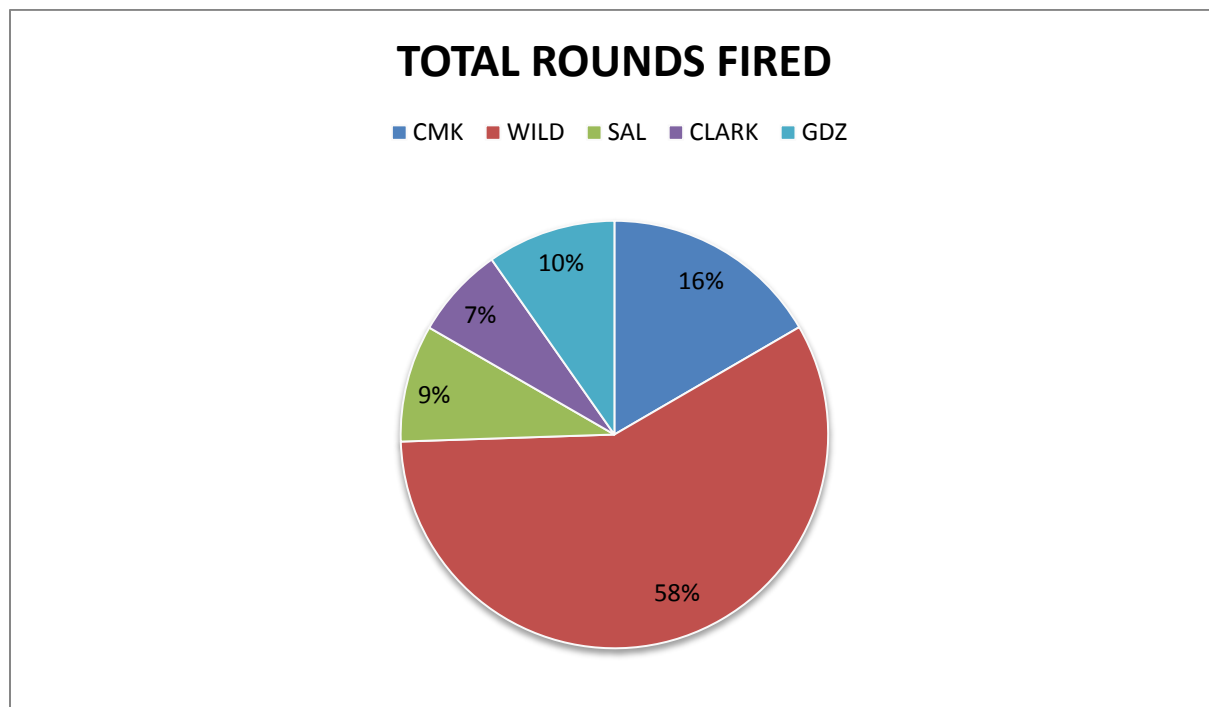
Issue: Ammunition Management

Discussion: While managing the ordering, distribution, and consumption of ammunition across two provinces and five firing points, the Battery ran into multiple issues in providing adequate support for the firing platoons. All ammunition had to be ordered through Sustainment Brigade, a unit not organic to 4BCT. The battery was allocated a certain number of rounds by type per howitzer and that was arbitrarily pre-determined by someone clearly unfamiliar with the day-to-day operations of a firing platoon. Once the Battery had drawn its allocation of rounds, the only way to order more rounds was to draft a consumption report, showing that the Battery had consumed the rounds drawn. This creates several significant issues. First of all, it allows little to no flexibility to prepare for upcoming operations. We could not increase the ammunition on a particular firing point through ordering more ammunition and were forced to take rounds from firing points that were deemed less kinetic. This resulted in a constant "rob Peter to pay Paul" scenario.

The paperwork for increasing the allocation through the TAMIS system was lengthy and required signatures from multiple field-grade officers within and outside of the Brigade. Secondly, a consumption report would take an average of three to five days to be processed completely. On several occasions the Battery consumed rounds so fast that the consumption process fell behind and resulted in significant ammunition shortages. This led to maneuver commanders growing concerned over their limited ammunition supplies and caused undue

friction amongst battalions. Thirdly, ordering ammunition by LOT number is extremely important and that was something that the TAMIS system did not allow. Ammunition LOTs have to be calibrated to compensate for variations in propellant efficiency, so sending multiple LOTs of ammunition, even if it is the same type of ammunition (i.e. High Explosive, Smoke, White Phosphorous etc), does little to increase the usable number of rounds on hand.

For example, let's say COP A has 50 HE rounds. They have 10 of LOT A, 10 of LOT B, and 30 of LOT C. If LOT C is an un-calibrated LOT of ammunition, they will expend 10 rounds of LOT C in order to calibrate the LOT. That leaves them with 20 of LOT C and in effect means they never really had 50 rounds to begin with. Sending un-calibrated LOTs of ammunition to a firing point ensures that the first 10 rounds will be expended conducting a calibration. If we continue to send new LOTs of ammunition to these firing points, we continue to require unnecessary expenditures due to the need to calibrate. Compound this problem over five firing points and it is easy to see how it could appear that you have the necessary allocation of ammunition to provide indirect-fire support, when in fact you might not have enough usable rounds due to un-calibrated LOTs.

Finally, the lack of historical data during the fighting season to predict expenditures at the different firing points made resupply rates impossible to calculate or plan for. COP Wilderness, for example, expended 117 rounds in two days at the beginning of September. The week prior they shot 50 total rounds. The fluctuating abilities of the enemy create an ebb and flow of activity and result in significant variations in expenditure. There was no ability to adjust to these increased requirements. We could not order more ammunition if we had reached our allocation, regardless of the fact that we were expending it in significantly higher quantities during unpredictable times.

Recommendation: Educate the sustainment community on the unique ammunition management requirements for an artillery unit. The procedures put in place by an outside entity led to the inability to adjust to conditions on the ground. We were forced to deal with an inflexible system that resulted in ammunition shortages at critical times. It never reached a point where we couldn't support the maneuver units; however on several occasions we were within 24 hours of being 100% black on ammunition and only due to removing rounds from other firing points were we able to achieve the mission. This is unacceptable and should be addressed immediately. The ammunition process has to be more flexible because you can't set allocations, especially during a fighting season, based on arbitrary predictions. These allocations should be dynamic as conditions on the ground change.

Alpha Battery After-Action Review

CPT Nicholas Browning (A/4-320 FA)

The following topics are key highlights identified by 1st Platoon, 2nd Platoon, HQ Platoon, and Soldiers attached to SFAAT mission sets. A multitude of significant events covered and identified during internal AAR sessions, including the pre-deployment train-up, JRTC, the successful execution of the OEF XIV rotation, and the redeployment/re-integration process, will be addressed. In order to ensure constructive feedback, battery leadership moderated the discussions to follow the Observation/Discussion/Recommendation format.

Pre-Deployment

Observation: During past deployments several units failed to properly connect/communicate with the families of their Soldiers in the months leading up to deployments. Deployments are treated as a taboo topic at work, families are often kept in the dark, and unnecessary stress is created.

Discussion: Our unit, from BDE down to the Battery level, through various workshops, briefings, FRG Meetings, and deployment fairs did an exceptionally thorough job of keeping our families in the loop on the upcoming deployment. Our unit displayed that it cared about the total Soldier concept by keeping our families informed and involved.

Recommendation: The family events that our unit conducted, in conjunction with multiple FRG updates, should be sustained for future deployments in order to minimize family stress and mitigate high-risk Soldier issues.

Observation: Peason Ridge Certification and extensive training delay for Live Fire Exercises.

Discussion: Soldiers of Alpha Battery took four guns to JRTC and went through certification at Peason Ridge with the M119A2. At this point the Battery was still unsure of how many or what type of firing points we were expected to fall in on, but it was the first opportunity that Alpha had to conduct a live fire in roughly five months due to the constant shift in mission. Both platoons combined sections and were somewhat unsure of how execution would work. Peason Ridge was an excellent opportunity and building block to solidify a new firing section and inculcate new leaders. The ability to combine FDCs and new section leadership at JRTC provided the ability to execute with no prior rehearsals, thereby displaying the overall technical aptitude of Alpha Soldiers.

Recommendation: Units that fire together at JRTC should be kept together during deployment.

Observation: Time constraints and minimal cross-training for the M777.

Discussion: Due to the constant shift in mission for Alpha Battery, Soldiers TACON to Bravo Battery manning the Gardez firing point did not have the ability to participate in the MTT on the M777A2 prior to deployment. The Soldiers of 1st platoon had zero Soldiers with experience on this system, thereby creating a sense of uncertainty on how exactly training standardization and certification would occur. In the final weeks leading up to the deployment, Soldiers and NCOs of Bravo Battery were able to find time to familiarize the platoon with howitzer operations and guided them through a quasi-certification. Although great strides were made to assist the 1st platoon Soldiers prior to deployment, it was not enough time to allow the Soldiers and leadership to become comfortable in daily operations. However, the training provided did provide valuable experience and served as a confidence booster for the Soldiers of the platoon, and allowed them to deploy with a sense of what needs to happen, not a sense of the unknown. Greater focus should have been placed on M777 maintenance prior to the deployment.

Recommendation: Overall, the intra-battery training provided Alpha Battery Soldiers the ability to gain valuable experience on the weapon system; however, all firing batteries must receive pre-deployment training on new, unfamiliar weapon systems, crew drills, and maintenance, regardless of mission uncertainty. The ability to know and operate on both light and heavy indirect fire weapon systems offers diversity and expands the working knowledge of Soldiers and leaders alike.

Deployment/ Post-Deployment

Observation: Alpha Battery was tasked with one of the most diverse mission sets in the Brigade. Due to these circumstances, elements of Alpha's platoons were asked to conduct missions that they had little or no training for. Additionally, platoon/section structure and manning was inconsistent, due to redistribution of key leaders to help spread experience and leadership across the Battery.

Discussion: As a whole, Alpha Soldiers felt that the leadership did an excellent job at selecting the right personnel to fit the right jobs. This was an especially difficult task because it required the forethought of placing individuals together under high-stress conditions that had not previously worked with one another. In many cases, these personnel decisions involved placing personnel and leaders in jobs which they had no experience: mayor cell, BDOC, ECP, SFAAT, etc.

Recommendation: The Battery and Battalion should sustain the process that it used to select manning and leadership positions for future deployment scenarios. The input the command team received from the platoon and section levels was key in the correct filling of roles for the deployment. Placing the right people in the right jobs allowed Alpha Battery to excel far beyond what was previously imagined.

Observation: M777A2 Howitzer maintenance.

Discussion: Due to the limited pre-deployment training on the M777A2, Alpha's firing platoon relied heavily on the maintenance experience of one Section Chief, gained during his RIP with the outgoing chief while on ADVON. Later in the deployment, Alpha Soldiers were able to spend several days with M777A2 FSRs to cover more in depth maintenance observations on the system. Although no extensive training was provided, Alpha Soldiers were lucky enough to have a mechanically inclined section chief on ADVON, who had the experience and mechanical background to ask the right questions about maintenance. Additionally, our RIP with 3-320th FAR provided us with a subject-matter expert on the M777A2, allowing for a seamless RIP. If it had not been for these two factors, the firing platoon may have faced more difficulties in our initial maintenance with the new system.

Recommendation: More pre-deployment emphasis needs to be placed on total maintenance to mitigate readiness rates downrange. Availability of civilian FSRs prior to deployment and having them moved around to firing points to teach maintenance on newer systems and upgrades will also continue to bolster OR ratings throughout any area of operations.

Observation: One challenge that our Battery faced given the diversity of its mission was that some Soldiers and NCOs had to carry out jobs unrelated to their MOS while others did not. This challenge made it difficult for Soldiers and NCOs to get the same MOS-specific training that the firing platoon did day in and day out.

Discussion: Some of the Soldiers that did not get the chance to rotate through the firing point felt that they fell behind the power curve in their respective MOSs as opposed to the Soldiers who had the opportunity to train on a daily basis. Although many LPDs and training events were conducted at their locations, they felt that more time could have been dedicated to MOS training or more Soldiers rotated out on the firing point. However, on the firing-point side it would have presented more problems for section efficiency and cohesion to continuously rotate crew members and leadership out. The dislocation of Alpha Soldiers and wide variety of jobs they held created a rift in training if not co-located with howitzers.

Recommendation: If a similar scenario arises in the future, where part of the battery has a standard mission and part of the battery has a non-standard mission, it would be beneficial to have a plan of action for each Soldier to spend at least some time periodically conducting training or familiarization with MOS-specific skills or equipment.

Observation: Home station CENTRIXS access was insufficient at the battery level.

Discussion: The need for greater CENTRIXS access was identified multiple times, but the priority was lowered somewhere at echelons above brigade. There was only one drop in the S6

office for the S2 shop (and other staff sections) to use at Battalion. The ability for Soldiers of the Battery to access CENTRIXS prior to the deployment would have allowed for greater interaction with their counterparts and allowed for higher classifications of information to be relayed. Due to the remote locations of some COPs and FOBs, NIPR access is minimal and the ability to relay pertinent information is restricted to classification requirements.

