



Afghan Commander AAR Book



Currahee Edition

September 2009

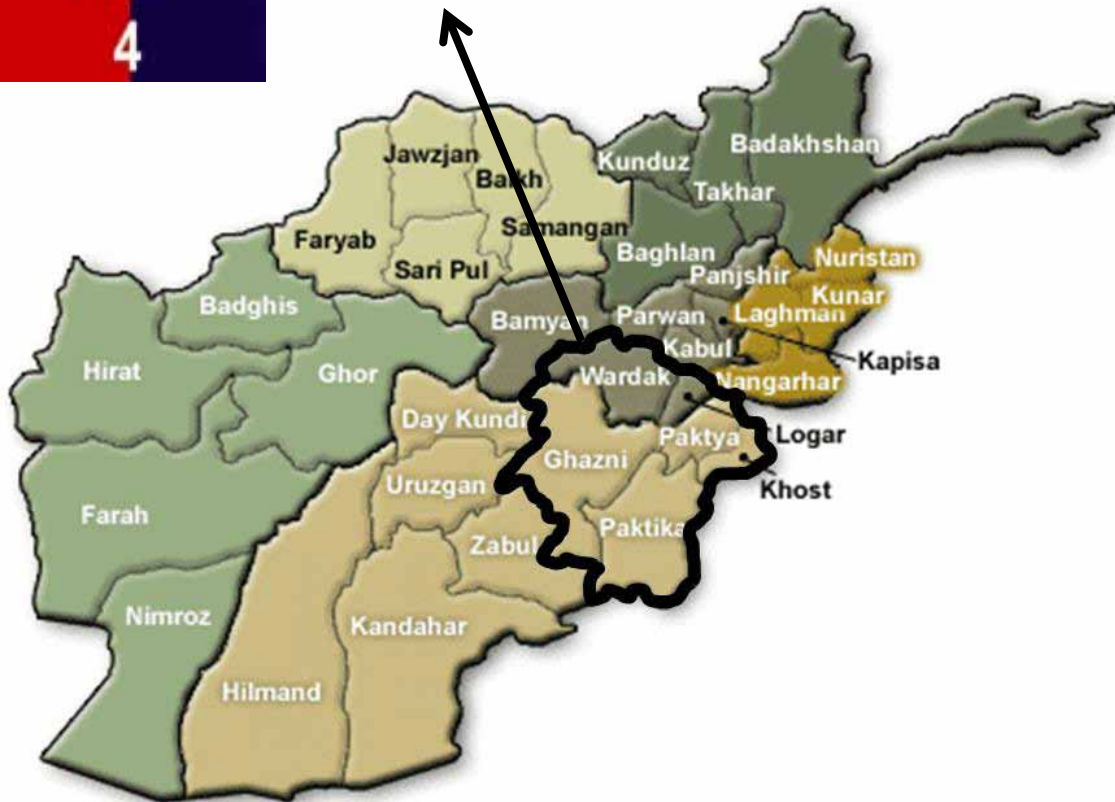


In this edition of the *Afghan Commander AAR Book*, company commanders from across TF Currahee share their hard-earned knowledge with the profession

This book is by and for company commanders; it brings together commanders who have experience leading in Afghanistan with commanders who are preparing for combat operations in Afghanistan right now.



4th BCT Currahees, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
March 2008 - March 2009
Paktya, Paktika, Khost, Ghazni, Logar, and Wardak Provinces.



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September 2009

Introduction

In this book we, the company commanders of TF CURRAHEE, pass along some of the hard-earned lessons learned and insights we gained from our experience in Operation Enduring Freedom IX, March 2008-March 2009. Our desire is that future company commanders read and benefit from what we share here, just as we benefited from those who preceded us and chose to share their knowledge. We also envision this book stimulating discussions and serving as a catalyst for others to band together and share their own ideas and experiences. We see this process as an integral part of our profession—continuously learning and adapting in order to be the most effective leaders we can be.

This book is organized around individual company commander insights and grouped by battalion:

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NOTE: A digital copy of this document, along with additional *Afghan Commander AAR* products, is available in the “milspace library” – which you have access to as a member of the Company Command and/or Platoon Leader professional forums (<http://CC.army.mil> & <http://PL.army.mil>).



