



MARINE CORPS CENTER FOR LESSONS LEARNED



**COVER STORY: REGIMENTAL
COMBAT TEAM 1 OPERATIONS IN
AFGHANISTAN**

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Front Cover photo credit: Cpl Colby Brown

Marines from 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, Regimental Combat Team 1, and Garmsir District officials enjoy Iftar (the nightly "break of the fast") during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Lessons from Regimental Combat Team 1 Operations in Afghanistan

Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1) deployed to central/southern Helmand Province in September 2010 for a year-long deployment, initially in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 10.2 and then of OEF 11.1. The RCT-1 mission was to provide the command element for Marine Corps and coalition ground forces operating in this portion of the Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)) area of operations (AO). The RCT directed the operations of numerous infantry battalions that conducted counterinsurgency (COIN) and stability missions over this widely dispersed geographical area that had previously included many Taliban strongholds. During its deployment, the RCT-1 AO experienced a significant reduction in kinetic activity, especially as a result of the "hold" and "build" operations in the Marjeh District.

Following the RCT's re-deployment, the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) and the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG) sponsored a lessons learned conference in September 2011 to capture the observations and recommendations of the RCT-1 leadership and staff in a systematic manner. (This was the third in a series

of regimental-level lessons learned conferences sponsored by MCTOG to capture observations and recommendations from OEF deployments; the first two addressed lessons learned during the deployments of RCT-7 and RCT-2.) The latest conference marked the beginning of a partnered effort by MCCLL and MCTOG to ensure that the experiences of RCTs are captured and documented systematically. In addition to RCT-1, MCCLL, and MCTOG, participants in this latest conference included representatives from the 1st Marine Division G-3, the Seventh Marine Regiment, various agencies of the Training and Education Command (TECOM), and the Training Support Center (TSC) at Camp Pendleton, as well as the commanding officers of several battalions at Camp Pendleton. The conference working groups were focused on the topics of command, control, communications and computers (C4), intelligence, maneuver, fires, information operations (IO), counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) initiatives, logistics, and partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). As would be expected, many of the issues identified during the conference had surfaced in the previous RCT conferences,



Photo credit: Sgt Jesse Stence

At the IED course at Camp Dwyer, Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers trained by the RCT-1 Embedded Training Team (ETT) provide 360-degree security after one of the soldiers discovered a simulated IED.



Photo credit: Sgt Jesse Stence

During Operation Watchtower, planned by RCT-1, Marines from 2d Battalion, 3d Marines (2/3) discovered ten weapons caches in southern Marjeh. The operation involved four RCT-1 battalions that targeted suspected enemy bed-down and supply locations in central Helmand.

as well as in many after action reports (AARs) based on OEF deployments. An [Executive Summary](#), documenting many of the key results of the conference, was prepared by MCTOG shortly after the conclusion of the conference and was referenced in the [MCCLL November 2011 Newsletter](#). More detailed information on the conference results have now been compiled in the final MCCLL/MCTOG For Official Use Only (FOUO) report, entitled [Regimental Combat Team 1 in Operation Enduring Freedom](#).

A complete set of FOUO comments and observations are included in the MCCLL/MCTOG report. Among the observations releasable in this newsletter are:

- **Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP).** The RCT staff participated in numerous exercises during PTP that prepared them for employment of the many different systems used in theater; however, it was not possible to duplicate the tremendous scope of the architecture encountered in the widely dispersed operating environment in Helmand and Nimruz Provinces.
- It is desirable that Marines who will be operating combat operation centers (COCs) at lower echelons be able to train at forward operating bases (FOBs) that replicate how they will function in theater.
- Training on biometric devices during PTP occurred

under classroom conditions that were not able to duplicate some of the challenges faced under theater conditions. Once in theater, the RCT was able to institute policies for the more effective collection of biometrics data on the Afghan local populace.

- **Operations.** Small unit leadership needs to be continually emphasized and reinforced, especially in the dispersed environment in which Marine Corps forces are operating.
- Since multiple battalions served under the regiment during this deployment, it was necessary for RCT-1 to ensure unity of action across the subordinate units and the individual battalion AOs.
- The regiment held squad leaders symposiums every six to eight weeks for Marines to exchange ideas and best practices in an effort to spread "good ideas" quickly from battalion to battalion.
- Augmentation of the RCT-1 COC allowed for the facility to provide continuous, 24 hour operations.
- In support of the overall counter-narcotics program, RCT-1 established a "food zone program" to provide seeds for licit crops to farmers at little or no cost. The program was able to be implemented in those areas in which the regiment had a security presence.

Enhanced Company-Level Operations in Afghanistan

In October 2009, the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) published a report on [Enhanced Company-Level Operations in Iraq](#) that highlighted efforts by the Training and Education Command (TECOM), the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG), the Marine Corps Intelligence School, and other organizations to develop a concept for ground combat companies to possess all of the capabilities needed to succeed under widely dispersed, irregular warfare conditions, such as those encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan. This 2009 MCCLL report was based on a collection effort that focused on three battalions who had received varying degrees of enhanced company operations (ECO) training prior to their deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). These units were 1st Battalion, 2d Marines (1/2), 1st Battalion, 3d Marines (1/3), and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines (3/7). The report addressed the following capabilities, which were key elements of the ECO concept at that time:

- Establishment of company-level intelligence cells

“...Interacting with Afghan role players during the pre-deployment program was beneficial, but [additional benefits could be realized] if the Marines had been tasked to "train" their partners during exercises... ***Training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) was their primary mission.***”

-- From the MCCLL Report on *Enhanced Company Operations in OEF*

(CLICs),

- Formation of company-level operations centers (CLOCs),
- Fielding of additional equipment to companies (including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and additional information sharing systems),
- Receiving additional training in: culture/language, information operations (IO), tactical site exploitation (TSE), detainee operations, Combat Hunter principles, and tactical questioning, and
- Being furnished with tailored training by law



Photo credit: Sgt Jesse Stence

A squad automatic weapon gunner with Golf Company, 2/3, talks with local nationals at the Khalaj Bazaar in the Garmsir District of Helmand Province on "Bazaar Friday." These bazaar days normally draw about 3,000 villagers who buy and sell livestock, meat, poultry, textiles, and other wares.

enforcement professionals (LEPs).

As a follow-on to this initial report (and to document the application of the ECO concept to infantry battalion operations in Afghanistan), MCCLL conducted a collection with the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines (2/3) at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in August and September 2011, following the battalion's return from a seven-month deployment to central Helmand Province. The battalion's mission included partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), establishing the authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) in the battalion's area of operation (AO), supporting economic development efforts, and countering the destabilizing influences of the insurgency.