Recommendation: CENTRIXS should be active in the BN S2/OPS cell work spaces no later than three months prior to after redeployment in order to allow for effective flow of communication and product dissemination.

Observation: CPOF operator training.

Discussion: During JRTC the CPOF was operated by the TOC RTO or previously trained officers, not by one of the BTL CPT/NCO of the TOC or OPS cell. Once the BCT arrived in country, manning requirements forced the CPOF operator to be a BTL NCO. These NCO's are doing an outstanding job but they could have been better prepared for BDOC operations and would have had an easier transition during RIP/TOA if they had the experience needed prior to deployment.

Recommendation: Having all TOC Soldiers and Plans personnel, of all ranks, complete CPOF training at home station prior to deployment and conduct some FTX training, which will allow the Soldier to better prepare for events in theatre.

Observation:Pre-Deployment Civil-Military and Insider Threat Training.

Discussion: During the BCTs pre-deployment training, non-lethal planning and insider-threat operations were appropriately emphasized. A wide variety of classes provided at home station and LTP allowed for all levels of Soldiers to be trained as sensors. Engagement training and Civil Military Operations were incorporated into Platoon and Company STX training prior to deployment, allowing leaders the opportunity to utilize these skills and receive immiediate feedback.

Recommendation: Sustain emphasis on Civil-Military and insider threat training Operations during pre-deployment training events.   This allows leaders at all levels the opportunity to develop basic negotiation and interpersonal communication skills and further refine their skils as the "Soldier Sensor". With the ever-present risk of Green-on-Blue violence, this training is paramount to allow for operations and training standardization. The Soldiers of Alpha Battery especially found this training informative due to the BDOC, mayoral cell, ECP and SFAAT missions.

Observation: Life Support Coordination at FOB Lightning during expansion.

Discussion: During initial plans for the FOB Lightning expansion, all requirements for billeting, support package (billeting, phones, drops, power, etc) and personnel-flow timelines were coordinated for with the Mayor's Cell. Initial timelines allowed for a steady inflow of the Brigade's Soldiers while maintaining operational capabilities throughout. However, weather restrictions and material and construction delays caused significant issues in getting all life-support requirements established before the arrival of the first main body. Sufficient billeting space was not readily available and we did not receive the remainder of the life-support systems until roughly 30 days post-arrival. Although LOGPAC movement and coordination is coordinated at the BN level, on several occasions, key elements and items were diverted due to BDE pushing ancillary equipment. Although some of these movements were not relayed through the proper chains, the "ask for forgiveness later" mentality caused unnecessary issues.

Recommendation: Key personnel, BTRY CDR/XO, BN S4 through, need to ensure movement of all key life support elements is tracked at all times, and key personnel are in place to facilitate the appropriate movements in order to mitigate additional issues.

Observation: Movement of the battery's containers en-route to their final destination.

Discussion: All TMRs for battery equipment and containers were built for single source dissemination and multi-modal push from BAF. The delay of these containers from BAF hinged on an overall lack of CCOs and battery-level UMOs to field and push the containers outward. Lack of availability of ADVON and TORCH seats is a mitigating factor in successful container movement. Additionally, the container load-out process this deployment had multiple issues due to the allocation of container space throughout the Brigade and MTOE/TPE hand receipts. Each battery worked closely with the unit that we would replace; however, once ADVON was boots on ground, plans changed, and the unit we were replacing decided to take equipment they previously planned on leaving behind. This major lack of communication led to unnecessary repetition of work, and did not allow for our unit to properly account for items we might need downrange, taken from home station

Recommendation: Continue to work with theater transportation managers and adjacent units to move as much equipment directly to the final-destination FOBs as quickly as possible. This saves time during the RIP. Furthermore, lateral communication amongst C/B/T commanders to ensure all equipment needed for successful operations is available.

Observation: Key Control for rear detachment.

Discussion: Numerous offices and barracks rooms were locked

Recommendation: Upon actual deployment, Rear-Detachment representatives must collect all keys to all offices and maintain positive key control. We should have someone in place to sign for all equipment left in the rear for the split property book concept to be effective.

Observation: Afghan Fires Center of Excellence (AFCoE) training (Specifically, D30 Howitzer training).

Discussion: Prior to this deployment several Soldiers from Alpha Battery, as well as HHB and 11C attachments from 1-61 CAV, were tasked with manning a formal fires training program at Camp Clark. Although the previous unit had begun training D30, FDC, mortar, and FIST operations, there were no formal systems in place to accurately track progress and build a sustainable metric. For several months prior to the deployment, Soldiers form the Battery had little interaction with the previous advisors, leaving the overall training on these systems to two Soldiers with less than two weeks of total training time. Trainers, specifically the FDC Instructor, had to self-train on the Afghan Gunnery Computer (AGC); AFCoE mortar trainers worked on a multitude of Soviet Bloc and Chinese mortar weapons systems without previous training and also worked correction formulas for both 6400 mil and 6000 mil variants. D30 instructors had little to no experience with the systems prior to deployment, except for a brief overview at JRTC. During this period, JRTC cadre removed a D30 from the impact area to introduce Alpha Soldiers to the weapon system.

Recommendation: Better lateral communication between the unit on ground and the replacing unit could have assisted the AFCoE prior to arrival. Additionally, after working the entire deployment with minimal oversight or issues, it was clearly apparent the OJT with the locals was the best way to learn the systems. By utilizing methods that they know, we made strides in product and systems development that were adopted and utilized by NTM-A, IJC and NATO.

Observation: Senior leadership for partnered training (Senior NCOs and Officers).

Discussion: During the AFCoE's training at Camp Clark, all Soldiers and NCOs on the team had multiple responsibilities due to its extremely small signature. In total, the AFCoE was composed of 12 Soldiers, with the highest ranking NCO being a SSG, and one 1LT(P). Strategic importance was placed on ANA indirect fires throughout RC-E, and as one of the five pillars and main LOEs, additional Coalition senior leaders and a clear chain of command would have been beneficial in the overall execution. While AFCoE leadership was clear on who was in their chain of command, outside agencies would often directly contact the AFCoE OIC, thereby hindering operations and creating additional non-linear reporting requirements. Though Battery and Battalion leadership were frequently able to intercede after the fact, AFCoE training operations were sometimes impacted by ancillary agencies.

Recommendation: Lessons-learned indicate that senior leadership was paramount for the overall success of the AFCoE. Without the top cover provided from Battery and Battalion leadership, leaders of the AFCoE would have been tasked out by multiple parties. Sustain senior leadership intervention and assistance.

Combat Advising: Training to Put Rounds Downrange

CPT Michael Leija (HHB/4-320 FA)

In late April until early May 2013, Headquarters Battery, 4-320th Field Artillery Regiment deployed to multiple locations across Khost and Paktya Provinces until the mission was complete in December 2013. The Battery's mission was to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Fires Center of Excellence (AFCoE) in order to build competent and confident Field Artillery leaders within the Afghan National Army. This included fire support, fire direction and mortar-fire instruction. To assist the Battery with the accomplishment of the mission, HHB was attached two mortarmen instructors who proved themselves more than capable and a welcome asset to the team. In addition, Headquarters Battery served its inherent role as Force Field Artillery Headquarters exercising mission command through appropriate staff functions. Force-cap limitations prevented the battalion from deploying a full forward support company; however, HHB was attached a small maintenance crew including the Battalion Maintenance Officer, Battalion Maintenance NCO, and two small arms/artillery repairmen. This section was responsible for providing gun support to all five firing points in Khost and Paktya provinces. Finally, the Battery was charged with target acquisition of enemy indirect cells and assets. This task primarily fell on the intel cell, targeting officer, and radar section. In total, 72 Headquarters personnel deployed in support of OEF XIII-XIV. The following are some of the larger friction points experienced throughout the deployment.

Issue: CL IX support for artillery guns proved too slow for OPTEMPO of the Battlefield.

Discussion: Due to size of Currahee AO, the Guns of Glory Battalion deployed to 5 firing points: COP Champkani, COP Wilderness, FOB Gardez, Camp Clark, and FOB Salerno. The determined logistics hub for the AO was established at FOB Salerno. Oftentimes this provided challenges in providing CL IX support to outlaying stations. As Headquarters Battery had no forward support company element, the FOB Salerno firing point would often be responsible for the pick-up and distribution of parts and supplies to all other locations. In addition to this, the ordering process often lagged beyond OPTEMPO, resulting in significant lag from time of order to delivery. This was especially true in the case of M777 parts. M777 parts require shipment from the manufacturer stateside, and due to the cost are not stored in bulk in theater. This problem was compounded by the long delays in shipment once the parts had reached Bagram. Shipments of CLIX parts from Bagram SSA to Salerno SSA frequently lasted between 30-60 days after confirmation of departure from stateside usually with no updates provided to the unit in that timeframe.

Recommendation: More frequent communication needs to be conducted between Bagram SSA and Brigade SSAs. Weekly updates would provide units greater flexibility to either shift gun positions or accept tolerable degradation as well as allow better situational awareness.

SSA LNOs should be able to provide on-hand quantities to units and M777 parts could be placed as priority due to the inherent setback in delivery to due their stateside origin.

Issue: Re-location of Q-53 radar system results in system out of action for 48 hours.

Discussion: Weeks of preparation had been undertaken as the FOB Salerno shutdown approached. The Battery had undergone painstaking care to build a 2,000 lb "woody" decoy radar system under limited visibility at hours of darkness to prevent the enemy from receiving advance notice of the radar's movements and reduced coverage during the transition period. During the preparation phase, two courses of action remained for the location of the Q-53 radar system. Course of Action 1 would position the radar at FOB Lightning and focus on the rocket threat while Course of Action 2 would retrograde the Q-53 to Bagram Airfield and place it under another unit's care and use. The night prior to movement day, Course of Action 1 was approved. All coordination between radar section chief and convoy commander had already been conducted prior to course-of-action approval. The radar section chief was not scheduled to ride with the radar system. As a result of miscommunication, a generator and shelter arrived to FOB Lighting but the antenna was shipped to FOB Bagram. As a result the system was inoperable for over 48 hours.

Recommendation: As a result of this incident, it is now unit SOP that the section chief travel with the system to ensure all parts arrive to their designated location and arrive complete. In addition, another rehearsal conducted with the convoy commander and radar section chief would have prevented the misrouting of high-dollar equipment.

Issue: AFCOE personnel received bad parts and equipment in poor condition from the Afghan Corps and its higher headquarters.

Discussion: The ordering process in the Afghan Army is notorious for its system of delays and shortages. Logistics personnel charged with shipping orders simply do not have the expertise to cover the wide arraying equipment needed by all warfighting functions. On several occasions, ANA CORPS would report successfully shipping parts and guns when in reality what was received on ground were inoperable parts and guns with deadline defaults.

Recommendation: Additional advisors at the CORPS logistics level with expertise in fires and effects would improve quality assurance and control prior to shipments to the users. Inoperable equipment not only results in greater delays but places receiving units further back in queue for CLIX re-supply.

Sustain

There were several areas were money was made during the train-up phase which proved invaluable downrange. Key attachments such as the artillery repairman and mortarmen more

than added to the overall capabilities of the batteries advisory mission. U6 MTTs provided valuable information and allowed for fewer maintenance personnel to deploy while facilitating the deployment of more firing point locations. U6s not only accomplished their trained objectives but often went above and beyond when repairman support could not be immediately provided. Training multiple TOC personnel on all communications equipment to include Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS), Command Post of the Future (CPOF) and Meteorological computer allowed the Battalion to successfully jump TOC with no loss of situational awareness.

Convoy Escort Team Operations in a Closing/Transferring Brigade Area of Operations

CPT Joshua Peeples (A/801 BSB)

Introduction

The scope and responsibility of the only Distribution Company in a two-province Brigade Area of Operations going through a simultaneous closure and transfer process provided a truly complex mission. Alpha Company had Soldiers at Bagram Air Base, FOB Goode, and FOB Salerno, which created challenges in manning and oversight during the company's decentralized operations. Alpha Company provided direct support to the brigade with up to 12 primary missions to include: a company operations center; multiclass supply support activity; two helicopter landing zones; one rotary wing passenger terminal; two retail and bulk fuel points; a bulk water point; a Forward Area Arming and Refuel Point; the Ammunition Supply Point; Host National Truck management; and Convoy Escort Team operations. The enormity of these missions were compounded by the fact that all but the FARP mission at FOB Goode was transferred to a relieving unit while all other missions were closed, creating significant planning considerations for reduction of personnel and equipment during simultaneous base closures.