506th Infantry Regiment History



Formed on July 20, 1942-
Toccoa, GA

Two Combat jumps during
WWII

- Ø Normandy
- Ø Market Garden

Three Presidential Unit
Citations

- Ø Normandy
- Ø Bastogne
- Ø Dong Ap Bia Mountain
(Hamburger Hill)

“Band of Brothers” Regiment

Campaigns include

- Ø WWII: Normandy, Rhineland,
Ardennes-Alsace, Central
Europe
- Ø Vietnam: Counteroffensives III,
IV, V, VI, VII; Tet
Counteroffensive and Tet 69;
Consolidation I-II
- Ø Iraq (1-506 only) Aug 04 - Aug 05
- Ø Iraq Dec 05 - Nov 06
- Ø Afghanistan Apr 08 - Mar 09

Served on Korea DMZ 1987-1994
(1-506 only)

Oct. 13, 2005: 506th INF Regt.,
4th BCT, 101st ABN DIV activated

Dedicated to our Fallen Comrades

We dedicate this book to them and to our wounded heroes, whom we think about each and every day.

- 1LT DONALD CLAYTON CARWILE, 1ST BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- SGT ISAAC PALOMAREZ, 1ST BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- SPC ESTELL LEE TURNER, 1ST BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
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- 1LT NICK A. DEWHIRST, 2ND BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- SFC RAYMOND JOHN MUNDEN, 2ND BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- SSG KEVIN CASEY ROBERTS, 2ND BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- CPL CHARLES PATRICK GAFFNEY JR, 2ND BATTALION 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
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- PFC ARA TYLER DEYSIE, 1ST SQUADRON 61ST CAVALRY REGIMENT
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- SSG BRIAN E. STUDER, 720TH EOD COMPANY 3RD EOD BATTALION
- SGT FEDERICO BORJAS, ALPHA COMPANY 416TH CIVIL AFFAIRS BATTALION
- SPC SAMSON A. MORA, 1ST BATTALION 294TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- SGT BRIAN S. LEONGUERRERO, 1ST BATTALION 294TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
- 1LT JEFFREY DEPRIMO, PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD
- MAJ SCOTT A. HAGGERTY, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM GARDEZ
- PFC DEREK D. HOLLAND, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM GARDEZ
- 1LT JEFFERY A. AMMON, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM GHANZI
- HN MARK A. RETIMER, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM SHARANA
- CM1 ROSS L. TOLES II, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM SHARANA
- 2LT ROBERT MARCZEWSKI, CHARLIE COMPANY POLISH BRIGADE
- PVT GRZEGOR POLITOWSKI, CHARLIE COMPANY POLISH BRIGADE
- PVT PAWEL SZWED, BRAVO COMPANY POLISH BATTLE GROUP
- PVT PAWEL BRODZIKOWSKI, BRAVO COMPANY POLISH BATTLE GROUP
- CPL WALDEMAR SUJDAK, BRAVO COMPANY POLISH BATTLE GROUP
- SSG RADIM VACULIK, 102ND RECON BATTALION CZECK REPUBLIC

Foreword

The area of operations assigned to the Currahees during this deployment consisted of the provinces of Paktika (divided into East and West), Paktya, Khost, Ghazni, Wardak, and Logar—spanning over 25,000 square miles and equivalent to the size of the state of West Virginia. Key terrain our Company Commanders faced consisted of the Pakistan border, the historic Khost-Gardez Pass (known as the Sato Kandow Pass) where two Soviet Divisions were defeated by the mujahedeen, and Highway 1 that connects Kabul to Kandahar. The human terrain, which presented complex challenges, consisted of a diverse multi-ethnic population dominated by Pashtun, yet with significant numbers of Hazara and Tajik. Some were influenced by traditional tribal structures while other portions of the society were influenced by religious institutions. This human terrain dimension was complicated by a lack of infrastructure from decades of war, Taliban fundamentalism, and the harsh, mountainous terrain that compartmentalizes population densities, further breaking down the tribes into distinct clans and sub-clans with various needs. These factors challenged our Company Commanders as they tried to connect the local and provincial government to the population while simultaneously separating the Afghan people psychologically and, in some cases, physically from the enemy. To accomplish our population-centric strategy, our main effort was to substantially increase the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces through real partnership down to the company and platoon level with the Afghan Army, National Police, and the Border Police.

During our deployment, the Currahee Company Commanders displayed tremendous capacity to adapt and integrate unique capabilities from the Interagency and Non-Governmental Organizations as well as NATO forces in a Combined Task Force. The Currahee Team partnered with four US Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), one Czech Republic PRT, and one Turkish PRT. In addition, we integrated three Agri-business Development Teams into mission planning along all lines of operations. Lastly, for an extensive period in this deployment, our Company Commanders conducted counterinsurgency operations alongside a Polish Task Force in Paktika and Ghazni, on which NATO and Poland's leadership maintained a keen eye throughout the deployment. These Company Commanders demonstrated amazing adaptability, willingness to learn, and persistence in bringing to bear all elements of power to separate the enemy from the people and to connect the Afghan government to its people.