Prior to its deployment, elements of the battalion had participated in a limited objective experiment (LOE) conducted by MCWL that was included in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2010 (RIMPAC 10). This experiment was considered to be the capstone event for the overall series of ECO experiments, and included an expanded headquarters and scout section, the execution of operations in a complex and distributed battlespace, and the employment of ECO concepts, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and equipment. The results of this MCCLL collection have been documented in a "Quick Look" Report, entitled [Enhanced Company Operations in Operation Enduring Freedom: Lessons and Observations from 2/3](#).

A complete set of FOUO comments and observations are included in the MCCLL report. Among the observations releasable in this newsletter are:

- **Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP).** If a unit will provide training for the Afghan National Police (ANP) on police-specific skills (in addition to training them on basic infantry skills), then, as a minimum, the unit itself should receive training on those skills from a police advisor team (PAT).
- In order to conduct effective motorized operations in Afghanistan, drivers and vehicle mechanics need to have as much training as possible during PTP.
- Practical application training on machine gun operations (including field firing) should also be an area of emphasis.

- Additional training on all of the communications systems that will be employed in theater helps ensure a high level of proficiency upon deployment.
- The command and control (C2) systems that will be employed by the unit in theater should be identified as early as possible, with the applicable Marines then trained on them early and often.
- **Personnel.** Having enough personnel available to provide sufficient maintenance capability for generators, refrigerators and vehicles in a distributed environment proved to be a challenge. The same situation existed with respect to communications Marines.
- **Equipment.** The Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDE) system was critical to the biometric registration of the local populace and the eventual identification of insurgents operating in the battlespace. Additional HIIDE systems would be very beneficial.
- The number of enabling systems (including intelligence assets, C2 systems, and maintenance personnel) employed by a unit in theater should be able to support the number of physical locations that the unit is required to man.
- **Operations.** A number of the Marines who were interviewed during the collection indicated that the MCWL limited objective experiment helped prepare them for the distributed nature of operations in Afghanistan. However, the very large number of locations that the battalion was required to man still proved to be a challenge.
- The co-location of Marine and Afghan combat operations centers facilitated coordination and the tracking of Afghan units in the battlespace.
- Marines who had prior experience in training billets found that this training helped them to be successful in training the Afghan forces.
- The "Radio in a Box" proved to be an effective information operations tool in disseminating timely and accurate information to the local populace. However, even more effective was having Afghan officials "spread the word" on coalition and government actions that had been implemented to improve security and economic development.

Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction

Marine Corps Roles and Lessons Learned

The end of the Cold War with the former Soviet Union tended to push the topic of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) off the headlines for a few years. However, the attacks on 11 September 2001, the actions of Iraq in 2003, and continuing efforts by unfriendly nations, including North Korea and Iran, to acquire these capabilities (as well as similar efforts by transnational actors, such as members of the *Aum Shinrikyo* who were responsible for the Sarin gas attack in Tokyo in 1995) has resulted in a renewed impetus by the nation (and the U.S. military) on ensuring adequate preparations are being made to combat these type weapons. In addition, such events as the damage to the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami have highlighted the necessity of the military being able to operate in radiation environments.

The [National Military Strategy](#) for combating weapons of mass destruction was issued in 2006 by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with an endorsement from the Secretary of Defense stating that the strategy was applicable to the entire Department of Defense (DoD). This document, along with supporting documentation (including [DoD Directive 2060.02, Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction \(CWMD\)](#)), tasks the military departments with ensuring that forces are organized, trained, equipped and otherwise prepared to combat WMDs, their means of delivery, and related materials. In order to establish guidance for the Marine Corps, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) published its [CWMD Operating Concept](#) in September 2010. This document defines and clarifies the role of Marine forces in support of the CWMD mission areas, which include: • threat reduction cooperation, • security cooperation and partner activities, • elimination operations, • interdiction operations, • offensive operations, • active defense, • passive defense and • WMD consequence management. Although many individuals may tend to equate CWMD with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defense, the MCCDC Operating Concept points out that "*CWMD does not solely correlate to CBRN defense. CWMD is the integrated approach of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF), supporting establishment, and installations to execute each of the CWMD mission areas with the realization that there is a CBRN or WMD nuance to the planning aspects and execution of the missions.*"



Photo credit: Cpl Andrea M. Olguin

Marines and Sailors don mission-oriented protective posture hazard protective gear as part of a CBRN hazard scenario during Exercise Active Shield 2011 at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

In an effort to document lessons and observations concerning the current Marine Corps' CWMD operations in support of joint force commanders, the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) interviewed operations, intelligence and CBRN personnel at Headquarters, Marine Corps, Marine Corps Forces Command, and I, II and III Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs). The objective was to identify impacts and recommended changes to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities, and capture operational tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and best practices. The results have been documented in a For Official Use Only (FOUO) MCCLL "Quick Look" report, entitled [USMC Support to Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction](#).



Photo credit: Sgt Josh Cox

Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense specialists with 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) secure a role player to a medical backboard during a technical rescue certification exercise as part of a two-week training evolution at the Center for National Response in Gallagher, West Virginia.

A complete set of FOUO comments and observations are included in the MCCLL report. Among the observations releasable in the newsletter are:

- **Doctrine and Policy.** Actions associated with CWMD should not be planned or executed in isolation, rather integrated throughout the range of military operations. This is emphasized in the latest revision of [Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication \(MCDP\) 1-0, Marine Corps Operations](#), which now includes information on military mission areas that relate to CWMD. [Marine Corps Warfighting Publication \(MCWP\) 3-37.1](#) also now incorporates CWMD mission areas in consonance with the national strategy and with DoD policy documents.
- Those who were familiar with its content consider the CWMD Operating Concept to be effective in helping operations officers become familiar with the CWMD missions areas as they relate to the Marine Corps.
- [MCWP 3.37.5 \(Multiservice Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of Installation CBRN Defense\)](#) also now incorporates the joint doctrine elements for combating WMD, as well as relating installation CBRN defense to consequence management doctrine.
- **Training.** Col Garreth Brandl, Operations Officer, G-3/5/7, Marine Corps Forces Command, stated that "General purpose forces need more education on what CBRN threats are out there and what actions to take to protect themselves."
- In particular, there was general agreement that the professional military education (PME) of leaders should

address CWMD operations.