Host Nation Truck (HNT) Convoy Escort Team (CET) Mission

The main effort for Alpha Company and the 801st Brigade Support Battalion was the closure of Forward Operating Base Salerno. This mission was accomplished through multiple means to include Helicopter Landing Zone Operations, Unescorted HNT Linehaul loads via the APPF (Afghan Public Protection Force) and escorted HNT Linehaul missions executed by the Convoy Escort Team of Transportation Platoon, Alpha Company, 801st BSB. This CET mission was

accomplished through a concert of sections across the brigade support battalion and included enablers from across the brigade combat team.

The Coordination and Staging Process

Equipment identified for movement from FOB Salerno would be coordinated through the Support Operations Transportation OIC of 801st BSB. These loads would generate a requirement for Host Nation Trucks to be requested in order to facilitate their movement. SPO Transportation in conjunction with the Operations Section of Alpha Company and the Air Force Movement Control Team would in-gate these trucks upon their arrival to the Entry Control Point in order to facilitate their subsequent loading on the FOB. SPO Transportation's meticulous tracking and the Operations Section of Alpha Company would ensure these loads were coordinated to move on upcoming Convoy Escort Teams missions via detailed trackers such as the embedded example. Upon loading by the Alpha Company Operation Section's Material Handling Equipment, the Operations Section would stage the HNT in the Alpha Company staging yard located within the company's AO on FOB Salerno. The Operations Section personnel would then escort the drivers off of the FOB and would provide the drivers with a window to return that would be within 24 to 78 hours of the upcoming Convoy Escort Team mission. This prevented having to provide life support and security to the host-nation drivers on the FOB and prevented releasing sensitive information of mission times.

TMR #	VEH TYPE	LOAD	PASSPHRASE	POC	DESTINATION POC	DESTINATION	ARRIVAL DATE	CARRIER	NAME OF DRIVER
AC0229	40' LOWBOY	M-ATV REG# MYOGPE & 1x MINE ROLLER	CURRAHEE RETRO 77	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	CPT SHELTON / 318-673-0374 LASHAYLA DAVIS	BAGRAM	3-Sep	VW	SENWAR
AC0348	40' FLATBED	2 x 20' CONT.		LT HERNANDEZ / 318-951-621	FC RUTLEDGE / 716-552-904	LIGHTNING	3-Sep		
AC0515	40' FLATBED	M10A FORKLIFT REG# NFOAHE & 2 x MINE ROLLERS	TF_T0 BLIVET	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	SGT COOK, JOSHUA / 312-481-6116 LASHAYLA DAVIS /	BAGRAM	3-Sep	LAL	SHARIF KHAN
AC0274	40' LOWBOY	ATLAS 10K FORKLIFT SN: 10KA762001	CURRAHEE RETRO 77	SSG CORBIN / 318-851-5376	SSG MELENDEZ / 318-418-634	BAGRAM	4-Sep	BNN	EZATULLAH
AC0272	40' LOWBOY	RG-31 MRAP REG# MYDA32	CURRAHEE RETRO 77	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	PAINTER, ERIC / 388-707-34	BAGRAM	4-Sep	BNN	EID MOHAMMAD
AC0233	40' LOWBOY	M-ATV MRAP REG# MYOGIC	WHITE RETRO 01	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	CPT HIGHTOWER / 318-418-685	BAGRAM	4-Sep	KMT	ASADULLAH
AC0215	40' LOWBOY	M1120A2 LHS SN: 10T2KU25F1024673	WHITE RETRO 01	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-951-5215	CHESTER, LUTISHA / 318-431-	BAGRAM	4-Sep	BNN	FAIZ ABDUL
AC0242	40' LOWBOY	6K FORKLIFT SN: 6000MB1043	CURRAHEE RETRO 77	SSG CORBIN / 318-851-5376	SSG MELENDEZ / 318-418-634	BAGRAM	4-Sep	KMT	DIR MOHAD
AC0217	40' LOWBOY	A4 HEMMT WRECKER SN: 10TGJAM00959	CURRAHEE RETRO 77	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	WARD, TAYLOR / 318-481-60	BAGRAM	4-Sep	BNN	TIDAR KAHD
AC0151	40' FLATBED	2 x 20' CONT. USAU165337SWSC0321362	25 AUG E-PUSH 3	LT HERNANDEZ / 318-851-5215	ROSADO, JOSE / 318-431-31	BAGRAM	4-Sep	AMRAM	SAID AILAL

Convoy Escort Team Mission Planning and Preparation Process

The Convoy Escort Team missions included a host of enablers including Air Weapons Team escorts, Combined Arms Clearance Operations (CARCO) Teams, ISR Platform coordination, battle space owner coordination/overwatch and brigade-level EXCHECKs. The Convoy Escort Team mission proved to be a brigade-level operation and the cornerstone event to complete the brigade's third Line Of Effort--the Retrograde, Reduction and Realignment (R3) LOE in retrograding FOB Salerno. Key events prior to mission execution consisted of a CONOP brief given to the BSB Battalion Commander between 72 and 48 hours prior to mission execution. At 48 to 24 hours prior to mission execution, a company-level CONOP would be briefed to CET members by the convoy commander and assistant convoy commander. This allowed for all significant intelligence information, route and convoy movement specifics, to be discussed and would be immediately followed with battle drills. Generally, crews would go on a rest cycle following these battle drills in preparation for the upcoming mission. At the 24 to 12 hour mark prior to CET execution, a GO/NO GO brief would be given to the BSB battalion commander and

if a GO was given, the brigade S3, battalion S3s and enablers would participate in an EXCHECK rehearsal with the CET convoy commander to ensure all enablers were synced prior to the CETs execution. If any issues existed at this time, they would be deconflicted by the battlespace owners or enablers themselves. Also, and generally in the 48-24 hour mark prior to execution, the Alpha Company Operations Section would in-gate the drivers of the HNTs and secure them with their trucks in the HNT Staging Yard. At the 4-hour mark prior to execution, CET gun-truck crews arrive and begin conducting final PCC/PCIs, commo, weapons test fires, final convoy brief and HNT driver convoy brief. Following the HNT driver brief, the Operations Section would integrate the HNTs to the convoy via a predetermined order of march and the convoy would exit FOB Salerno to begin their CET mission. Generally speaking, the CET would be on route for a 12-18 hour time frame given the rough terrain and HNTs failing along the route. The CET generally traveled in a three-HNT-to-one-gun truck configuration and would also travel with a bobtail ration of one-bobtail-to-3 HNTs. If a prime mover failed along the route, the driver of the failed vehicle would be given a short amount of time to fix the issue and if he could not, he would be ordered to disconnect and a bobtail would take the load the rest of the way to the destination. This TTP was very effective for us and limited halts along the route to the least time possible.

Host Nation Truck Reliance and Limitation

The reliance on Host Nation Trucking was a key weakness to the overall success of the Convoy Escort Team mission. Identified weaknesses were the poor condition of equipment which would limit capability on what loads they could and could not handle. Quite often, Convoy Escort Team personnel would be exposed along the route due to driver equipment issues such as engine/drive-train failure, broken trailer decks, chains not being secured properly, and flat tires. Also, the unpredictability of drivers returning for their loads would create friction before mission execution and would require loads to be switched out on trucks due to the restrictive nature of the LMR process through the Movement Control Team and their higher headquarters. Drivers themselves would be unpredictable and would stop at random along the route. During halts

along the routes, drivers would often disappear into local shop fronts and delay onward movement when the halt was complete. Safety was also a concern due to driver's drug usage and, at times, dislike for each other. In one instance a driver pulled a knife on another due to an issue they had with each other along the route. Some host-nation drivers were quite helpful and would support their fellow operators along the route if an issue would arise, but by and large language barriers, poor equipment and driver inadequacies were the common denominator during operations involving Host Nation Trucks and their operators.

Lessons Learned

Host Nation Truck reliance differs significantly from US contractor support such as that provided by KBR during the withdrawal from Iraq. Professionally operated and maintained personnel and equipment is more expensive and reliable than that of Afghanistan's Host Nation Trucking; however, it was not available. The key to successful withdrawal from FOB Salerno via Host Nation Trucking rested in the hands of the Support Operations Office of the BSB. Through their skillful ordering of Host Nation Truck, Exelis-Contracted Host Nation Trucks, and KPPF unescorted trucks, the final days of Salerno were met with a surplus of Host Nation Trucks, which was well beyond the requirement of loads to complete the final CET mission. Ultimately the unwavering efforts of the MCT, Alpha Company Operations Section, and the SPO Transportation Section led to the final out-gating of excess Host Nation Trucks and a successful final withdrawal from FOB Salerno. A less forward-thinking organization would not have been able to meet the challenges of retrograding via the Host Nation Truck method, but due to the tireless efforts of these three sections, retrograde was achieved well ahead of previously set timelines.

Bravo Company 801ˢᵗ BSB After-Action Review

CPT David Horn (B/801 BSB)

Issue: Sending the Supply SGT on TORCH.

Discussion: Our Supply SGT arrived in theater on TORCH and had coordinated all layouts and inventories prior to the commander getting on ground. Sending the Supply SGT first set conditions for commanders to have a smooth change of command inventory.

Recommendation: Sending the Supply SGT on TORCH to facilitate the change of command inventories and account for property and its location is a practice that should be used for deployments and JRTC rotations.

Issue: Communication through VTC and e-mail with outgoing command team.

Discussion: Prior to stepping off, the outgoing command teams and inbound teams conducted VTCs and exchanged lessons learned which set the unit up for success. These interactions and cross talk ensured we were bringing the right people and equipment downrange. We were able to accomplish all missions with the personnel that deployed. The theater provided equipment and lateral transfer from the outgoing unit was sufficient to accomplish all missions, and we were prepared to fill shortages through our organizational equipment. Furthermore, cross-communication between the Sustainment Brigade Warrant Officers and our Warrant Officers proved invaluable while on BAF. The networking allowed for needed equipment that had been retrograded or turned in to be loaned to us in order to accomplish our mission.

Recommendation: Enforce the interactions between the outbound and inbound units to ensure lessons learned are passed along early and often. The sooner these discussions can begin, the faster the incoming unit can prepare and succeed.

Issue: Sending only the Company Commander on ADVON and leaving sub-handreceipt holders back on various main body flights.

Discussion: While the change of command inventories took place on time, the sub-handreceipt holders were not on ground to receive the equipment, thus creating the need for yet another layout and inventory. The RIP/TOA process was disturbed by these follow-on layouts. The RIP/TOA process could have been decreased by 24-48 hours if the subsequent layouts were not needed.

Recommendation: Allow Companies to send their sub-hand receipt holders on ADVON with the company commanders if space allocation is available in order to conduct the change of command inventory together, and streamline the property transfer process during RIP/TOA.

Issue: Miscommunication or breakdown of communication between FSCs and the Field Maintenance Company in the BSB.

Discussion: Maintaining a more streamlined state of communication between the FSCs and our company would have allowed for quicker response times to provide assistance. FSCs should be the first line of defense in preventative and recovery maintenance. There will always be the need for "pass back" maintenance requirements due to the lack of comprehensive maintenance capabilities the FSC do not possess. The disconnect and/or distance between the FSCs and the BSB created unnecessary wait times for support. Two prime examples took place during the CET that lasted for 25 hours. During the recovery mission in the switchbacks, the M984 Wreckers did not possess the lifting capacity to complete the mission and the MRV from E/1-506 was requested to come from FOB Goode and provide support. This was a lengthy process that could have been resolved if the FSC, BSB, CET commanders had coordinated for the use of the MRAP Recovery Vehicle (MRV), which possesses a greater lifting capacity.

Recommendation: FSC commanders should be included in BSB operation briefings to provide input or raise concerns when there are mission requirements needed or that can be provided. Company commanders of the BSB and the FSC CDRs should conduct regular synch meetings to facilitate streamlined support.

Issue: Operation tempo.

Discussion: The steady increase in missions and retrograde requirements helped ensure complacency didn't set in with the Soldiers. Soldiers stayed engaged throughout the deployment and as a result minimal Soldier issues arose. Soldiers were continuously challenged with work related missions that they never see in the states (i.e. Jingle Truck recovery missions, recovering a Striker vehicle with a MRV, changing out a MRV engine, working on civilian generators, welding ECP gates, etc.). Soldiers seemed to thrive on the challenges and demonstrated superbly their skills.

Recommendation: Commanders provide purpose, direction, and motivation through the deployment, mixed with morale events in order to keep Soldiers engaged and build a cohesive unit geared towards mission success.

Issue: Working with OGAs created some difficulties and slow equipment turnaround times.

Discussion: Working with Other Government Agencies (OGAs) in Eastern Afghanistan can bring you in contact with civilian and military agencies alike. Many of those agencies do not use the same procedures that we do. This variable created some difficulties in maintaining necessary equipment, and doing so with a sense of urgency. Some OGAs use civilian vehicles

that our mechanics were not accustomed to, or NVGs that our technicians were not familiar with.

