



We're Back

Well, we never really went away. We helped 332 pieces get the visibility they're due by publishing them in single article format since September, 2007. But this issue announcing some of the winners of our first writing competition (see p. 5) marks our return to regular publishing of select works in a proper journal style. We will continue to bring you what we can when we can: news and commentary via the SWJ Blog, longer pieces via the Journal online, and now these regular "print" issues, too -- at least this freely distributed PDF e-zine that you can print yourself if you so choose. Look for another edition shortly with more winners and more news about Small Wars Foundation.
- Dave & Bill

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CORDS and the Whole of Government Approach

Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Beyond

by Richard Weitz, Ph.D.

Grand Prize Winner, Question #2

All too often, the U.S. national security system has proven unable to integrate its diplomatic, military, economic, and other elements of national power adequately. The weak integration, due primarily to poor interagency cooperation, has presented particular problems for the United States when waging counterinsurgencies. The new U.S. counterinsurgency field manual, FM 3-24, points out that "military efforts are necessary and important to counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power."¹

The case of the Vietnam War—sometimes misperceived as a counterinsurgency failure—shows how the United States can conduct such campaigns more effectively. Confronting what until recently was the most extensive counterinsurgency and nation-building challenge the U.S. national security community had ever faced, the U.S. gov-

ernment adopted a novel civil-military strategy that achieved remarkably rapid if limited successes under trying conditions. The experience offers lessons to current and future U.S. policymakers as they grapple with new COIN challenges.

Background

Until 1968, U.S. and South Vietnamese military forces concentrated on killing the Viet Cong (VC) insurgents and North Vietnamese combat units present in the Republic of (South) Vietnam (RVN) as well as disrupting, primarily through air strikes and ground interdiction offensives, the flow of reinforcements and supplies through the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam to the South. In addition, Operation Rolling Thunder sought to induce Hanoi to curb its support for the insurgency by inflicting measured pain through aerial bombardment. Neither South Vietnamese military units nor the many American combat forces that entered after 1965 proved very adept at defeating the insurgents or preventing the infiltration of reg-

¹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C., December 15, 2006), p. 2-1.

ular North Vietnamese units and logistical support into the South. The Viet Cong regularly retained the initiative and contested the control of the Government of (South) Vietnam (GVN) over large areas. Critics of the attrition strategy then adopted by U.S. and RVN forces called for greater efforts at local area defense, aggressive small-unit patrolling that relied on surprise ambushes rather than massive firepower, and “pacification” measures to weaken popular support for the insurgency.

In the context of the Vietnam War, “pacification” referred to “the collection of programs by which the United States attempted to assist the Saigon government to gain control over and build popular support throughout the RVN.”² The objective of these programs, which received increased resources as the war progressed, was to deprive the VC of support among the rural population by protecting villagers from VC intimidation through military, police, and intelligence activities. The expectation was that the enhanced security would decrease support for the insurgency by establishing conditions for sustained economic growth and more effective GVN performance. Successful pacification

requires a whole-of-government approach to achieve the tight connection between the military and civil dimensions of the conflict. Although pacification involves non-military programs such as land reform and good governance measures, it entails an essential military security dimension as well.³ The population needs long-term security to feel comfortable cooperating with the government against the insurgents. According to former U.S. military officer and later senior CORDS administrator John Paul Venn, “Whether security is ten percent of the total problem or ninety percent, it is inescapably the *first* ten percent or the *first* ninety percent.”⁴

Although many U.S. and RVN agencies participated in pacification, their efforts were initially poorly integrated. The U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) provided military training to the RVN Army, but the command’s assets were outside the control of the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Despite regular meetings between the MACV Commander and the American ambassador,

² David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 150-151.

³ Andrew F. Krepinovich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 12.

⁴ Cited in Ronald H. Spector, *After Tet: The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1993), p. 283.



Watch for [Robert Haddick's](#) weekly editorial, [This Week at War](#). Friday evenings at Foreign Policy.

SMALL WARS JOURNAL

Editor in Chief Dave Dilegge
Publisher Bill Nagle

Small Wars Journal is published by Small Wars Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. If you value this material, please consider supporting us in our efforts to bring it to you.

Business Office
4938 Hampden Ln, #560
Bethesda, MD 20814
office@smallwarsjournal.com

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This issue and the SWJ writing competition are made possible, in large part, by the support of Smith Richardson Foundation, with our particular thanks to Dr. Nadia Schadow and Dr. Marin Strmecki.

military-civilian coordination was weak.⁵ Poor integration also prevailed among the programs run by the various civilian agencies, which differed in mission approaches, goals, and chains of command but continued to grow in size and complexity. For example, the State Department, Department of Agriculture, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Information Service (USIS), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and other U.S. government agencies pursued separate and conflicting pacification initiatives without an integrated strategy.⁶ The American and RVN pacifica-

⁵ Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: US Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986), p. 90.

⁶ William Colby, with James McCargar, *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), pp. 82, 191; and Robert Shaplen, *The Road From War: Vietnam, 1965-1970* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 158.

tion programs were also poorly coordinated.⁷ The lack of a single major agency or directing body meant that pacification “was everybody’s business and nobody’s.”⁸

Despite the evident confusion and inefficiency, repeated efforts to integrate pacification activities better before 1967 failed. Reform proposals sought only improved coordination, not unified command or direction. They also addressed only civilian program efforts, leaving the military to conduct its own war.⁹ Representatives of the State Department and the CIA resisted consolidating U.S. pacification efforts under the military.¹⁰ Past experience had persuaded the civilian agencies that the military would pay insufficient attention to pacification and treat it as an adjunct to conventional military operations.¹¹ The military’s overwhelming presence in the RVN, however, made it difficult for civilian U.S. government agencies to operate efficacious independent pacification programs.

NSAM 362

On May 9, 1967, President Lyndon Johnson took a radical step to overcome these coordination problems. He signed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 362, which established the “Civil Operations and Revolutionary [later ‘Rural’] Development Support Directorate.” Johnson appointed his chief pacification advisor, Robert W. Komer, to head the new organization with the rank of ambassador. The organizational structure of CORDS established a unique model for promoting an integrated approach to COIN activities. CORDS adopted the unprecedented approach of aligning nearly all the civilian and military interagency assets involved in the counterinsurgency under one civilian manager—and then placing that civilian within the military hierarchy as a Deputy Commander of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). For several reasons, Komer had pushed for placing the U.S. military in charge of CORDS.¹² First, he wanted senior commanders to pay more attention to pacification and local security. Second, he sought to ensure that programs could draw on the military’s substantial resources. Finally, he aimed to exploit the U.S. military’s clout with South Vietnam’s military leadership.

The practice of centralizing command of civilian and military resources in a single central headquarters was replicated at each level of the GVN. CORDS established a unified American civil-military advisory team structure that worked with the RVN agencies involved in pacification in all areas of the country’s administrative hierarchy: the 4 military regions; the 44 provinces; and the 242 districts. CORDS coordinated most U.S. in-country personnel, including almost all USIA, USAID, and State Department employees deployed in the field, as well as those CIA employees involved in intelligence and area security and those American military advisors not directly involved in conventional combat operations (such as those in support of rural local security forces). The Department of Defense provided most funds and other assets for CORDS activities. The military accepted the burden because most pacification programs cost very little compared with conventional combat operations.¹³ By 1969-1970, 14,300 American advisors of all types worked in South Vietnam. Most of them (approximately 8,000) were involved with CORDS. Almost 7,000 of these CORDS personnel were military; over 1,000 were civilian. In addition, there were approximately 3,000 U.S. combat advisors.¹⁴

The result was that a single coordinator headed the civilian and military pacification efforts at the local levels where the programs were actually executed. Orders and reporting occurred within CORDS’ chain of command for both civilian and military projects, allowing for greater efficiency and coordination. CORDS enjoyed access to considerable civilian and military resources and helped unify the planning, support, attention, and other activities of the numerous U.S. and South Vietnamese groups engaged in pacification.

CORDS Program Elements

CORDS involved a diverse set of activities. USAID sought to improve RVN’s macroeconomic performance by reducing inflation and increasing employment. It also distributed food and agricultural supplies to the rural population and promoted rural education, health care, and public works projects. Information (propaganda) operations were led by the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), which distributed leaflets, posters, and newspaper and magazine articles throughout Indochina. The USIS also attempted to develop a

⁷ George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), p. 63.

⁸ Komer, *Bureaucracy at War*, p. 83.

⁹ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 192.

¹⁰ Spector, *After Tet*, p. 281.

¹¹ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 207.

¹² Spector, *After Tet*, p. 280.

¹³ John Prados, *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1995), pp. 205, 209.

¹⁴ Jeffery J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), p. 452.

nationwide TV network, though this effort suffered from insufficient numbers of Americans with Vietnamese-language skills or deep knowledge of Vietnamese culture.¹⁵ Political reforms also received some attention. For example, the pacification plan for 1969 focused on reviving local government by providing more development funds to villages that held elections.¹⁶ The development of voluntary associations, such as labor, youth, sports, and civic groups, was also encouraged.

This mix of CORDS programs included the key elements of U.S. support to the pacification initiatives undertaken by the RVN. To this end, CORDS representatives made a systematic effort to induce GVN leaders to give more attention and resources to pacification as well as better manage these programs.¹⁷ CORDS also made a sustained effort to replace incompetent or corrupt regional RVN administrators and military officers who had primarily civil responsibilities. The Hamlet Evaluation System and other periodic assessments served as levers to highlight inadequate performance. Local CORDS officials were required to evaluate their South Vietnamese counterparts at least annually. Komer pressured MACV and the U.S. embassy to work with South Vietnamese leaders to secure removal of poor performers.¹⁸ The annual and special CORDS pacification campaign plans represented the most detailed combined U.S.-GVN operational planning in the war.¹⁹ In other areas, specifically military operations, U.S. and RVN authorities conducted almost two separate wars.

CORDS put additional emphasis on the “Chieu Hoi” (“Open Arms”) Amnesty Program for VC deserters. Since its inception in 1963, it had offered amnesty and “rehabilitation” to VC and North Vietnamese defectors who surrendered to the RVN as Hoi Chanh (“returnees”). Over 172,000 defected after 1966,²⁰ versus 75,000 between 1963 and 1967.²¹ VC Hoi Chanh (returnees) surrendered using safe conduct passes and, after a short period of internment to ensure that they were legitimate deserters, they would be retrained in a craft or given some land for farming and be resettled. The program was not without its problems. Many non- or low-level VC would participate for the free food,

shelter, and other material benefits.²² Monetary awards for South Vietnamese responsible for a defection (under the “third-party inducement plan”) led to phony defectors who split the reward money with corrupt officials.²³ True defectors also encountered suspicion and other resistance when they genuinely sought to integrate in RVN society.

In an effort to bolster local security and allow pacification to proceed with minimum outside interference, CORDS launched a major program of security sector reform. The goal was to provide villagers with sustained security protection so that the civic action programs would gain their support and the intelligence agencies could eliminate the local VC civilian infrastructure. One major initiative of CORDS was to revitalize and expand the RVN National Police. A strong national police with integrated locals had been one of the keys to defeating the Malayan Insurgency. CORDS managers hoped that a similar entity could be established throughout the South Vietnamese countryside to counter the VCI and take the security burden off the U.S. and RVN militaries.²⁴ Despite persistent corruption and morale problems, police training and performance improved.

CORDS also expanded and improved the GVN’s pacification programs. While the U.S. military focused on fighting the VC and the North Vietnamese, the Army of RVN (ARVN) worked on reestablishing a GVN presence in the countryside and regaining popular support. MACV assigned Mobile Training Teams to instruct ARVN conventional units on how to support pacification. CORDS also increased U.S. assistance to the Regional Force/Popular Force militia (RF/PF; aka “Ruff-Puffs”). These territorial units consisted of male part-time volunteers from the locality (RFs served only in their home province; PFs only in their village). Their mission was to conduct patrols, ambush guerrillas, and call on regular quick-reaction ARVN forces for assistance when necessary. Before CORDS, they had been assigned low priority in terms of weapons, supplies, and training. They also had been frequently misused to support conventional operations.

¹⁵ James William Gibson, *The Perfect War: The War We Couldn't Lose and How We Did* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1988), pp. 282-286.

¹⁶ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 264.

¹⁷ Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁸ Komer, *Bureaucracy at War*, pp. 33-34

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 106.

²⁰ W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzell, *The Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1977), p. 220.

²¹ Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 91.

²² Gibson, *The Perfect War*, p. 304.

²³ Spector, *After Tet*, p. 286.

²⁴ Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: the Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1966), pp. 103, 105, and 110.

The SWJ Writing Competition

This issue presents the prize winners for Question 2 of our first writing competition, along with other selected works. Question 1 winners will be published in a separate issue shortly. Question 2 as it was put forward at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/competition> was:

Postcards From The Edge – the practical application of the Whole of Government approach.

Organizational issues are being discussed from Goldwater-Nichols II to unity of effort and simple hand-shake-con. Whatever the structure on high, people from different walks of life and different functional expertise need to work together on the ground at the pointy end of the spear to deliver effects that matter. Discuss real experiences (personal, known firsthand, or researched and documented) of real people facing real challenges that offer relevant insights into the conduct of a small war.

Consider any, all, or none of the following:

- Discuss what worked and/or what didn't, and why.
- How did participants from different agencies, branches, nations, etc. look at problems differently, and how were those views eventually reconciled (or not)?
- Discuss personal challenges.
- Discuss the moral and ethical challenges of small wars.
- Approach as a turnover guide to a successor.
- Inform operational approaches and “grand” tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Inform human resourcing / manpower / training & education.
- Relevance for national resource strategy.
- Relevance for go-to-war decisions and conflict strategy.

Komer successfully lobbied to gain responsibility for the training and support of the RF/PF units.²⁵ CORDS soon created hundreds of small U.S. Mobile Advisory Teams (MATS) to train them. The RF/PF strength rose from 300,000 in 1967 to almost 500,000 by the end of 1969. The units received M16s and other advanced weapons to replace their WWII-era stocks. In addition, CORDS arranged to reassign the units under the command of provincial and district chief rather than to ARVN. Previously, the U.S. military had favored a single unified chain of command for all armed RVN units for reasons of efficiency, but this arrangement had encouraged the use of the RF/PF in conventional operations. As a result of these new policies, the RF/PF was soon killing more insurgents than the ARVN.²⁶

William Colby, Komer's deputy (1967-68) and then successor (November 1968-June 1971), launched an initiative in 1968 to provide arms to able-bodied male and female villagers who, due to their age or sex, did not already serve in the military or security services. The People's Self-Defense Force (PSDF) would spend one day a week or so on

unpaid guard duty and would share a common stock of weapons or perform unarmed support functions. The PSDF included approximately 1 million members by early 1969.²⁷ Almost 200,000 of these possessed arms, while the other members (predominately women, the elderly, or members of youth groups) were involved in military support and social welfare activities. Subsequent analysis showed that the VC normally could circumvent or defeat the PSDF with little effort, but Colby later explained that their purpose “was not to produce trained soldiers but to recruit to the Government's side the very individuals who would otherwise find excitement in joining the local Communist guerrilla groups.”²⁸

The Phung Hoang (“Phoenix”) program aimed to coordinate and better exploit the overly compartmentalized and frequently competing U.S. and RVN intelligence programs directed at neutralizing the civilian Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI). This clandestine political and administrative organization performed essential functions for VC

²⁵ Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, p. 84.

²⁶ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (John Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 220.

²⁷ Charles R. Smith, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown: 1969* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1988), p. 282.

²⁸ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 242.

cadres, including recruitment, propaganda, logistics, intelligence, and terrorism. Whereas initially the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs)—platoon-sized paramilitary units—focused on attacking local VC guerrillas, under CORDS the PRUs also identified and arrested suspected VCI members for further interrogation, though many suspects were killed when they resisted.

Phoenix became quite controversial, especially in Washington, due to disagreements in goals and the conduct of operations. U.S. civilian and military analysts could not agree on the size of VCI—estimates ranged from 34,000 to 225,000.²⁹ Army intelligence focused on identifying the VC order-of-battle rather than VCI. Although Phoenix operations may have captured many VCI members and supporters, most of these were not the most influential or senior operatives. In addition, PRUs soon gained a reputation as assassination squads, leading American commanders to curb U.S. military participation in the Phoenix program. RVN officials apparently used the program to eliminate their noncommunist opponents. A quota system encouraged the punishment of innocent people, and bribery allowed possible VCI members to escape arrest. Finally, widespread allegations of torture during interrogations discredited the program within the United States. As with the contemporary search for metrics to assess the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, CORDS analysts sought objective ways to determine if they were winning the insurgency. They relied heavily on the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) established by the CIA in the mid-1960s. This computer-based system incorporated monthly feedback from U.S. district advisors, who answered questions on a variety of security and development issues. The HES was partly discredited when it appeared to exaggerate successes in pacification before the Tet Offensive. Advisors' lack of deep knowledge regarding their districts limited the utility of their evaluations.³⁰ The CORDS Research and Analysis division subsequently tried to improve the HES by relying less on advisors' subjective judgments and more on objective, quantified data acquired through more specific questions about such items as the number of defections, refugee returns, and terrorist incidents.³¹

The Tet Offensive and Project Recovery

Under its initial "Project Takeoff," CORDS achieved some measurable progress for the successful conduct of COIN and nation-building operations. The National Police and the Regional and Popular Forces performed better, the 1968 pacification plan for the first time integrated the U.S. and RVN pacification programs, and many HES ratings improved. The VC's Tet Offensive, which began in late January 1968, initially disrupted many of CORDS' rural operations as the U.S. and ARVN withdrew from the countryside to defend the cities.³² The fighting produced over 1 million new refugees and damaged or destroyed nearly 170,000 houses.³³ CORDS personnel were forced to focus on physical reconstruction rather than political dimensions of pacification.

In a few months, however, CORDS leaders realized that much of the VCI and VC military infrastructure in the RVN had collapsed. As a result, it was easier to ensure security in rural areas while CORDS pacification efforts took hold. North Vietnamese replacements, deprived of a strong VCI, needed time to understand and exploit local conditions. The U.S. and GVN soon redoubled their pacification efforts to exploit the VC's military setbacks and the new intelligence revealed about the VCI. Under "Project Recovery," CORDS secured more resources to initially assist the many RVN refugees and then to reestablish regional security and a local GVN presence through an accelerated pacification campaign plan focused on community development.³⁴

During the 1968-1972 period, the indigenous VC steadily lost influence in South Vietnam due to the success of CORDS. North Vietnamese regulars had to assume a more visible role in the fighting. In effect, the U.S. and GVN had won the counterinsurgency conflict. Unfortunately, they then confronted a new conventional war against the North Vietnamese military, assisted by a residual VC support network, at a time when popular support for the war effort in the United States had vanished.

