



LNO Missions as a Model for the Division Headquarters RIP/TOA Process

Richard C. Nash, Neal Loidolt and C. Bryan Tierney

Introduction

Situational understanding is the paramount goal of any Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) for a division commander as he accepts responsibility for his area of operations. This takes on even more urgency in counter insurgency or stability operations, as all the operational decisions and tactical employments that arise from protecting the population and rooting out insurgents takes on the gravity of strategic implications. The mobilization, and subsequent deployment, of the 34th ID Headquarters (HQ) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) created a unique challenge in preparing Soldiers for a challenging mission. For only the second time during OIF, an Army National Guard Division HQ had been assigned the responsibility of a Multi-National Division (MND) Area of Operations (AO).

The 34th ID HQ, better known as the “Red Bulls”, has a long and proud tradition dating back to World War I, but had not deployed as a full division headquarters since World War II. While the division headquarters and many of its members had recently deployed to Bosnia, Kosovo and to Iraq as part of 1st Brigade/34th ID, the scope and responsibilities required of this deployment would be much greater. Some of the challenges facing the Red Bulls were a shortened mobilization timeline, conversion to a larger Division HQ MTOE and a greatly expanded area of operations. Further, the Red Bulls would be conducting their RIP/TOA in Basra with the 10th Mountain (MTN) HQ who had just deployed their division headquarters from Victory Base Complex in Baghdad to the Basra Air Station. Complicating this TOA even more was the movement into a new facility on Basra, since the UK Division had operated with a much smaller staff from the Basra Airport Hotel, as their responsibility had reduced to one province. Though the 10th MTN HQ did the initial RIP/TOA with the UK Division in Basra on 31 March 2009, the Red Bulls would conduct their RIP/TOA with the 10th HQ MTN a mere 50 days later. Three previous MND AOs, encompassing nine provinces, were now officially the purview of one command, MND-S.

On 20 May 2009, the Red Bulls conducted their TOA Ceremony with the 10th MTN Division. Despite all these challenges, the higher headquarters of MNF-I and MNC-I remarked that this was one of the smoother MND RIP/TOAs they had seen occur. One of the leading reasons for the ease of the transition was the implementation of a specific program to help the Red Bulls gain the necessary situational understanding required of a complicated TOA.

Background

The OIF Division RIP/TOA process is a daunting task, even when the conditions are relatively well known and with units that have done several previous rotations. Though the Red Bulls had some recent pertinent experience in deployments, this RIP/TOA was going to be significantly different.

The 34th ID HQ came into the process with experience deploying and conducting RIP/TOAs in SFOR 14 and KFOR 5B. While these experiences were valuable in deploying the division into a Stability Operations environment, the division was task organized on a smaller scale that would not translate easily into the OIF environment. These Brigadier General level commands were organized more along a brigade model and not to the scope and depth of the current division MTOE.