- CWMD considerations should also be incorporated into staff and tactical level exercise scenarios and training.
- In particular, additional training on all of the communications systems that would be employed in theater could help ensure a high level of proficiency upon deployment.
- **Chemical, Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF).** The CBIRF is designed to forward deploy, when directed, in response to a credible threat and assist local, state, or federal agencies and designated combatant commanders during consequence management operations.
- The deployment of the CBIRF's Incident Response Force in support of Operation Tomodachi following the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and the damage to the Fukushima nuclear power plant is one example of such a deployment, in this case to address the resulting radiation leaks from the power plant and contamination of Marine Corps aircraft involved in the humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) effort in support of the Government of Japan. The Incident Response Force conducted bilateral capabilities demonstrations with the Japanese Self Defense Force (JSDF) and performed site assessments of deployed JSDF decontamination sites and training facilities. Readers may be interested in reviewing the [CBIRF trip report](#), which addresses the lessons learned from the bilateral response to the disaster and of the U.S. and Japan efforts at military cooperation during this response.

OEF After Action Report

The First 100 Days of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines' Afghanistan Operations

When 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6) initially deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 11.2 in August 2011 it was tasked to continue counterinsurgency and stability operations in central Helmand Province, a region that had already experienced greatly improved security. However, the evolving tactical situation resulted in its reassignment to northern Helmand, with tasking to begin planning an operation to clear insurgents along a portion of a route in the Sangin and Kajki Districts. Based on the results of the early stages of this operation, referred to as Operation Eastern Storm, as well as observations on the pre-deployment training that had prepared the battalion for its deployment, 1/6 has prepared its [OEF 11.2 First 100 Days After Action Report \(AAR\)](#) for the period from July to November 2011.

The battalion found that company-level intelligence cells (CLIC) are extremely important elements of effective operations. Combat patrols cannot be effective if they do not have access to up-to-date information on named areas of interest or other critical intelligence. The CLIC is responsible for providing much of the intelligence supporting the company's day-to-day operations, as well as tracking future operations. The CLIC also provides bottom-up intelligence that is sometimes not available to battalion collectors due to the dispersed nature of the battlespace. In particular, the AAR highlights the need for intelligence to address tribal dynamics in the area of operations to the greatest extent possible. In northern Helmand (as in other locations in Afghanistan), the tribal structures have been negatively impacted by the Taliban. Although many tribal and village elders are overwhelmingly supportive of coalition forces, they do not have as much influence over the young males in their villages as tradition would imply. These young males are greatly influenced by the radical mullahs and by



Photo credit: Cpl Cpl James Clark

Marines from Bravo Company, 1/6, take up positions for an ambush against insurgents operating in the area of the Kajaki Sofla in northern Helmand Province. The Marines and Sailors of Bravo Company are participating in Operation Eastern Storm to drive insurgents from a major road connecting the Sangin and Kajaki Districts.

offers of money, guns and drugs from the Taliban. This gap between the traditional and contemporary symbols of power is a major roadblock to progress.

Other topics addressed in the AAR include: the importance of effective training on the Biometric Automated Toolkit System (BATS) and Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDE), detainee operations, evidence handling and collection, IED detector dog (IDD) employment, development of a staff battle rhythm, employment of the Compact Metal Detector (CMD) II and other improvised explosive device (IED) detection tools, and many administrative and logistics issues.

“...the elders understand that we can change things for the better with our presence here; the younger generation does not. Focus efforts on identifying and creating incentives for the younger generation to support coalition forces, and by extension the elders, and then target information operations to exploit those efforts and engender support for the leadership of elders.”

-- From the 2/6 First 100 Days AAR

Governance and Economic Development

Challenges Faced in the Final Push for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan

As the planned drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan approaches, the importance of attacking all lines of operation in an effort to help ensure a secure and stable Afghanistan in the future becomes increasingly important. This fact was highlighted by I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) (Forward) in November 2011 when the command hosted a Governance and Economics Conference, with subject matter experts on these topics from civil and military government agencies and the private sector, as well as participation by Afghanistan officials. The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) acquired a number of the briefings presented during the conference that offer many valuable observations and insights into the current outlook for the successful resolution of the myriad issues faced in Afghanistan in the areas of governance and economic development. These briefings include:

- **[The Afghan Economy: An Overview](#)**. This briefing, presented by Mr. Dean E. Fischer, Afghanistan Desk, Department of State, furnishes basic information on the Afghan economy, including the main contributors to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). A comparison of the economy of Afghanistan with that of Vermont (the U.S. state with the smallest GDP) highlights how small the Afghan economy is (about 60% of Vermont's GDP). Afghanistan also ranks very low in terms of measurements of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living (155th out of 169 nations worldwide). However, the briefing does highlight the fact that Helmand Province is one of the least poor areas of Afghanistan, with the lowest poverty rate of any province.
- **[Governance and Politics: Information from Garmser, Afghanistan](#)**. This briefing by Dr. Carter Malkasian, Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), focuses on a single district in Helmand Province as a case study of the governance problems that are faced throughout Afghanistan (including government misrule, corruption, abuse, and over-centralization), the extent to which these problems are being addressed, and the additional steps that need to be taken. The briefing provides a synopsis of the ups and downs in the governance of the district from the pre-Taliban period before 1978 through the most recent developments of the governing institutions in 2010 and 2011. Dr Malkasian concludes that only a very strong government will be able to hold these institutions together following the withdrawal of

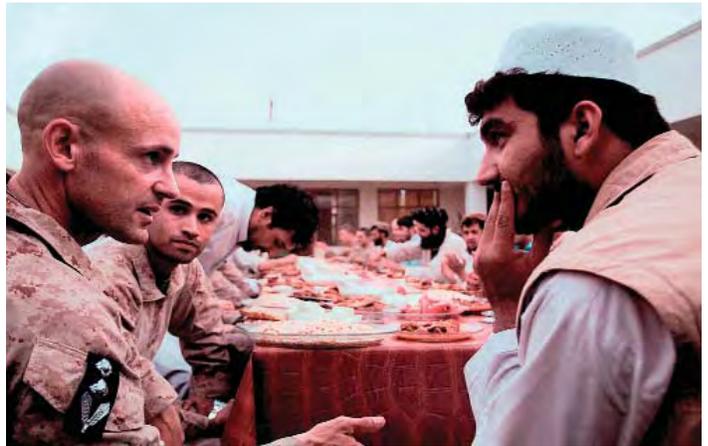


Photo credit: Cpl Colby W. Brown

LtCol Sean Riordan, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines (1/3), speaks with the Garmser District Governor as they participate in an Iftar meal (the nightly "breaking of the fast" during the holy month of Ramadan).

coalition forces.