The effectiveness of the CORDS pacification programs became evident during the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive, which began on March 30, 1972. Unlike during Tet, the VC proved unable to assist the offensive by launching a mass uprising

²⁹ Prados, *Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, p. 210.

³⁰ Gibson, *The Perfect War*, pp. 307-311.

³¹ T. Louise Brown, *War and Aftermath in Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 227; and Gibson, *The Perfect War*, p. 313.

³² Gibson, *The Perfect War*, p. 311.

³³ Spector, *After Tet*, p. 279.

³⁴ Richard Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 156-57.

in South Vietnam's urban or rural areas. Supported by a redoubled U.S. air campaign as well as the massive supply of U.S. equipment provided through the Nixon administration's "Vietnamization" campaign, the ARVN was able to halt the North Vietnamese offensive, leading Hanoi to redirect its efforts toward securing a favorable peace settlement. Despite CORDS' initial expectations, the North Vietnamese negotiators succeeded in requiring the withdrawal of all U.S. military advisers under the terms of the January 1973 ceasefire agreement.³⁵

Assessment

Despite the relative success of CORDS, the revitalized pacification campaign proved insufficient to win the Vietnam conflict. First, the decline in U.S. public and congressional support for sustaining the war effort undermined Komer's strategy of winning the insurgency through a patient, long-term approach.³⁶ William Colby, Komer's successor after November 1968, saw the post-Tet situation as a race in which CORDS had to "so strengthen the Government that it could survive with a major reduction in American assistance."³⁷ The number of CORDS personnel fell by over half during 1971 and continued to decline throughout 1972. CORDS was formally dissolved in January 1973 with the Paris Peace Accords (Article 5 required that all U.S. advisors withdraw from South Vietnam). Subsequent RVN efforts proved ineffective. As Harry Summers observes, "It was not until after the war had already been lost on the American home front that we put counterinsurgency in proper perspective as a valuable adjunct to our military operations against North Vietnam."³⁸

Another problem was that CORDS and other pacification programs were uniquely successful in achieving interagency integration. Management problems, especially excessive compartmentalization, still plagued other areas of the American war effort.³⁹ U.S. and RVN military forces continued to operate under two entirely separate chains of command. U.S. Army tactical advisory teams remained outside the CORDS chain of command, complicating coordination efforts.⁴⁰ CORDS constituted only one staff directorate out of five within MACV. The overall American military effort was

fragmented among the military services, with each fighting their own air war as well as different ground strategies. More broadly, the U.S. war campaign lacked a mechanism to integrate pacification or other civilian programs with the majority of military operations.⁴¹ Perhaps the greatest problem was that the U.S. government lacked an effective local partner. Transforming CORDS' initial gains into long-term triumphs required South Vietnamese authorities to take the lead in sustaining pacification, but the GVN was militarily and administratively too weak to consolidate gains. Corruption, inefficiency, and bureaucratic and factional infighting among the South Vietnamese wasted resources and forced CORDS to rely on U.S. military and civilian personnel for far too many activities. Even many militarily skilled ARVN commanders, eager to combat the enemy, underestimated the importance of pacification efforts or protecting population centers. They were inclined to use RF/PF units to support their conventional operations and were reluctant to allocate substantial resources to these units. Partly as a result of these failures, VC terrorist attacks persisted sufficiently throughout the 1968-72 period to dissuade peasants from openly siding with the government.

Finally, by the time that CORDS became fully operational after 1972, the main U.S. adversary had become North Vietnam's conventional forces rather than Viet Cong guerrillas.⁴² CORDS' post-Tet "one war" pacification strategy achieved remarkable successes, but it was too little, too late. The Easter 1972 Offensive showed how little the notable progress in rural pacification now mattered for the RVN's fate. CORDS' pacification successes meant that the VC launched few guerrilla attacks, but North Vietnamese regulars were able to conduct a major conventional offensive that was only heavy U.S. air strikes and other military support (intelligence, logistics, and rushed deliveries of replacement equipment) halted. This support was fast evaporating. The sanctuary North Vietnam offered the insurgents, the increasing number of its own troops involved in the conflict, and the tenacity shown by its leadership and people in pursuit of the vital national objective of reunification meant that Hanoi would eventually secure the military triumph denied its insurgent allies.

³⁵ Hunt, *Pacification*, p. 269.

³⁶ Maclear, *Ten Thousand Day War*, p. 257.

³⁷ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 233.

³⁸ Summers, *On Strategy*, p. 175.

³⁹ Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, p. 63; Komer, *Bureaucracy at War*, pp. 18, 81-110.

⁴⁰ Clarke, *Advice and Support*, p. 212.

⁴¹ Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, p. 85.

⁴² Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999), p. 69.

Lessons Forgotten: Afghanistan and Iraq

Understanding the CORDS experience in Vietnam is critical to understanding the promise and challenges of forging a unified interagency COIN effort. The establishment of CORDS correctly recognized the need for tightly integrated civil-military support for pacification. The Joint Staff later described American involvement in the Vietnam War as “a seemingly incoherent war effort” due to inefficiency among the myriad of U.S. Government agencies [that] operated independently, without much interagency coordination.”⁴³

CORDS overcame the pacification dimensions of this problem by establishing the first fully integrated civil-military field organization in U.S. history. Waging a major counterinsurgency effort requires a single chain of command to unify the resources, expertise, and planning efforts of numerous civilian agencies with those of the military. The single-management structure established by CORDS throughout South Vietnam meant that conflicts among agencies could be resolved in the field in Vietnam rather than in Washington.⁴⁴ It also provided a single “chain of advice” from U.S. to RVN officials at each administrative level. In the case of Afghanistan and especially Iraq, the Defense Department evidently excluded the State Department from the military’s prewar planning for the campaigns and the initial post-conflict reconstruction efforts in both countries. In order to compensate for what was soon recognized as a major mistake, the U.S. government established Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to promote interagency cooperation regarding U.S. post-conflict governance and reconstruction efforts in both countries. Unfortunately, even though the PRTs are organized differently in both countries and operate in diverse ways—and in a different political, military, economic, and social context than during Vietnam—they have suffered from many of the same types of flaws that impeded pacification efforts in Vietnam before CORDS. In particular, they were initially not well integrated into a larger counterinsurgency strategy and experienced persistent interagency differences over funding, staffing, and other issues. Since their formation in 2002, the PRTs have been at the forefront of U.S. efforts to apply military and civilian COIN assets in an integrated manner. Generally consisting of several dozen military personnel and a smaller num-

ber of civilians, the PRTs have performed a variety of pacification activities in both countries ranging from providing technical and financial support for local civic action projects like rebuilding schools and roads to undertaking political and security initiatives such as advising local government officials or training indigenous security forces. Their organic or associated military components have provided essential unit security to enable civilian experts to improve local economic and political conditions even in relatively insecure regions. In Afghanistan, other NATO governments have adopted the PRT construct due to its perceived value in integrating their civilian and military contributions to the war effort.

The PRTs are regularly described as essential for winning the war. Yet, observers of the U.S. PRTs in both Afghanistan and Iraq complain about “a lack of unity of command resulting in a lack of unity of effect. Funding is not consolidated . . . funding streams are extremely confusing.... Metrics do not exist for determining if PRTs are succeeding.”⁴⁵ A major impediment to initial civil-military integration in the Afghan and Iraq PRTs has been uncertainties regarding the specific responsibilities and authorities of the various U.S. agencies involved. In both cases, no approved interagency doctrine was established and no formal interagency agreement governed the division of roles within the PRTs. Their members would often receive separate instructions from various joint commands as well as from their agency headquarters in Washington. As a result, “with no one in overall charge, disputes are referred to more senior officials up separate ‘stovepipes’ of authority.”⁴⁶ A USAID Interagency Report highlighted problems with interagency coordination by noting that a “lack of explicit guidance led to confusion about civilian and military roles.”⁴⁷ Similarly, those familiar with the teams in Iraq cite “high-level wrangling between State and the Defense Department over who would provide security, support, and funding. No memo-

⁴³ Cited in Scott W. Moore, “Today It’s Gold, Not Purple,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn/Winter 1998-99), p. 101.

⁴⁴ Colby, *Lost Victory*, p. 207.

⁴⁵ *Forging a New Shield* (Washington, DC: Project on National Security Reform, 2008), p. 151,

<http://www.pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr%20oforging%20a%20new%20shield.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Robert Perito, “Congressional Testimony: The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan,” United States Institute of Peace, October 18, 2007, <http://www.usip.org/resources/us-experience-provincial-reconstruction-teams-iraq-and-afghanistan>.

⁴⁷ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment,” June 2006, p. 10, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG252.pdf.

randum of understanding was in place to delineate each agency's responsibilities."⁴⁸

In the absence of a clear operational strategy for PRTs in either Afghanistan or Iraq during their first few years of operation, what coordination existed occurred largely on an ad hoc basis. In some cases, improvisations produced good civilian-military coordination, especially between PRTs and the military units engaged in more traditional combat operations. In too many other instances, however, the better-resourced and more numerous military personnel imposed their own priorities on civilian reconstruction missions even when limited initial guidance designated the less well-endowed State Department and USAID as the lead agencies for these reconstruction and governance projects.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the PRTs frequently encountered difficulties coordinating with the humanitarian NGOs, which have a major presence in both countries.⁵⁰ This collaboration problem arose notwithstanding that COIN doctrine now recognizes the PRTs as important contributors to civil reconstruction efforts.⁵¹ It was not until November 2006 that the Defense and State Departments adopted a memorandum of understanding that specified their respective financial and other contributions to the PRTs.⁵²

In Vietnam, the philosophy animating CORDS also appreciated that territorial security was just as essential for successful pacification as effective pacification was for achieving military success. Without security against local guerrilla attacks, neither economic development initiatives nor opportunities to participate in elections will induce naturally cautious people to openly support their government against the insurgents. The importance of training and equipping local security forces, such as the RF/PF, instead of relying on the national army or foreign military units for security

is clear. By actively engaging the populace in pacification, local communities assume responsibility for their own security and development. The population will more closely identify with and support a government that sponsors these endeavors and oppose guerrillas who seek to disrupt them. One reason why U.S. forces have found it difficult to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan is that the local security forces have proved incapable of defending civilians from insurgent attacks. Interagency differences over staffing, funding, and other issues related to establishing and sustaining the PRTs also distracted them from their task of providing security and promoting reconstruction in their localities.

The PRTs appear to have become more effective in recent years, and have enabled U.S. pacification efforts to reach even remote areas in conflict-prone regions. Nonetheless, many of these start-up difficulties could have been avoided had the initial PRT architects paid greater attention to the lessons of CORDS rather than, as seems to have been the case with other COIN issues, treated Vietnam as a painful and eagerly forgotten aberration from the proper combat role of a military still largely unenthusiastic about fighting small wars.

Richard Weitz is Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute. Dr. Weitz has published or edited several books and monographs, including Global Security Watch-Russia (Praeger Security International, 2009); a volume of National Security Case Studies (Project on National Security Reform; 2008); China-Russia Security Relations (Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, 2008); and Kazakhstan and the New International Politics of Eurasia (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2008).

⁴⁸ Shawn Dorman, "Iraq PRTs: Pins on a Map" *Foreign Service Journal*, March 2007, p. 22, http://www.afsa.org/fsj/mar07/iraq_prts_1.pdf.

⁴⁹ Robert Perito, "Special Report 152: The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Lessons Identified," United States Institute for Peace, October 2005, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr152.pdf>; and USIA, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Michael Dziedzic and Colonel Michael Seidl, "Special Report 147: Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Non-governmental Organizations in Afghanistan," United States Institute of Peace, September 2005, http://www.usip.org/library/oh/afghanistan_prt.html.

⁵¹ Department of the Army, *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency*, p. 2-1.

⁵² Robert Perito, "Special Report 185: Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq," United States Institute of Peace, March 2007, p. 3, <http://www.usip.org/resources/provincial-reconstruction-teams-iraq>.

Getting Past the First Cup of Tea

by J. Andrew Person

Honorable Mention, Question #2

"If you want to thrive in Baltistan, you must respect our ways. [Remember] the first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea, you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become family and for our family, we are prepared to do anything even die. Doctor Greg, you must make time to share three cups of tea."⁵³

Washington DC is in the midst of a fierce debate over the future of US policy in Afghanistan. The pundits debate whether a surge in troop numbers is the wise course. The White House weighs the merits of a counter terrorism strategy vs. a counter insurgency strategy and the troop levels each would require. Congress tallies the costs of the conflict and is nervously watching public opinion. Yet no matter where troop levels end up, no matter what our strategy, we cannot succeed in Afghanistan until we fix what's wrong with the following scenario:

It's May, 2009. A company commander leads a small patrol to an Afghan village to introduce himself to the leader of a district recently added to his company's area of operations. The Captain is well prepared for the meeting. He holds a briefing book complete with pictures of the district's village leaders, intelligence about possible bases of Taliban support, and a list of reconstruction projects that have been completed in the district. Shortly after he arrives in the village, the commander is invited into the district leader's home. The two leaders exchange niceties and sit down to enjoy their first cup of tea together. They have taken the first step in building a positive working relationship.

Question: What was wrong with that picture?

Answer: It's 2009. First cups of tea with key Afghan leaders should be a thing of the past.

The US and our allies in Afghanistan must find a way to get past the first cup of tea in Afghanistan. In other words, ISAF needs to develop a cadre of leaders who stay in Afghanistan and guide



A group of villagers sit down for a "first cup of tea" with B Company, 1-508 IN, 173rd Airborne Brigade in Shah Wali Kot District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan in November 2009.

international forces that rotate from year to year through Afghanistan's human terrain. We cannot continue to bring fresh faces into Afghan valleys, cities, and villages and expect our forces to operate effectively.

I learned this truth the hard way: I served two years in Iraq and Afghanistan in an infantry company responsible for frequently changing areas of operations. My experience was that the military placed too little value on the localized, non-transferrable knowledge a unit gains after patrolling a district. Areas of operation were swapped between units like old hum-vees. Transitions between units often lasted only ten days. Then, later, when the time came to rotate units again, the military sent in another unit new to the area rather than bringing back a unit familiar with the area of responsibility. The Army's selection of officers for leadership was based on an organizational personnel mission to foster career progression through a predetermined set of assignments designed to build personal careers and future high-level leaders rather than based on an operational mission focus placing leaders with knowledge of the human and physical terrain in a position to succeed in a long-term complex fight.

The costs of repetitive "first cups of tea" in Afghanistan are enormous. It is impossible to lead an effective counterinsurgency when familiarity with the human terrain is measured in months and

⁵³ Mortenson, Greg. *Three cups of tea: one man's mission to fight terrorism and build nations*. New York: Penguin, pp. 149-150.

not years. The Pashtun people value personal relationships far more than any well or new school. The way forces are rotated today, even if a commander has enough time to develop a relationship with an important Afghan leader, that commander will be replaced soon with another, followed by another. Before long, Afghans learn that, while the presence of ISAF forces may be persistent, the individual personalities are very short term. Meanwhile, the individual personalities among insurgent forces remain persistent. Afghans can cheat ISAF out of contract funding or provide false intelligence and rest easy knowing that the westerners coming in next years' rotation will not get the message. This game of musical chairs reduces the likelihood an Afghan will take a risk trusting the American military officer asking for his loyalty and cooperation.

The problems with "first cups of tea" were clear only months after the initial invasion of Iraq in March of 2003 and may have been a strong contributor to the explosion of the insurgency in the summer of 2003. While serving as a fire-support officer with Legion Company in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, I joined the Brigade's airborne invasion of Northern Iraq. After quickly moving southward to Kirkuk, we began the game of musical chairs that would characterize the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Legion company was first assigned a few neighborhoods in Kirkuk. Weeks later, we assumed responsibility for a small village outside of Kirkuk. Legion was then moved to a string of small Sunni Arab villages a short ways from Kirkuk along the Zab river. This journal entry I wrote during these patrols says much about the efficacy of our operations:

July 15th, 2003:

We rarely interact with the local population. Occasionally, we get a task to go around and ask people what their village was lacking. I love working with the locals, drinking chai tea, eating the delicious food, and learning about Iraqi culture. But it is obvious that they've already grown skeptical of Americans doing anything for them. They say they've already been asked the same questions by three other groups of American soldiers and had not received anything. It's only been four months since the invasion and we've already lost our credibility. Most of the villagers we work with, though, remain hospitable-- at least to our faces.

Eventually, Legion Company took up a six-month assignment in Tuz, a multi-ethnic city of approximately 100,000 souls south of Kirkuk, but during the critical months between our airborne

invasion in March and our arrival in Tuz in September, Legion company patrolled dozens of areas of operation. We would stay just long enough to learn about what we might offer the villagers in return for their cooperation and then we'd leave for another area without an opportunity to hand over what we'd learned to the follow-on unit. We rarely moved beyond the "first cup of tea" niceties into a real cooperative partnership, and neither did the units who preceded or followed us. Surely, the locals must have wondered who are these people anyway!

Legion company's effectiveness improved dramatically after spending over six months in Tuz. Remaining in a single area of operation for an extended period improved every aspect of our operations. Our ability to collect intelligence, target insurgents, and complete development projects all improved once provided the knowledge and relationships we were able to build over the course of a half-year. It took a while, but Legion Company finally got beyond the first cup of tea. We were then replaced by a battalion from the 25th Infantry Division, and the soldiers of Legion Company—with all our knowledge—never returned to the area.

A year later, Legion company deployed to Afghanistan where we assumed a new area of operations from another battalion of the 25th Infantry Division. We spent four months building relationships and getting to know the ten districts we were now responsible for patrolling in Paktika Province. Our company development bank was flush with cash—a dramatic change from Iraq-- and I moved quickly to fulfill my assigned responsibility to kick off large development projects. Spearheading road, school, and other projects requires, more than anything, trustworthy Afghan partners. If you know which leaders to consult about what needs to be done and which contractors to hire to do the work well, you really can't go wrong. Case in point: after about a month on the ground in Afghanistan, I began planning a fifty-thousand dollar reforestation project across all 10 districts in our area of operations. Partnership with local leaders was essential to execute such a project. The provincial director of agriculture advised me on what types of trees I should select. Unfortunately, he also tried to convince me to plant them all on property that he owned, a fact pointed out to me by other local leaders. By good fortune and good counsel, I was able to complete the project, which sent a positive message across the province about the presence of US forces. After only four months, Legion Company had developed a great working relationship with the Governor of Paktika province, Gulab Mengal.