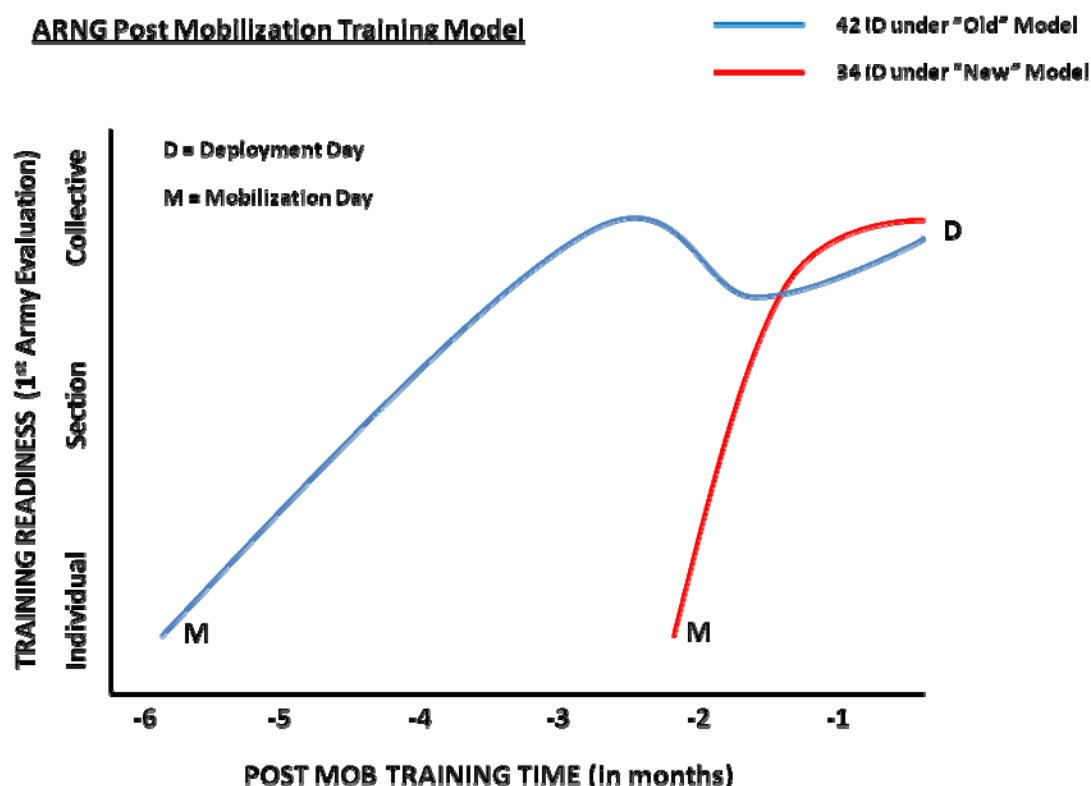
Members of the Red Bulls had Iraq Theater experience when 1st Brigade, 34 ID (1/34 BCT) mobilized and deployed as a Security Force (SECFOR) Brigade for OIF 06-08. Part of the 1/34 BCT mission set was convoy security in the southern part of the country where the 34 ID HQ would be deploying, and of particular note is the 34th ID HQ Deputy Commanding General for Operations, BG David Eliciero, had been the 1/34 BCT Commander during that rotation. While his experience, coupled with other members spread across the Red Bulls staff, helped with situational awareness of the area it did not necessarily inform the mission set the 34th ID HQ would be conducting. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers from this rotation were now serving in higher grades and had little to no experience at the division level. Ultimately, over 80%¹ of the staff deploying with the Red Bulls had no previous deployment experience, so the “learning curve” of the staff was steep.

Another experience the Red Bulls had to draw upon was the 42d ID, “Rainbow” Division of the New York National Guard, who mobilized in support of OIF 03-05. They were the first Army National Guard Division HQ to deploy as an MND battle-space owner but were in the northern part of the country. Although the Red Bulls command group would be able to spend a day with the 42nd leadership, to include the commander, MG Taluto, many of the training and RIP/TOA lessons learned were difficult to apply to a different environment and mobilization training model. Some lessons learned from the Rainbow Division mobilization related to the mechanics of their RIP/TOA but the area of the country and the operating environment were different enough that parallel comparisons were unhelpful. The Rainbow Division mobilized under the legacy policy of a 545 day mobilization of MOB – TRAIN – DEPLOY. The division spent 6 months in training at FT DIX, NJ in preparation for the mission. Following their post-mobilization training, the 42nd ID deployed to Iraq for twelve months.

The 34th ID was selected for an OIF rotation in January of 2008, approximately 13 months before mobilization and 16 months before Transfer of Authority (TOA). In the period since the 42d ID’s mobilization, mobilization policies for National Guard units had changed significantly. Previously, 525 day mobilizations were common while the new mobilization policy limited units to a 400 day mobilization period. To maintain a viable “boots on ground” time, the MOB-

¹ 1148 Soldiers assigned – 932 Soldiers (0) previous deployments, 155 Soldiers (1) previous deployment, 61 Soldiers (2 or more) previous deployments (Does not account for IRR or AC fills).

TRAIN-DEPLOY model had to be modified. The significance of this new and reduced training model cannot be overstated. While allowing sufficient time for individual and some section training, the division staff would have little time to form the collective team and shared training experiences. The chart below depicts the significance of this new model on the ability to get ready for a complex mission in a short period of time.