Recommendation: Authorize select personnel to attend specialized training prior to deployment. Understanding what OGAs are operating in the AO and what vehicles are "endemic" to the region and those agencies give commanders the foresight to prepare for anticipated, specialized maintenance needs. Focusing on capabilities will give commanders that subject matter expert in the time of need. Specifically, sending Soldiers who hold an MOS in 91B to civilian vehicle maintenance training, will reduce the need for civilian contractors and will not only increase the BSB capabilities, but will offer 4BCT the ability to enlarge its support "umbrella" to include OGAs, thus leading to greater OGA-to-Currahee relationships.

Issue: Bravo Company Morale team that traveled to outlying COPs and FOBs to provide support to tenant units without the support of said units organic FSC.

Discussion: During the Morale Building Missions around the FOBs and COPs, Bravo Company provided Armament and Power Generation Support to tenant units throughout AO Currahee. These teams helped augment tenant support elements and ensured commanders had the highest readiness rate possible through the maintenance of weapon systems and power generation. Weapons and electricity are critical to the mission and morale of any Soldier, and these maintenance teams were force multipliers who enabled units to accomplish the mission to the highest standards possible.

Recommendation: Although tenant maintenance and support elements were present on all outlying COPs and FOBs, the injection of these maintenance teams proved invaluable and should be a policy practiced in future campaigns.

Charlie MED After-Action Review

CPT Jason Constantineau (C/801 BSB)

Issue: During the RIP/TOA of medical assets in the AO, the Role II Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) was not included in the process for the Garrison Support Unit (GSU), the Afghan equivalent to Charlie Company.

Discussion: A vital component of the future Afghan success is their medical capabilities. Though they have come a long way within their formations, critical training is still needed to ensure they have skill sets IOT effectively provide proper lifesaving interventions. The GSU has specialty shops that a Role I BAS is not equipped to provide training for. The abilities of laboratory, X-ray, dental, physical therapy, behavioral health, and medical logistics are that of a Role II MTF. It is through this partnered training that the low-density sections can get proper training in their crafts which will be critical for improving and maintaining Afghan readiness.

Recommendation: The Role II MTF should be a part of the training of the Afghan Role II units as they share a common make up and service set. The subject matter experts of the Role II should be mentoring those of their Afghan counterparts of the GSU. Future training should be conducted jointly with Role II and their Afghan partners, to ensure that maximum efforts are made for the future of Afghan medical capabilities.

Issue: Although Afghan medical personnel are making great strides in the treatment of wounds from traumatic events, there still is a knowledge gap in terms of ancillary support.

Discussion: Charlie Company has provided Ancillary Service Support training to a number of ANSF units throughout Khost and Paktya. The ANSF senior medical leaders we have spoken with have stated these events were mostly at the individual-Soldier level and infrequent prior to 2013.

Recommendation: Continue to provide translated training products and develop more ancillary training events that utilize the "train the trainer" format to allow Afghan medics and NCOs the ability to build capacity in their own ranks. In addition, repetition and frequency of events are important to maintain and allow for maximum retention of information.

Issue: ANSF combat medical training is currently modeled after our medical training at the levels of Operator, Combat Life Saver, Combat Medic, Physician Assistant, and Doctor. Individually, medical personnel have made significant strides in skill level and experience.

Discussion: The next tier of medical training should focus on collective training based on exercising TC3 principles in collaboration with MASCAL training at the Role I and Role II levels. This training strategy will bring all front-line medical entities together, while building confidence in their own systems.

Recommendation: ANSF medical training must be reinforced at the collective level. The ANSF medical personnel of today will become the leaders and trainers of tomorrow.

Medical Operations

Issue: Available MAXXPRO ambulances were identified as an underutilized medical asset in Khost and Paktya provinces.

Discussion: The MAXXPRO ambulance increases survivability on the battlefield by bringing a mobile up-armored emergency room to the warfighter. In support of an Infantry Brigade Combat Team, this evacuation platform could be utilized at far forward combat outposts where aeromedical evacuation time can be prolonged due to terrain and weather. The MAXXPRO ambulance could easily fall in with a quick reaction force in order to secure casualties from a convoy with a disabled vehicle due to IEDs and provide immediate lifesaving interventions until aeromedevac arrives. The MAXXPRO ambulance could also be used to provide enhanced medical coverage for Convoy Escort Team operations during retrograde missions.

Recommendation: Units arriving in theater should coordinate for their medical personnel to receive familiarization training on the MAXXPRO ambulance during RSOI training from available forward support training teams. Home-station training should also be coordinated for during pre-deployment activities.

Issue: CL VIII order tracking system is not in place with the current system once the order is placed with the Medical Logistics (MEDLOG) Company.

Discussion: There is a lack of ability to track orders placed from the Brigade Medical Supply Office (BMSO) to the MEDLOG Company. This inability makes it difficult to keep customers informed of where their orders are and the estimated time of arrival. This also makes planning more difficult for the BMSO customers, not knowing how long it will take for items to arrive or where their orders are in the process.

Recommendation: Developing a way to track items ordered from the customer to the BMSO through the MEDLOG Company would greatly allow for better planning. It would also assist on the visibility of the availability of items and allow for potential substitutions to be ordered in place of backlogged items.

Issue: The lack of knowledge of what CL VIII items require a Letter of Justification slows the ordering process.

Discussion: Items that require a CL VIII Letter of Justification (LOJ) changed on a regular basis and there was never a list published prior to ordering certain items. Only after several weeks and the order being cancelled would the requirement of an LOJ is made known to the BMSO and the customer.

Recommendation: A published list of all LOJ items be made available to all BMSOs on a monthly basis IOT ensure that all customers know the requirements and to speed the process up to avoid unnecessary cancelations.

Ancillary Services

Issue: The ANSF has little to no knowledge of Physical Therapy practices and techniques. This has led to a reduction in the fighting force, as treatable injuries take longer to overcome or become permanently disabling.

Discussion: The ANSF medical providers have received the majority of their training in treating trauma and severe illnesses. There remains a void in the area of musculoskeletal injuries that decrease the readiness of the fighting force.

Recommendation: By providing continuing training in musculoskeletal evaluation and treatment, the ANSF will be more likely to independently maintain a fighting force with greater longevity.

Issue: Preventive Medicine capabilities to assist are dependent on the equipment and supplies we are provided down range.

Discussion: The current listing of Field Sanitation supply is set for a mission set for long-term established locations and is standardized for any OCONUS location. This equipment is sometimes inapplicable for the current OPTEMPO and very hard to get resupplied downrange.

Recommendation: By providing an updated preventive medicine supply list for expeditionary missions in Afghanistan, it will ensure that the supplies needed to perform preventive medicine assistance for base closures will be easily accessible and applicable to the mission at hand.

Issue: Disease and Non-Battle Injuries are the greatest threat to ANSF combat power. For example, diarrheal diseases from drinking water from unapproved water sources can reduce unit fighting strength and combat effectiveness, halting missions.

Discussion: Overcrowding, poor sanitation, and inadequate hygiene practices contribute to communicable diseases, such as acute respiratory illnesses and gastroenteritis. Exposure increases with improper sanitation or when shelter is inadequate to protect the population.

Recommendation: By providing basic preventive-medicine training at the medic and NCO level, we improve the ANA's ability to conserve combat power by ensuring Afghan sustainable solutions.

Issue: A significant number of Soldiers did not receive their malaria prophylaxis and/or scheduled medication that was to be ordered on their TMOP request during SRP.

Discussion: In preparation for the deployment, the BDE went through SRP to ensure the overall readiness of every Currahee. During this period, each Soldier was to fill out the TMOP request for a minimum of Doxycycline, as well as any other medications they submitted to a pharmacy representative to have filled. The BDE nurse picked up the filled prescriptions and issued them out to each BN medical section one week prior to the first flight out, for verification that all Soldiers were taken care of appropriately. It is at this point that any discrepancies were to be recognized and rectified prior to the Soldier's departure from Fort Campbell.

Recommendation: Each BN medical section should be involved with the request process from SRP through the distribution procedures, to account that each Soldier has their required medication.

Issue: Poor oral health and widespread oral mucosal disease constitutes a major threat to ANSF combat effectiveness and training.

Discussion: Poor oral health has a systemic effect in a Soldier's body, where they cannot efficiently perform daily job duties, training, and be combat-mission ready.

Recommendation: ANSF dentists and oral-health/medical-care personnel need additional guidance to implement preventive oral health screenings and conduct more dental-health education training programs. Having a more active oral health-care delivery system through reinforcement training will increase ANA's self reliance, community participation, and sustaining combat-mission capabilities.

Issue: Utilization of Behavioral Health (BH) assets as crisis management, but not as prevention.

Discussion: The BH Clinic was well utilized by Soldiers seeking routine or emergent behavioral health care, and was able to quickly respond to several critical incidents and provide emergency and follow-up support to outlying FOBs. However, very limited use of the Behavioral Health providers as subject matter experts for the purpose of providing trainings, giving briefs to

command teams, etc. was requested. The BH team was uniquely qualified to brief all levels of command on a long list of behavioral health topics and was asked to do so on only four occasions.

Recommendation: This aspect of the embedded behavioral-health team should be better marketed up the chain of command, and the behavioral-health team should be integrated into the normal rotation of trainings and briefings given to battalion- and brigade-level staffs. Topics that touch directly on behavioral health issues, like suicide, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, should involve the BH team as subject-matter experts.

Issue: Sleep disruption represents a threat to ANSF combat power. Multiple Afghan military personnel have reported difficulties with sleep onset and maintenance.

Discussion: As length of total sleep deprivation extends, attention performance becomes increasingly erratic and variable. After 20 hours of complete sleep deprivation, performance on some cognitive and motor tests is equivalent to performance under the influence of a BAC level of .1%. Soldiers can avoid response lapses and errors ranging from 3-10 seconds by ensuring a minimum of 4-5 hours of sleep per night using effective sleep habits.

Recommendation: Training on effective sleep habits represents a low-cost, low-stigma service that Afghan medical personnel can offer to improve Soldier mental alertness.

Issue: Restrictions or administrative hurdles made Ancillary Service Support battlefield circulation unnecessarily complicated and restricted access to Soldiers at times.

Discussion: Within the first week of arriving to Salerno, all Ancillary Service Support teams had planned their battlefield circulation rotations, scheduled times for the missions, coordinated clinic coverage and were ready to start heading out. However, the unit was soon directed to develop a modified plan in order to deconflict BH visits with combat operations and ANSF development activities in order to maximize Soldier availability on each visit. Dates for travel were then given to the company and we were told that no other travel dates would be approved except for emergent situations. In addition, all assets would travel together (Behavioral Health, Preventive Medicine, and Physical Therapy) in order to avoid nickel-and-diming the unit with multiple visits and to make the most efficient use of air assets. This resulted in multiple occasions where non-emergent needs arose and a BH team visit to certain FOBs off-rotation would have been optimal, but those needs could not be immediately met due to the travel arrangements that had been made. As a result, alternate care had to be given via VTC or telephone sessions and the Soldiers had to wait until their FOB was due for a team visit again to have a face-to-face session.

Recommendation: More freedom to plan Ancillary Service Support movement in the battlespace would have allowed assets to react to the specific needs of the Soldiers where they were located, allowed for more agile response times, and allowed providers to tailor care to each FOB, knowing that they could return as needed. This would still require deconfliction with operations and would only be provided at the request of the supported unit.

Issue: Collaboration with Corps-level Combat Stress Control (CSC) providers was regular, reliable, and effective.

Discussion: CSC providers and their technicians were very familiar with Telebehavioral Health (TBH) applications, and frequently served as a resource for enhancing the TBH networks in AO Currahee.

Recommendation: For future deployments, S-6 could benefit from cross-talk with CSC providers and staff to better understand maintenance of system demands.

HHC 801ˢᵗ BSB After-Action Review

CPT Major E. Robinson (HHC/801 BSB)

During deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom XIII - XIV, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 801st Brigade Support Battalion managed two major operational pieces in addition to battalion staff functions. These were operation of the Salerno Passenger Terminal and operation of the Salerno Dining Facility. Major challenges in operation of the PAX Terminal centered around security and preventing infiltration through Terminal or airfield-access points, and general force-protection measures. Major challenges in assuming management of the DFAC came from number of available personnel and availability of Class I supplies.

HHC was assigned management of rotary-wing operations in conjunction with Air Force fixed-wing operations. Primary responsibilities included: maintaining command and control over personnel who arrived and departed the terminal; scheduling and coordinating over 25,000 movements throughout the Brigade area of operations; and maintaining the airfield. A noticeable lapse in existing procedures arose when a group working in coordination with the Afghan agricultural bureau was able to walk onto the Forward Operating Base uncontested after landing in a commercial aircraft.

Fixing this force-protection concern required scrapping the inherited procedures and creating a set of standard operating procedures which incorporated additional personnel and structural improvements. Limited resources prevented incorporating every improvement, specifically the emplacement of a gate sufficient to entirely close off an access road. This was ultimately mitigated by providing personnel to provide eyes on the area during aircraft arrivals, actively directing all passengers to a choke point and identification area, and aircraft landing at the more secure end of the airfield. The other consideration was the likelihood of additional occurrences within time remaining before handing over the FOB. No other instances occurred.