We were exchanging intelligence with the Paktika provincial intelligence team and had successfully implemented hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of development projects across area of operations. Yet in many ways we were just getting started.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade commander, facing a fiercer than expected insurgency in Kandahar province south of Paktika, ordered us to quickly move to assume control over three districts in northern Kandahar Province. The move to Kandahar set us back to square one. After a brief handover from the previous unit responsible for our new three districts, we started our “first cup of tea” tour around our districts. This “first cup of tea” is hard on both the military and the locals. The Afghans see yet more new faces and yet another set of promises, while the faces of the Taliban militants often remains the same. It is not hard to imagine who they would side with when push comes to shove.

Our efforts in northern Kandahar largely failed. We failed to identify many insurgents in our districts while the insurgents succeeded in identifying us. Legion company patrols were attacked effectively numerous times by ambushes and IEDs. Legion company lost a well-respected non-commissioned officer and a beloved soldier.

This excerpt from my journal during a typical patrol provides a glimpse at why our efforts were such a failure:

21 July, 2006

This area may be impossible to free from the insurgency. Our patrols over the last two days indicate that. We set up a patrol base at the southern end of a small village we searched the day before where the stream created a small patch of trees before the desert consumed the last bit of water.

We kept our detainees in a simple unfinished compound—about 14 total. Yesterday morning Eric and I spoke with each one individually before releasing them. We tried to give them one last chance to give us information regarding the location of the Taliban.

A couple young ones were obviously against us—heads shaven, long beards, they looked at us with a mix of unease and hatred. Later, we heard I-com⁵⁴ traffic about our attempt to bring them to our side. Everyone around here is talking with one another in a complex network of Observation posts, safehouses, and villagers that provide food

⁵⁴An “I-Com” is a handheld two-way radio – today’s “walkie-talkie”.

and water. Yesterday afternoon, we hiked high into the mountains above our patrol base. I lost my camera in the rocks. We did not find anything significant. I was surprised how quickly I dehydrated in the hot sun. Moving up the mountains in body armor and a combat load of ammo is a physical challenge.

We returned to base and fired artillery smoke and HE against a hillside where we suspected enemy caches/ops to be. We did not hit them. I-com traffic suggested that we were not hitting the right area.

During these patrols, we had very little knowledge about the people we were operating among, who we could trust, who we were targeting. After six months of such futile patrols, Legion Company was rotated back to Italy and a Canadian unit began their first cups of tea with the Afghan leaders in northern Kandahar.

Getting beyond the first cup of tea is particularly important in a counterinsurgency. Defeating insurgents requires the ability to find them. Thus, platoon and company leadership must be knowledgeable of the population that they are patrolling in and amongst. They need to know who to trust. They need to know which villages might be offering support to the Taliban. They need to know if there are folks in the village who haven’t ever been there before. You just can’t get to this level of knowledge when platoon leaders and company commanders are rotating around or getting promoted.



Local police or Taliban? Sometimes It’s tough to tell, especially if you’re new to the area.

Despite all the talk about counterinsurgency operations, our ground forces still rotate manpower as if we’re in a conventional fight. In conventional warfare, a platoon is a low level piece of a large battlefield. You put a junior officer in

charge—a butter bar⁵⁵ who doesn't know his ass from his elbow. That butterbar takes orders from a company commander with a little more experience who takes orders from a very senior lieutenant colonel. That's typically the level where lots of experience is needed. The Battalion commander must integrate his assets that deliver fire support, intelligence, reserve forces, logistics to deliver the right effects on the battlefield. Naturally, moving up the chain of command means more responsibility and more power.

In such conventional warfare, the focus of such leadership development is teaching officers the mechanisms of delivering conventional effects on the battlefield—not teaching officers the nuances of a particular village, valley, or neighborhood. Thus, “promoting” a company commander into Brigade staff is a smart way to prepare him for the next level of responsibility. Since the Army strives to make each unit's standard operating procedures fairly uniform, it does not take long for the new company commander to understand the internal operation of the organization he's recently assumed command of.

The counterinsurgency fight in Afghanistan throws this system of promotion into disarray. Most of the key lessons a platoon leader learns are not transferrable to a new position of leadership. The lessons pertain to the particular area he's been working in and many of the lessons are lost once he's moved to a new position.

Incredibly, the Army's counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-24, fails to recognize this reality. The manual poses the question: What if you get moved to a different area? It offered this answer: “Efforts made preparing for operations in one AO [area of operations] are not wasted if a unit is moved to another area. In mastering the first area, Soldiers and Marines learned techniques applicable to the new one. For example, they know how to analyze an AO and decide what matters in the local society.”⁵⁶ While there is some truth to this statement, it is largely disconnected from reality. Much of the effort expended preparing for operations in one AO is in fact wasted when a unit is moved to another area. The military hesitates to accept this inconvenient truth because to accept it would be very disruptive to the way the military rotates units and leadership.

Thus, the two principal reasons why American military leaders are still having first cups of tea in Afghanistan are 1) units are not deployed to spe-

cific areas based on their leaders' knowledge of the human and geographic terrain and 2) leaders are rotated out of positions based on their long-term career interests not the demands of the mission at hand. The military places little or no consideration to whether a unit's leadership is familiar with an area when selecting them for a deployment. Military brass often behaves as if any part of Iraq or Afghanistan is completely interchangeable. Based on the way the 173rd was deployed during my period of service, it seemed as if Army did not value the experience the 173rd gained in northern Iraq and did not consider deploying us back to the same region. My only conclusion is that they do not place much value on individual personal experiences with the local population.

Second, the way the military rotates and promotes leadership also ensures that first cups of tea continue to happen all too frequently. My brief Army career was a rare exception to the normal progression of an officer. I spent a whopping *four years* in the same infantry company as a fire support officer. I worked for *five* different company commanders and *three* battalion commanders. I watched dozens of platoon leaders come and go. My permanence served an important purpose and helped me gain an important insight—the constant rotation of officers around assignments and units across geographic areas was killing our chances of winning the fight. The mission of an infantry company in Afghanistan is clear: extend the reach of the Afghan government. How to do it? Eliminate insurgents. Make the government look good by funding projects and letting them get the credit. Build up the security forces by training them and going on patrol with them. All of these tasks require an intimate knowledge of the human terrain and the military should prioritize the development and retention of this knowledge in all areas where US and ISAF forces operate.

The promotion of officers to the command of larger sized units also creates a demand for larger unit operations, most of which disrupt more than they advance effective counterinsurgency operations. In my experience, Legion Company's effective low-level operations were disrupted by Battalion level operations. Our Battalion would occasionally pool together resources and “clear” a district by conducting a number of raids all at once. These operations would accomplish very little because we were not familiar with the human terrain we were attempting to clear and they disrupted Legion company's efforts within the districts we were beginning to become familiar with. Every Battalion operation I participated in, be it in Iraq

⁵⁵ Second lieutenant, whose formal rank insignia is yellow gold

⁵⁶ FM 3-24, Page A-9, 15 December 2006

or Afghanistan, was a waste and squandered valuable time available for the platoons of Legion Company to do their work.

It appears that the Pentagon is coming to realize what an enormous problem our “first cups of tea” really are. Tom Ricks recently reported on his blog that the Army is planning to designate the XVIII Airborne Corps as the “permanent headquarters for Afghanistan.” Ricks wrote, “This is part of Gen. McChrystal’s long-term plan to create a team of ‘Afghan Hands’ who can build for several years, during multiple tours, on their experience and relationships in the country.”⁵⁷

In his recent assessment of the US effort in Afghanistan, General McChrystal seemed to have identified the ‘first cup of tea’ problem but did not propose an adequate solution. He wrote that since 2001, US and allied forces operating in Afghanistan have “not sufficiently studied Afghanistan’s peoples, whose needs, identities and grievances vary from province to province and from valley to valley.” To succeed, the United States must “redouble efforts to understand the social and political dynamics of... all regions of the country and take action that meets the needs of the people, and insist that [Afghan government] officials do the same.” Unfortunately, “redoubling efforts” is not going to solve the problem. The military needs to document the time leaders have spent in certain provinces in Afghanistan and do everything possible to return those who have achieved a partnership with locals to the same area. That’s the only way to end the “first cups of tea,” or at least keep them to a minimum.

There are no easy solutions to this problem, but I will propose a possible step in the right direction. Military officers could be planted in Afghanistan as permanent cadre on the ground. They will not be reassigned until the war is over. Of course, they should receive R and R frequently to visit friends and family and to decompress. The NCOs, traditionally the trainers and troop leaders of the military, should prepare the troops for battle and arrive in theater ready to execute the war at the direction of the officers on the ground. Other military officers could permanently serve in garrison to assist as necessary with training and fulfilling administrative requirements.

Such a personnel system might improve morale among the troops serving in these difficult assignments. In my experience, high-level brass of-

ten underestimated how frequent moves from area to area undermined troop morale. As skeptical as the soldiers were about making progress, once they got to know an area, they believed in their own ability to help it. After learning that they may move out of an area, many soldiers begin to question the value of patrolling the area and become much more risk averse. A permanent cadre of officers would be able to convey to troops rotating in and out of an area of operations a sense of permanence, direction, and value to their labor and sacrifices.

The military will also have to end the practice of moving officers out of their critical roles as platoon and company commanders upon promotion. Platoon leadership used to be suitable for new, inexperienced officers under the close supervision of a more experienced company commander. That’s no longer the case. The platoon is the key level at which this war is being won and lost. If officers excel as platoon and company leaders they should stay in those positions. A colonel leading a company of 160 men would seem absurd from a traditional point of view but makes perfect sense given the skills required in a counterinsurgency.

Personnel policy in Afghanistan is not the most exciting topic, but, from my perspective, it holds the key to why we’re losing and how we can start winning in Afghanistan. We need to get past the first cup of tea—and quick. We may only have one more cup left before it is too late.

J. Andrew Person is originally from Helena, Montana, and is a recent graduate of the Master of Science in Foreign Service program at Georgetown University. He served for 5 years as an officer in the U.S. Army, including tours in Afghanistan and Iraq as a Fire Support Officer in the 173rd Airborne Brigade and earned the Bronze Star Medal for Exceptional Service. He is also a fellow with the Truman National Security Project.



The author passes some time with friends during a “meet and greet” tour of the districts in our new area of operation in Pak-

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http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/10/07/xviii_airborne_corps_hq_set_for_permanent_afghan_duty

Examining the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Civil Military Operations

A Small Power Securing Military Relevancy in Nontraditional Military Roles

by Delilah Russell

Honorable Mention, Question #2

What would a military do to combat an internal security problem which has spanned decades, operating under conditions of limited funding, weak combat capabilities, poor human rights records, corruption, and is still expected to eradicate internal insurgencies by 2010? The prospects appear bleak but this paper would like to examine the nontraditional military operations of the Philippines' counterinsurgency program.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ushered in a renewed interest in classic counterinsurgency literature; underscoring the reality that today's battlefields are becoming more complex. In expeditionary wars, soldiers are faced with unfamiliar physical terrain, culture, and language which complicate the conduct of warfare. The battle space is further complicated with adversaries operating fluidly and blending in with the civilians. Additionally, numerous actors work in conflict zones including humanitarian organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government agencies which blur operational lines between military and civilian spheres. Inevitably, these conditions require the 21st century soldier to engage more in extra-military tasking.⁵⁸ What has emerged to better manage the new environment is Civil Military Operations (CMO).

CMO is generally defined as military activities utilizing nonmilitary instruments of power to maximize the military-civilian interface for the overall purpose of mitigating or eliminating a conflict. The concept is not new, being practiced in past counterinsurgency operations, but has undergone further doctrinal development, institutional-

ization, and increased recognition as a valid military tool.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, existing literature primarily examines CMO of Western militaries in expeditionary wars. This leaves us with limited information on CMO conducted by indigenous forces that have far less financing, resources, and capabilities. Unlike nations that have the ability to project military power and can face challenges of accommodating the full spectrum of conflict, small powers have to be more selective in allocating scarce resources that are often times related to their immediate security needs. To draw more attention to this point, the paper would like to examine CMO practiced in the Philippines.

In many ways, the AFP-CMO is a *sui generis* where its concepts have been developed from their particular military culture and experience. Elements of CMO have been in existence since the early 1950s and were utilized for both counterinsurgency and nation-building, but it was only in 2006 that it became formally institutionalized as part of the nation's efforts to combine soft and hard power to tackle the insurgency problem.

Another factor which sets the AFP-CMO apart from American and European expeditionary forces is that they operate under different conditions. One being the AFP is internally-oriented. Second, the Philippines has one of the lowest military expenditures in the region. In 2007, its defense budget as percentage of the GDP was 0.7 percent. Under serious financial constraints, combat capabilities have also been compromised by aging equipment and corruption. Their inventory consists of used and out-dated equipment, some even dating back to the Vietnam War.⁶⁰ On the other

⁵⁸ The following works discuss the diverse roles American soldiers would have to cover in contemporary wars: Gen. Charles C. Krulack, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marines Magazine*, January 2009; Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, USA (ret.) "Army Transformation: Implications for the Future." Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee on July 15, 2004. Available online at: www.au.af.mil/au/awcgate/congress/04-07-15scales.pdf.

⁵⁹ See the United States' definition of CMO in Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Civil-Military Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-57 Washington, DC: CJCS, July 08, 2008.

⁶⁰ Thought a Philippines Defense Reform was put into place in 2003 to address the capabilities and equipment deficit, the stagnated economy has stalled the upgrade program. Read more from Fernan Marasigan, "RP's low defense spending rued." *Business Mirror*, September 11, 2008. Available online at: <http://www.businessmirror.com.ph/09112008>. Accessed May 9, 2009.

hand, corruption undermines the delivery of a public service by a military leadership working in a system of weak governance.⁶¹

In terms of legitimacy, the AFP is faltering especially in the way they handle internal security operations. Human rights issues have once again attracted international concern when a UN report published in 2007 pointed out that the AFP was also behind the systematic killings of leftist activists and journalists since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed presidency in 2001.⁶²

The resurrection of CMO practices came about in these trying times and is part of the president's directives to crush the insurgencies by 2010, using a holistic approach of combining efforts by the military and civilian agencies.

The paper will seek to examine the AFP's CMO with reference to the problems mentioned above and its potential in wearing down the insurgencies. Additionally, to provide a better picture of what CMO is like on the ground, Zamboanga City will be used as a case study. The city itself seats a military regional command that does numerous CMO activities with NGOs, government agencies, local government officials and U.S. Special Forces.

Defining CMO

The AFP defines CMO as military operations that encompass socio-economic and psychological activities that are mostly non-combatant in nature and is conducted by the military independently or in coordination with civilian entities with the objective of accomplishing a military mission.⁶³ Though its primary function lies in counterinsurgency, it retains a strong developmental orientation, due to its long tradition in mobilizing the military for nation-building.

CMO has three pillars which targets a particular audience: Public Affairs (PA), Civil Affairs (CA), and Psychological Operations (Psyops). The PA works to garner support from the public so that the AFP could better accomplish their mission. Activities include releasing timely and accurate in-

formation to the public through the media, public symposiums, information drives, and dialogues with the community. CA targets the community in the form of socio-economic activities for the purpose of securing an environment so that other government agencies can function. These include civic action programs that deliver health assistance, engineering, disaster relief, educational and humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection. Psyops are activities aimed at weakening the will of the enemy. It is sub-divided into words-psyops (non-combat) which are media-related and deeds psyops (inclusive of combat) which includes patrols, raids, and deception operations. PSYOPS also processes surrendered rebels and helps their reintegration into society.⁶⁴



Figure 1: the CMO triangle depicting three pillars with their intended audiences Source: Adapted from Philippine Army, *Civil-Military Operations Manual (PAM-7-00)*, Makati: The

AFP-CMO Background and its Resurrection

CMO has always been an integral part of the history of the AFP. Elements of CMO were practiced since the early 1950s when the newly independent Philippines faced its first major internal unrest from a communist-inspired peasant revolt known as the Huk Rebellion. The CMO practiced then centered on activities such as civic action and public affairs to maximize psychological damage on the enemy. The success in quelling the Huk Rebellion was due to creative efforts made by the Secretary of Defense Ramon Magsaysay (later President) and his American advisor, Colonel Edward Lansdale, which consolidated government action in tackling

⁶¹ Kevin E. Cross cited in Ronald Meinardus, "Wild Car in Filipino Politics," *The Japan Times*, April 4, 2005. Available online at: <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/eo20050404rm.html>.

⁶² UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Philip Alston: addendum: Follow-up to country recommendations - Philippines*, 29 April 2009, A/HRC/11/2/Add.8. Available online at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a0932280.html> Accessed November 24, 2009

⁶³ CMO-AFP Doctrine 2006; Philippine Army, *Civil-Military Operations Manual (PAM-7-00)*, Makati: The Philippine Army, 2002.

⁶⁴ LTC Ferozaldo Paul T. Regencia, Philippine Army, interview with author, AFP National Development Support Command, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines, October 8, 2007.

the socio-economic-political roots of the rebellion.⁶⁵

The Magsaysay approach remains the tenets of AFP counterinsurgency strategy today. Though touted as one of the best practices in counter-insurgency, the defeat of the Huk rebellion did not spell out an end to the insurgency problem in the Philippines. In the late 1960s, two armed movements which began its intellectual roots in student activism on Manila's campuses brought forth two strains of ideology: communism and Muslim nationalism. They morphed into a full-fledged armed movement that led to a major war in the Southern Philippines in the early 1970s.

At the peak of the war, CMO was the most visible in civic action programs. President Ferdinand Marcos declared in his speeches that the AFP could help destroy subversion and insurgency by using development as a tool.⁶⁶ The overall assessment of the CMO approach was poor though since many of the military's excesses related to corruption and human rights' violations, negating any impact civic action had on the community.⁶⁷

The direct antecedents of Philippine CMO practiced today date back to 1985.⁶⁸ In the post-Marcos period, CMO had a full plate. It not only targeted the public, community, and the enemy, but it was also directed to the "rear" or the soldiers themselves.⁶⁹ These were the years when the nation was tasked to build national reconciliation programs to undo the political trauma of martial law period. CMO was aimed to improve morale and the standing of the soldier in the eyes of the public.⁷⁰

On the military operational side, CMO was first experimented in an intelligence gathering team called the Special Operations Teams (SOTs) in 1985. The purpose was to neutralize the communist insurgencies. SOTs were a composite of

combat, intelligence gathering and CMO. Due to its success in reducing communist expansion, the triad concept is still practiced today.⁷¹

CMO began to take a backseat in military operations with what appeared to be an approaching demise to internal security threats. The AFP threw in their efforts to modernize into a self-reliant posture after the closure of the US bases in 1992. In 2003, the CMO office lost its independent status at the military headquarters.