- **[The Rule of Law \(RoL\) in Helmand Province. Overview and Selected Issues](#)**. This briefing by Mr. Patricio Asfura-Heim, CNA, addresses efforts to rebuild the RoL in Helmand, with the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (HPRT) assigned lead responsibility in this area. The briefing documents the RoL initiatives that have taken place from 2009 to 2011 and the challenges that must still be faced in developing an effective justice system. Informal justice and the Taliban courts continue to be alternative means for resolving disputes. However, currently in Helmand only 5% of the local populace believe the Taliban is able to resolve disputes in a fair manner.
- **[Stability Operations](#)**. This briefing by Col Yori Escalante, the Assistance Chief of Staff, C9, for Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)), addresses the work of his staff in supporting stability operations in Helmand, with the current focus being the central Helmand River Valley. This region tends to include those districts that are furthest along in terms of both security and stability. The briefing addresses such specific topics as anti-corruption strategies, reintegration initiatives, counter-narcotics programs, and specific development initiatives. In identifying appropriate development programs, Col Escalante indicates that these efforts should focus on sustainment and expansion of the province's agrarian economy.

Protecting Forward Operating Bases

Recommended Tactics, Techniques and Procedures

Counterinsurgency and stability operations in Afghanistan have required the continual construction of new forward operating bases (FOBs) and combat outposts (COPs) in order to position coalition forces in locations where they can best begin providing security and stability to the local populace. In areas where there had not previously been a significant coalition presence, the Taliban often had the upper hand. The current environment also requires that deployed forces and forward-based activities continually protect themselves against threats that are designed to interrupt, interfere, or impair the effectiveness of these operations. In particular, commanders who are responsible for the protection of the FOBs need to have a thorough understanding of the threats, vulnerabilities, potential consequences of threat actions, and the methods and resources available for preserving mission capability and protecting personnel and equipment. In order to provide guidance to commanders in these areas, the [Joint Forward Operations Base Protection Handbook](#), originally prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), has recently gone through its sixth iteration to ensure that it remains up-to-date and continues to identify best practices and lessons that have been learned during the most recent operations in theater.

FOBs are defined to be the evolving bases that extend

“ . . . A threat analysis is a continual process of compiling and examining available information concerning potential adversaries that could target DoD components, elements and personnel. Threat analysis researches and analyzes intelligence, counterintelligence and open source information to identify likely adversaries to FOB operations. . . The greatest threat to an FOB is an attack capable of producing mass casualties. Adversaries will employ a variety of weapons and tactics to achieve this aim. Potential adversaries may resort to asymmetric methods [including] unconventional, surprise, innovative, or disproportionate means to exploit weaknesses.”

-- From the *FOB Protection Handbook*



Photo credit: LCpl Kenneth Jasik

Marines from Charlie Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 2 (CLB-2), implement force protection improvements at FOB Robinson in the Sangin District of northern Helmand Province to provide enhanced security for Marines at the base.

and maintain the operational reach of forces, providing a secure location from which to conduct and sustain military operations. FOBs are not permanent bases, but, depending on the circumstances, may develop many of the same functions and facilities over time. These bases may include units from a single service, units from various allied, coalition and contingency partners, host nation units and even representatives from other U.S. agencies. Irrespective of the composition or size of the FOB, many of the same principles apply in ensuring that adequate protection measures are implemented. Effective FOB planning requires a multi-disciplined approach, with participation by individuals who have expertise in such areas as civil engineering, design, environmental factors, safety, preventive medicine, antiterrorism, security and real estate. In particular, effective FOB planning requires a partnership between security forces and engineers. The five broad protection concepts identified in the handbook are: deterrence, prevention, active security, passive defense, and mitigation. The handbook is scoped to address threats that are commonly encountered in current contingency operations in order to provide protection strategies that are based on common tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), best practices and lessons learned from these operations. These protective strategies focus primarily on threats that would have the capability to significantly disrupt operations or could produce mass casualties.

Enhanced Mojave Viper After Action Report

Lessons Learned by 2d Battalion, 6th Marines

[Last month's newsletter](#) highlighted an [after action report \(AAR\)](#) prepared by 2d Battalion, 9th Marines (2/9) following the battalion's Mojave Viper training as an example of the benefit that such documents can have for units preparing for the Mojave Viper or Enhanced Mojave Viper (EMV) training provided by the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTF-TC). Since then, another excellent example of an AAR with an actionable set of observations and recommendations concerning training at this facility has been entered into the MCCLL repositories. The [2d Battalion, 6th Marines \(2/6\) AAR for EMV Viper 1-12](#) provides a wealth of lessons learned by the battalion staff sections and company-level leadership based on its 40 days of EMV training.

The battalion emphasizes that EMV is a complicated and dynamic training evolution involving large amounts of information being pushed over data and voice communications means on a daily basis. In order to ensure that the battalion's information management (IM) plan is able to "survive first contact," it is recommended that it be developed prior to EMV and vetted through the "Coyote" trainers, MAGTF Integrated System Training Center (MISTC), and Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG). In addition, it is recommended that it

also be furnished to the battalion that is being replaced in theater and the applicable regimental combat team for review to ensure that it is adequate for in-theater operations. Particular attention should be paid to the layout of the combat operations center (COC). The bottom line is that battalions should use EMV as an opportunity to refine and validate the IM plan and not as a venue to build the IM plan from the ground up.

Noted by the battalion in the conclusion to the AAR, ". . . execution of EMV remains a necessary and critical step in a unit's pre-deployment program cycle before any combat deployment. EMV continues to provide company and battalion-level training venues to enhance offensive and defensive skill sets, as well as command and control, that is hard to achieve for east coast battalions due to the limited and competitive nature of available ranges. The complex and distributed nature of the desert terrain and exercises aboard MAGTF-TC provide east coast battalions with the closest replication of conditions to be faced in an upcoming OEF deployment. Tactical Training Exercise Control Group (TTECG) and the Coyotes have developed and implemented an exceptional program with the most professional staff cadre possible. . ."



Photo credit: Cpl Ed Galo

A squad leader from 2/6 is evaluated as he interacts with Afghan local citizens through an interpreter during training at Camp Lejeune prior to the battalion's EMV training evolution.

Providing Support for Flood Relief Operations in Thailand

Lessons from III Marine Expeditionary Force

The humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts of U.S. forces in Japan following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami were clearly the highest profile HA/DR operations supported by the Marine Corps during the past year. However, this was only one of a number of operations conducted in the Pacific and Middle East to help alleviate the suffering of individuals impacted by natural disasters. Other HA/DR missions included separate flood relief operations in support of the people of Thailand and Pakistan. Based on the HA/DR requirement following the Thailand floods in October 2011, III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) has prepared a comprehensive [After Action Report \(AAR\)](#) that focuses on the Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) that deployed from mid-October to early November to survey the extent of the flooding, assess the impact on the Kingdom of Thailand and its people, formulate recommendations for follow-on HA/DR support, and help facilitate these follow-on operations by III MEF forces. This AAR provides a step-by-step chronology of the activities of the HAST that demonstrates the methodical processes by which the team determined the extent of the disaster and the best means of providing assistance to the government and people of Thailand.