Situational Awareness/Training Gap Identified

Since the Red Bulls would be operating under a one year mobilization policy for this mission the Red Bull Commander, MG Nash, made the decision to conduct collective training later in the pre-mobilization timeline to allow for individual training to be completed at home station. Individual training was under individual state Adjutant General (TAG) oversight and also allowed all Soldiers required in the collective plan to be present and able to focus on the Division training objectives and mission. This decision helped to reduce the amount of time the Red Bulls spent at the mobilization station which maximized the 34th ID HQ boots on ground (BOG) under the 12 month mobilization policy. The majority of the individual Soldiers tasks were accomplished during Individual Duty Training (IDT) and Annual Training (AT) periods. In addition to regularly scheduled drills, individual training was accomplished by Pre mobilization Training and Assistance Element (PTAE) that provided training in three 5-day increments. 1st Army provided oversight of this training so it met established Southwest Asia (SWA) and 1st Army individual mobilization training requirements.

The one major pre-mobilization collective training event for the 34th ID HQ was the I Corps Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) in October 2008 as they prepared for their MNC-I Mission.

The Red Bulls participated with all their senior leadership and key staff at FT Lewis (which was the Division's mobilization site) to gain understanding of the in-theater Area of Operations and their role as MND-S. The timing and participation in this event was crucial, as only four months later the 34th ID HQ would mobilize and conduct collective training at FT Lewis, where time was short (effectively two months) with the net effect being little opportunity to collaborate with deployed counterparts from the higher HQ, I Corps and 10th MTN HQ.

Another factor that the Red Bulls had to contend with was being the first ARNG Division Headquarters to deploy under a new MTOE and with enablers that would make the headquarters significantly bigger. The HQ moved to a significantly larger MTOE size of approximately 895 personnel which now accounts for War Fighting Functional (WFF) areas. The WFF areas had to be coupled with traditional G-Staff roles which was a new concept for many on the staff. Further complicating the staff organization structure were the numerous staff enablers² that a multi-national division is augmented with in OIF. The MTOE staff had no experience in operating with the new enablers and so had little understanding of their employment at this level. Ultimately, the Red Bulls "didn't know what we didn't know" and so were not in a position to ask the right questions, which led to confusion on initial e-mail exchanges with the 10th MTN HQ.

While there are established programs known as the Pre Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) and Leaders Recons that help units with the RIP/TOA Process; they tend to be relatively short (one week) and often give the staff sections little time to really understand the issues as they are focused on senior leader situational awareness. The PDSS is limited by the number of participants (no more than 12 personnel) and frequency (usually only two are allowed). The Red Bulls realized they needed to find a way, outside of traditional methods, for tying into the unit they would replace and attempt to build a higher level of situational awareness.

Genesis of Embedded LNO Missions

The Embedded Liaison Officer (LNO) Mission concept was one that made absolute sense, especially based on the late notification of sourcing for the 34th ID HQ. MG Nash attended a FORSCOM Commander Conference in late 2007 where General Campbell proposed the idea that units deployed to OIF/OEF and those "close range" units about to rotate in ought to establish a reach forward/reach back capability to exchange ideas and concepts. It seemed natural to send forward the WFF Staff at an appropriate time based on the changing environment in order to build relationships, situational awareness and to leverage the ability of the deploying division to establish a base of knowledge with forces that would be back for collective training at the collective training events.

MG Nash identified to his Chief of Staff and G3 a need to not only better understand the operating environment but also how the 10th MTN HQ was organized as Multi-National Division-Center. He ultimately decided on a conceptual model to "fall in" on the 10th MTN staff structure and processes for the first 30 days of the deployment. MG Nash's stated intent was to adopt current 10th MTN HQ procedures to include Board, Bureaus, Centers, Cells and Working Groups (B2C2WG), command group decision making processes and senior level knowledge

² I.E.: Human Terrain Analysis Teams (HTAT), Red Team, Iraqi Advisory Task Force (IQATF), Improved Explosive Device – Defeat Task Force (IED-D TF)

sharing and situational awareness. The 34th ID Commander's end state would be a seamless RIP/TOA that created "no harm" to subordinate BCTs for the first 30 days and to try and avoid any traditional "gaps and seams" in staff knowledge. The best method for facilitating this vision during the pre-deployment time period became the challenge.