A best-practice takeaway in managing personnel through the terminal is that of utilizing a very professional NCO for personnel unprepared to deal with the vagaries of military flights or who had not planned adequately. Under stressful circumstances, the NCO we utilized was capable of appropriately informing personnel who sometimes far outranked him of available options and existing restraints. He at all times maintained poise and bearing. This was an important, but easy to overlook, aspect of maintaining command and control of the personnel.

HHC was further assigned management and operation of the FOB DFAC. As the handover of the FOB began, contracted food workers were reduced and quickly phased out. Soldiers having the food service military occupational specialty, 92G, along with Soldiers on KP duty, provided food service. As 92Gs are the Soldiers who may actually cook and prepare food, the DFAC was overall short 92G personnel and utilized KPs as much as permissible. Soldiers conducted a left-seat/right-seat transition with the contracted personnel, whose numbers were immediately reduced. One difficulty during this period was the apparent attitude from remaining contracted personnel that because Soldiers were present, civilians could or should cease active

involvement. Given a shortage of 92G personnel, this complicated the task for the senior 92G who was forced to continually police contracted personnel, while training 92Gs and KPs, during on-going food service operations. During this transition, food quality and quantity were noticeably reduced, as was the rate at which personnel were served. Another factor affecting quantity of food was an interruption in the contract for certain Supply Class I items. As contracts changed hands, and as contracted transporters changed, some food items would arrive delayed and not fit for consumption, limiting what was available to Soldiers.

Recommendations for mitigating many of these factors include increasing the available number of 92G personnel who deploy to theater. Planning for this will also require company commanders to insist on the fitness and deployability of 92Gs, for whom it is not atypical to be less physically fit. Such condition goes more easily unnoticed in a garrison environment (where a physical profile may not limit duty) and will require deliberate attention from command teams. With regard to contracting difficulties, the lesson learned is to engage contracted parties earlier in the process and have adjusted contracts well in hand prior to the actual left-seat/right-seat transition.

In addition to the two major operational pieces, HHC comprised the staff sections for Battalion. Some notable highlights and observations from staff sections include the effects felt by S2 from the lack of trained CoIST personnel; management by S4 of generally excellent schemes of maneuver from companies for disposition of property and jump from Khost area to Bagram and ultimately to home station; and general observations regarding transition and relief-in-place with the outgoing unit.

S2 observed that personnel had initial modest training as a Company Intelligence Support Team and were able to apply their skills during the Joint Readiness Training Center rotation. Nevertheless, the trained individuals were reassigned prior to deployment, leaving the Battalion without a CoIST once downrange. The need for CoIST was recognized, however, and two Soldiers were assigned to fill the void. The Soldiers had no intelligence experience or training and had different primary jobs. Despite valiant efforts by these otherwise intelligent and creative Soldiers, they were not able to comprehensively understand and brief the conglomeration of information needed to develop ongoing intelligence preparation of the battlefield. Recommendation is that personnel be assigned CoIST as their primary mission and receive extensive training early in order to properly support the Battalion Commander's critical decision-making.

Handing over the FOB was a monumental task of property management. From the perspective of the Battalion S4, the companies had excellent plans for identifying property that required turn-in, lateral transfer, or which was Foreign Excess Personal Property (FEPP) or Foreign Excess Real Property (FERP). Transfers were completed ahead of schedule on all equipment with minimal problems. Commanders had good plans for their equipment to be turned in and/or moved out of the Khost area. Timelines for closure and turn-in presented by Brigade S4 and BSTB were aggressive, but were good plans that were executable. These are all areas of performance to be sustained.

S4 also committed a large amount of time to processing Financial Liability Investigations of Property Loss for Organizational equipment and losses resulting from Soldiers' baggage lost during transit. Recommendation is that proper 100% inventories and shortage annexes be executed prior to deployment. Time constraints with events leading up to deployment typically hinder this.

Additional observations are of friction points occurring during transition to theater. Particularly for the Torch team, eager to set conditions and manage expectations, it was difficult to communicate and send reports to the Rear during movement to and up until arrival at Bagram. Greater accessibility to BlackBerry devices for key subordinate leaders would facilitate communication.

Space limitations on the Torch flight prevented each section being able to send a representative. Allowing for at least on representative from each section on the Torch flight would facilitate quicker transitioning with the outgoing unit. This would also curb the need later for what was perceived as entirely too many meetings during the relief in place, and which frequently provided duplicate information.

Sapper Company After-Action Review

CPT Mike Skuski and 1SG Richard Marshall (A/4 BSTB)

Background: As the only combat-engineer company in the brigade, we were tasked to provide route clearance and general engineering support to the brigade in AO Currrahee. We traversed the entire battlespace and operated in four battalions' areas of operations (AOs).

During the deployment, my XO and I spent significant time fighting all the technology that was being force fed to us through the big Army. We were receiving fieldings of the "best" new equipment the Army had about every 2-3 weeks. However, not all of this equipment was relevant or effective in our AO. For example we had a steel rake on the back of our Husky that malfunctioned more times than it worked. After a few missions we decided to take it off because it was not adding any value or capability to our mission. The company initially had three different hand-held detectors that we used on a daily basis, and we were fielded three different detectors over the course of the deployment. The issue becomes that Soldiers in the company begin to fight technology rather than gain proficiency on the equipment they currently are assigned. I constantly had Soldiers attending training for the newest widget, which usually provided no additional capability. I have sent feedback on all engineer and CIED equipment to JIEDDO on both my deployments, OEF X-XI and OEF XIV. My recommendation is that commanders have the ability to deny receiving equipment they deem ineffective or that will not provide an increased capability for the unit's mission.

Training on the basics during the beginning of the ARFORGEN cycle, I believe, was key to the company's success in Afghanistan. We focused on marksmanship, communicating, foot marching, and general physical fitness. I knew, based on the area the brigade was assigned, my soldiers would spend a majority of their time dismounted, clearing IEDs. This is why physical fitness and foot marching are important.

I never had to call a MEDEVAC or treat a Soldier for a heat-related illness. I believe this was due to the high state of physical fitness my company was in prior to the deployment. The PT average for the company was 271 points. This was due to the high-intensity PT program we conducted at the company. Additionally, the foot marches we conducted prior to deployment focused on carrying weight both on your back and in your hands as if you had a hand-held detector. This built strength and confidence for the Soldiers going into the deployment.

Another area we focused on was marksmanship. This was one of the Battalion and Brigade Commanders' areas of emphasis as well. Once my Soldiers were confident and trained in qualifying on the standard Army qualification table, with a majority of Soldiers qualifying with a score of 34 or better, we began shooting at longer distances out to 500 meters. Again, the Soldiers became more confident in their own marksmanship skills and in their weapon systems. While deployed, we would conduct bi-monthly ranges to keep our Soldiers' marksmanship skills sharp.

The last piece we focused on was training on commo equipment and radio procedures. The high level of proficiency my Soldiers maintained on commo equipment allowed us to never miss a patrol time due to commo equipment not working properly. Additionally, with all Soldiers being trained on the radios, we were able to troubleshoot radios in vehicles without having to stop the convoy and having our one assigned communications specialist move to the vehicle. Focusing on these four areas allowed the company to be successful from the beginning of the deployment and have a solid base to build off of during the deployment.

Despite the fact the brigade published their TACSOP and FRAGO 506, standards of operations were different in each battalion battlespace. At first, this proved to be problematic, especially for my platoon leaders, since our mission took us through three battlespaces, During the pre-deployment training we trained to the established battalion and brigade published standards of procedure, which provided us with a good foundation to start. It took the first month for us to figure out reporting requirements for each battalion. My recommendation is that all battalions have the same reporting requirements for units entering their battlespace. This format can be issued by brigade in a FRAGO or placed in the brigade TACSOP.

During the deployment, I was able to work with a majority of the companies in the brigade as well as numerous units from outside the brigade. I often noticed that supported units would be allocated Air Weapons Team (AWT) or Close Air Support (CAS) during their mission but they would not know how to properly employ these platforms. One of the biggest errors I observed was that when AWT checked on station, platoon leaders would not know how to talk to the aircraft or they would not know what to tell them. I did not observe this often with Currrahee units; it was mostly units outside the brigade. However, knowing the capabilities of the aircraft supporting you and knowing how to give a task and purpose to the aircraft using doctrinal terms is essential to the proper employment of the asset. I also observed that when the asset was employed, platoon leaders would oftentimes have the aircraft circle around the convoy for the entire time the asset was on station. This is fundamentally wrong and does not employ the asset to its fullest potential. My recommendation is that all lieutenants go through the two-week Air-Ground Integration course, which will give them a better understanding of how to properly employ AWT. Additionally, AWT should be requested in support of home-station platoon and company training events in order to better prepare platoon leaders to manage these assets.

ISR coverage during route-clearance operations was not conducted in a manner I found to be effective. Despite my efforts at the company level to request ISR at certain times and for certain locations or NAIs, the ISR would watch my route-clearance patrol as it cleared down the route at 5 MPH. This is fundamentally wrong. At least once or twice per mission, I would watch my OSRVT and the Shadow would be watching my patrol. I attempted to correct this by talking to my S2 and UAV pilots, and the issue would be corrected for a few missions, but it would go back to the same thing. My recommendation is better synchronization of ISR by implementing an air-mission brief with the UAS operations so they are tracking the task and purpose.

TF Apache senior leaders did a good job of empowering their commanders and platoon leaders without micro managing. As a company commander, the last thing you want is to be micro

managed by your battalion headquarters. I fully understand that sometimes battalion and brigade leadership need to micromanage due to the potential strategic impacts certain decisions or operations could have. LTC Dillard did empower his company commanders and allowed me to fight the C-IED fight the way I assessed it to be most effective. LTC Dillard gave me my left and right limits, which allowed me to effectively manage my two platoons traversing four battlespaces. It is critical for senior leaders to empower leaders down to the lowest levels, because it shows the junior leaders that battalion has trust and confidence in their abilities. I believe empowering junior leaders down to the squad level will lead to a more effective and efficient organization.

Lastly, choosing the right Soldiers for the right jobs will help your organization be successful. We are allocated by MTOE eleven 12Ns (heavy equipment operators) in the company. We selected them early in the training cycle to attend specific route clearance courses. These Soldiers attended: the DOKING robot course, which teaches them to employ a remote-controlled mine-clearing robot; the Buffalo interrogation course; and the route clearance operator's course. The Buffalo is equipped with a hydraulic interrogation arm on the front of the vehicle, which the equipment operators excelled at operating due to their equipment training and their experience operating similar hydraulic arms on the IHMEE. They were able to manipulate the arm on the Buffalo in a manner that would not destroy the IED, so it could be collected for evidence. This proved to be valuable in winning the counter-IED fight. My recommendation is to ensure a scrub is conducted of your Soldiers' skill sets that they have acquired both inside and outside of the Army. You may be surprised what your Soldiers can bring to the table.

Integrating Military Intelligence Assets with Maneuver Unit Training

CPT Kent McInnis (B/4 BSTB)

Insight

Pre-deployment training campaign plans are a challenge faced by all commanders, but a low-density commander has an additional requirement to integrate their assets with the supported maneuver units. The full scope of a Brigade Combat Team is best realized by the synchronized employment of all its capabilities. The cornerstone for success is the Soldier, trained and proficient in their Military Occupational Skill (MOS) and equipment. These specialized, trained Soldiers will later serve as the foundation for future collective-training events.

After-action reviews from previous deployments have revealed the need to exhaust all MOS-specific training resources early in the ARFORGEN cycle. Equipped with this knowledge, the company began necessary specialized training prior to redeploying, even as company equipment was sent from theater for reset. Additionally, the command team began identifying training requirements to assist in scheduling MOS courses. Individual training was primarily conducted using off-post and non-unit-funded Foundry courses. On-post training was conducted by Mobile Training Teams in the Kinnard Mission Training Complex at Fort Campbell. In addition, several leaders were granted the opportunity to increase their proficiency by attending off-post courses. This also allowed them to network with their peers to identify other training systems that would improve their Soldiers' skills. Their knowledge was used to build platoon training plans.

As the company headed into team and platoon training events, it was soon recognized that the Soldiers were independently confident, but needed to develop their skills working as a team. During this time, the company began receiving reset and new equipment with updated systems. To ensure success, the company scheduled home-station training that accompanied the equipment fielding. The company began to conduct collective training at the battalion and brigade levels; Soldiers brought a baseline as trained individuals prepared to work in a collective environment to be further shaped by the BDE S2. The integration of Human Intelligence Teams (HUMINT) and the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) with the maneuver units allowed ground commanders the opportunity to work with assigned intelligence assets similar to those they would have downrange. In addition, this effort granted HUMINT teams the opportunity to begin building relationships with maneuver commanders they would support once deployed.