The HAST initially deployed with 18,500 sandbags

to provide immediate support to Thailand officials. Throughout its deployment, HAST activities resulted in significant interest by the news media, with local and international media accompanying HAST assessments and interviewing HAST members. The U.S. Ambassador frequently requested HAST members to accompany her to various media engagements, public announcements, and programs.

As noted in the conclusion of the AAR, the HAST was able *"through DoD, interagency coordination, and excellent cooperation from the Government of Thailand . . . to access flooded areas and provide a ground truth assessment of the flood impact on the people of Thailand, the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTARF), and the national, provincial and district level governments. By leveraging strategic communications and aggressive messaging via military, U.S. Embassy, and local and international media channels, the U.S. Ambassador was able to use a very small military presence and turn it into a large virtual presence. By folding this highly visible virtual presence into other U.S. assets and actions (e.g., donations and surveys by the U.S. Agency for International Development/OFDA, etc.), the Ambassador was able to demonstrate U.S. support for a strategic ally."*



Photo credit: Cpl Robert J. Maurer

As residents navigate a flood-filled street in Pathum Thani, Thailand, the U.S. HAST deployed by III MEF surveys the situation to help determine the potential humanitarian assistance that Marine Corps forces could provide.

Responding Effectively to "Active Shooter" Incidents

Lessons Learned at the Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island

In recent years, "active shooter" incidents (including the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, the Amish schoolhouse massacre in 2006, the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, and the 2009 Fort Hood shooting) have emphasized the need for law enforcement agencies to be prepared to deal effectively with lone gunmen who are intent on indiscriminately killing/harming individuals who have congregated together in the course of their daily lives. These types of shooters are particularly dangerous since they do not necessarily expect to escape (or even survive) following the incident. Even though the shooting at Fort Hood was the only one of these incidents that took place on a military installation and involved military law enforcement professionals, the military services are very aware of the potential for the future occurrence of such incidents. As a result, the Marine Corps, along with the other military services, is committed to ensuring that its installations have developed plans and conducted training exercises to ensure that they are prepared for such an event. After action reports (AARs) prepared by Marine Corps Support Facility (MCSF) Blount Island based on active shooter exercises that took place in September and October 2011 are examples of the many lessons that can be learned during the course of exercising an installation's plans and response capabilities. The MCSF Blount Island AARs address an [Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise](#) that took place in September, and a follow-on [Active Shooter Full-Scale Exercise](#) in October.

The MCSF Blount Island exercises were designed to help improve emergency response operations in terms of:

- incident command/management,
- emergency operations center (EOC) management,
- communications within and across installation commands and jurisdictions,
- the utilization of mass notification systems to recall critical personnel and alert the installation populace of the attack, and
- the execution of mass casualty procedures.

The Tabletop exercise provided the participants with an opportunity to clarify their roles, responsibilities, and capabilities and an opportunity to identify operational issues that should be addressed in order for them to provide effective responses in all their areas of responsibility.

The Full-Scale Exercise AAR emphasized the critical role of communications in helping to ensure an effective response to an active shooter. Communications is the fundamental capability within disciplines and jurisdictions that participants need in order to satisfy even the most routine and basic elements of their response. In particular,



Photo credit: Cpl Tyler Hlavac

Marines and civilians from the Marine Corps Police Department of Marine Forces Reserve practice room clearing techniques during active shooter training in New Orleans.

communications interoperability allows the EOC and public safety agencies (police, fire and emergency medical services) and the service agencies (including public works, transportation, clinics, and hospitals) to talk within and across agencies and jurisdictions. The AAR points out the necessity of public safety personnel having the communications they need to respond to an active shooter, with interoperability being one of the prime considerations in developing and acquiring these systems.

In conclusion, the AAR points out that "*Active Shooter 2011 confirmed the effectiveness of MCSF Blount Island's overall response, coordination and decision-making processes if an active shooter incident were to occur. . . the exercise revealed the installation's strengths in EOC activation, tactical operations, agency teamwork, and the understanding of existing plans, policies and procedures. . . Finally, the exercise served as an effective tool in demonstrating and reinforcing the importance of integrating existing response efforts with those of responding partner agencies.*"

50 Years of Cold-Weather, Mountainous Training

A History of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center

After the Chosin Reservoir Campaign in North Korea during the winter of 1950/1951, the Marine Corps recognized there was the need for a training program designed to help prepare Marines for combat in harsh winter climates. The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC) at Bridgeport, California, was established to serve this purpose, initially as a basic cold-weather indoctrination program for replacement draftees who were bound for Korea. However, the MCMWTC has evolved over time into a year-round, one-of-a-kind facility. The base camp for the Center is located at 6,800 feet on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Range, with mountain peaks in the training area ranging from 9,000 to over 11,000 feet in elevation. During the winter months, snow depths can exceed 10 feet in the canyons and as much as 25 feet in the Sonora Pass. As a result of this unique environment, the training provided at the Center helps Marines become thoroughly schooled in mountaineering skills, tactics and survival techniques. The end result is a high level of confidence on the part of Marines to be able to operate in a challenging climate and over rough terrain. There is no other Marine Corps training environment that requires so much endurance and perseverance.

In 2000, the Marine Corps History Division began preparations to publish a history of the first 50 years of the MCMWTC, tracing its evolution from the 1950s to the post-cold war period and the dawn of the War on Terror. The History Division's monograph on this topic, entitled [U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951 to 2001](#), has recently been published and includes not only

a history of the center, but also background information on the center's location in the Sierra Nevada Range, the cold weather experiences of the Marine Corps prior to 1950, and the backdrop provided by the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

Although the conclusion of the Cold War resulted in less emphasis on cold-weather training and exercises, the introduction of Marine Corps forces into the mountains of eastern Afghanistan furnished an additional impetus for this type of training. However, the MCMWTC has also had to shift its training packages to meet these new requirements. The difficult and challenging training in a mountainous environments had to be coupled with relevant, contemporary counterinsurgency scenarios.

Noted by MGen Harry W. Jenkins, Jr. (Retired) in the introduction to this history, *"Marines are still required to give their all in order to be successful in the mountains. Individuals and units that complete MCMWTC training acquire the same confidence and ability as previous generations of Marines. It is a tribute to the professionalism of the Marines stationed at this superb facility that they continue to demand the most out of those who train in that environment."*

Readers may also be interested in reviewing a Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) "quick look" report on [Exercise Mountain Warrior 8-10](#) that captured lessons from Third Marine Regiment, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines (1/3), and staff assigned to the MCMWTC during an October 2010 training evolution in which Third Marines served as the regimental combat team headquarters and 1/3 as a "synthetic" (simulated) battalion during the exercise.