Initial discussions centered on possibly mobilizing and deploying the relatively few staff members with experience early to embed with the 10th MTN HQ staff for continuity. However, the mechanics of this could not be worked in time and MG Nash ultimately believed that these personnel were more important for collective training and the unit needed their maximum "boots on ground" time for the duration of the 34th ID HQ deployment.

The idea of embedding liaison officers in the 10th MTN HQ staff was raised by MG Michael Oates, the 10th MTN DIV Commander, during the 34th ID HQ visit to the 10th MTN HQ Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) in February 2008. The 10th MTN HQ had embedded Soldiers with the 3rd ID HQ during their preparation period and prior to their TOA. MG Oates attributed many early successes to having someone physically on ground with the unit he was to replace. MG Oates offered this to the 34th ID HQ and the two commanders agreed on a new model. Not only would the Red Bulls be able to gain insight to the coming mission but they would also provide the 10th MTN HQ with additional help and a regular conduit to their follow-on unit. Based on the MG Nash vision and the Mountain 6 offer, the Red Bull staff decided the best way to understand the 10th MTN Division would be through focused LNO missions. The doctrinal definition served the Red Bulls well in guiding what they were looking to accomplish with the LNO missions.

Liaison is that contact or intercommunication maintained between elements of military forces or other agencies to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action (JP 3-08). Liaison helps reduce the fog of war through direct communications. It is the most commonly employed technique for establishing and maintaining close, continuous physical communication between commands. Commanders use liaison during operations and normal daily activities to help facilitate communication between organizations, preserve freedom of action, and maintain flexibility. Liaison provides senior commanders with relevant information and answers to operational questions. It ensures they remain aware of the tactical situation.³

The 34th ID staff began to analyze the full scope of the LNO Program. What is the right length of time for an LNO tour? What staff sections need to participate and who from the staff section should participate? How many rotations can the 10th MTN support? How many Soldiers can 10th MTN support during each LNO tour? What is the impact on the 34th ID HQ Training Program? This became the basis of the staff analysis process as the plan was developed.

Embedded LNO Missions Plan Takes Shape

There was no existing concept for the 34th ID HQ to follow in implementing an LNO program with a deployed Army division. The Division Chief of Staff, through recommendations by each primary staff officer, pushed for more detail with careful consideration made as to which WFF

³ FM 6-0, Command and Control of Army Forces, August 2003

would benefit the most from the use of the liaison program. For example, because of the complexity of the OIF Operational Environment (OE), the 34th ID HQ G-2 participated in the first liaison rotation as a means to ensure that subsequent Red Bull training and preparation included the most current information possible regarding the OIF OE. Likewise, leading the LNO program with a primary staff officer provided MG Nash and his staff an LNO with significant experience in Army operations and military staff functions. This enabled the Division to develop an initial understanding of not only the organization of the intelligence WFF, but also how the current unit was conducting its B2C2WGs and the unit's organization for combat.

Reviewing the Division's training calendar and coordinating with 10th MTN HQ, the leadership determined that each LNO rotation would be no more than 6 Soldiers and that each rotation would be 3-4 weeks, inclusive of travel. This would allow a 34th ID Soldiers about 2-3 weeks of actual boots on ground time, working in their respective cell with their 10th MTN counterparts, while trying to avoid undue disruption to their respective 10th MTN staff section. The rotations were scheduled across the remaining pre-mob training period which resulted in a total of 8 rotations, up to the 34th ID HQ mobilization on 10 Feb 09. Of importance to note is the augmentation this gave the 10th MTN staff as well. LNOs were placed against the 10th MTN HQ Unit Identification Code (UIC) and position paragraph and line numbers. Thus 10th MTN HQ was able to fill vacancies in their manning document and the length of the rotations was enough to allow for substantive contributions from the Red Bull LNOs.