A turning point for CMO came in 2006. Already in 2000, the internal security situation was taking a turn for the worse. On the communist front, the movement was still a significant threat, with an estimated 4,500 fighters that have influence in 1,470 barangays (villages) throughout the archipelago. On the Muslim separatist front, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), consisting of at least 11,000 regular fighters, is engaging in a localized war with the AFP in Mindanao. Though a ceasefire agreement was put into place in 2001, unresolved issues over claims to their ancestral lands have stalled the peace process with the government. Another Muslim group, equated as a terrorist group, the Abu Sayyaf, range between 100 between 200 fighters. Their alleged ties with the Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda have brought a contingency of U.S. forces to provide advice and assistance to their AFP counterparts. Manifestations of violence are also found in ridos (clan wars) amongst Muslim rival groups and general lawlessness.

In 2006, the CMO was reestablished as an independent office with an increased focus on the interagency dimension. Institutionalization began in earnest since 2006 with the publication of the first CMO doctrine, *AFP Doctrine for Civil Military Operations*, and the establishment of the CMO School for the three services: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force for the purpose of turning CMO into an occupational specialty.⁷² The reactivation of CMO was also accompanied with the creation of the National Development Support Command (NDSC) in 2007. This is the engineering arm of CMO mandated to synchronize the AFP's Army, Navy, and Air Force engineering brigades in peace development projects.⁷³

⁶⁵ Napoleon D. Valeriano & Charles T.R. Bohannon, *Counter-Guerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience*, Westport, Connecticut & London: Praeger Security International, 1962, 2006.

⁶⁶ In Jose M. Crisol, *Men and Arms*, Makati: Agro Printing & Publishing House, 1981, p. 61; 69.

⁶⁷ Richard J. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989, p.144.

⁶⁸ Before 1985, CMO was under the heading of Civil Relations Services (CRS).

⁶⁹ LTC Ferozaldo Paul T. Regencia, Philippine Army, interview with author, AFP National Development Support Command, Camp Aguinaldo, Manila, Philippines, October 8, 2007.

⁷⁰ Carolina G. Hernandez & Maria Cecilia T. Ubarra, "Restoring and Strengthening Civilian Control: Best Practices in Civil-Military Relations in the Philippines," in *Partnership for Democratic Governance and Security*, (December 31, 1999).

⁷¹ Philippine Army, *Civil-Military Operations Manual (PAM-7-00)*, Makati: The Philippine Army, 2002.

⁷² Gen. Reynald D. Sealana, interview with author, AFP, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Military Operations, J7, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, August 3, 2009;

⁷³ LTC Ferozaldo Paul T. Regencia, Philippine Army, interview with author, AFP National Development Support Command, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines, August 3, 2009.

The most significant outcome for the AFP-CMO since 2006 was not so much with the operations itself but more on efforts to streamline CMO expertise into a comprehensive guideline for soldiers⁷⁴ Additionally, the interagency cooperation is gaining currency, and the military is reaching out more to NGOs especially in performing their community outreach programs. The following section would like to examine Zamboanga City in order to give a clearer picture on what CMO is like on the ground.

Zamboanga City

Zamboanga City is located on the tip of Zamboanga peninsula of Mindanao in the Southern Philippines, 505 nautical miles from Manila. It is the third largest city in the Philippines, with an area spanning approximately 1,500 sq.km. Banners in the city read “Asia’s Latin City,” a faint but lingering reminder that the Spanish had established their presence with a fort in 1635. From this base, the Spanish launched attacks against the Muslims or Moros in the Mindanao region. The Spanish were never able to subjugate the fierce Moros and incorporate them into their Philippine colony. It was only when the Americans emerged as victors in the Spanish-American War (1898) that the Muslim South was ceded to the United States. The Americans also faced countless challenges in putting down uprisings and lawless elements of various Muslim groups and an American military governorship headquartered in Zamboanga City had to run Mindanao until 1913 before it could be transferred to the American civil government in preparation for eventual Philippine independence.

Today the port city is also known as the sardines capital, has an economy based on agri-fisheries, trade, tourism, manufacturing and services. The population is 774,407 and is composed of three segments, the Christians, the Muslims, and the Lumads (indigenous people of Mindanao).

The city itself has a heavy military presence. Historically, the former Southern Command (Southcom) of the AFP led the deadliest military operations against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the early 1970s which killed over 120,000 people. In the mid-1980s, the militarization was manifested in its influence over politics and the economy.⁷⁵ Today, the city continues to

retain numerous military installations with South-Com being reorganized as the Western Mindanao Command (WesMinCom). The U.S. forces are also stationed in the city to dispense advice to the AFP and collaborate with them in CMO projects.



*Image 2: Map of the Philippines.
Source: Maps of World*

Western Mindanao Command (WesMinCom)

WesMinCom is the largest regional command in the nation and fields approximately 15,000 personnel. It is also the only military regional command in the Philippines that faces the most serious threat from the Abu Sayyaf while also having to contend with the communist rebels, rogue elements of the Muslim separatist groups, MILF and the MNLF.

CMO activities have gained momentum in the last few years especially with the recognition that it is effective in winning hearts and minds. Though monetary figures were not disclosed, as of May 2009, funding for WesMinCom’s CMO activities were increased by 100 per cent from the pre-

⁷⁴ LTC Ferozaldo Paul T. Regencia, Philippine Army, interview with author, AFP National Development Support Command, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines, October 8, 2007.

⁷⁵ Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, *In the Name of Civil Society*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 126.

vious year.⁷⁶ A significant shift in the paradigm of the military approach was articulated by the new commander, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mohammad Dolorfino when he said internal security operations would operate under the 80 percent CMO and 20 percent combat principle. He explained that, “This is a deeper and wider kind of Civil Military Operations, more on establishing alliance with the local government units and civil society so that we could have a focus and give solutions based on collaboration.”⁷⁷

One of the serious challenges that the AFP has is bridging the distance between the government and communities in the hinterlands. In remote and conflict areas, the military undertaking activities such a road and school building, and basic literacy programs as one way to facilitate the entry of other government agencies. In some cases, the military is the first contact people have with the government. On the other hand, for communities that are already are aware of government and military activities, the biggest challenge lies in “building the image of AFP” since they have a poor track record on human rights and attempts are being made through dialogues, civic action, and information drives to win the people to their side.⁷⁸

In order to accomplish CMO missions, NGOs are seen as important partners because of their ability to direct the AFP in addressing the needs of the community and to help the soldiers in exercising cultural sensitivities. Developing good relations with the community also facilitates gathering human-intelligence. Mobilizing CMO effectively is really a bottom-up approach to making people feel more comfortable in cooperating with the AFP in sharing information about enemy movements.

While the complete annihilation of terror elements is the ultimate goal, combining standard military operations and CMO has been effective in “constricting” or containing the ASG to the outer islands of Sulu and Basilan and keeping areas in the city free from enemy infiltration.⁷⁹

Collaborating with NGOs

The Philippines has a vibrant civil-society sector. The Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission estimates that there are 60,000 non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered in the country. Many of them are considered to be the state’ partner in delivering socio-economic assistance to economically depressed communities such as those found in Zamboanga City.

For an example, Kiwanis Club of Metro Zamboanga’s organizational mandate is to identify the needs of communities and mobilize resources accordingly. They also work with the AFP and U.S. forces in their activities. The relationship is primarily based on sharing the burden. The military provides the resourcing of materials, logistics, security, and the dispatch of medical professionals. Conversely, NGOs can provide the military on advice on what a community needs and guides the soldiers on their conduct in the field.

When working with children, Kiwanis have advised American soldiers to wear “civvies” as opposed to combat fatigues, and with the AFP and the police, have given them guidelines in exercising cultural sensitivities in Muslims communities.

Kiwanis president comments that this relationship helps NGOs with the much needed resources and at the same time helps the military identifying communities that are at risk of being penetrated. The military presence is one “subtle way to ward off lawlessness.”⁸⁰

Both NGOs and government agencies find working with the military indispensable especially when traveling in areas that are comprised in security.⁸¹ Furthermore, the military is sought for their services in equipment, personnel, and logistics.⁸² Other positive factors of working with the AFP are that they are punctual and organized.⁸³ On the down side, the question of whether CMO activities actually brings tangible benefits to a community such as reducing poverty is debatable. Fault-

⁷⁶ Maj. Eugenio S. Batara, Public Information Officer, interview with author, Western Mindanao Command, Zamboanga City, Philippines July 29, 2009. Hereafter cited as Maj. Eugenio S. Batara with date of the interview.

⁷⁷ Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Western Mindanao Commander, interview conducted by Bong Garcia in place of author, Western Mindanao Command, Zamboanga City, Philippines, August 2009.

⁷⁸ Maj. Eugenio Batara, October 3, 2007.

⁷⁹ Maj. Eugenio Batara, July 29, 2009.

⁸⁰ Frenchie L. Carren, president of the Kiwanis Club of Metro Zamboanga, interview with author, Mein Technological College, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 27, 2009

⁸¹ Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in response to written questions, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 29, 2009.

⁸² Sister Emma Delgado, Peace Advocates Zamboanga Foundations, Inc. (PAZF), interview with author, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 28, 2008. Hereafter cited as Sister Emma Delgado.

⁸³ Jocelyn C. Wee, senior Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Specialist, interview with author, Zamboanga City, July 27, 2009.

finders in the AFP's civic action projects are that they are there to fulfill military missions such as intelligence gathering and that their priorities do not lie in development work. These should be left to civilian agencies, underlying that the AFP should stick to its function of defense and not to interfere in the civilian sphere.⁸⁴

Opinions on how far the military can intervene in the civilian sphere are varied. Perspectives garnered from various NGOs that have collaborated with the AFP in Zamboanga City say that they concur on the fact that the AFP's role in development is more "symbolic" but this bias of working with the military has to be removed since the AFP is also a legitimate stakeholder of peace.⁸⁵ As one professor notes, the AFP-CMO is doing "double-time" now to make up for ill-reputed actions which has led to their credibility deficit and "it's a welcome sight to see the soldiers do their work (CMO)."⁸⁶ In short, some NGOs give more credit to the military in shifting their mindset to peacebuilding rather than on actual socio-economic assistance.

The NGOs have also played an important role in bridging the AFP with the communities. Peace Advocates Zamboanga (PAZ), a peace advocacy group sees that in the process of building peace, one cannot alienate the military. Though Zamboanga City is not a conflict zone, the on-going war between government forces and rebel groups in parts of Mindanao have created an "invisible damage" on the psyche of the people. And in a heavily militarized society where human rights have been violated by the AFP, rebels, civilian militias, Christians, and Muslims, there has to be a way to break down biases and build reconciliation from a grassroots level.

In order to promote this, PAZ organizes interfaith and intersectoral dialogues that include Muslims, Christian, indigenous peoples, local government units, the AFP, and the police. Dialogues take place in different forms such as prayers and meetings. But PAZ makes a point that the military is only invited if their presence is requested by participants or the participants are comfortable with the presence of soldiers.

⁸⁴ Spokesperson for Karapatan, interview with author, Manila, Philippines, July 24, 2008; Senior researcher at IBON foundation, interview with author, Manila, Philippines, March, 2007.

⁸⁵ Father Angel Calvo, president of Peace Advocates Zamboanga Foundation, Inc. interview with author, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 28, 2008.

⁸⁶ Professor Edgar Araojo (Western Mindanao State University), interview with author, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 31, 2009.

In one interfaith dialogue in 2007, Gen. Dolorfino, then a marines commander admitted that the AFP's indiscriminate use of military operations have violated human rights, displaced civilians, and had become part of the problem of violence on the island province of Sulu.⁸⁷ A former NGO worker in Basilan that declined to be identified said that though the military has a long way to go in building trust with communities but still "I can observe change among the military in areas of the thinking framework and paradigm."

U.S. Forces Role in CMO

Lesser known of America's military missions abroad is their role in the Philippines. Though the premises lie in its long-standing military relationship with the country which goes back over a century, the low-visibility of American forces in Mindanao is largely due to the U.S. serving a strictly advisory role on counter-terror and participating in humanitarian works.⁸⁸ The common security concerns of both countries now stem from the presence of the local terrorist group, the Abu Sayyaf and their links to international Islamic terror organizations. With the Philippines being a "coalition of the willing" in the U.S. global war on terrorism, the US has currently 500-600 elite forces operating in Mindanao.⁸⁹

The U.S. involvement in CMO projects in both conflict and non-conflict areas have received generally positive views from their Filipino civilian partners. U.S. forces have conducted various activities ranging from longer-term road and school building and one-day medical and dental civic action programs. NGOs feel that the U.S. presence has helped boost the number of CMO activities.⁹⁰ One reason for that may be that the U.S. funds and provides the hard material that both NGOs and the AFP do not have ample supply of. They are also given credit for handing over the project to the

⁸⁷ Darwin Wally Wee, "Soldiers of Cupid: AFP forsaking guns-increasingly for the bow and arrow of peace making" *Peace-Works*, December 2007, Vol. VI No. 11, p 4.

⁸⁸ See "Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and U.S.A" ChanRobles Law Library. <http://www.chanrobles.com/visitingforcesagreement1.htm>. Accessed March 22, 2009 ; Balikatan Exercises, www.globalsecurity.org.

⁸⁹ Lt. Cmdr Fred Kuebler (U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines), interview with author, Western Mindanao Commander, Zamboanga City, Philippines, October 3, 2007.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

community⁹¹ thus underlying the US forces priorities to allow Filipino agencies take lead.⁹²

Some of the challenges the U.S. forces encounter in CMO are trying to “solidify their (AFP) legitimacy.” As Lt. Cmdr. Kuebler says “It is true the AFP has not enjoyed good relations with the people and CMO is the best way to break down barriers.” NGOs have lauded US efforts in this area and say that US military have reduced tension and mistrust in communities that do not welcome the AFP and have been instrumental in building a bridge between the AFP and the communities.⁹³

Nevertheless, the most formidable challenge lies in sustaining gains from CMO. For instance, counterinsurgency operations were conducted on the island of Basilan which aimed to remove the base of operations of the Abu Sayyaf through a bilateral exercise between the AFP and US forces (Balikatan). It was centered on promoting development in impoverished areas. Initially success was registered with a drop in kidnappings and number of terrorist incidents in the years since 2002, but deterioration in the security situation has reduced these operations to tactical successes,

US forces explain that initial success was due to the large number of US forces (1,300) working in Basilan. But after progress was made, the U.S. pulled out, leaving a vacuum. The problem here was that people still did not have socio-economic development and the conditions were ripe for the return of the Abu Sayyaf. Major Wilson surmises the situation as a process which will take years and generations for activities such as CMO to bear fruit. And it is the AFP who will be responsible for the long-term so it is critical that the AFP take lead.⁹⁴

CMO beneficiaries

The CMO beneficiaries interviewed within the vicinity of Zamboanga City were generally happy with the AFP and US forces. Recipients of one-day to two-day medical and dental missions said the military brought with them doctors and medi-

cal supplies much in need and expressed wishes that they would come again. In Malagutay, a village of 5,624 people, several medical outreach programs were held. One such beneficiary, Carlos Remoto (49) was able to save his leg from amputation after sustaining injuries from a construction accident. In February 2004, a joint medical civic-action held between the AFP and U.S. recognized he require further medical services. As a result he got free treatment for his leg by the Americans in an AFP camp. As a result of this experience, he feels a sense of closeness with both the Americans and the AFP. Whereas before, the soldiers belonged to a different world, one “you can only see peeping through the (military) gates.”

Outreach programs conducted in schools especially left a strong impression on children. Students interviewed at the Boalan Elementary School in July 2008, expressed delight at having American soldiers coming in to read them books and play with them. They also appreciated the fact that they were given notebooks, textbooks, shoes, clothing, and that the soldiers worked in repainting the classrooms. A grade 6 subject teacher Nomito Castromayor added that Filipino soldiers were also there but kept a low profile and let the U.S. soldiers take center-stage. As for the school, making requests to the government for building improvements takes as long as 5-6 years to process so it was extremely helpful to have soldiers come in to provide supplies and do upkeep.

In other projects the AFP keeps a lower profile and delivers assistance upon request such as with the case of the resettlement project for squatters. In Tulungatung village, government property was re-designated as a lot to provide homes for squatters complete with a water system and electricity. It was spear-headed by Gayad Kalinga (GK), a Catholic organization, and the city office. The objective was to resettle 2,600 families and as of July 2009, 500 families were settled. One of the new settlers, Alex Lagling a father of three, remembers the AFP working on one portion and he was pleasantly surprised with their good attitudes. He recalls the navy, army, air force, and the police worked on construction. Others also agreed their impressions of the military were positive, most pointing out that they never encountered the AFP at such a close level before. They gave them credit for being obedient to the foreman, and bringing their own food and material.

Elected officials in various communities and schools interviewed said some made the requests to the military and in some in cases the AFP or Americans approached them. But for the average

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Maj. Tyler Wilson & SSG(P) Calen A. Bullard (US Forces CIM, NCOIC, Civil Affairs Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines), interview with author, Western Mindanao Command, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 28, 2009.

⁹³ Frencie L. Carren, interview with author, president of the Kiwanis Club of Metro Zamboanga, Mein Technological College, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 27, 2009. Hereafter cited as Frencie L. Carren.

⁹⁴ Maj. Tyler Wilson (US Forces CIM, NCOIC, Civil Affairs Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines), interview with author, Western Mindanao Command, Zamboanga City, Philippines, July 28, 2009.

resident, they did not know the reasons why the military chose their community especially since all the respondents said they had never encountered a rebel or a terrorist except on TV. NGOs were left scratching their heads about the choice of beneficiaries since most of these villages did not have security problems and comparatively speaking, were not as impoverished as communities in more remote areas. Some NGO workers that declined to be identified said that residents were rumoring amongst themselves that the AFP and US had ulterior motives of securing natural resources or even hidden gold treasures left behind the Japanese in World War II. This suspicion is not unusual since Mindanao is resource-rich. In other parts of Mindanao, especially in areas designated as ancestral domains of indigenous people, it is speculated that the military is conducting CMO to clear lands from infiltration of communist insurgents to allow the entry of foreign investment.⁹⁵

Generally speaking though, none of the beneficiaries interviewed had any complaints about the AFP or U.S. forces. They were also careful to add that though they did not have negative images of the AFP prior to their civic action programs, their image of the soldier improved considerably. To make generalizations of communities reactions to CMO activities based on a area-specific sample can be misleading but for the case of Zamboanga City, the common denominator here is that CMO beneficiaries have never experienced military operations in their villages and while the city retains numerous military installations, most of them had no contact with the soldiers prior to CMO

Concluding by Looking at the Bigger Picture

In regards to Zamboanga City, the heavy military presence indicate that that a kind of a co-dependency has been developed between the military and civilian agencies especially in areas of furthering socio-economic work, sharing resources, and preventing the infiltration of rebel or lawless elements. This naturally leads agencies to depend on one another to make up for the lack of resources. Secondly, from a military operational perspective, geographical proximity of many of the communities to the military bases would make it an imperative to keep these areas free of enemy

infiltrations. Finally, WesMinCom has been more receptive and open to an exchange of ideas with civilians through the facilitation of NGOs.