Photo credit: Cpl William J. Jackson

A Marine with Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7) negotiates a gorge at the Levitt training area aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California.

The Most Popular Downloads from the MCCLL Website

In addition to the weekly rollups of new documents entered into the MCCLL repositories, three of the most recent MCCLL reports (all addressing Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) operations in Afghanistan) were among the most frequently downloaded documents in December 2011. These three reports addressed the operations of Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1) in OEF, the efforts of Marine Corps forces to partner, mentor and advise the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and the integrated operations of unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

The table below highlights these three MCCLL reports, as well as the other documents that were downloaded most often during the month. As would be expected, after action reports (AARs) that units have prepared during or following their OEF deployments were very popular downloads during the month. These included a first hundred days AAR from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6) and end-of-deployment AARs from 2d Battalion, 8th Marines (2/8), Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 (MWSS-272), and RCT-1. An interesting briefing on the legal, ethical and practical considerations

associated with contractors in the workplace (prepared by the three Associate Councils of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC)), a briefing from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Safety Division on friendly fire incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a report from the Civil Military Fusion Centre (CFC) on IED-related trends and issues (compiled from publicly available resources) round out the list.

These documents were downloaded most often by officers in grades from O-1 to O-5, NCOs in grades from E-5 to E-7, DoD civilians in grades from GS-11 to GS-14, and DoD contractors.

Due to the holiday period, there were fewer new registrations on the MCCLL website than in some of the most recent months. There were 669 new registrants during the month, compared with 1149 in November. However, the expanded newsletter distribution list in November, along with the 2d Marine Division registration drive contributed significantly to the large number of registrations in November.

Top Ten Downloads from the MCCLL Website, December 2011

1. [OEF 11.1 After Action Report \(AAR\) from 2d Battalion, 8th Marines \(2/8\)](#)
2. [Regimental Combat Team 1 \(RCT-1\) Operations in OEF \(MCCLL\)](#)
3. [OEF AAR from Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 \(MWSS-272\)](#)
4. [OEF 11.1 First 100 Days AAR from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines \(1/6\)](#)
5. [OEF AAR from RCT-1](#)
6. [Contractors in the Workplace \(MCCDC\)](#)
7. [Partnering, Mentoring, and Advising in OEF \(MCCLL\)](#)
8. [Unmanned Aerial System \(UAS\) Integrated Operations in Support of Regional Command Southwest \(RC \(SW\)\) \(MCCLL\)](#)
9. [Friendly Fire Decision Briefing \(CMC Safety Division\)](#)
10. [Improvised Explosive Devices \(IEDs\): Trends and Issues \(Civil Military Fusion Centre \(CFC\)\)](#)



Photo credit: Cpl Samantha H. Arrington

Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 (MWSS-272) constructed the new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flightline at Camp Leatherneck to support the arrival of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 (VMU-3), previously located at Camp Dwyer.

Friendly Fire Incidents in Afghanistan and Iraq

The loss of life of a Marine, another U.S. service member or one of the members of the coalition forces in Afghanistan or Iraq is a tragedy, but when the life is lost due to friendly fire, the death becomes even more tragic. Although such incidents may be viewed as unavoidable consequences of war, the U.S. military continually works to identify measures that can be taken to ensure that these incidents are even more infrequent. As a result of these efforts, the number of U.S. friendly fire incidents in Afghanistan has been significantly lower than those experienced in Iraq. In an effort to determine some of the reasons for this disparity, the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Safety Division has reviewed all of the incidents that occurred between 2001 and 2011 in order to categorize the types of incidents and the contributing factors. The results have been documented in a concise [Friendly Fire Decision Briefing](#). This document highlights some of the actions that have been taken in the past to reduce the number of incidents, including the revamping of training (incorporating blue-on-blue vignettes) and improvements made in positive identification capabilities. In general the Safety Division found that the current tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for the prevention of friendly fire incidents are sound, although certain specific actions are recommended that could help ensure that friendly fire tragedies become even more infrequent occurrences.



Photo credit: LCpl Andrew D. Thorburn

A light armored vehicle crewman with Company E, 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion uses the Vector 21B binoculars to locate simulated targets at the Supporting Arms Virtual Trainer at 29 Palms. The trainer allows Marines to learn from their mistakes so they can accurately call in strikes on the enemy and not on friendly forces.

Latest News from the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group

As highlighted [previously in this newsletter](#), the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) and the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG) have formed a partnership to sponsor lessons learned conferences that collect lessons from regimental combat teams (RCTs) returning from Afghanistan deployments. The results of the RCT-1 conference were featured earlier in this newsletter, while the upcoming RCT-8 conference is currently scheduled to take place later in January. The mission of MCTOG is to provide advanced training in operations of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and combined arms training and unit readiness planning at the battalion and regiment levels, as well as to synchronize doctrine and training standards to enhance combat preparation and performance of ground combat element (GCE) units during MAGTF operations.

Individuals who wish to learn more about recent MCTOG activities may be interested in the [latest edition of the MCTOG Newsletter](#). This edition highlights: • the recent results of the Course Content Review Board (CCRB) for the Tactical MAGTF Integration Course (TMIC) and the Ground Operations Chief Course, • the RCT-1 Lessons Learned Conference held in mid-September 2011, • the deployment of MCTOG to Camp Atterbury in September in support of Spartan Resolve 5-11, • MCTOG's newest curriculum addition (the Intelligence Tactics Instructor's (ITI) course), • and the visit by the Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps to the TMIC Course.



Photo credit: LCpl William J. Jackson

Recent graduates of the first MCTOG Tactical MAGTF Integration Course (TMIC) and Integrated Ground Operations Chief Course receive their certificates.