Challenges of T10/Institutional Army

The first major challenge was to determine the most effective method in which to deploy Soldiers. Each Soldier was a volunteer and this time away would not count against their mobilization time. It was understood that Active Guard /Reserve (AGR) Soldiers could travel into theater on a DD 1610, since these are Soldiers who serve full-time under federal (Title 10) and state (Title 32) authorities. The more difficult area to tackle was the Soldiers who served as full-time federal technicians or were traditional "drilling" guardsmen. It was understood that these Soldiers had to request to mobilize under the current process for mobilizing and deploying for up to a year and this required input of a mobilization packet through the DAMPS⁴ process.

Gaining approval of the plan was the second step. 34th ID HQ staffers, working with the Minnesota Joint Force Headquarters Mobilization Readiness section, outlined a procedure to deploy the three types of Soldiers from the different pay statuses, in support of the LNO mission. The initial Title 10 headquarters identified as the approval authority for the LNO movement was First U.S. Army. Both headquarters quickly accepted the concept and provided approval. However, National Guard Bureau (NGB) and the Department of the Army (DA) HQ, the two higher headquarters of the State and First Army were not identified as key nodes and they quickly became obstacles to the LNO program. These headquarters tied up the initial packets and

⁴ Department of the Army Mobilization Process System - system use by the Department of the Army for tracking the mobilization process of US Army Reserve and Army National Guard units and individuals.

refused to approve the deployment of the identified Soldiers. In both cases these headquarters felt that the 34th ID HQ was attempting to circumvent existing PDSS⁵ rules.

Ultimately, a personal visit by the Red Bull Chief of Staff to each headquarters convinced them that the plan was related to assisting the 10th MTN HQ and training 34th ID HQ personnel, not an attempt to increase PDSS throughput. The Chief was able to outline the MG Nash intent: This program is not a “back room deal” between operational headquarters, that all parties were on the “same sheet of music” as to the purpose of these tours and that the LNOs have the necessary force protection training and were administratively cleared to deploy.

With the plan finally approved, the movement of 34th ID HQ Soldiers into theater could begin. However the first three tours were delayed and almost cancelled because procedural “hurdles” and institutional “mindsets” were difficult to change. As the Soldiers were initially being sent to conduct their mission to support the 10th MTN HQ, confusion ensued to where they should report. The first attempts at sending 34th ID HQ Soldiers into theater began with Soldiers reporting to Ft. Drum, New York. However, this option was immediately withdrawn because it provided no assurances that these Soldiers would move into theater. Instead, each Soldier was sent to the CONUS Replacement Center – Ft. Benning, Georgia and deployed into theater from there. This ensured the Soldiers had completed required theater training and were guaranteed movement.

The final plan for 34th ID HQ Soldiers now had a clear procedure. Selected Soldiers completed a mobilization packet no later than 30 days prior to departure date and upon approval of the mobilization packet a reservation was made at the CRC. The Soldiers deployed to Ft. Benning for training, equipping and onward movement. Upon arrival in Kuwait, the 10th MTN HQ LNO received the Red Bull personnel and assisted with their movement to Victory Base Complex and 10th MTN HQ.

LNO Mission Success Once in Theater

This reach forward concept allowed the 34th ID HQ to have visibility on intelligence, operations, logistics and current decisions on possible courses of action as the 10th MTN DIV HQ contemplated moving their HQs to the southern part of Iraq and expanding their area of operations. This concept started to build the team atmosphere between the two headquarters that was evident during the smooth left seat/right seat rides and RIP/TOA process. The 34th ID CDR sent the right LNO team to Iraq initially in order to make the right first impression with the “Climb to Glory” Division and to ensure this unique process was immediately successful. MG Nash and his Chief of Staff spent considerable time discussing what WFFs and officers needed to lead the inaugural attempt at this unique opportunity.