But the findings in Zamboanga City are not necessarily duplicated elsewhere in the country. In areas where there have been extensive military operations such as in North Cotabato, CMO does not have the same effect. As of May 2009, it was reported that as many as 700,000 people have been displaced and put into evacuation centers by ongoing military operations against the MILF. Displaced people in camps are currently subjected to overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack of health care and indiscriminate shelling by both the AFP and MILF.⁹⁶ A Basilan-based NGO work comments that CMO should be used especially in the “relief and rehabilitation of displaced people in ongoing military operations. This is where the military can coordinate with volunteers and agencies, and prevent the harassment of civilians by the military.”

From an operational perspective, the revival of CMO practices has measured some success in bolstering the counterinsurgency efforts and is in line with the “holistic approach (of the government) consisting of political, economic, psychosocial and security components to address the causes and armed threats of insurgency.”⁹⁷ However there are problems that can be foreseen if CMO is used as a stop-gap measure in addressing the inherent weaknesses within the AFP. First, while CMO can help offset costs by coordinating with civilian agencies to complete a project, it cannot on its own, compensate for the AFP’s funding that is not commensurate with the military’s capabilities to fight insurgencies. Secondly, CMO cannot increase their legitimacy of the military and win hearts and minds if human rights and corruption committed by soldiers are not held accountable. The government and the military needs to establish functioning mechanisms to reign in errant soldiers. Thirdly, the timeline to end insurgencies by 2010 set by the government is not realistic especially since it has yet to conclude a peace settlement with the MILF while contending with the armed communist front, terrorism, and lawlessness in remote areas. These problems will limit CMO’s successes to a tactical level unless the government and the AFP takes constructive measures to reform its security apparatus.

⁹⁵ Brad Miller, “PHILIPPINES: Mindanao Tribals Caught Between Army, Insurgents,” Inter Press Service, January 10, 2008. Available online at: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=40738>. Accessed November 15, 2009.

⁹⁶ Amnesty International, Philippines: *Shattered lives: Beyond the 2008-2009 Mindanao armed conflict*, 26 August 2009, ASA 35/003/2009. Available online at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a94f2182.html>. Accessed November 22, 2009.

⁹⁷ See *Executive Order No. 21* (2001).

Looking on the brighter side, attempts to elevate the CMO status to the same level as traditional combat operations signals a potential for the AFP to create an existing expertise and experience into an operational niche. The National Development Support Command (NDSC), proposed that by 2014 CMO should be brought up to a level where it's applicable to any region in the world.⁹⁸ The aim to utilize CMO in international peace-keeping missions reveals aspirations for a military transformation that can be a trade-off of expensive modernization programs where scarce resources can be devoted to developing one segment on the military operational spectrum to promote the AFP's relevancy also in an international context.

Delilah Ruth Russell is a PhD student at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS), Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.

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⁹⁸ LTC Ferozaldo Paul T. Regencia, Philippine Army, AFP National Development Support Command, interview with author, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines, October 8, 2009.

Clio in Combat

The Transformation of Military History Operations

by Lieutenant Colonel John A. Boyd, Ph.D

In Greek mythology, Clio is the muse of history.

The Afghan-Iraq campaigns are now the most digitized, documented, photographed and video recorded wars in American military history – until the next war – and this means both more and less than it may seem. Every soldier seems to have a blog and digital camera, not to mention access to email and – in many cases – classified data. For the first time in world history, soldiers from the lowest private to the highest ranking general meet as equals – they can write, publish, and/or post combat vignettes on websites accessible to millions of readers worldwide. At unit headquarters the digital revolution of Internet, network protocol routers and battle command systems has created a paperless Army rapidly pushing real-time information to multiple subordinate commands and soldiers numbering in the thousands of terabytes each day.

For Army historians this glut of information is both a blessing and a curse. On the plus side historians are close to capturing almost every minute detail of U.S. military operations; on the minus side this flood of data now threatens to overwhelm researchers and raises many questions: what do historians collect, how do they collect, and how do historians best organize, store, and safeguard, strategic, operational and tactical military information?

The Center of Military History (CMH), located at Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C., is responsible for the collection, preservation, and publication of the Army's official history. In order to accomplish this mission the Army created the three-man Military History Detachment (MHD) for deployment into combat zones to conduct historical collection operations.¹ The mission of the MHD is to collect raw operational data, creating a collection of primary source materials which Army historians can use for publication. The function of the MHD on today's battlefield can best be summarized us-

¹ Mr. Robert K. Wright first discussed historical collection, mission, development, and fielding of Military History Detachments (MHDs) in "Clio in Combat: The Evolution of the Military History Detachment," *The Army Historian*, No. 6, Winter (1985), pp. 3-6.



Figure 1 Military History Detachments of the US Army

ing the acronym W.E.P.A.I.D.V. The MHD collects Webpage material, Electronic data, Photographs, Artifacts, Interviews, Documents, and Video information. The ideal assignment for the MHD is to attach it to a division or sustainment command headquarters where it can cover down on combat brigades as well as combat support and combat service support units. However, MHDs have also been assigned to support corps and strategic-level headquarters historians with equal success.

You Go to War with the Historians You Have

In March 2003, twenty-five MHDs – nineteen in the U.S. Army Reserve, five in the Army National Guard and one active duty detachment were available for Operation Iraqi Freedom.² Reflecting the optimism of the Army – that the Iraq war would be short – twelve MHDs, close to one-half of those available, were deployed to Kuwait. The number of MHDs and historians on the ground, the highest since Vietnam, resulted in the creation of the first ever Military History Group. Designating three MHDs as the Group element, historians Colonel Neil Rogers and Command Sergeant Major Scotty Garrett created a "history col-

² One of the twenty-five MHDs was retained for support operations in Afghanistan.

lection headquarters” and executed a historical collection plan for the invasion of Iraq: Cobra II.¹

The Military History Group (MHG) performed adequately during the invasion. It provided command and control not only for MHD soldiers, but also for civilian historians, Army artists, combat cameramen, and Army museum curators. However, pooling MHDs instead of immediately assigning each to a maneuver unit HQ led to gaps in historical combat collection. In instances when MHDs were attached few staff officers and soldiers at brigade and division level headquarters had ever heard of a Military History Detachment let alone work with one; others demanded to know what the MHD brought to the fight – how was this unit a combat multiplier? In most cases the success or failure of the MHD rested upon its ability to successfully integrate – if not ingratiate – itself into its attached HQs, an event that occurred on extremely short notice and after operations were well underway.

In the immediate aftermath of the U.S. invasion, historians operated with few restrictions or constraints on their movements or activities. Out from under the watchful eyes of the MHG a few soldiers morphed into “cowboy” historians, pursuing personal rather than professional agendas. Other MHD commanders did not truly understand how to execute their collection plans or were sidetracked by officers and men who misinterpreted their mission and became – for lack of a better word – Warrior-Tourists. Fortunately, the majority of MHDs succeeded in capturing the core elements of historical data for CMH.

However, the already tenuous connection of MHD to maneuver unit HQs was severed shortly after the fall of Baghdad when months later the majority of MHDs were ordered to redeploy back to CONUS before their job was done. Created to support a conventional military invasion, the Military

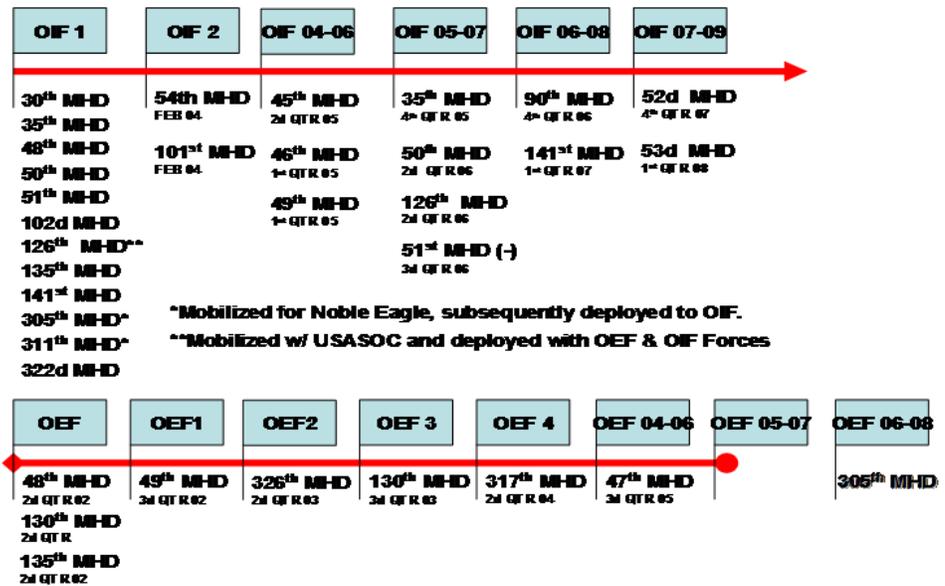


Figure #2 MHD Deployments in the Iraq & Afghan Campaigns

tary History Group came to an untimely end in August-September 2003. By February 2004 only two MHDs – six soldiers – were left in Iraq to capture and record the sacrifices and achievements of 150,000 plus U.S. soldiers.

Like much of the Army, historians were not prepared for what came next – stability operations – the Long War. By late 2004 as U.S. forces confronted an insurgency it became apparent that the “front community” would have to adapt itself to sustain historical collection operations for an indefinite period. Manpower and equipment needs of the tiny pool of MHDs were stretched thin, the often competing agencies of the Joint History Office, Military History Institute, FORSCOM Historian Office, USAR Historian Office, Center of Military History and other historical agencies found themselves thrust into an uneasy if not unholy alliance of necessity. Could they agree on common critical information requirements and tasks; among them, who would supervise MHDs and collect higher level headquarters information? Where would the historians for the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) come from? These entities were expeditionary Joint Task Force commands with no permanently assigned historians – they would dissolve upon mission cessation.

Complicating matters were division headquarters and sustainment commands. These organizations employed civilian historians intended for forward deployment; but in many instances – divisions for example – the positions went unfilled

¹ Fm 1-20 *Historical Operations* had just been published in 2003.

or the historian was non-deployable. Ultimately, historians from all agencies, civilian and military, needed to provide and rotate key personnel to Iraq. These historians would have to work for all historical agencies and provide MHDs with a degree of supervision and guidance.¹

Clio meets the Enemy, and He is Us

What MHD soldiers encountered in the combat zone clashed with training and expectations. The absence of civilian historians at division or higher level headquarters had consequences. The MHD commander – usually a major but sometimes a captain – suddenly found themselves assigned as the unit historical officer and/or a member of the command group staff. With the majority of MHD officers coming from the USAR or ARNG, few had ever worked in an Army headquarters as a staff officer. Required officer education courses such as CAS3 or CGSC did little to calm the angst or confusion of many – especially captains – when immersed in such an environment. Assigning them additional duties or special projects – typical staff officer actions – made their primary mission of historical collection in the field extraordinarily difficult. The nightmare scenario for any assigned MHD commander was to discover upon reporting to their Chief of Staff that the Chief had majored in history in college and therefore believed he knew how to use an MHD. This usually resulted in a tasking to write the unit history. While such an assignment could open doors and permit an MHD to travel and collect information anywhere within the unit's battlespace – not a bad thing – it did not help the MHD commander, most of whom were not historians or writers. Diverted from his collection mission, the MHD commander labored valiantly but the Chief of Staff was usually disappointed in the final product.²

Years of poor manning and MHD stationing methods caught up with history detachments. Traditionally, due to their use of 46 MOS series photo-journalists, MHDs were co-located with Public Affairs units for administration and support. However, PA units often used MHDs for their own purposes. If mobilized, PA units usually gutted MHDs taking any quality 46 series soldiers with

them; or, conversely, they used MHD slots to promote their soldiers or to park excess or substandard soldiers. On the officer side reserve and guard units generally assigned marginal officers (often lackluster majors) to command MHDs. Few, if any, history detachment officers impressed USAR or ARNG senior raters enough to earn a coveted top block rating on their Officer Evaluation Reports. What is remarkable is how well the majority of MHDs performed during deployments.³

Deployed and attached to a headquarters the MHD discovered – much to its surprise – that the Army had truly become paperless. The stationary nature of stability operations gave birth to robust staffs producing a cornucopia of information – numerous reports, orders, and analysis. It was as if each staff officer had determined to write the plan, analysis, or memo that would win the war outright. The amount of digital information produced by divisions numbered in the thousands of terabytes. The existence of NIPR, SIPR, CENTRIX networks (and later FusionNet to interface with networks) added an element of confusion for historians trained to expect a less complex command environment. The MHD was initially swept away in the information management challenges of the Army. Over 300-plus data bases and forty domains – most of which did not have interoperability – were available to explore in Iraq by 2005-2006.⁴

Like it or not, the MHD confronted a collection dilemma – what to download and what to condemn to digital oblivion. Running out of storage capacity at the highest command levels, G6 chiefs continued to delete what they considered to be useless data from their servers. As a consequence, two schools of thought emerged, those favoring selectively downloading key documents and critical information and those wanting to download as many digits as possible – the “suck it all out” method. The labor-intensive “select it” method worked if MHDs had time on their hands and could recognize important documents; but due to time constraints most MHDs downloaded as much as they could in hopes of sorting it later. At first, historians stateside did not understand the dimension of the problem and proposed printing all documents and shipping them to CONUS until one MHD NCO explained that the 200 gigabyte hard drive he had just shipped to CMH contained ap-

¹ These agencies include, but are not limited to, the Center of Military History, Combat Studies Institute, Joint History Office, Military History Institute, USASOC, Army museum historians, military services, coalition historians, and others.

² While the MHD can be tasked by its supervisor to perform any mission, the unit PA detachment is best situated to produce a unit history – usually the equivalent of a yearbook.

³ By 2005 cross-leveling personnel into MHDs had become standard practice. It may also have been the saving grace, resulting in higher quality officers as detachment commanders.

⁴ See Lieutenant General John R. Vines, “The XVIII Airborne Corps on the Ground in Iraq,” *Military Review*, September – October 2006.

proximately 500,000 documents alone (his MHD would eventually ship seven such hard drives).¹

On the other end of the spectrum most soldiers from private to general officer possessed personal digital information some of it digital combat footage. Most of this material was not centrally located on a server but required one-on-one individual collection. In short, sitting in the brigade or battalion headquarters was not enough for MHD soldiers seeking to capture and understand the reality of combat operations.

MHDs were not prepared for the digital storage crisis. In some instances collection missions ground to a halt for lack of portable hard drives. Attempting to stay mission capable, MHD soldiers purchased storage devices from local Iraqi vendors. Many of these would fail after one or two uses. Frantic messages from deployed detachments to CMH requesting portable hard drives, thumb drives, and more ensued. CMH at first began an exchange program – ship a loaded hard drive, get an empty one back. But this did not account for gaps in shipping times of several weeks or the fact that an MHD needed a classified as well as an unclassified hard drive. In one instance, an MHD sent CMH a 200 gigabyte hard drive only to receive a 100 gigabyte hard drive in exchange.

The MHDs' other stock in trade was the oral interview. If capturing documents seemed too challenging or painful for some, then perhaps numerous oral interviews might make up for their lack? CMH understood that well-executed oral interviews could supplement impersonal OPLAN or MDMP documents. The art of the oral interview therefore, was another area in which the MHD needed to excel. Here the quality of the interviewer's questions hinged on their level of professional military education and unit research as well as their "street smart" ability. Could the MHD NCO intelligently discuss small squad tactics with infantry platoon soldiers? Was the MHD commander capable of asking strategic, operational, or tactical level questions when interviewing high-ranking

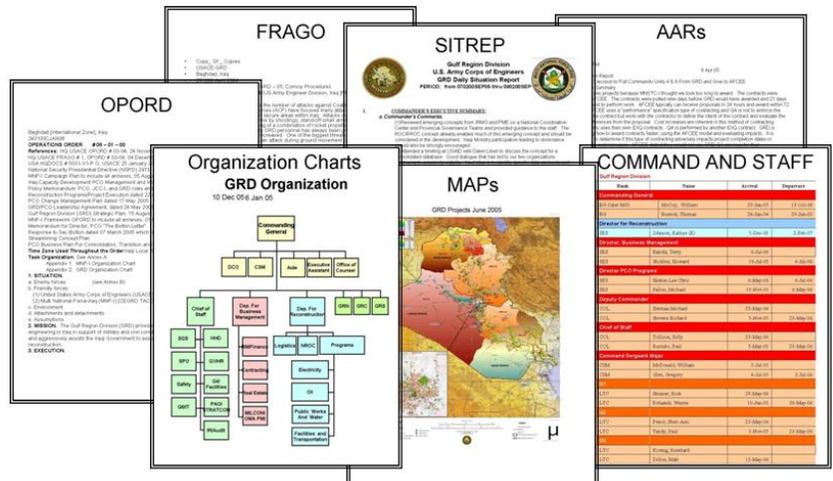


Figure # 3 Examples of Documents Historians Seek

officers? The smart interviewer researched the soldiers, activities and operations of the subject unit prior to meeting with its key leaders.

How frustrating to discover that in many instances none of this mattered for MHDs occasionally hit brick walls, glass ceilings, or the "party line" in their efforts to interview staff and general officers. Some flatly refused.

There is an alarming trend among general officers in today's Army, they give reporters from the mainstream media more interviews and access than they do their own historians. Despite the fact that Army historians represent the home team and will let them discuss issues at length, too often access is denied. They also deny historians access to their notes and email correspondence – today's primary means for exchanging operational views and making military decisions.²

The question is why and the answer is that some are dodging in depth interviews – sitting on their emails, notes and other materials – so they can write their book. These books, such as General Tommy Franks *American Soldier*, or Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez's, *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier's Story*, are often agenda-driven or apologist narratives that gloss over controversial command decisions – they typically address some of the issues but have limited historical value.

Equally nuanced is the "party line" interview. Career officers fearing the unforeseen conse-

¹ At CMH and elsewhere, historians debated the merits of digital storage versus paper storage. Digital material could potentially be altered, whereas paper could not. Another concern was that the storage technology kept changing, which might render storage devices and methods then in use obsolete in later years – would CMH have the funding to update and preserve electronically stored material?

² The Military History Institute is the largest repository for the diaries, notes, and correspondence of Army general officers. AR 25-1 *Army Information Management*, Chapter 8 *Records Management Policy*, 8-6. *General Policies* section C states, "Army general officers . . . may place files that they create during their tenure of office with the Military History Institute."

quences of an interview often duck difficult or controversial questions by echoing official public affairs style talking points. Their adherence to unity of command and speaking with one voice is commendable but their superficial musings do not make for good history.