During the Brigade Mission Readiness Exercise, the maneuver commanders were responsible for the employment of the HUMINT and UAS while conducting their combat patrols. Implementing this integration in multiple home-station training events ensured the success of the unit during its JRTC rotation and ultimately during its deployment.

Human Intelligence Teams

Background: Military Source Operations training was planned and facilitated by the Brigade HUMINT Technician and Platoon Leader. This created the foundation to be later built upon during collective training events. At the platoon level, Soldiers were equipped with the tools needed to build relationships with the tactical command teams. Versed in their MOS, teams conducted capability briefs with the supported units during home-station training. Human Intelligence Team integration with maneuver units during collective-training events was facilitated by including the asset in the written scenario.

Issue: Integration of 35M into Combat Units.

Discussion: The integration of the 35Ms into the supported combat units included participation in Company EXEVALs, the providing of capabilities briefs to battalion staffs, and participation in JRTC planning. The net result was that units had a better understanding of their support assets before execution of the mission, which increased effectiveness and mission success.

Recommendation: Integrate the 35M into units earlier in the ARFORGEN cycle once MOS-specific individual and collective training is completed. Increase combat-focused training for 35Ms.

Issue: Providing Education to the Supported Units.

Discussion: During the course of the deployment, it became clear that some of the supported units had a limited understanding of the capabilities and limitations of a HCT. Additionally, some units had preconceived notions of what they wanted their particular HCT to do, based on previous deployments and experiences.

Recommendation: The OMT Chief or S-2X must provide an OPD to the command and staff of the supported units before JRTC and combat deployments.

Issue: Cultural and Language Training.

Discussion: During the course of the deployment, members of HCTs demonstrated a limited understanding of Afghan history, Afghan culture and especially the Afghan languages of Dari and Pashto. This was borne out in their intelligence reports which sometimes led to erroneous reporting. Units often depend on HCTs to have a good understanding of the environment and human terrain.

Recommendation: Increased participation in language courses and Afghan studies. Afghan studies should include history, culture and religious education. Additionally, Afghan studies should be administered by an actual SME and not somebody who independently conducted research for an OPD or NCOPD.

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

Background: Readiness Level (RL) progression was limited early in the ARFORGEN cycle, but gained ground once the company had a trained Instructor Operator/Standardization Instructor Operator in the UAS platoon. The escalation of RL-qualified operators and maintainers allowed the platoon to conduct multiple field exercises focused on refinement of necessary skills critical to completing their assigned task. Additionally, the early realized proficiency of the platoon made the capability available to ground commanders prior to battalion and brigade culminating training events.

Issue: Identifying UAS Training Requirements.

Discussion: The identification of UAS requirements during the ARFORGEN cycle alleviated stress within the platoon which assisted with a successful PRESET. The planning and allocation of the UAS Platoon, during Eagle Flight III, had misconceptions/misinterpretation in support of the brigade for combat operations.

Recommendation: UAS leadership needs to be involved in the planning and management of their UAS system in order to ensure accurate and timely coverage and reasonable, workable collection plans.

Issue: Education, and Employment of UAS Operations.

Discussion: Throughout the deployment, it became clear that some UAS requirements were not understood (e.g. system limitations and proper implementation of UAS). Supported battalions had no clear understanding of how to properly put in a request for UAS support. BCTs and BNs are plagued with misconceptions that merely leverage UAS as an extra ISR asset, when available, and assign mission statements such as "go here, orbit, report observation."

Recommendation: Collection managers and planners need to work with the UAS leadership to better understand the role of the UAS in the battle. These personnel would benefit from a block of instruction on their respective asset(s) prior to deployment.

Issue: UAS and Brigade Relationship.

Discussion: During the course of the deployment, UAS Soldiers grasped the "be flexible" motto due to FOB closures and movement of sites. The support received from higher echelons above the platoon enhanced the productivity and mission product the platoon was able to produce in record-breaking time frames, resulting in Soldiers understanding of real world events in a combat environment.

Recommendation: Continue to challenge Soldiers at all levels with increased responsibility, and use OPDs and NCOPDs to teach ways of flexibility to do more with less, and conserve scarce resources.

The One and Only: The SIGMI Co and Implications for Increased Efficiency in Signal and Military Intelligence Operations

MAJ Johnathan P. Martin (SIGMICO/4 BSTB)

21 April 2013, FOB Salerno, Afghanistan: a unique company guidon is unfurled. Divided along the middle horizontal, the top field is Signal orange and the bottom is pale blue. In the center of the flag is a unique crest, a combination of the Signal Corps' wig wag and the Military Intelligence's rose and dagger. It is the standard of the SIGMI Co, an organization as unique as its guide-on. The SIGMI Co was a result of the unique circumstances facing the Currahee Brigade Combat Team as it deployed in support of OEF XIV. The experience of the SIGMI Co, though unique, is instructive in this time of reduced budgets and an increased demand for efficiency. Below I intend to chronicle the SIGMI Co's inception, outline the positive and negative aspects inherent in the SIGMI Co's organizational structure, and finally, offer recommendations as to how the Army can improve the effectiveness of Signal and Military Intelligence formations, while maintaining economy of force and improving maneuver commanders' flexibility and lethality as we look to tomorrow's battlefields.

History and formation of the SIGMI Co

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, Currahee, faced significant challenges as the deployment approached. As a forcing function of the drawdown, a force-manning cap was set for each deploying unit, the intent being to ensure that troop levels would be reduced with each subsequent deployment cycle. As such, all leaders in the brigade were forced to take a hard look at exactly what specific forces were required to accomplish their core mission and which capabilities on which they were willing to assume risk. This, in effect, meant that many of the standard METL tasks trained towards in Eagle Flights 1-3 and validated at the Mission Readiness Exercise (MRX) would be left behind, and only the most necessary equipment and Soldiers, and subsequently the capabilities they provide, would deploy forward.

With the final force cap set at around 2,200 personnel and an emphasis on reduced equipment movement, the brigade would deploy without typical core capabilities such as: brigade-level FM ground retransmission (FM-RTX); High Capacity Line of Site (HCLOS) data network extension; and Satellite, Mobile, Anti-jam, Reliable, Transport, Terminal (SMART-T) critical system link redundancy. Within this framework, commanders started thinking of new ways to increase efficiency as a means of accomplishing the mission with fewer personnel and less equipment.

One such commander, LTC Larry F. Dillard Jr., took a novel approach to the problem set. Firstly, as the commander of the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, LTC Dillard's challenge was unique in that his battalion consisted exclusively of low-density MOS soldiers, which by and large, support the brigade commander with combat engineers (A Co, Sappers), communications (C Co, Signal), military intelligence (B Co, MI), Chemical Recon, and military police (HHC, BSTB) as directed. In addition to these standard capabilities, the BSTB was

tasked with establishing a brigade female engagement team (FET) pool in order to interact with Afghan females while respecting Afghan culture.

In order to accomplish these missions, LTC Dillard was allocated a force manning level (FML) of 370 Soldiers out of an available strength of 549. This reality, in turn, forced each company command team to pare their forces down accordingly in order to meet the mandated target. This is where LTC Dillard made the unique decision to combine the command structure of two companies, effectively eliminating a complete company headquarters element, while also freeing up personnel for other key missions. CPT Kent McInnis, an experienced MI professional, became a key SFAAT advisor, and 1SG Hostrop, an experienced 1SG, became the Rear Detachment NCOIC. LTC Dillard correctly asserted that once critical signal and military-intelligence technical systems were established, the command teams of those respective formations were underutilized.

Additionally, as the vast majority of Signal Co and Military Intelligence Co Soldiers work directly for brigade primary staff officers (the BDE S6 and S2 respectively,) the command team's role becomes largely administrative as the Soldiers themselves are busied with their various tasks. In addition to the merger, this newly formed company would also have responsibility for training and managing the FETs, a responsibility which already belonged to the organic C Co. The first test of the new organizational structure would take place during the brigade MRX at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

On 3 January 2013 the Currahee Brigade deployed to Fort Polk, LA. Once individual platoon training tasks wound down, the organic C Co command team (CPT Johnathan Martin and 1SG Frederick "Fred" Jones) started integrating the B Co (MI Co) Soldiers into the then-unnamed company that would become the SIGMI Co. The initial concept was for B Co to operate semi-autonomously and for the subordinate platoons to report to an acting "B Co commander," CW2 Sean Ulrich, who would then report to the C Co command team. SFC Tamika Bryant would operate as the NCOIC for the element.

This initial arrangement proved highly cumbersome and quite ineffective. CW2 Ulrich, though an expert in his field, lacked the command experience necessary to manage such a diverse and relatively large element. Each platoon sergeant lagged in accomplishing administrative and accountability tasks as SFC Bryant was often tied down in the running of her platoon and controlling operations within the Brigade Intelligence Support Element (BISE). The end results of this initial arrangement were that the brigade's MI professionals were less efficient, a greater strain was placed on the brigade S2, and the organic B Co Soldiers were left confused and feeling leaderless. Within a very short time it became readily apparent that a drastic change was in order.

After a brief discussion with 1SG Jones, we determined that the only feasible way for this arrangement to succeed was to totally merge the two companies into one cohesive and unified team. We settled on the name SIGMI Co and called a meeting of all platoon sergeants and platoon leaders in order to explain the change. By the time of the meeting, we had designed a prototype of the SIGMI guidon utilizing power point and drafted a refined task organization. The slides were projected as the background during the briefing.

Initially platoon-level leaders from both companies were skeptical, but by the end of the brief, everyone was supportive of the plan and excited to be able to focus on their platoon mission. As part of the merger, CW2 Ulrich's Intelligence Electronic Warfare (IEW) platoon was co-located with the new merged HQs element, and the previously separate battle-rhythm events were streamlined into one. 1SG Jones published the company standards to the platoons, and company policy letters were revamped to reflect the newly established company. Finally the company mission statement was adjusted and briefed to the platoon leaders to ensure they all understood our higher headquarters' mission, our role in accomplishing it, and the commander's intent. Getting everyone on the same page was in many ways the easiest step.

After a short discussion, 1SG Jones and I established a plan to forge trust in us as leaders and establish a sense of unity amongst the unit. The first phase was a concentrated and continuous battlefield circulation, and within a few days each of us physically saw and talked to each Soldier in the formation. As we visited the various sites, our focus was on asking the Soldiers themselves to teach us about their specific mission and the tasks contained therein. The positive results of these interactions were many and went beyond simply introducing us to the new Soldiers in our charge. First, both 1SG and I quickly became spun up on the capabilities, limitations, emplacement and operations of the various military-intelligence systems. Secondly, the Soldiers provided us candid feedback on their expectations of us as a command team. Lastly, the circulation allowed us to interact with the supported units, ensuring that all of our Soldiers were well cared for, command support relationships were understood, and that supported units understood the capabilities our enablers had to offer.

The second phase of our plan involved establishing a company identity and subculture that the Soldiers could rally around. It is often the case that low-density, Combat Support and Combat Service Support Soldiers don't have many significant cultural symbols to rally around. Infantry Soldiers, for instance, have a variety of cultural indicators. The EIB, CIB, and blue cord are visible uniform accoutrements that separate and identify wearers as "elites" within the larger Army culture. The Army utilizes these culturally significant devices and symbols to encourage Soldiers to excel at the hardest tasks, and they are many and varied. The amount of time for a newly established symbol to gain cultural currency is relatively short as evidenced by the CAB, GWOTE, and OEF/OIF campaign ribbons. Another interesting aspect of the establishment of subcultures is that they become over time increasingly resilient, so much so that the founding symbols can change, but the culture itself will survive as long as the members of the culture can still be identified visually. Good examples of this are the change of the Ranger beret from black to tan and the change of the Ranger diamond to a tab.

The establishment of the SIGMI Co subculture was a deliberate and intentionally subtle undertaking. It was imperative that the Soldiers (members of the subculture) felt that no one branch or MOS was favored over the other; to that end, new symbols were developed that combined both Signal Corps and Military Intelligence symbology. The SIGMI crest (Panel 1, Figure 1), as it became known, was created and was instantly emblazoned on all briefing products and posted prominently. The combined guidon (Panel 1, Figure 2), designed on power point in JRTC, was requisitioned from a local tailor and brought to life. A new motto: "SIGMI, One and Only" was coined. Finally, a myriad of smaller changes from e-mail signature blocks to

the creation of a SIGMI coin further strengthened the sub culture leading to the Soldiers embracing it to the point of getting custom t-shirts made and inundating their chain of command with requests to have SIGMI items place in the Donald F. Pratt museum.

On 21 April 2013 the SIGMI Co deployed to FOB Salerno, Afghanistan. This deployment would prove to be highly unique as the brigade was tasked with shuttering forward operating bases (FOBs) as CENTCOM reduced the overall coalition presence across Afghanistan. Upon the beginning of the Relief in Place (RIP), it became apparent that the roles of the Signal and MI company commanders while deployed were indeed difficult to define.