They decided on the Intelligence WFF Chief, LTC Chris Tatarka, to lead the 34th ID HQ first LNO Team mission to Iraq. This individual is extremely talented and well versed in tactical, operational and strategic intelligence. He had extensive experience with the use and deployment

⁵ Pre Deployment Site Survey – Existing rules specify a short time, usually a week, and only certain staff members who may attend. The PDSS is related strictly to understanding current mission sets and is not designed to specifically augment the existing staff or provide training for the deploying staff.

of national level intelligence assets. He also had the complete confidence of the Army G2, LTG Kimmons, by virtue of the fact that he supplied the 34th ID HQ with world class intelligence officers and warrant officers in an area that the Red Bulls had not been able to fill based on length of schools and availability of Soldiers. LTC Tatarka went to Iraq and embedded with the 10th MTN HQ as the MG Nash personal representative of the 34th ID HQ with guidance to make this pioneering plan work. He was embraced by the 10th MTN Command Group and Staff which set the right tone for subsequent LNO Missions.

The improved situational understanding of the OE he gained provided the genesis for a successful post mobilization training plan. Each of the 10th MTN HQ G-2 leaders was able to provide insight as to what training or experiences they had during their pre-deployment training and which of those were valuable or which were less successful. For example, the 10th MTN HQ G-2 staff emphasized the importance of pre-mobilization Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) Training and the value of ensuring that SIGINT Soldiers were fully prepared for their duties through a variety of training courses and virtual right seat rides prior to mobilization. Because of this shared knowledge during the LNO tour, the Red Bulls G-2 section secured training funds and training seats specifically based on these recommendations. As a result of the guidance provided by the 10th MTN HQ G-2 section, by the time the 34th DIV HQ had mobilized, the 34th ID HQ SIGINT section was, according to the Commander of U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command “the best prepared Reserve Component SIGINT Soldiers to ever deploy into Theater.”

One of the key initial steps in the program started prior to the trip with the development of a group of products (shown in table below) to guide each LNO. Each LNO was required to develop RFIs, accompanied by a personal biography and what each individual wanted to accomplish while deployed. This information was sent to the 10th MTN HQ in order to help them understand each LNO’s experience and gave them a list of RFI’s to prepare for prior to the trip. The pre-trip RFI’s allowed the 10th MTN HQ to have an informational packet already prepared when the LNO arrived. Informational packets allowed the Red Bull LNO time to quickly address information requirements and focus on new topics as questions arose. These topics also helped to give the LNO new ideas about how to train for and conduct the mission and provide continuity to the next LNO trip that was coming. These new ideas were shared across staff sections at home station and further incorporated in the 34th ID HQ Training Plan.

Required LNO Mission Products

<u>Product</u>	<u>Responsible Section/LNO</u>
• Commander's Intent for LNO Program	• Chief of Staff
• Standards of Conduct during LNO Missions	• Chief of Staff
• Individual LNO Mission Rotation Expectations	• Individual LNO
• LNO Biography	• Individual LNO
• Red Bull CG RFI	• Chief of Staff G3
• Section Individual RFI	• Division Staff Sections Individuals
• Weekly LNO Updates	• Individual LNO
• End of Mission Trip Report	• LNO Rotation OIC

Required LNO Mission Products Chart⁶

Once in theater the LNOs were quickly assimilated into the 10th MTN Staff. They were afforded desk space, attended regular battle rhythm events and helped produce staff products where appropriate. In several instances they travelled with the senior leadership on battlefield circulation or with the staff on trips to key areas they would not have been able to on a PDSS. One of the Plans LNOs flew with the DCG-O, BG Buchanan, across the entire MND-C AO, sitting in on briefs with battalion commanders. Other LNOs were able to fly to Basra and see what would become the future MND-S HQ site, even though this planning was still in the embryonic stage and the decision to move the MND from Baghdad to Basra would not come until months later. The ability to fully participate and serve with the 10th MTN HQ staff was integral to the LNO Mission Program success and the key difference from a PDSS.

The LNO Mission gave the Red Bull Soldiers a basic understanding of the operating environment and current mission set of the 10th MTN DIV HQ, which became monumentally useful to developing staff members' understanding of their role in the ever changing counter insurgency environment of Iraq. Better situational understanding made the train up time for the 34th ID more productive and focused. This created a reliable pull system that the 34th ID HQ could "hang their hat on" as the LNOs were able to free 10th MTN HQ from a traditional push of information that may or may not have been the information required. Because LNOs came from all WFF and comprised both officer and NCO grades, a varied perspective was used to develop the training plan. The Red Bulls were able to develop individual, section and staff specific training plans based on lessons learned during these LNO missions.