Finally, the deployed MHD needs to find the right balance between covering headquarters and CS/CSS functions on Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and the combat operations of soldiers outside the wire. “Neither a FOBBIT nor a door kicker be,” Marine Colonel Michael Visconage (MNC-I Historian 2007-2008) advised incoming detachments; but this balance hinged on the personalities of detachment soldiers. In some cases officers and NCOs hunkered down in office trailers during their tour – refusing to leave the FOB. In other cases rogue MHD soldiers eager to take home a Combat Action Badge – and cover themselves in self-styled glory – spent the majority of their time with combat units. Fortunately most MHDs found the right balance or executed balanced missions based on guidance from supervisors – usually a Chief of Staff.

Re-inventing the MHD: Birth of the Basic Combat Historian’s Qualification Course

The uneven performance of MHDs in Iraq from 2003-2005 triggered a demand for new and better training using TTPs more in sync with an Army at war. Despite the fact that training had progressed from a detachment conference held every three years to a one week and then a two week training program by 2003, there was still much to do.¹ With the majority of MHDs (nineteen) in the USAR, the Army Reserve Historian, Dr. Lee Harford and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Perot in partnership with Mr. Bill Epley of the Center of Military History took the lead in developing an effective MHD training program. Originally organized into two phases named Delbruck/SLAM, the USAR Historian Office began two weeks of MHD training at the Catoosa National Guard facility in northern Georgia located a few miles from the 1863 Civil War Chickamauga battlefield.² Here soldiers

were instructed on how and what to collect. Using the nearby battlefield they collected operational and tactical data on the Chickamauga battle while conducting practice field interviews using Civil War re-enactors as interview subjects. MHDs were evaluated on collection methods and techniques by observer controllers. The ability to master the intricacies of the Union Army of Cumberland circa 1863 – its soldiers, leaders, maneuver, tactics and combat – was an excellent method for the Crawl and Walk phases of MHD training.

The Run phase – a rotation to a Combat Training Center – inserted MHDs into a battalion or higher level headquarters during unit field exercises. Accompanied by a soldier-historian acting as an observer controller the MHD was evaluated on performance (validated) for upcoming deployment. The CTC allowed the MHD to work on collection TTPs with ordinary soldiers and gave the subject unit experience working with an MHD – a win-win situation.

This march from improvised peacetime training to professional wartime training gave birth to the Basic Combat Historian’s Qualification Course (BCHQC). Historians Dr. Robert Rush, Dr. Rich Davis, and Mr. Frank Shirer from CMH joined ranks with Dr. Harford and his USAR staff to improve course structure and curriculum. Working with TRADOC, core lessons were examined and revised while cadre attended Army instructor certification courses to improve content and teaching technique. Enduring two years of development, TRADOC inspectors accredited the BCHQC in July 2008 and added it to the list of Army courses under ATTRS 300. A final step institutionalized and moved the BCHQC under the 84th Training Command (Leader Readiness). Wartime necessity had produced a needed and recognized Basic Course for future soldier-historians.³

In line with the new BCHQC, CMH re-vamped and fielded its computer collection program – the Military History Combined Systems Integrator – or MHSCL. This research tool combined collected data and organized it into a useable format. The format enabled a researcher to find, for example, an interviewee’s photo, his interview and his documents under one file heading. It also allowed the MHD to organize information by unit,

¹ CMH’s concern over information gaps during MHD deployments to Bosnia during the 1990s resulted in the first one-week MHD training initiative.

² Delbruck was named after German historian Hans Delbruck, while S.L.A.M. was named for S.L.A. Marshall the famous Army historian who pioneered historical research techniques during WWII. For a detailed description on the training and mechanics of the MHD, see Dr Lee Harford, “Documenting the past

training the military history units . . .,” *Army Reserve Magazine*, Summer 2002.

³ The BCHQC was institutionalized and moved to the 84th Training Command (Leader Readiness) in Fall 2009 following a heated debate among historians over the utility of using the Chickamauga (Civil War) battlefield versus today’s TTPs and available modern day scenarios for training.

operation, or subject. A useful byproduct of MHCSI was its ability to create what soldier-historians called an Operational Data Report (ODR). The ODR encapsulated the collection work of the MHD; it also assisted the historian when developing a unit's Command Chronology.

A revision of manpower and equipment occurred. MHDs were issued five to seven 200 gigabyte hard drives and additional storage devices at the start of their deployments. Digital voice recorders and digital cameras were added while antiquated tape recorders and bulky cameras were discarded.

The benefits of the new BCHQC were many: it provided MHD soldiers with quality instruction on data collection, organization of materials, storage and shipment; it allowed cadre and instructors to vet soldiers and validate units prior to overseas deployments and, it put soldier-historians in a field environment where they could test their skills, equipment and themselves. The BCHQC brought synergy, pride and a sense of professionalism to soldier-historians.



Figure # 4: 45th Military History Detachment
LTC John Boyd, SFC Renea Everage, SFC Scott

Sustaining Historical Collection Operations on the Stability Operations Battlefield

Today's challenge for military historians is sustaining current operations with enough soldier-historians to do the job. The USAR has attempted to place MHDs into Army Reserve Expeditionary Force (AREF) packages but a growing demand for historical units has forced mobilization planners to think outside the box. On average, history detachments rotate back to Iraq or Afghanistan every two to three years. To supplement Army manpower needs the U.S. Navy voluntarily formed adhoc

MHDs beginning in 2007, this helped tremendously during the Iraq surge.¹

The Center of Military History's answer to wartime manpower and C2 requirements is the new two-man Military History Team. Proposed by CMH these two-man teams (three officer and five NCO teams) came on line in September 2008.² Their mission: provide command and control for MHDs in theater as well as cover down on assigned corps or strategic level headquarters. Like today's Army their use is modular, plug and play. An officer team might deploy with two or three NCO teams to support it or teams might be sent to supplement three-man MHDs when needed. These units will be manned by professional military historians and/or soldiers with previous MHD deployment experience, or soldiers who have served and know their way around a higher level headquarters.

Officer teams will be capable of writing history, providing their commands with written narratives and vignettes as well as formulating theater-level historical collection plans for MHDs. The teams will exercise operational control over MHDs and inspect the quality of their work. The teams represent a potential source of manpower for manning the headquarters of Joint Task Forces – they are the answer for non-deployable civilian historians and short staffed commands.

Beginning in 2007 detachments no longer deploy alone. Drawing upon his experience as an MHD soldier in the Vietnam War, CMH Director Dr. Jeffrey Clarke revived the practice of assigning each forward deployed MHD a CMH historian (rear) to advise the detachment. Researchers and writers now assist history commanders to focus on information they consider valuable. They help detachments develop collection plans and work to solve other historical issues.

The establishment of an adhoc Reach-Back Research Center at CMH in 2007 also significantly improved the life of many deployed historians and MHD commanders – some assigned to division staffs as unit historians. Now, if responding to a request for historical studies of topics such as counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam (CORDS) or Malaya, the soldier-historian can rapidly call back to the Reach-Back Research Center for assistance and get linked to the study and a subject matter expert.

¹ The Navy continues to provide sailors for this mission and trains them at the BCHQC.

² Officially, the Army designates these eight USAR units as MHDs not MHTs, which may confuse planners when submitting requests for forces.

One of the newest challenges for historians is organizing the information collected. Indeed, the transformation of the Army into a modular force has complicated this task. As division headquarters rotate back and forth to Iraq with different Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and support units the situation only gets murkier. It is no longer enough to simply write a “history of the division” when subordinate units no longer align to specific divisions. With the modular Army must come “modular history,” the era of “Task Force history” is at hand. In that spirit most MHDs and historians on the ground organize history by task force and rotation.



Figure # 5: Colonel H.R. McMaster discusses 3rd ACR military actions at Tal Afar with his-

What is Past is Prologue: The Way Ahead

The future of historical collection operations looks bright, and there is still much to accomplish. This historian suggests the following:

- The Army chiefs need to inaugurate an Army-wide spirit of cooperation with historians in the Iraqi and Afghanistan theater of operations. Leaders set the command climates for their units. They need to understand that MHDs are not CNN or the *Washington Post* but the home team – dedicated to telling their story. If commanders openly encourage their soldiers to work with Army historians, a lasting record of the sacrifices and achievements of their brave soldiers can be archived for future generations. Colonel H. R. McMaster, soldier, historian, and commander of the 3rd ACR in Iraq (2005-2006) understood this. He opened the door for historians during Operation Restoring Rights (Tal Afar) with great success.¹
- Major Subordinate Commands of USAR and ARNG units need to assign quality officers and NCOs to MHDs. Commands need to understand that MHD soldiers are generally put into active Army division headquarters. These “close to the flagpole” positions, in which the MHD commander usually becomes a member of the command staff, are not “career enhancing” for marginal officers and soldiers.
- A Command Historian’s Qualification Course – the CHQC. Now that the Basic Historian’s Qualification Course (BCHQC) is established the next logical step is to create a higher level course for command historians who serve at division, corps, and theater-level headquarters. Such a course would emphasize collection planning, review historical collection from all the services as well as joint history office requirements and writing requirements.
- Access to general and flag officer email. With so many discussions and decisions being made via general officer email, the officer’s right to keep or withhold this vital information is lamentable. Email documents need to become collectable. Let the record speak for itself!
- “Fly on the Wall” or Shadow rights. Give historians carte blanche to embed, watch, and observe officers and soldiers in all their activities – from high level meetings to combat outpost inspections. The ability of the historian to shadow the commanding officer and members of his staff assists the historian in understanding the command and capturing its history.
- Require MHDs to be put under the operational control of the MNF-I or MNC-I Historian.
- Archive (organize) history by Task Force and year of rotation. There will be exceptions to this format, but it remains the best approach. If units can send their servers to CMH at the end of their rotations so much the better.
- Share information. Throughout the Iraq campaign different historical offices and the agencies of the different services have failed, and in some cases refused, to cooperate and share information. This situation can be improved by designating the CENTCOM Historian and the MNF-I Historian as overall supervisors for historians working in theater. In the spirit of “there is plenty of history to go around” it is reasonable to share copies of collected information among historians

¹ Colonel H.R. McMaster, author of *Dereliction of Duty*, a study of Vietnam, instructed his soldiers to freely talk to historians. As a result, the archived records of 3rd ACR’s activities in Iraq are superior when compared with other units.

- Require commands to fill empty MHTs/MHDs two years prior to deployment. This will give the detachments time to train and work together as a team.
- Task other services, the Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, to provide personnel for adhoc MHDs during the present Iraq campaign as the Navy has done.
- Initiate a search for ASI 5X military historians to serve in MHTs and MHDs. Launch an initiative through Military History Institute and Center of Military History to grant the ASI 5X to interested but qualified officers.
- Issue MHTs/MHDs with the latest video recording technology. MHDs continue to use audio digital tape recorders in the field. This has not kept up with current advances in technology. The ability to interview soldiers using audio-visual is now at hand.
- Continue to develop the Military History Combined Systems Integrator (MHCSI) program until it can digitally send information directly back via SIPRNET to the Center of Military History, negating the use of portable hard drives except as back up.
- Preposition (leave) specialized equipment in theater for MHTs/MHDs to fall in on when deploying to theater.
- Identify the MHD's supported unit prior to deployment. Ensure that the MHD attends pre-deployment exercises with its attached headquarters in order to build relationships as well as receive mission/area pre-deployment training.
- Require the MHD to report to CMH prior to deployment in order to meet with its assigned point of contact (historian rear) and "end users" of collected material.
- Expand historical collection efforts to include Coalition and Iraqi Army forces. The story of how the United States built a new Iraqi Army is a fascinating story which is being lost to history. The Afghanistan Army story is equally important.
- Create a Military History Operational & Functional Command or create a Public Affairs-Military History Command. Granted, this might be the smallest O & F command in the Army, but the truth is that historians need to take care of their own, promote from within, and manage the training, equipping and man-

ning of their own units. Under current manning MHDs are usually placed under PA units which in turn serve larger O & F commands. Few MHD officers and NCOs will receive top notch evaluations from commands that consider them "ash & trash" unit soldiers. There is no career path for the officer or NCO who discovers and believes that the job of soldier-historian is the best job in the Army. This is regrettable because not every soldier can do the historian job – they must be independent operators and skilled interviewers/collectors to succeed. The Center of Military History is the best equipped to become a Military History Operational & Functional Command. It presently has Army officers and NCOs which can constitute an overall command structure.



Figure # 6: Historian SFC Scott Fisk photos 2-325 Regt 82nd ABN soldiers in Tal Afar,

Today on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan a few dedicated soldier-historians labor to capture and record the sacrifices and achievements of our brave soldiers. It is a sacred trust. As the Army transforms so too do military historians, transforming themselves to better meet the challenges of an Army at war. History matters. In the words of General Eisenhower's Chief of Military History, Col. William A Ganoe, "History is the last thing we care about during operations and the first thing we want afterwards. Then it is too late."

Lieutenant Colonel Boyd served as the Multi-National Force-Iraq Command Historian in 2005-2006, while commanding the 45th Military History Detachment from 2005-2007. He currently commands the 20th Military History Team, a historical unit belonging to the 412th Engineer Command USAR. He is the civilian Command Historian for the 81st Regional Support Command, United States Army Reserve. He holds a BA from Vanderbilt University; M.Ed. and M.A. from the University of Cincinnati, and a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kentucky.

Task Force Stryker

Network Revolution

by Captain Jonathan Pan

“To defeat a network, you have to be a network.”

General Stanley A. McChrystal
Commander, International Security Assistance Force and
Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan

In counterinsurgencies, the most difficult thing to understand is the nature of the conflict. The military is very self-referential with the outside world. Soldiers tend to see the world through a military lens. When a soldier sees hills, he thinks key terrain: an area the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. When an agronomist sees hills, he sees the principal water catchment area and the need for elevated irrigation canals. A decentralized civilian-military network reveals a complete picture of the “whole world” which leads to better decision making. Having decentralized networks within a structured hierarchy such as the military brings a certain amount of chaos and ambiguity in exchange for innovation.

5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, also known as Task Force Stryker, has sought to develop in its key leaders and staff the ability to see the “whole world.” This was accomplished through multiple Human Dimension leadership development programs away from Fort Lewis, which is where the unit was based. Implicit in this approach was the intent to get away from the military world and put them in a different environment. Many of the programs were not about war at all; they were about humans enduring through challenging situations.

This was surprising to some because Stryker brigades have been called “the most lethal and agile formation on any battlefield anywhere.”¹¹⁴ Lethality and agility are necessary but not sufficient to winning a counterinsurgency. A sufficient characteristic is having decentralized networks. General Martin Dempsey, Commander, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, spoke about “networked decentralized organizations, and how hierarchical organizations have a very difficult time encountering them” and how the Army is moving

towards an organization that is “more trust than control.”¹¹⁵

Task Force Stryker (TFS) is one of the most technologically networked brigades in the United States Army. It is the first brigade to deploy with land warrior, “a modular fighting system that uses state-of-the-art computer, communications, and global positioning technologies to digitally link soldiers on the battlefield. The system is integrated with the Soldier’s body armor and has a helmet-mounted display.”¹¹⁶

TFS soldiers even have the unprecedented ability to be linked directly with fighter pilots. Beyond the flashing icons and flickering screens resides an unseen decentralized network: the fusion cells.

There are six fusion cells within TFS: Tactical, Population and Resource Control, Advisory, Intelligence, Special Operation Forces, and Governance, Reconstruction, and Development (GR&D). Each fusion cell is a working group where various staff members come together to address issues specific to that cell. Fusion cells are decentralized networks. Issues are not given to traditional staff elements, but managed by a problem-oriented team. It is a highly effective way to flatten the staff and achieve a multidisciplinary cross-pollination of ideas and holistic solutions. There was a reason why Major Michael Gephart was chosen to be in charge of all the fusion cells. He used to work in the Special Forces (SF) community, which are the very definition of decentralized networks. SF usually works in twelve-man Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs) which can be deployed anywhere to do anything. That is why he personally brought two capacities central to decentralized organizations to

¹¹⁴ Gilbert, Michael. “Stryker brigade readies for war” *The News Tribune* May 5, 2007 <http://www.thenewstribune.com/356/story/55324.html>

¹¹⁵ Moore, Karl. “Talking Management: Leadership message from a four-star general” *The Globe and Mail* Aug 14, 2009 <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/08/14/26059-talking-management-leadership-message-from-a-four-star-general/>

¹¹⁶ Dawson, Debi. “Army to Equip Brigade with ‘Land Warrior’” *Army News Service* May 28, 2008 <http://www.army.mil/-news/2008/05/28/9450-army-to-equip-brigade-with-land-warrior/>

the fusion cells: anyone can do anything and anyone can be invited to fusion cell meetings.

TFS's *Long Range Strategy* emphasizes excellence in planning. To this end, TFS established a GR&D fusion cell with the objective of collaborating with similar organizations already in existence in Kandahar Province, specifically the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. The Brigade Commander's vision stated that "Once the capability of Governance, Reconstruction, and Development Fusion Cell is understood others will seek to work with it."

These words have been prophetic because recently a United States Department of Agriculture representative switched over from another organization just to work alongside TFS. Furthermore, there are many other civilians at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul who are starting to hear about TFS and have contacted the GR&D fusion cell to collaborate on future projects. In the business world, they would probably call this branding. Branding leads to increased perceived value and builds trust. TFS is a centralized company that decentralizes the customer experience. Its customers range from the American Public, to International Actors, and to the Afghan people. Every customer not only receives products and services but the help shape the formation and delivery of these products and services. For instance, before TFS executes any major project, there will be deliberations with the Provincial Reconstruction Team, the USG regional platform, Afghan Provincial and District Leaders, as well as Tribal Leaders. Having so many moving pieces for one activity highlights the lack of visibility for the tactical commanders, which requires an unprecedented level of trust which is necessary in small wars.

Building the Trust for the Revolution

Building a hybrid model with the coexistence of the structure and control of the military as well as the chaos and ambiguity of a decentralized network requires trust. This required a two-prong approach: building the capacity of the network to accept chaos as well as empowering people. The Commander of TFS, Colonel Harry D. Tunnell IV, made it work because he empowered people and got out of the way and then championed the ability of junior officers to express their views in a hierar-



chical system.¹¹⁷ This was challenging to say the least because the military perceives decentralized networks not only as ineffective, but dangerous.¹¹⁸

Seven months before deployment, he sent a young company grade officer throughout the greater Seattle region to build networks. While attending a six-month course called "Creating a Company" at the University of Washington, the young officer was introduced to the Keiretsu Forum and the Northwest Entrepreneur Network. The Keiretsu Forum is the world's largest angel investor network with 750 accredited investor members throughout eighteen chapters on three continents. The Northwest Entrepreneur Network is a 700 member strong organization that is dedicated to helping the entrepreneurship community in the Northwest.