Health and Safety-Related Topics in the News

The [Division of Public Affairs Current News Playbook for 19 December 2011](#) highlights some of the key health and safety-related topics that continue to be in the news, emphasizing the proactive nature of the Marine Corps' response to these issues:

- **Suicide Prevention.** In 2009, the Marine Corps experienced its highest suicide rate since the beginning of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, with 52 suicides reported that year. As a result, the Marine Corps leadership has made suicide prevention a major area of emphasis, highlighting the critical role that leaders of all ranks have in ensuring that Marines with problems receive the support they need. With this increased focus, the number of Marine suicides was reduced to 37 in 2010. In 2011, the number of suspected suicide deaths was 32 as of the end of November. The Playbook highlights some of the key points that should be emphasized concerning Marine Corps efforts in this regard and refers Marines and their leaders to the [Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Website](#) for additional information.
- **Sexual Assault.** The Marine Corps Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program is victim-centric and focuses on preventing sexual assault, improving a victim's access to services, increasing the frequency and quality of information provided to the victim, and expediting the proper handling and resolution of sexual assault cases. Since bystander intervention has been identified as one of the best practices for engaging Marines in their role in sexual assault prevention, this topic has now been incorporated into SAPR training. A video-based NCO Bystander intervention course, **Take a Stand**, has been developed and modeled after the successful Suicide Prevention Program awareness campaign, referred to above. This is a three-hour course, presented by trained uniformed victim advocates that emphasizes the important role of NCOs in creating a command climate where Marines have trust in their chain of command and instills awareness on the impact that sexual assault has on the victim, the unit and the Marine Corps.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury.** Traumatic brain injury (TBI) was formally defined by the Department of Defense in October 2007 as a "traumatically induced *structural injury and/or physiologic disruption of brain function as a result of external forces.*" The Playbook highlights the fact that there were over 160,000 cases of TBI diagnoses



Photo credit: Cpl Tommy Huynh

An MV-22 Osprey prepares to land on the amphibious assault ship Makin Island during an 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) exercise.

of U.S. military services members deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan as of September 2009. These diagnoses have not only had a profound impact on Marines and their families, but also represent a significant healthcare cost and an impact on the level of unit readiness and troop retention. The Playbook highlights the fact that management of TBI within the DoD has made significant advances over the past several years, with clinic practice guidelines emerging to standardize the systems approach to treatment by incorporating state-of-the-art science, technology and knowledge-based outcomes. In an effort to prevent the initial TBI injury (which is the most pragmatic and cost effective course of action) the Army and Marine Corps are aggressively working to improve today's helmet design.

- **The Safety Record of the MV-22 Osprey.** As highlighted in the [MCCLL September 2011 Newsletter](#), the MV-22 Osprey has acquired an excellent safety record during the past four years. Since the aircraft achieved initial operational capability in 2007, the MV and CV variants have flown over 18,000 hours in combat and 100,000 total flight hours; the Marine Corps variant has exceeded 90,000 hours on its own. MV-22 squadrons have made three deployments to Iraq, four to Afghanistan, and four with Marine Expeditionary Units. The Class A flight mishap record for the MV-22 is the lowest of any tactical rotorcraft in the Marine Corps fleet over the past ten years. As highlighted in the Playbook, since the Osprey was redesigned, the aircraft has demonstrated its safety and reliability in some of the harshest operating environments in the world. It has now been over a decade since the last MV-22 crash.

Reading Lists and Book Reviews

In July 2011, the [Commandant's Professional Reading List](#) was revised by a review panel established by General James F. Amos to ensure that the list remains relevant and provides Marines with a variety of resources to broaden their perspectives and help ensure that they benefit from the experiences of others. The list continues to highlight **First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps** by LtGen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret), as the Commandant's "choice book" to be read by all Marines. In addition, each Marine is tasked to read a minimum of one book from the list for their grade each year. The CMC list, as well as other reading lists (such as those prepared by I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and the Director of Intelligence), are highlighted on the [Marine Corps University \(MCU\) website](#), along with discussion guides and other resources.

This month we feature:

(1) Two books that have been retained from the 2009 list, which are both classic accounts of war written in the 1930s by **C. S. Forester: Rifleman Dodd** (on the Commandant's list for Private/Private First Class) and **The General** (on the list for Master Gunnery Sergeant/Sergeant Major and Captain/Chief Warrant Officer 4) and

(2) Two books that have been added to the 2011 list, **Soldiers of God** by Robert D. Kaplan (on the list for 2nd Lieutenant/Warrant Officer/Chief Warrant Officer 2) and **In the Gray Area**, by Seth Folsom (on the list for Major/Chief Warrant Officer 5).

Rifleman Dodd (also "Death to the French")

- C. S. Forester (John Lane Publisher, 1932)

"Morran os Franceses! Death to the French!" is the cry echoing throughout Portugal in 1810. Crushed between Napoleon's imperial ambitions and British commander Lord Wellington's ruthless determination to thwart them, Portugal is now a desert, the land stripped, its people famished and suffering. Their fury focuses on the French invaders. Mutual hatred spawns unspeakable atrocities. French dragoons torture, rape and kill hapless Portuguese peasants; Portuguese guerrillas treat captured French soldiers with merciless ferocity.

Caught up in French Marshal Masséna's push to pin down Wellington's forces are British Rifleman Matthew

Dodd of the Ninety-Fifth "Rifles" and Sergeant Godinot, leader of an infantry unit of ill-fed, demoralised young French conscripts. When Dodd is trapped behind French lines during the British retreat to Lisbon, their lives become enmeshed, and as events unfold they are seen in mirror image from both points of view. Although Dodd remains unaware of Godinot and his comrades, to them the elusive, deadly "Green Englishman" represents their nemesis.

Burly, phlegmatic Dodd is a rank-and-file soldier with years of campaigning behind him. The brotherhood of his company is his only reality. Separated from the British Army, his sole imperative is to rejoin it. Wellington's fortifications at Torres Vedras stall the French for interminable months, but also keep Dodd from his objective. With the aid of Portuguese companions, he single-mindedly harries the French soldiers in his way, compounding their misery and drawing on tactical and leadership skills previously untapped.

*A powerful, uncompromising tale, **Death to the French** is both a testament to the uncelebrated courage and resolution of the common soldier ("the only reward for the doing of his duty would be the knowledge that his duty was being done"), and an indictment of the never-ending, destructive cycle of war: "The ruin and desolation ... might even constitute a shining example to a later generation, which, with the additional advantages of poison gases and high explosive, might worthily attempt to emulate it"*

-- Review by [Annis from HistoricalNovels.Info](#)

The General

- C. S. Forester (Michael Joseph Publisher, 1936)

"This classic novel by C.S. Forester depicts life as an officer within the British Army between the World Wars. Although this is a work of fiction, the cultural setting is undeniably based on the history and traditions of the British colonial military. Many literary and historical scholars also assert that the main character, Herbert Curzon, is a composite of Field Marshall John French and Field Marshall Douglas Haig. Because of its strong basis in fact, this novel has been required reading for military officers and students from the time of Hitler to the present. While Forester writes critically about the way the British carried out World War I, he frames the decisions as coming from the often insular social context and rigid hierarchy of the British colonial military

system. He explains that personal loyalties most often were tied to a regiment rather than to the nation or the army as a whole and where an officers rank and social station were tied not only to his intellectual abilities, but also to his family's wealth and social standing. With the swelling of the ranks and devastating losses in World War I, this complicated structure was quickly replaced by soldiers motivated to defend their country, many of whom did not plan on military careers. This is a story not only about military cultures or the power of a strong individual, but also about social and cultural change and how it is often brought about by war".