As an example, the LNO tours enabled the Red Bulls an enhanced ability to gain access to the 10th MTN HQ Portal and a wealth of information from 10th MTN HQ products, it also enabled the ability to "prove a negative." That is, since many of the products developed by a Division

⁶ Required LNO Mission Products were those products, at a minimum, that the commander and chief of staff required of each LNO mission rotation into theater.

staff are based on significant activity reporting or on events which occur in an area, it can be cognitively difficult to consider those areas which do not have SIGACTs or other events being reported. For example, in August 2008, one portion of the MND-C Operating Environment was consistently reporting less enemy related SIGACTs than other areas. On the surface, prior to the LNO tour, the logical conclusion from the Red Bull G-2 section was simply that less extremist activity occurred in that area and it was clearly not an area worth significant consideration relative to high threat areas.

However, given time to spend with the 10th MTN HQ G-2, Intelligence LNOs were able to ascertain that the reason for the lack of SIGACTs was not simply reduced number of insurgents, but rather, a focused effort by the Brigade Combat Team to conduct successful counter-insurgency operations which had reduced the number of SIGACTs and made the area less hospitable for extremists. Therefore, rather than mentally discount that area as “quiet” during its train-up, the Red Bulls G2 section instead took the time to develop an understanding of what factors made that area “quiet.” This led to far greater situational understanding which would likely not have occurred by simply viewing products and briefing materials.

This further became essential to providing the Red Bull leadership early insights as to how to shape their post mobilization collective training. Under the new post mob training model, having key personnel forward to provide this feedback was not just advantageous but in retrospect became essential. This allowed the staff to understand what battle rhythm events were paramount to the commander’s understanding and allowed for the training to be shaped not just for the leadership but also at the action officer level in a way that would be meaningful for both. As an example, Key Leadership Engagement (KLE) of Iraqi leadership was further defined and weaved into the 34th ID HQ MRX as a result of the LNO mission understanding of how important the engagement program was in theater. The training would not have had the texture and depth it did, had it been “gleaned” from power point slides and weekly VTCs among the senior leadership. “Face-to-face” and “hands-on” work by the LNOs allowed the staff to do its job more effectively in preparing the training content.

Ultimately, the LNO missions allowed the members of the Red Bulls the ability to establish relationships with their counterpart in the 10th MTN HQ. The relationship that was developed between the 34th ID HQ and 10th MTN HQ staff members during the LNO trip was instrumental in providing a base of knowledge for the particular staff role and the staff section as a whole. This relationship did not end when each LNO mission ended, rather it continued during the 34th ID HQ train-up process and through the entire Red Bull deployment process, providing a shared comfort and confidence level between the staffs that was unique. Current doctrine underscores this relationship:

“Prepare during Execution: Get Ready for Handover from Day One - It is unlikely the insurgency will end during a troop’s tour. There will be a relief in place, and the relieving unit will need as much knowledge as can be passed to them...The corporate memory this develops gives Soldiers and Marines the knowledge they need to stay alive. Passing it on to the relieving unit does the same for them. It also reduces the loss of momentum that occurs during any handover.”⁷

⁷ FM 3-24, Counter Insurgency, Appendix A, 15 Dec 06.

The development of these relationships helped in the RFI process, the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Division and the development of the training plan for the 34th ID HQ. These relationships were essential to understanding the ever changing mission that the Red Bulls would assume, and led to what was universally acknowledged as a seamless RIP/TOA.

MG Nash thoughts on the LNO Mission: “Based on my experience with the LNO Mission and the subsequent successful RIP/TOA process I could not have been more pleased. It undoubtedly took a willing partner I found in MG Michael Oates, his command group and the entire 10th MTN DIV staff and Soldiers. Our team, ideas, training plans and support for exercises were totally embraced from the moment MG Oates and I spoke of how we could partner and ensure the FORSCOM Commander’s guidance of reach forward/reach back worked. I am a huge proponent of the pre-mobilization/post-mobilization training plan that was developed by our G-3, COL Jon Jensen, in concert with 1st Army, 10th MTN DIV and BCTP. We were totally supported throughout our training from the AC/RC components and the efforts of so many made the RIP/TOA a total success and the stage for very rewarding first 100 days in Iraq without a loss of momentum to the programs and operations the 10th MTN HQ had in place.”