Though not particularly their fault, the respective commanders just sort of ran out of things to do once their key systems were established. The Signal company command team we replaced had busied themselves with the retrograde of property in anticipation of our arrival, a tactic that would prove helpful during our deployment. The MI company command team had not conducted retrograde of any property and had instead become an active presence in their battalion and brigade's lethal targeting processes. As we assessed both command teams, it was readily apparent that supplanting the brigade staff primaries reduced the effectiveness of the targeting process by essentially adding another unnecessary layer into an already segmented and stovepiped system. The MI company commander had inadvertently become the filter for intelligence assessments going to the Brigade S2.

We took this and other lessons with us as we completed the RIP and assumed control over the missions of intelligence gathering and assessment and communications-network support. The SIGMI Co would become the most geographically dispersed company in the brigade with Soldiers spread across multiple combat outposts (COPs) and FOBs throughout Area of Operations (AO) Currahee. The Company HQs, JNN 31, ISR, SIGINT and IEW platoons were located on FOB Salerno along with two FETs, two HUMINT teams, and the Operational Management Team (OMT). JNN32 and an additional HUMINT team were located on FOB Clark. FOB Gardez housed both FET and HUMINT teams and a forward TUAS control element. The bulk of the TUAS platoon was located on FOB Sharana where launch and recovery operations in support of Paktya province would be conducted. Finally a FET was located at COP Sabari.

SIGMI Co Soldiers were detailed to other missions such as SFAAT and DDOC responsibilities that were located at FOB Lightning, COP Wilderness and Bagram Airfield. As mission dictated, SIGMI Soldiers would also travel to other outstations in order to support the maneuver units there. The robust battlefield circulation rehearsed in JRTC would become essential in managing the decentralized company. Once essential systems were set, our focus shifted to retrograde operations and follow-on realignment. Our first element to move was the TUAS platoon, which moved from Sharana to Salerno using the innovative tactic of flying the aircraft to its destination. This allowed us to continue to provide Shadow coverage for the brigade throughout the move. Our second element to move was JNN32, which moved from FOB Clark to FOB Lightning in anticipation of the subsequent Brigade TOC jump.

Finally, the HQs and other elements still on FOB Salerno jumped to Lightning, with the exception of the HUMINT and FET teams (essential for the maneuver unit's intelligence

gathering) and JNN 31 (which was providing data connectivity to the FOB.) These elements were some of the last support Soldiers to vacate FOB Salerno as the brigade pivoted towards Paktya Province.

Throughout the deployment, the SIGMI Co Soldiers supported the brigade with robust communications support and accurate and timely intelligence collection and targeting while simultaneously retrograding large amounts of TPE property. The list of superlatives describing the SIGMI Co's deployment is long. Below are some of the highlights by platoon:

-The TUAS Platoon flew a total of 352 separate missions with a total of 2,162.8 hours flown in support of the Currahee brigade's intelligence-collection efforts.

-JNN 31 and 32 combined to provide 6,840 hours of continuous network support to the brigade.

-The HUMINT Platoon collected 374 intelligence information reports, utilizing over $10,000 in Intelligence Collection Funds and removing rare counterfeit "black money" from the battlefield.

-SIGINT and ISR platoons combined to collect and assess intelligence material that directly contributed to the removal of 560 enemies of Afghanistan from the battlefield.

-FET members conducted over 104 patrols with the Infantry counterparts and took a key role in the graduation of 3 classes of female Afghan Uniform Police.

-IEW maintained a 98% OR rate for all critical "high side" systems and also designed and managed the build of the new brigade-level Secure Compartmentalized Information Facility (SCIF) on FOB Lightning

-HQs supervised the retrograde and disposition of over $13 million worth of TPE equipment and conducted a jump of the CP from FOB Salerno to FOB Lightning without any loss of equipment or personnel.

Though the SIGMI Co experience was by and large a success, there are some significant limitations inherent in the task organization. First and perhaps most importantly, the SIGMI-Co concept's success was largely personality based. Strong and experienced leaders at all levels ensured that the transition was carefully managed and that the mission would be a success even with fewer people. The SIGMI Co concept would not necessarily work with all Signaleers nor all Military Intelligence professionals. Experience and interpersonal skills are highly important for all leaders involved in such an organization, especially the company command team.

The SIGMI Co command team also is required to regularly interact with their supported brigade staff officers (the brigade S2, and S6) and thusly should be "team players" who are well versed in both signal and MI operations. 1SG Jones has been in the Army for 28 years. CPT Martin had 33 months of command time and 43 months of KD time when standing up the SIGMI Co. Less-experienced leaders may have a more difficult time in managing such a diverse company, though it is certainly not beyond the reach of the agile leaders across our formations.

Secondly, the SIGMI Co had a massive property footprint, with over $31 million in organic property alone. Not only is there a great deal of expensive property during deployment, but it is dispersed across the entire brigade AO. This fact places a great deal of stress on the supply sergeant and executive officer, who should be experienced and intelligent individuals as well.

Lastly, the Soldiers themselves must be invested in both the success of the SIGMI Co and their individual platoon/ section's mission. This is simply not possible if the battalion and brigade's senior leaders are not invested in the concept itself. In both words and actions, the senior leaders must show the Soldiers that their behind-the-scenes contributions matter and are appreciated. This was very much the case within the 4th BSTB and Currahee Brigade, but may not be the case in other units where Combat Support Soldiers may be held in lower regard.

Broader lessons gleaned from the SIGMI Co experience

The achievements and story of the SIGMI Co Soldiers are worthy of telling; however, I would like to focus on some of the key lessons that could be broadly applied across the Signal and MI communities in order to improve efficiency and increase lethality as we move towards the "next war." The SIGMI Co experience proved several key facts. First, Signal and Military Intelligence company commanders do not have much of a daily job in a forward-deployed environment once their key systems are in place. Their Soldiers largely work under the direction of the brigade S6 and S2 respectively. Secondly, the technical Signal systems, known collectively as WIN-T, and the technical MI systems, such as the Trojan, have a great deal in common, both being tactical satellite-based communications systems. These systems and the maintenance of them could easily be consolidated into one program of record. This simple change would save both time and money by increasing interchangeability, streamlining supply requisition, and reducing redundancy in training. The Military Occupational Specialties (MOS's) that maintain this equipment could also be streamlined for a modest overall reduction in personnel (apx x1 CW2, x1 E5, x3 E1-E4). Finally, it is imperative that battalion commanders responsible for the signal and MI companies be well versed in the capabilities, limitations, and proper utilization of the specialty assets each element provides. This was the case with LTC Dillard; however, as the transition to Brigade Engineer Battalions (BEBs) is completed, more-battalion level commanders will have MI and Signal companies but little to no experience in either field.

Recommendations for the future application of the Signal and Military Intelligence Soldiers within the Infantry Brigade Combat Team

With the transition back to the BEB concept as alluded to above, the Army is taking an important step towards providing the maneuver commander with the actual route clearance, breaching, demolition, and construction capability that has been lacking. As this transition occurs, however, we are at risk for a further marginalization of the Signal and Military Intelligence assets within the Brigade. This marginalization and eventual reduction in capability and expertise is coming at a time when the realities of tomorrow's battlefield require both increased connectivity

and greater intelligence gathering and assessment capabilities. Furthermore, the transition to a smaller, more lethal force requires a greater integration of and dependence on all technological assets in order to maintain battlefield superiority. To that end I recommend a further restructuring of the Brigade Combat Team.

Under this concept, the Signal and MI companies would be removed from the BEB, freeing the engineers to focus purely on their engineer specific METL task. The Signal and MI companies would receive all 25- and 35-series personnel within the brigade HQs, with the exception of the staff primaries/NCOICs. This change would ensure that 25- and 35-series Soldiers receive the MOS-specific training they require and that brigade staff primaries are freed from the administrative tasks associated with managing Soldiers. Away from the BEB, the signal and MI companies would form the core of the proposed Communications, Intelligence Battalion (CIB).

A Cyber company would join those two companies to provide the brigade commander with offensive and defensive capability in the cyber realm, a capability which currently only exists at the strategic level. Joining the Information Assurance Venerability Assessment (IAVA - Defensive Cyber) and Offensive Cyber platoons would be an Electronics Warfare platoon tasked with managing electronic-warfare countermeasures and a Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) platoon in its traditional role. The HHC of the CIB would be responsible for the depot-level maintenance of the brigade's communication assets, absorbing the C & E shop (currently in the BSB) and the former Intelligence, Electronic Warfare platoon (IEW), currently in the MI Co (renamed Satellite-Based Systems Maintenance or SBSM). The HHC would also provide power generation support for the battalion and depot-level power generation systems maintenance for the brigade, an area with which the Army as a whole continues to have difficulty. The battalion would be commanded by a Signal, Military Intelligence, or Cyber functional-area-qualified commander.

The CIB would not be a battlespace owner, but would operate across the brigade's AO in order to support the maneuver commanders and their operations while simultaneously protecting the brigade network and targeting enemy C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computer and Information systems) at the brigade commander's direction. Though this change would be drastic at first, the benefits in synergistic effects would be immediate and would prepare the brigade combat team for the battlefield of the future.

Providing the brigade commander with both an offensive and defensive cyber capability would have several immediate benefits. First, in garrison, the IAVA platoon would replace the current Network Enterprise Center (NEC) concept, reducing the civilian workforce and its cost while making network maintenance support more responsive and accountable to the brigade chain of command. Secondly and more importantly, providing offensive cyber capability to the brigade commander is an important step towards placing the Army on an equal footing with those of the Far East. Currently, cyber capability is planned and executed solely at the strategic level, depriving maneuver commanders of potentially game-changing effects at the tactical and operational levels. With an offensive cyber capability, commanders in the field could shut down the enemy's command and control data network, publish contradictory orders to an opposing maneuver force across their own network, or read and access their opponent's entire battle

plan. The capabilities available within the cyber-warfare arena allow commanders to finally fight in all dimensions of the battlefield and are only now beginning to be realized.

Beyond the core capabilities that each company in the CIB provides, there is a larger synergistic effect to having the variety of disciplines together. Admittedly, it is difficult to illustrate synergy in order to see how this structure could benefit current commanders. The tactical example of these synergistic effects in the idea of "coms herding" is illustrative of what is possible. A typical coms-herding scenario is outlined below:

HUMINT reports a new enemy direct action cell in the brigade AO. This report is briefed to the EWO who assesses the data from each DUKE and THOR that has patrolled in the area. This data shows which frequencies are being utilized for EN C2 in the area, and, in this case, there are 5. The EWO consults with the Signaleers (to de-conflict friendly/host army frequencies) and SIGINTers (to support collection)in order to develop a jamming/coms-herding plan. The EW aircraft will jam frequencies 1, 2, 4, and 5 intermittently for 8-10 minutes, then jam completely those same frequencies for the duration of an hour. Simultaneously, SIGINTers collect on frequency 3 since all enemy traffic was willingly moved to that frequency due to perceived problems(static interference)with frequencies 1,2,4 and 5.

This operation is conducted in conjunction with a mounted infantry patrol through the suspected enemy area. Shadow TUAS scouts ahead of the patrol and pinpoints the enemy based on triangulation of the enemy position provided by the SIGINTers. The disposition of the enemy is communicated to the maneuver force utilizing BACN and Shadow aerial-retrains capability (FM), and the enemy position is marked on the FBCB2. The commander on the ground calls fire on the enemy position utilizing the Shadow to provide PID and clear CDE. The ground forces then move to the OBJ area where they clear it of enemy. The ground force commander sends digital photographs of the engagement site to his BN TOC via HPW (High Performance Waveform, AN/PRC 117F or AN/PRC 152), which are forwarded to the Brigade for assessment by the S2.

After consolidation on the OBJ, Soldiers enter the enemy KIA into the SEEK and the RTO uploads the data into the BATS terminal he's carrying and transmits it directly to the Brigade server via ANW2 (Automatic Networking Wideband Waveform, PRC 117G only) where the brigade analyst confirms at least two known enemy operatives were destroyed. The maneuver element stands by for further orders. SIGINTers collect chatter about the engagement that, along with HUMINT collection, will inform future lethal targeting. A prepared RIAB (Radio in a Box) radio message goes out to shape the local perception of the engagement.

The above scenario is completely possible now. All of the technology and skill sets exist within the brigade to provide that level of relevant support to the warfighter. Unfortunately, we rarely get there because the fluidity between enablers is often hampered by a distinct lack of unity of command and an overarching tendency for information to be stovepiped within each discipline. If we as commanders, with some of the largest staffs in history, have difficulty in making even tactical level successes (such as outlined above) happen, imagine how far behind we will be as technology continues to move forward. If we do not adjust our current glide path, the outlook is even grimmer as we look towards potentially facing a much more technologically advanced foe than we have in the last five major conflicts (Vietnam, Desert Storm, Somalia, OIF, OEF).