The course led by Dr. John Castle, was the only one of its kind in the world where students teamed up to form companies with start-up funding from the Michael G. Foster School of Business. TF's young officer started up a company with two other students called Pristine Polishing, which provides eco-friendly yacht detailing. Indirectly, he learned how to ensure that contractors would not be able to gouge him on prices. In Afghanistan, there is a serious issue of Coalition Forces paying too much for projects and a lack of oversight. Sending off a young company grade officer into Seattle for six months required a tremendous amount of trust.

Furthermore, TFS considered mobile phone banking for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) with the Chief Executive Officer of a leading provider of mobile information solutions. He explained how companies have tried this in Kenya and the Philippines with mixed results. These companies would basically have nodes, such as small grocery shops, which can receive text messages from the bank to confirm credit or withdraw-

¹¹⁷ Brafman, Ori and Rod A. Beckstrom. *The Starfish and the Spider*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

¹¹⁸ Clegg, Neil. Private Conversation. Kandahar Airfield, November 12, 2009.



Satisfied customers: Even the dog is pleased with our work!

al of funds once their customers sent a text message to the bank. However, the fundamental issue still remained: the nodes needed cash eventually and these companies existed due to the remoteness or lack of security of these population centers. Based on this experience, TFS was able to eliminate that as a potential solution before arrival in sector and concentrate on establishing security and telecommunication support for automated teller machines (ATMs) instead. ANSF were being wounded or killed on their way to the Kabul Bank ATM in Kandahar City to draw their wages. They have to use Kabul Bank because this is where the Ministry of Interior transfers their wages. There was only one Kabul Bank ATM in all of Kandahar Province. The GR&D fusion cell sent a representative to meet with the Chief Operations Officer of Kabul Bank in order to convince him to open up a new branch.

This networking was not limited to the business world. Anticipating the need for road experts in a country with mobility issues, two University of Washington Engineering professors were contacted: Joe Mahoney (an ex-Air force officer) and Steve Muench (an ex-Navy officer). They created Pavement Interactive, an internet-based collaborative space that for all things pavement. This network enables TFS to execute pavement projects in the absence of road experts. Furthermore, a law professor named Clark Lombardi led to the introduction of Barnett Rubin, one of the foremost experts on Afghanistan, and his yahoo group comprised of 1,459 experts and other interested persons on Afghanistan.

This decentralized network was tested during TFS's National Training Center rotation, where brigades train before their deployment, with a re-

quest for information on current wages for a day's worth of unskilled labor in southern Afghanistan. Within twenty-four hours, the latest data from all sorts of government officials, U.S. and Afghan, was obtained. Pre-deployment activities of the GR&D fusion cell developed the capacity of its members to operate as a decentralized network. This has paid dividends once the unit arrived in theatre and started to expand its networks and relationships with its civilian partners. The network revolution has begun.

Expanding the Network

The concept of coordinated civilian-military strategy development and planning has been relatively new yet widely successful in Regional Command South, Afghanistan.

To clarify the alphabet soup that is the civil-military world, the civil-military cell of the Regional Command South will be referred to as the "CIV-MIL cell," the Civil Military Cooperation shop will be referred to as the "CJ9." The CJ9 focused on provincial level partners while the CIVMIL cell focused on regional and national level partners. The CIVMIL cell stood up in December 2008. The cell's mandate is to develop a regional comprehensive integrated civil-military strategy. Thereafter, The United States Government (USG) Civilian Platform was stood up in August 2009. The platform's mandate is to achieve USG and ultimately coalition unity of effort through the pursuit of an integrated civil-military strategy.

TFS arrived in sector (Kandahar and Zabul Province) in July 2009. Within a month of arriving, the CIVMIL cell hosted a lessons learned session with briefings by the Civil-Military Operations shop of Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan as well as members of the CIVMIL cell. The Marines have been operating in neighboring Helmand Province since June 2009. Lieutenant Colonel Curtis Lee of the Marines, gave an extensive overview of all the civil-military activities and programs that existed, from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation's National Solidarity Program to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance's Afghan Social Outreach Program, and how best to integrate these into the commander's intent.

For a whole month, the CIVMIL cell as well as their next door neighbor, the CJ9 shop introduced all the various civil-military players in the region. Needless to say, TFS's network expanded enormously during this month. At first, the GR&D fusion cell relied heavily on the only two military officers in the CIVMIL cell at that time, First Lieutenant Russell Grant and Navy Lieutenant Joshua

Welle. Their departure however was not without benefit as it forced the GR&D fusion cell to expand their networks to the civilian members of the CIV-MIL cell, with as varied backgrounds as Jason Lewis-Berry of the State Department, Bernard Haven of Canadian International Development Agency, and Marcus Knuth, of the Danish Embassy in Kabul.

Shortly thereafter, TFS added two civilians to its ranks: the experienced Todd Greentree of the Department of State, with Afghanistan being his fifth duty post in an irregular conflict, following El Salvador 1980–83, the Bougainville Rebellion, Papua New Guinea 1987–88, the People Power Revolution and Maoist insurgency in Nepal 1990–93, the death of Jonas Savimbi and the termination of the Angolan civil war 1999–2002, and Neil Clegg, a former Canadian Army officer and veteran of 27 years in Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Mr. Greentree served as the senior civilian to TFS and Mr. Clegg as the liaison between Canadian Task Force Kandahar to TFS on stabilization and development issues.

During early engagements, Task Force Stryker considered its embedded civilians as "enablers" of its military objectives. Soon, there was a realization that their capabilities went far beyond "enabling" the unit to achieve its military objectives. By treating them as full partners in the full spectrum of the planning process, they showed on specific occasions a strong ability to be creative and innovative in the planning process. Their forte was manifested in their conceptual skills. On the other hand, the military was adept at structuring frameworks and turning plans into deliverable communication, such as fragmentation or operation orders. Also, the military is one of the premier organizations that can move thousands of personnel and pieces of equipment around. TFS used its civilians' decades of experience in a kaleidoscopic range of fields to build its own capacity and expand its networks.

Practical Applications for Tactical Commanders

Fighting a war in a coalition is a complex undertaking. However, Regional Command South's fifteen contributing nations lengthens the decision making process. Capitals need to be contacted and deliberations take time because the ultimate decision makers are often in Kabul, Washington, Ottawa, or London. Two practical applications of utilizing the civil-military network are for drafting strategic overview plans as well as making use of the

civilian hierarchy. One of the first things TFS found itself dealing with was the drafting of the Kandahar Coordination Plan, "a comprehensive approach to synchronizing and coordinating the military and civilian activities of Canada and the U.S. in Kandahar province for one year."¹¹⁹

Deliberating the nuances of one word versus another is not a military forte. However, to ensure that these strategic level plans maintain their focus, it is important to be precise. This is one area where civilians have substantial expertise. Mr. Greentree served with Task Force Warrior in Regional Command East and Mr. Clegg has served as both a Canadian Army Officer and business development planner. With decades of experience in their respective diplomatic services as well as first-hand military experience, they played an invaluable role in translating doctrinal military text into plain language.

Strategic overview plans define the joint intent of senior military and civilian leaders. They serve to maintain a common strategic direction, while not inhibiting subordinate commanders' tactical freedom of action. Consistent with the task of shared civil-military strategic vision, TFS started District-level planning sessions in October. The intent was to achieve unity of effort between the battle-space owners and civilian counterparts at the district level to achieve a unity of effort and identify areas where the brigade or higher can support.

Preparing these strategic plans has been an iterative process. The process of developing the first District Stabilization Plan (Arghandab) was fraught with difficulty stemming from inexperience, lack of focus on desired end states, and lack of adequate preparatory action done by the inputting individual planners. The first planning session lasted almost six hours and ended when the participants reached a state of fatigue. It was only through the superb individual efforts of Mr. Lewis-Berry, the Chief of Staff of the Senior Civilian to Regional Command South, in providing a coherent summation of the day's discussions the process was able to be continued. The lessons learned from the first session were the need for: a clear agenda, a focused participants list, a list of shared or common objectives, and a clear expectation for preparation and follow up. These were all necessary to have towards a meaningful and efficient commencement of a consultative strategic planning process

¹¹⁹ Kandahar Action Plan, August 21, 2009: 1

Feeling the way forward, the second session in Spin Boldak, which is separated from Kandahar Airfield by eighty kilometers and not nearly as familiar to the participants, took only four hours and produced a much more concise, focused, and substantial end product in terms of its identification of crucial areas of interest and desired one-year and three-year end states. The lessons learned from this process were the need for identifying areas where there were crucial gaps in critical intelligence. These gaps were essential and had to be addressed quickly and substantially.

Having parallel civilian-military hierarchies can be useful to tactical commanders. For examples, requests for humanitarian assistance packages through the Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) were consistently held up at the United States Forces Afghanistan level. The GR&D fusion cell encountered roadblocks while going through the military's chain of command. It was much easier for Mr. Greentree to call a two-star equivalent civilian who could help influence the situation. The USG Civilian Platform seems to have a horizontal rather than a vertical reporting chain. Aside from the practical applications of employing the network for various tasks that the military is less competent with, civilian partners play a role in seeing the "whole world" picture which leads to better decision making.

The Value of Different Perspectives

TFS values different perspectives from different agencies, branches and nations because it leads to better decision making. In October, thirty-one participants from a diversity of networks were invited to a District Planning Session in Spin Boldak. The participants hailed from agencies such as the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Command South CIVMIL cell, Human Terrain Team, United States Agency for International Aid and Development's (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives, Spin Boldak's Border Coordination Center, Task Force Kandahar, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force Anzio, Kandahar Intelligence Fusion Cell, United States Department of Agriculture, Department of State, 8th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment and others.

The planning session focused on one-year and three-year end states. The unit focused on the one-year plan, which centered on ANSF-led persistent security for select model villages which led to stabilization and then development of those population centers. Mr. Lewis-Berry emphasized the

need for the three-year plan. Civilians attached to the maneuver battalions often tend to align their views with the battalions or with their own personal expertise (the agriculture expert will usually advocate for agriculture), which is why it was important to bring brigade and regional command level civilian partners to emphasize the long view.

Having regional command level planners ensured that the unit's plan synchronized with the regional plan. Ultimately, the three-year plan centered on the fact that major regional projects and programs will result in an increased supply of agricultural products coming from the Helmand and Arghandab River Valleys that will exceed regional demand, which will result in the export through Spin Boldak to Pakistan. These major projects and programs include but are not limited to USAID's \$240M Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production of Agriculture Plus (AVIPA Plus) program (increase in agricultural output), the Dahla Dam project (increase in irrigation of the Arghandab River Valley), and the installation of the third generator in Kajaki Dam (increase in electricity). The regional plan depends on movement along all phases of the value chain. Spin Boldak will rightfully so be on the storage, processing, and packaging portion of the value chain.

The value chain is an important concept for the Commander of TFS, because he sees beyond single, isolated projects. Understanding the value chain is understanding the whole picture. Agriculture is the defining economic driver of Regional Command South. It does not solely depend on the farmer, "there needs to be effective integration between retailers, sales and marketing agents, distributors, transporters, processors, merchants



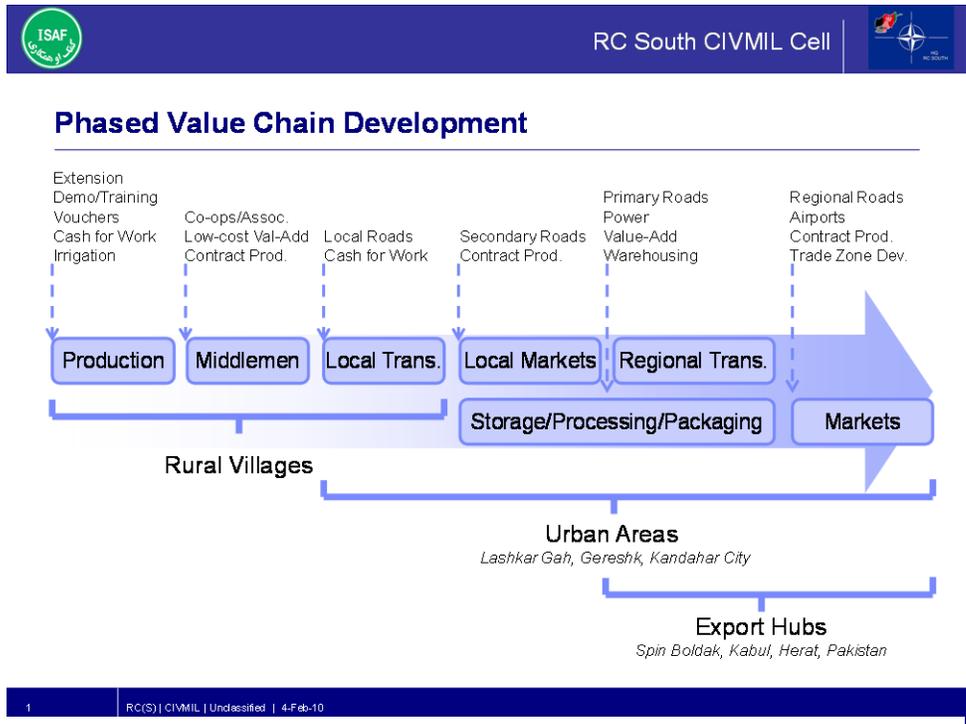
Planners deliberating during the Spin Boldak Planning Session in FOB Spin Boldak

and producers.”¹²⁰ Therefore, to really improve stability or economic development, the whole spectrum of the value chain needs to be developed.

The lines between all levels of war have been blurred by the nature of small wars. It takes an adaptable and fast-learning organization to exploit any situation. Aside from Provincial (Brigade) and District (Battalion) level planning, the GR&D fusion cell has actually facilitated population-center level planning (Company). Combat Outpost Rath, which is occupied by Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment (2-1 IN) is located within the center of the largest population center in Maiwand District.

Eighteen people were present for this planning session to include the Police Mentoring Team Leader from the 4th Brigade, 82nd Infantry Division, the Battalion’s Department of State representative, the Battalion Executive Officer, two Asymmetric Warfare Group representatives, the Civil Affairs Team, the Battalion Information Operations Officer, the Battalion Non-lethal Coordinator, the Center for Army Lessons Learned liaison officer to TFS, the Brigade Economic Development Officer, the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team’s Agriculture representative, all the Platoon leaders, the Company Executive Officer, and finally the Company Commander.

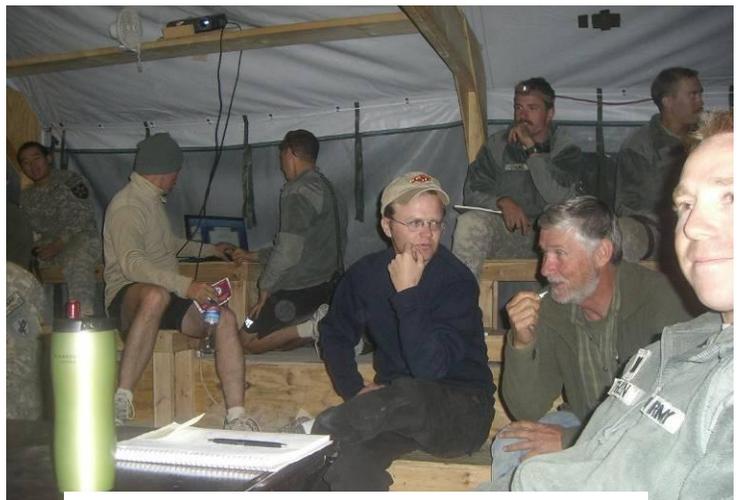
This planning session was an example of the decentralized network being utilized. Various partners usually working at the regional command or higher level were called upon to plan at the provincial level one week and the company level the next. The session concluded with a lead identified on every project. For example, USAID will concentrate on service and



1 RC(S) CIVMIL | Undesified | 4-Feb-10

Sample Value Chain Continuum

technical contracts, the Civil Affairs Team will concentrate on infrastructure projects, and the Brigade will focus on getting regional level assets down to the company. Every identified project was targeted at addressing a specific grievance. To identify grievances, TFS uses the Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework, which is a tool to help understand a part of the world that both the civil-military side has just recently begun to see. The next evolution of these planning sessions



Planning Session at Combat Outpost Rath, October, 2009

¹²⁰ Upper Quartile, "RC(S) Agriculture Development Review" July 2009: 10

would be to include district or provincial level officials.

A Vehicle for Understanding the Whole Picture

The Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF) is designed as a systematic approach to getting the whole picture which leads to the identification and mitigation of grievances. Grievances make frustrated people, who then pick up guns and shoot others. Dr. Jim Derleth of USAID, the creator of TCAPF, always uses the example that there are a billion people living under a dollar wage per day, yet they do not all pick up guns and shoot people. Therefore, the notion of poverty being tied to an insurgency is misguided. The opposite of grievances are resiliencies. Resiliencies are governmental and societal capability and capacity to resist grievances. Conventional military targeting usually ignores the sources of resiliencies which can often help the mission more than killing a high value target. An example is an influential school teacher who told all his children and their parents that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) hurt their children and their community. IEDs went down 30% in the next month.

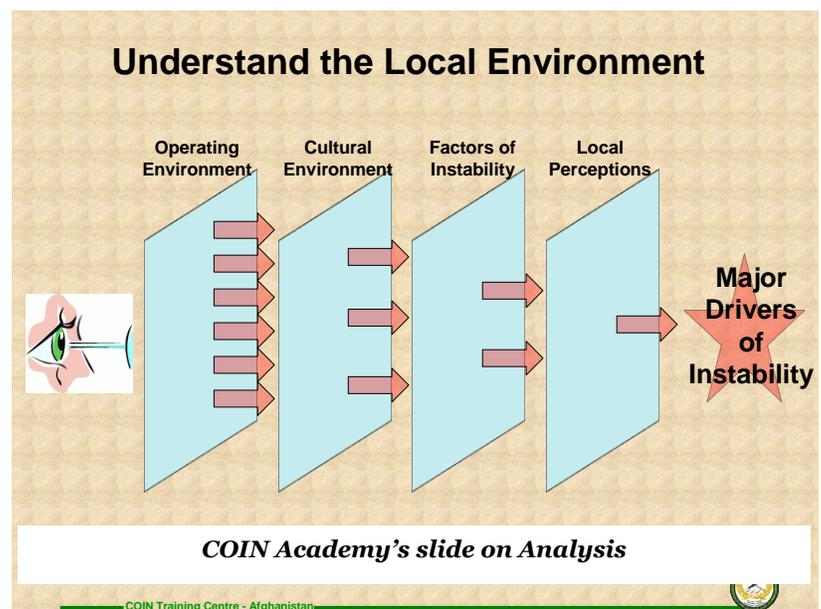
TCAPF has five phases which are Collection, Analysis, Design, Implementation, and Evaluation. Collection is done at the squad level with the use of their standardized questionnaire with four questions. The first question is, "Have there been changes in the village population in the last year?" The second question is, "What are the most important problems facing the village?" The third question is "Who do you believe can solve your problems?" The fourth question is, "What should be done to first help the village?" These questions have been developed over the years from an assortment of surveys and questionnaires. Dr. Derleth chose these questions because they accurately reflect the key pieces of information that help identify instability in an area from the local perception.