Way Ahead

The Red Bulls highly recommend that the LNO Mission Program become part of any ARNG DIV HQ conducting the RIP/TOA process and for any Active Component DIV HQ to consider it as well. However, this will require Army senior headquarters streamline the process in order to facilitate an ARNG DIV HQ ability to maximize the value of LNO missions. All Soldiers should be able to deploy for a “short tour” in TDY status, as long as they are medically and administratively prepared, regardless of their active or “drilling” reserve status.

Integrating this program into training is important. The Red Bulls were able to leverage the knowledge gained from these tours to effectively implement a training plan that immensely enhanced their situational understanding. This cannot be done under the current model which stresses individual, “check the box” type training for tasks that are focused at the company and battalion level. Rather, pre- and post-mobilization training must stimulate and capitalize on the requirements of stability and counter-insurgency operations for a higher level headquarters that leverages the military experience of senior officer and NCOs. The training must be knowledge based on the specific environment that acknowledges the difficulties of operating in the operational/higher tactical level realm of a division headquarters. The LNO mission underscores this model and enables the RIP/TOA process in a meaningful way.

The importance of these tours cannot be overstated and the Red Bulls recommend that they become codified in the Division RIP/TOA process for ARNG divisions under the new mobilization model. They afford an insight into how to organize in the complex environment of counterinsurgency and stability operations. This allows commanders the sure knowledge that their staff has better situational understanding as they assume a mission after RIP/TOA in the difficult first hundred days.

MG Nash sums up the effort thus: “I am a strong believer in maintaining the ability to send selected WFF staff and Soldiers to the theater for specific, agreed upon times and for defined durations. Timing of the LNO missions is as important as those selected. Too far from the RIP/TOA does not add value, rather culminate the LNO missions and working sessions embedded in the staff of the deployed unit just before the collective training event or MRX. I have discussed the benefits of the program with LTG Thurman, Army G-3, and how I appreciated his support for our limited LNO missions and the positive results. I also spoke to General Campbell and provided many examples of why we need to consider this program in the pre-deployment cycle of a deploying Reserve Component Division as a minimum and possibly for all deploying division headquarters.”

Major General Richard C. Nash is assigned as Commander of the 34th Infantry “Red Bull” Division, headquartered in Rosemount, Minnesota and currently commands Multi National Division South in Basra, Iraq. General Nash’s military service began with his enlistment into the Infantry in 1972. General Nash later commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry from Officer Candidate School and has commanded at every level from company to multinational task force. Prior to his current Division Commander assignment, General Nash served as Special Assistant to the Combatant Commander, North American Aerospace Command, United States Northern Command. General Nash also served as the Commanding General for the Multinational Brigade (North), SFOR-14 in support of Operation Joint Forge, Bosnia Herzegovina, a tour he performed while serving as Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver) for the 34th Infantry “Red Bull” Division.

Colonel Neal Loidolt assumed his duties as Chief of Staff, Main Command Post, 34th Infantry Division, on 1 October 2006, and is currently Chief of Staff for Multi National Division South in Basra, Iraq. He recently deployed to Iraq as the Deputy Director of Operations, Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, United States Mission – Iraq. Prior to his mobilized tour, he served simultaneously as Commander, 175th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) and Director of Personnel, Minnesota Army National Guard, at the State Headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has been a National Guardsman for more than 22 years and a full-time soldier for over 15 years.

Lieutenant Colonel C. Bryan Tierney is currently deployed with the 34th Infantry Division, Main Command Post and serves as Deputy Chief of G3 Future Operations, for Multi-National Division South in Basra, Iraq. After graduating from the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth in 2006, LTC Tierney served as the primary planner for G3, I Corps HQ at Fort Lewis, for numerous contingencies in the Pacific Theater and their HQ training program prior to their current deployment as Multi National Corps – Iraq. He has been a National Guardsman for 20 years and a full-time soldier for 12 years.

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