-- Review from the [Castle Crier, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers HECS Library](#)

Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan

- Robert D. Kaplan (First Vintage Departures, 1990 & 2001)

"Soldiers of God was suggested to me by a friend when I expressed a great deal of confusion over the tribal groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan that I kept reading about in the news. I found this book quite helpful in sorting out the who's who when it came to the major players over there.

Although this book was written originally in 1990, the author added a final chapter and republished it in 2000. The information in this book serves as a great stepping stone to bringing some understanding to light about the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan. You might think it is too old to be pertinent to today's events, but this is not the case at all.

You will follow the author as he travels back and forth between Pakistan and Afghanistan, not by car, plane or helicopter, but on foot alongside the Mujahidin or "soldiers of God" during the 1980s.

A time when the Afghanistan people were fighting to throw the Soviets out of their country.

If you have been following any of the happenings in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past decade, or even for the past several years, names from before 9/11 will jump out at you! Hekmatyar, Hamid Karzai, ISI (Pakistani Intelligence Service), Musharraf, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency- U.S.) and Massoud to name a few.

Tribal loyalties, power struggles between and among the tribes, the day-to-day struggle to survive in a country that can only be called primitive at best are brought to light. You quickly see how tenacious the people are in their fight against the Soviets yet divided by their own ethnic and religious differences.

"In 1987, the Soviets carpet bombed Kandahar for months on end. After reducing part of the city center and almost all of the surrounding streets to rubble, they bulldozed a grid of roads to enable tanks and armored cars to patrol the city....."

"They peppered the surrounding desert with tens of thousands of land mines, which they usually dropped from the air but sometimes shot from mortars. The villages around Kandahar became lifeless."

"But the Kandahari mujahidin were every bit as hell-bent as the Soviets. They zigzagged through minefields on the dust-packed, gravelly wastes with double-barreled 23 mm antiaircraft guns mounted on the backs of their pickup trucks, firing away at anything that moved in the sky."

When Robert Kaplan traveled between the two countries, the press was not interested in reporting on the happenings in Afghanistan but focused instead on South Korea, South Africa and other countries that were 'more civilized.'

"If there wasn't a satellite station nearby, or if the phones didn't work, or if the electricity wasn't dependable, you just reported less or nothing at all about the place."

You will see how the Soviets leave, how in the spring of 1994 the Taliban become filled with "shadowy quiet newcomers" who take control of the movement, and the days leading up to 9/11 become more clear.

*I would strongly suggest **Soldiers of God** as a book to start building an understanding of the people who inhabit Afghanistan and Pakistan. I say start, because it will take years and years of study to understand this complex life led by people living in such a primitive country. Primitive with a modern mix thrown in. Cell phones and illiteracy. Primitive fighters using high tech weapons. Definitely a worthy book to add to your library!"*

-- Review from the [War on Terror News](#)

In the Gray Area: A Marine Advisor Team at War

- LtCol Seth W. B. Folsom (Naval Institute Press, 2011)

*"Some day when we laugh at the war in Iraq, **In the Gray Area** can be the basis for a television situation comedy:*

A lieutenant colonel who commanded a light-armored reconnaissance battalion on the march to Baghdad in 2003 returns to Iraq in 2008 to lead Marines embedded with an Iraq army infantry battalion, which bumbles its way along and baffles its American advisers.

A TV series about irascible Iraqis and affable Americans is presumably not in development. Meanwhile, the reality of the situation between Military Transition Team 0733 and the

Iraqi 3rd Battalion, 28th Brigade, is anything but funny to the Marines. In fact, it's infuriating.

"When it came to operating with Iraqis, we would never be able to count on having enough information to make an educated decision," Lt. Col. Seth W.B. Folsom writes. "In many cases we would simply have to wing it. . ."

After being duped by an Iraqi lieutenant colonel who was "hip deep in a theft ring" a year earlier, Folsom is furious — with himself — and realizes that he might never figure out his counterparts if he continues "to eat their bulls--- with no questions asked."

He begins to follow his father's advice: Trust, but verify.

Folsom, the author of "The Highway War," which won a Military Writer's Society of America award, is a fine writer, and his memoirs of mentoring compare favorably with Wesley Gray's "Embedded," about a Marine lieutenant on a similar mission in 2006.

Folsom observes astutely and makes his cases conscientiously. A mentor's role might necessarily be gray, but Folsom's managerial acumen is clearly black and white — and makes worthwhile reading for anyone with hands-on abilities in a hands-off role."

-- Review by [J. Ford Huffman, Army Times](#)

Photo credit: Cpl Cristopher O'Quinn

Marines from Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (1/1), 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), display their equipment for Major General Rick Burr, Commander, 1st Australian Army Division, during a Theater Security Cooperation event at Darwin, Australia, aboard the USS Greenbay (LPD-20).

MCCLL Products "in the Pipeline"

A number of recently completed and ongoing collection efforts are scheduled to result in MCCLL reports within the next few months. "Stay tuned" for these upcoming MCCLL products:

- **A Security Cooperation MAGTF: The Black Sea Rotational Force (BSRF)**
- **OEF Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Employment and Operations**
- **The Stand-up of Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT) Forward**
- **Operations of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)**
- **Lessons Learned by Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs)/Joint Fires Observers (JFOs)**
- **Combat Engineer Operations in OEF**
- **Regimental Combat Team 8 Operations in OEF**



The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) newsletter provides "initial impressions" summaries that identify key observations and potential lessons from collection efforts. These observations highlight potential shortfalls, risks or issues experienced by units that may suggest a need for change. The observations are not service level decisions. In addition, some information in this newsletter has been compiled from publicly available sources and is not official USMC policy. Although the information has been gathered from reliable sources, the currency and completeness of the information is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed. Questions or comments (or requests to be added to the MCCLL newsletter distribution list) can be directed to: [Mr. Harry T. Johnson, Editor](#) Telephone: (703) 432-1279 DSN: 312-378-1279.

Roster of MCCLL Program Analysts

The latest roster of Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) representatives at major Marine Corps and joint commands and organizations is provided below. Note that Mr. Michael Smith is deploying as the replacement for Mr. Scott Kemp at 2d MLG (Fwd). Mr. Kemp is returning to his assignment as the program analyst at LOGCOM. Mr. Smith will also temporarily serve as the MCCLL representative at 2d MAW (Fwd) following LtCol Jack Estepp's re-deployment. Mr. Paul Voss has been assigned as the new MCCLL representative at 2d MAW. Contact information for these program analysts will be furnished as soon as it becomes available. Individuals from commands and organizations that do not have a MCCLL representative may contact [Mr. Mark Silvia](#), the MCCLL Operations Officer at 703-432-1284.

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