The Analysis phase centers on gaining situational awareness of the sector through four "lenses." The first lens is PMESSI (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information), which is a methodology used to understand the operational background. The second lens is the cultural environment (tribe, clan, religion,

language). The third lens is other factors, such as grievances, resiliencies, events, and key actors. The final lens is local perception which is information gathered through the TCAPF questionnaire during the collection phase.

The Design phase focuses on identifying activities that can actually solve the grievance. After the proper activities have been identified, they will be implemented and their performance and effects will be monitored and evaluated. This was a very simplified version of what a five-day course. However, there are less than six people in the world that can really teach TCAPF. Plans must be made with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to not only teach TCAPF but also stability operations in all levels of officer courses (from officer basic course to the Army Command and General Staff College's Intermediate-Level Education program) and non-commissioned officer education systems, from Warrior Leader's Course to the First Sergeants Course). This task shouldn't fall solely on the shoulders of the COIN Academy in Camp Julien, which started its inaugural Stability Course in early November. Ironically, TFS was invited to send a guest instructor to academy to help teach the very people who were going to advise and assist all Task Forces on stability operations- the Counterinsurgency Assist and Advise Teams.

The reason why TFS was the only brigade who had a qualified instructor to send was because of its decentralized networks. TCAPF was identified by the Marines during the previously mentioned lessons learned session as something useful and TFS contracted out for the training in early September. By the time this tool has reached the



ears of higher civilian and military leadership, TFS has become one of the leading proponents and users of it.

Over the last one hundred days, TFS has built a network and a reputation that has taken a life of its own. The decentralized fusion cells branch out to combined, joint, and interagency partners. As the fusion cells' network expands and the whole picture comes into view, they stand in a great position to achieve the desired end state.

Centralize Their Network

Revolutionizing TFS's own network is only half of the solution. A careful balance of decentralization has worked well so far in a centralized organization. The next step would be to centralize the district level government. The Governance, Reconstruction, and Development fusion cell's end state is to "build administrative and judicial infrastructure that will deliver security and stability to the population."¹²¹ Enable the government to provide a set of services that the population will come to depend on. The first step to accomplishing this is to establish or improve the district centers. District level officials, along with the ANSF, are the only level of government that the average Afghan sees day to day. Therefore, there needs to be district level officials present in the district centers everyday. Having a great district governor means nothing if his life is in jeopardy. The ANSF's barracks must be placed alongside the district center to include Coalition Forces and mentoring units.

The district center must radiate security and stability to the immediate surrounding population and then to the next largest population center. If there are no district officials then a civil-military push must be made to Kabul to ensure proper staffing. If the district officials aren't qualified then proper training must be provided whether it is in Afghanistan or if it's at the prestigious Civil Services Academy of Pakistan in Lahore.



Future plans for District Center outside Combat Outpost Rath, Maiwand District.

While deserving district officials are out training, Kabul should send down temporary officials, mimicking what the Focused District Development plan of the Ministry of the Interior does. That program brings Afghan National Police to a training academy in order to enhance their capabilities and build the rule of law. Concurrently, the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) comes down to the area where the Afghan National Police just left and serves as the police force while the Afghan National Police are in class. There needs to be the civilian equivalent of "ANCOPs" for district officials while they are out training.

Accomplishing this task requires networks of partners in various capacities and position. TFS's fusion cells continue to grow and learn from their experiences in southern Afghanistan. FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, states, "in COIN, the side that learns faster and adapts more rapidly—the better learning organization—usually wins" and "promoting learning is a key responsibility of commanders at all levels."

The coup de grace is to execute a brigade-wide collaboration session from the team leader above. In TFS, every combat soldier is networked through Land Warrior. Combined, joint, and interagency networks are wired through its decentralized fusion cells. The final step is to connect the combat soldier to the multi-disciplinary field of experts and policy makers in order to have collaboration with partners at every level of war: tactical, operational, and strategic.

¹²¹ Ahmed, Akbar. "American has yet to grasp the cost of losing in Afghanistan." *Guardian* 5 October 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/oct/05/afghanistan-us-strategy-mcchrystal-troops>

The Tribal Network

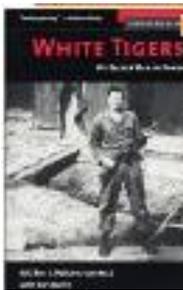
There is a saying in the Canadian Army: "We are tribal." This saying stems from the size of the Canadian Army, approximately 35,000 strong, which makes it easier to network because of its intimate nature. Perhaps that is why Major Claude Villeneuve, a former Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) company commander of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, wanted to introduce his relationships with Afghans instead of talking about specific projects. In a tribal society with undeveloped governance, the power of networks has been clearly illustrated. That is why the Canadian Army finds it much easier to translate this experience to its dealing with the Afghans.

The Chinese have a saying too, "You keep the land and lose the people, you lose both. You keep the people and lose the land, you have both." FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, states, "political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies." Conceivably, it is time to rethink the term "battle-space owner." The military looks at its area of operation as chunks of land with distinct borders. It is time to start looking at popu-

lation centers and fully appreciate the political nature of the conflict. The Russians owned the land much like Coalition Forces do today. But did they keep the people?

The power of information is so fast and pervasive that it is impossible to control it. Networks come in many forms and it is up to military leaders to find the right balance. There is a clear need for decentralized networks working side by side centralized networks. Decentralized networks create innovation necessary to defeat the enemy. Civil-military networks help tactical commanders in understanding the whole picture and therefore lead to better decision making. After all, "to defeat a network, you have to be a network."

Jonathan Pan is the Economic Development Officer for Task Force Stryker, 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (SBCT). He is responsible for stabilization efforts and economic development of Kandahar and Zabul provinces in Regional Command South, Afghanistan.



Book Review

White Tigers: My Secret War in North Korea

by Ben S. Malcom

(Washington, D.C: Brassey's, 1996). (\$8.95)

Reviewed by Major Bradford M. Burris, U.S. Army

Although not typically discussed as a "small war", for a few select Americans the Korean Conflict was as much of an unconventional war as Vietnam and the current war in Afghanistan. In *White Tigers: My Secret War in Korea*, retired Army Colonel Ben S. Malcom details his service as a member of the Guerrilla Division of the 8240th Army Unit from January 1952 until February 1953. As a young Lieutenant, Malcom and twenty-five other members of the 8240th trained North Korean partisans to conduct operations against the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) along the western coast of the North Korean mainland.

From a small island compound, Malcom contended with several problems still plaguing today's unconventional warfare practitioners: building relationships with indigenous leaders, over-

coming convoluted command and logistical support structures, mitigating partisan training shortfalls, balancing an advisory role with orders not to engage in combat operations, and finally explaining U.S. policy to a guerrilla force when juxtaposed to their desires.

Malcom's most important task was to develop a relationship with Pak Choll, the North Korean partisan he was tasked to advise. Mr. Pak "was the leader of a group of about six hundred anti-Communist partisan fighters who were members of an American-backed unit known as Donkey-4 (D-4) and who called themselves the 'White Tigers'" (p. 2). Malcom's immediate task was to assess the motivations and loyalties of Mr. Pak who had assumed command of D-4 about a month before Malcom arrived at Leopard Base.

Although Mr. Pak focused his attention almost solely on maintaining discipline in the ranks and honing basic guerrilla skills, Malcolm faced a series of complex problems during the two-month training period prior to a key partisan raid into North Korea. 1st Lieutenant Malcolm's struggles with the convoluted organizational structure that existed between his partisan units and a U.S. command structure that reached across Seoul to Tokyo, Japan continually hamstrung his ability to resource Mr. Pak's fighters with the weapons, ammunition, and tactical gear they needed to conduct reconnaissance patrols and raids against the NKPA.

When it came to training the partisans for the raid against a prepared NKPA position, Malcolm had to struggle with the fact that "most partisans knew nothing about calling in artillery fire or air support to a specific grid coordinate on a map. Even the idea of fire-and-maneuver for platoon- or company-size units utilizing supporting fires from machine guns was foreign to them" (p. 67). He had to figure out a way to balance training and advising Mr. Pak and the D-4 guerrillas with his orders to refrain from conducting operations with the partisans. Exacerbating the problem, there was no Army doctrine that discussed the right set of battle drills and standard operating procedures necessary to accomplish the mission that the members of D-4 were preparing to execute. Finally, when American political policies toward the North Korean government began to change and the U.S. military modified its strategy for prosecuting the war against the NPKA, it was up to 1st Lieutenant Malcom to explain the changes to Mr. Pak and the partisans while maintaining primary loyalty to his own chain of command.

Malcom's tome is valuable to modern audiences because it provides a detailed look into how the United States Army conducted unconventional warfare during the Korean Conflict. His comprehensive first person account of recruiting, vetting, training, and advising North Korean partisans provides additional credence to the argument that successful unconventional warfare occurs when waged through an indigenous population with gradually decreasing U.S. logistical and intelligence support. Malcom uses simple and direct language to lay out his view of what was right and wrong with the way that the U.S. Far Eastern Command utilized the unique capabilities of his unit.

The Achilles heel to Malcom's writing is that he highlights several flaws in the U.S. military's ability to conduct meaningful unconventional war-

fare without providing recommended fixes. In the epilogue, he reveals the book's major vulnerability. In these six pages, he lashes out against the Army for not allowing members of the 8240th to wear the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB). He admits to a 12-year quest searching for the right to wear the CIB. Because of this, the book is vulnerable to critique as one man's self-aggrandizing quarrel with the military establishment over a single uniform accoutrement. Although Malcom's personal vendetta undercuts the impartial nature of the book, future readers should focus on the complexities of unconventional warfare addressed by the author in the seventeen chapters prior to the epilogue as they seek to increase their historical knowledge of special operations.

White Tigers presents several broad questions that today's special operations leaders should use to hone their intellectual and practical approaches to the unconventional warfare situations they face around the globe. Malcom's initial selection as an advisor begs the question how should senior leaders identify, select, and manage potential special operations candidates. His struggles with a tortuous and many times disinterested command and control structure lead one to ask about the proper relationship between conventional and unconventional units. The inconsistency between approved doctrine and the skill sets necessitated by D-4's unique mission set raises the often-asked question is it more effective and efficient for special operations forces to be consolidated under a separate service on an equal footing with the four current military services. Years after his return from Korea, during a tour in Vietnam, Malcom addresses the most important question in the final pages of the book. As he mulls over the question of why the lessons of special operations require constant relearning from one war to the next "the hard way, one unit at a time, one soldier at a time" (p. 210), he closes with "It made no sense then. It makes no sense now" (p.210). This book is a must read for special operations practitioners as well as those interested in applying the lessons of historical military operations to those involving current SOF warriors.

Major Bradford M. Burris is a U.S. Army Psychological Operations officer currently assigned to the Defense Analysis Department, Naval Postgraduate School.

Haiti: Boots on the Ground Perspective

by Colonel Buck Elton

Buck Elton is the Commander of Joint Special Operations Air Component-Haiti. Small Wars Journal inadvertently received an e-mail update from Buck to his family and friends. SWJ asked if we could publish his insightful account and he most graciously agreed. What follows addresses many issues now appearing in the press – here is a boots on the ground perspective.



On Jan 13th I deployed with a few hours notice to Port au Prince to command a team of Air Commandos from Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field on a Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief mission in Haiti. We launched from Hurlburt within a few hours of notification without knowing what to expect at the airfield due to very limited communications with anyone in Haiti. We landed at 7 pm EST and had the Port au Prince airfield under our tactical air traffic control (ATC) 28 minutes later.

I am the commander of the Joint Special Operations Air Component-Haiti. I lead a force of 220 airmen (down to 164 now) executing ATC, airfield security, rescue, critical care evacuation, special operations surgical teams, aerial port duties, humanitarian airdrop surveys, planning, and DZ control, rotary wing ops command and control, communications specialists and logistics professionals. Most of us operated non-stop without sleep for the first 40 hours. We had no showers for the first 9 days; I slept 9 hours in the first 4 days. We are still eating only MREs, mosquitoes everywhere and absolute carnage outside of the wire. The stench of rotting bodies in the rubble makes driving in some areas difficult. Buildings are destroyed everywhere in the city and parts of the country. There are 59 confirmed and 37 reported (unconfirmed) US fatalities and up to 150,000 Haitian citizens reported dead or missing. Over

\$780M has been donated and another \$1.2B has been pledged by the international community. 690K refugees occupy more than 600 shelter villages because homes are destroyed or unsafe. Aftershocks occur daily, up to 5.0 and 6.0 in strength. The US Navy hospital ship Comfort is operating at maximum capacity and has all 1,200 racks filled with patients. The 2d Brigade Combat Team from 82d Airborne Division is here with soldiers to assist the UN and local police with food distribution and security.

Total DOD Boots on the Ground are over 5,000. The US Navy Carrier Carl Vinson is here with SH-60 and H-53 helicopters, and C2 aircraft flying day and night bringing aid to the airport. Two Marine Expeditionary Units are here, along with the Coast Guard and a small Air Force team now running the airfield. Rescue teams are still pulling survivors out of rubble, after being trapped for more than 12 days. Violence is remarkably low and the Haitian people are grateful, humble and very resilient. The Government of Haiti (GOH) is doing the difficult job of rebuilding, providing basic services and attempting to coordinate the massive amount of international aid flowing into the country. More than 30 nations and hundreds of NGOs are assisting the GOH. USAID is the lead agency for US humanitarian response in Haiti.



For the first week, we were virtually the only people in country who had communications, food/water, transportation, tents and security. We completely ran the international airport with a small force normally organized, trained and equipped to command and control special operations air. But we became the focal point for the evacuation of 12,000 American citizens, the primary casualty evacuation center coordinating hundreds of evac flights, our surgeons performed 14 major operations in their field hospital, mostly amputations of crushed limbs, our security held back rioting crowds and fence jumpers for the first several days, our pararescue jumpers saved 13 lives conducting confined space rescue missions with Fairfax Country Urban Rescue, the best in the world. Our security teams flew aid in to crowded landing zones and secured the LZ to distribute aid. Our Special Tactics Combat Controllers controlled an international airport 24/7 from a card table in the grass next to the runway for 12 days without a single incident, controlled almost 1700 fixed wing flights and 800 rotary wing flights from the infield with tactical radios until we handed the job back to Air Force air traffic controllers in their portable FAA tower (with air conditioning) on 25 Jan. We coordinated and planned 3 airdrop missions from C-17 aircraft. Our Joint Special Operations Forces distributed 43,800 hand cranked radios to allow disaster survivors to receive news and information regarding international relief efforts and public safety messages. And we provided internet and phone service to virtually every arriving unit and aid organization that showed up here without a plan.

I was interviewed by Katie Couric, Brian Williams, Al Roher, BBC, Reuters, French TV 24 and did two telecon interviews with 250 reporters. I coordinated directly with Senator John Edwards to arrange the evacuation of 28 critically injured Haitian citizens to Florida. John Travolta showed up in his Boeing 707 last night, but I went to bed and had a few airmen go get a picture with him. I briefed SECSTATE Hillary Clinton, former POTUS Bill Clinton, and more 3-4 star Generals than I can count. I had a problem with where we were taking US citizens and asked a National Security Council staffer to help me out. He emailed Janet Napolitano on his BlackBerry. She authorized me to move any US Citizen to any US location, overriding guidance I got from the Joint Staff and the US Air Force. I had to threaten an international flight crew that I would tow their 737 into the grass if they did not immediately depart the airfield (they had been on the ground for over 7 hours while aircraft were diverting due to no available parking) I told 50 re-

porters that if they didn't move their cars away from where an aeromedical evacuation flight was supposed to park I would bulldoze all the cars into the grass and off the ramp. I ordered the evacuation of 54 orphans on a C-17 against the specific direction of the American Consulate General here at the Embassy, but with the full support of the DHS, INS, NSC and ICE. I met with the Haitian Secretary of State for Agriculture and convinced him to allow airdrop resupply of humanitarian aid.

We took some heat at the airfield early on for the large number of divers international flights were executing. Most aircraft were arriving without enough fuel to hold for a few hours, some with only a few minutes to hold before diverting for more fuel. We had 40-50 divers a day for the first few days because there were no flow control measures to meter the number of aircraft that wanted to land here. The runway only has a single taxiway to the ramp and it is located at midfield. This makes it a single aircraft operation for takeoff, landing and taxi because all arriving and departing aircraft must use the runway to back taxi. The max aircraft on the ground is 12, but we only had enough material handling equipment to offload 3 at a time. The first night we hotwired a 6K forklift and provided the only means to offload military aircraft, until we flew down our own 10K forklift from Hurlburt. We had to hand off load a Chinese A330 because we didn't have the proper equipment. It took over 8 hours and they blocked half of the ramp because their pilots wouldn't taxi where we directed them to park. We pushed small civilian aircraft out of the way, threatened international aircraft with fines and threatened to tow aircraft into the grass unless they complied with our instructions. We were landing over 250 aircraft per day without phones, computers, or electricity and people were complaining about the log jam at the airport.

The Department of State DipNote blog has the [best summary of the air traffic challenges](#) we had. It is the transcript of a telecon interview I did with about 120 reporters from the Embassy here in Port au Prince. As a typical over reaction to the international "outrage" over not getting into the airport, the Air Force dramatically cut back capacity and has scheduled slot times well into late Feb. The AFSOC force has completely turned over control of the airfield operations to the USTRANSOM Contingency Response Group and the newly arriving Air Expeditionary Group. We are now landing just over a hundred aircraft a day, including small aircraft we park in the grass, and there are many

times during the day and night when there are only a few aircraft on the ramp. We can do much better.

Our team of Air Commandos from Air Force Special Operations Command acted decisively and proved responsiveness, creativity, courage and competence can allow you to accomplish just about anything. I have many stories to tell, but not time to type them yet. We are wrapping up our Special Ops portion of this massive effort and should be heading home shortly, but you never know.

Buck

Col Buck Elton
Commander, Joint Special Operations Air Component - Haiti