An intelligent enemy is the one who seeks to make our greatest strength into our greatest weakness, i.e. turn our technological superiority against us by exploiting our lack of coordination or by infiltrating our networks (cyber warfare.) The bottom line is that wars have always been and always will be fought and won by infantrymen. Technology is often posited as a replacement for "boots on the ground." Whether it's naval gunfire in the Pacific theater during WWII or shock and awe during OIF, true victory will always come at the hands of infantrymen. I am not suggesting that technology is a panacea for all the ills of warfare. What I am saying is that we are currently on the precipice of a great change in how we as an Army fight. The playing field of technology, which we formerly saw as being solely the purview of the United States, is becoming more level with each passing day. The victors in future large-scale engagements will be determined not solely by who is technologically superior or by who has the greatest mass but by who best integrates and utilizes the technological advances available to their advantage. We as leaders owe it to the infantryman on the ground to ensure we provide the best tools available to facilitate their mission. The CIB concept may not be the right or even the best answer, but we ignore the shifting dynamic afoot at our own peril. We must not allow ourselves to be the Army that prepares to fight the 20th century war as we head further into the 21st century.

HHC 4th BSTB After-Action Review

CPT Richard Cobb (HHC/4 BSTB)

Issue: Partnership with an allied nation and contracted host-nation personnel to conduct combat-support operations.

Discussion: HHC 4th BSTB was partnered with a Jordanian military unit and a contingent of contracted local Afghan Security Guards tasked to support the mission of base defense on FOB Salerno in Khost, Afghanistan, during the summer fighting season.

The 99-man Jordanian contingent was newly arrived and primarily tasked with perimeter security; they manned 9 of the 20 towers established on the base. This company element included a headquarters element with a Jordanian major as the commander. They received training from a National Guard unit on some of the key tasks for their planned mission prior to arrival in Afghanistan. A small team of US Army officers and NCOs accompanied them to Salerno to help with the transition.

Additionally, HHC, 4th BSTB had contracted Afghan Security Guards to support the base-defense mission. A third-party international contractor oversaw the hiring, training, and administrative requirements associated with their tasks. Shift supervisors were Afghan locals who had worked with the company for more than five years. The local Site Managers were three individuals from western countries (UK, Ireland, and USA). In addition to providing tower guards, Afghan guards supported the Entry Control Point (ECP) with 15 individuals.

While both partnered entities (Jordanian soldiers and ASG) shared some cultural similarities, neither respected nor worked with the other at the unit level.

Prior to our RIP, HHC and the outgoing unit communicated closely on the difficulties associated with the mission and the multiple elements within it. On our arrival into Salerno, the company began observing the tactical and logistical challenges inherent with two distinct languages and cultural differences. Some of the challenges included the establishment and enforcement of standards, establishment of SOPs, and execution of rehearsals. Our greatest asset when addressing these friction points was our use of interpreters. We used interpreters not only for the transfer of dialogue, but as a cultural bridge allowing for understanding and tolerance to compensate for lack of knowledge. Other mission frictions were resolved by planning and problem solving when working our SOPs. Since partnered personnel in our towers refused to work side by side, and there was a tactical advantage to rotate a unit's guard to different towers, we planned with leadership from each entity to execute rotations and shift changes at different times.

While there were inherent challenges in working with foreign organizations, there were significant contributions to the mission due to the diversity of the personnel executing the mission. The greatest advantage observed by leaders was the natural respect and deeply rooted connections that our Afghan and Jordanian partners had with the local villages. For a

US Soldier to approach a host-nation citizen, subtle indicators that can be used to determine friend or foe often go missed, but with our partners' background being similar or the same to our host nation, those subtle cues were noted and acted upon quickly and appropriately. While interacting with civilians, our Afghan counterparts also had an established trust since they were often from nearby tribes. When they spoke security on our behalf, the result was more welcomed, and led to a better reputation and fewer incidents for the unit.

Recommendation: Exercise the strengths of partnerships and mitigate the anticipated challenges. Once tasked to partner with foreign forces, develop leaders through formal and informal training to work with the specific culture and language. Once leaders are trained, focus individual, team, and collective training exercises to encompass cultural diversity and challenges the individual or unit may face during their partnership. During the training, include scenario-based exercises to shape the leader/Soldier thought process. Ensure these challenges are put to a tough and realistic test during the unit's rotation to JRTC. If time and funds are available, allow leaders an early opportunity to meet and work with partnering units.

Issue: Using combined low-density MOSs for base-defense operations.

Discussion: HHC, 4th BSTB was tasked to execute base-defense operations for FOB Salerno during what was anticipated to be a tough fighting season. The company was very successful with the fighting season, resulting in zero Level 1, 2, or 3 attacks against the FOB. Largely this was a result of the combined efforts of the BSTB and its subordinate companies. The company's role was to manage the day-to-day security requirements with respect to personnel, equipment, training, and administrative actions such as badging. HHC, BN is comprised of over 24 separate MOSs, few of which had any practical experience in security operations. During operations at the ECP or within the Base Defense Operations Cell, unique situations often arose where a security background contributed significantly. An example of this dealt with the exiting of personnel with laptops. The company adopted the SOP of screening all exiting laptops after discovering insurgent propaganda stored on a high-level interpreter's personal laptop. An MP stationed at the ECP recognized this as a potential issue and raised it to the company CP where it was decided to pass all data devices through Counter Intelligence. This SOP became very effective as it uncovered multiple insider threats or potential insider threats within the DFAC. To summarize, when developing SOPs and policies, having our security focused personnel in key positions was very beneficial. Once SOPS and policies are established, we found that execution was reliable from any MOS.

There were a couple unforeseen benefits that allowed increased mission performance due to the use of the varied MOSs on site. "Pro"s most observed by the leadership were their abilities to provide original thought to a scenario and the ability to have varied SMEs for military and non-military equipment readily available. Mission-essential barriers breaking down and convoys reconfiguring the ECP barriers with their trucks were reoccurring themes for the company. Having personnel with a mechanical background (like heavy equipment operator) mitigated the slow FSR process and allowed for continued mission readiness at all ECPs and with other base

defense operations. (Receiving timely support due to limited FSRs available throughout country was a persistent issue.)

The impact to Soldiers was also two sided. While it was advantageous for them to operate outside their common tasks and see a different part of the Army, it also resulted in a loss of experiential knowledge within their primary MOS as they operated in a deployed environment. This had an observed negative impact on the morale of some Soldiers.

Recommendation: Allow the task organization of mixed combat support and combat service support MOSs as appropriate, but ensure proper oversight to ensure that mission-essential knowledge is available and leadership are able to train and develop their subordinates on appropriate individual/ team/ collective tasks and oversee operations. When appropriate, rotate Soldiers to execute their primary MOS while deployed, allowing developmental growth within their PMOS. Lastly, emphasize heavy training on Soldiers Common Core Training tasks and instill the warrior spirit during all training events. Every Soldier is a rifleman first and should be trained and developed as such.

Havoc Company After-Action Review

CPT Tim Schriver (HHC 4th BCT)

Below are the lessons that 1SG Geleney and I learned during the Brigade's deployment to Khost and Paktya, Afghanistan from April 2013 to December 2013. We initially deployed to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Khost and then moved to FOB Lightning, Paktya as part of the Realignment / Retrograde operation. During the 6 months that our Company was on FOB Salerno, we were tasked with FOB Management of 5800 Soldiers at its highest point, while simultaneously providing administrative and logistical support to the Brigade staff, and retrograding as much excess equipment on the FOB as possible.

In September, the Brigade Headquarters moved from FOB Salerno to FOB Lightning. This was a large movement that took significant planning on multiple echelons to ensure that the jump would be a success. Once the Company arrived at FOB Lightning, we started preparation for our Relief In Place (RIP) with 3/10TH MTN. This process included merging our property book with multiple companies, based on the expected mission set that our replacement unit would have. The redeployment began late October / early November.

Issue: Moving the Brigade HQs and Company CP from one FOB to another while maintaining Mission Command of the Brigade.

Discussion: Identifying your operational requirements is paramount; we were not able to shut the old BCT TOC down until the new TOC was functional. A key requirement was the need for a duplicate set of ABCS systems to push forward with the first movement to FOB Lightning. To mitigate risks, each of the systems was tested for functionality prior to packing it up for movement.

Communication requirements must be completed at least 1 week prior to movement. This includes, but is not limited to identifying user accounts to be transferred to the next network. Another step that needs to be taken is to provide MAC addresses to the network admin for all automations equipment that will be added to the network. Our completion rate improved with subsequent flights after Soldiers were briefed on AAR comments from ADVON detailing the issues with setting up user accounts.

We had the following methods of movement and their respective time requirements: host-nation trucks took seven days, military convoy took two days, and slingload took two hours. Each of these had their own specific planning and coordination requirements. In summation, we used host-nation trucks for furniture and anything that was nice to have, but not required. Military convoy was used for everything that had to have a US escort, but we could operate without for up to four days. Slingloads were limited to the initial package of equipment that was required to get the BCT TOC and CO CP to initial operating capability and any last minute issues after that.

It is essential to establish priorities of equipment movement. This is directly tied to the time requirements for each type of movement as discussed above. In laying out the plan, ask yourself three questions: What equipment can move right away? What equipment is time sensitive? How much space is there on the receiving end? We were severely limited on storage space on the receiving end, so we timed our equipment movements to limit the amount of containers moving at one time. This gap provided us the adequate time needed to download the containers prior to moving them off of the FOB and back into the supply system. Ensure that you order moving materials to include tri-wall boxes, bubble wrap, seals, and tape. This step needs to be completed early so that the request can work its way through the supply system.

The movement plan for personnel must be focused on who is needed when and where. Our movement was broken up into five pushes: ADVON moved fifteen days prior, TAC five days prior, TOC I and TOC II moved twelve hours apart, and closed out with Trail ten days after. The ADVON personnel included the individuals that understood the layout of each of the shops and would ensure all equipment was set up correctly. TAC personnel were used to ensure all of the final touches were completed and to test the systems. TOC I was our day shift Soldiers that had just completed their shift and their only initial tasking upon arrival was to ensure they could log onto the systems and that their accounts were functional. Once complete they started making necessary preparations for their next shift of work. TOC II was comprised of the night shift Soldiers and functional staff sections. The Trail party was tasked with closing out the unit footprint at Salerno so that no one had to follow behind us to clean anything.

During our planning phase, we identified the need for specific teams to handle the important transitions. We developed four teams: the validation team, packing team, staging and pushing team, and the receiving and staging team. The validation team was used 3 weeks prior to the jump to ensure all of the systems were functional. This team was also part of the TAC element to ensure these systems were operational in the new setup. The packing team focused on ensuring that all equipment was packed correctly and that all of the paperwork was accurate and complete (1750s and 5748s). This was a secondary check to ensure all equipment was accounted for. The staging and pushing team was responsible for linking up with the MHE to ensure the equipment was moved to the correct yard and also to ensure that the personnel made movement on their scheduled aircraft. The receiving and staging team handled everything on the far end to ensure that all equipment and personnel made it to their required locations.

Recommendation: Start the planning process as early as possible and ensure that you are talking to your next higher element. Continue to push to get everything planned for, this will ensure that the transition goes as smooth as possible.

Issue: Managing a FOB with a seven mile perimeter and a population of 5800 Soldiers and civilians.

The greatest thing you can do to set yourselves up for success is to correctly select the team for Base Operations / Mayor's cell. The three main individuals are your NCOIC position, contract management, and billeting NCO. The right Soldier for each of these positions will pay dividends in the long run or end up causing you a lot of pain if the wrong Soldier is selected.

Develop a system of tracking the number of Soldiers and civilians on the FOB. This needs to be updated on a weekly basis and tie directly into the amount of required services that the logistical contractor has to provide.

There needs to be a forum to ensure that information gets out to the population of the FOB. We had two separate meetings to address this issue. The first meeting was a Town Hall style event where everyone on the FOB was invited. This was an unclassified meeting that covered a broad range of topics and allowed the civilian contractors a venue to voice their concerns. The second meeting was for military elements and addressed those topics that were sensitive in nature.

Once you assume responsibility of the FOB, ensure that all of the units and agencies on the FOB are identified and tracked. This will eliminate any potential headaches and drastically reduce the number of accountability issues that you could face.

Actively identify all of the contractors that are living and working on the FOB. This will give you a better understanding of who is here and also where you can cut personnel to reduce the FOB's footprint. We experienced a significant number of contractors who were living on the FOB, but not providing much of a service if at all. Get to know the logistical contractor well. This will help significantly as you learn the process of FOB maintenance. By regulation and contract, specific words must be in the work order or you will not get the desired outcome.

One area that will tend to get out of control if you do not pay attention to is transient housing. With Soldiers and civilians flowing in and out of the FOB on a daily basis, you will need to make checks on this area to track occupancy and cleanliness.

Recommendation: Set your team as early as possible to ensure success and continual work to better the systems that you put into place.