The Company Commanders and Soldiers fought an extremely difficult fight against a hard, violent, and relentless enemy. As the Company Commanders partnered with the ANSF, PRTs, and ADTs in building capacity in government and development for the Afghan people, the enemy employed every tactic at their disposal to either kill our Soldiers or negatively propagandize our actions against the US, international public and, most importantly, the Afghan people. We expended extraordinary efforts along the information line of operation to counter enemy IO efforts through rapid, deliberate consequence management (follow-on actions to mitigate a negative consequence by us) or exploitation (follow on actions to exploit a negative by the enemy). Our Company Commanders balanced proportionality and discrimination daily in their enemy engagements and in accordance with the theater's Tactical Directive. It cannot go unmentioned that these Company Commanders expertly

integrated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities in a sensor-to-shooter mode with joint fires and unmanned aerial systems that killed hundreds of enemy and protected scores of US Soldiers and our ANSF partners. Their command and skill in the lethal fight against the enemy simply was awe-inspiring and demonstrated the professionalism, discipline, and courage in our present Company Commanders.

We could not have accomplished what we set out to do without the service of our incredible Soldiers and support of their Families. The Currahees of today continue the great legacy of the Band of Brothers from its 20 July 1942 formation in Toccoa, Georgia to World War II, Vietnam, Korea, and Iraq—and now Afghanistan. These Soldiers and its Non-Commissioned Officers form the foundation of discipline and Warrior Ethos that allow our Company Commanders to command and lead our Soldiers in this complex counterinsurgency fight. As these Company Commanders will tell you below, it is these Currahee Soldiers that deserve our gratitude and praise.

Our Currahee Families shared a tremendous burden at home dealing with yet another deployment as they balanced Family life while supporting their Currahee Soldier in Afghanistan. Their devotion and energy on the home front allowed us all to focus on our combat duties and directly enabled our mission success. Sadly, some of our Families suffered the tragic loss of their loved one, and our heartfelt condolences continue to go out to every one of our Currahee Gold Star Families. We will never forget. Our Families' sacrifices and needs remain a priority for the Currahees now and in the future. Our gratitude for their support to the Currahee Family and our Nation cannot be adequately expressed in words.

Lastly, for our Fallen Currahees, to include our Coalition partners from the Czech Republic, the Polish Task Force, and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, who gave the ultimate sacrifice during this deployment—their efforts are not in vain. They were performing a noble mission on behalf of our Nations' interests and for the Afghan people. These Soldiers sacrificed to give the Afghan people a better life, while also protecting their buddies daily from a dangerous enemy. It is our hope that these lessons learned and insights from the Currahee Company Commanders below can improve mission accomplishment and protect our Soldiers during the next rotation to Afghanistan.

COL John "Pete" Johnson
BCT Commander
"Currahee 6"

LTC Daniel S. Morgan
BCT Operations Officer
"Currahee 3"

The Contributors



Red Currahees

1-506th Infantry (Task Force Red Currahee)

| | |
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| Mike Eliassen (Infantry), HHC & C/1-506 IN | 9 |
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White Currahees

2-506th Infantry (Task Force White Currahee)

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1-61 Cavalry (Task Force Panther)

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4th BSTB (Task Force Apache)

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Mike Eliassen, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: Charlie Co. & HHC 1-506th IN, 4BCT Currahee, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Ghazni, Wardak, W. Paktika

War is still war no matter what the mission is; when the bullets start flying there is nothing else to do but rely on the battle drills. This is why it was so important to practice controlled violence and the consequence management techniques prior to getting into country. They were then part of the battle drill for all of our Soldiers. Everything that happens has a real world consequence and not speaking the language exacerbates this issue.

Also, teamwork and team building is not something that you do on the fly. As we train for combat, we must understand that teams are successful for a reason: they train together and train to win.

More language training. Formalizing the process and choosing the right Soldiers and leaders to complete programs such as Tactical Dari & Pashto. The language training we did was good, but it could have been so much better had we put the time into really immersing a group of leaders and Soldiers in the language. I believe this would have paid great dividends while in country.

Take nothing for granted. We need to be in this fight for the long haul. Develop relationships with the idea that they are truly going to be life-long. Our Battalion Commander knew one of the Afghan National Army Colonels we worked with from his tour in 2004-05 as a Battalion S3. This was an excellent professional relationship that set both units up for success.

Additional Topics:

Human Dimension/Culture: You really must be a student of the culture to be successful in any counter-insurgency. Those leaders and Soldiers in the unit that put the time into developing relationships with the locals, NGOs and other players in our operational environment were a large part of our success. Those who did not see the Afghans as humans were generally a hindrance.

Equipment: The M1117, Armored Security Vehicle, was the most effective piece of equipment that we had, hands down. The MRAP will continue to be effective but needs work on the supply side. I am sure that there have been improvements now. The Army Combat Shirt was a favorite of the guys, except it had a short life. About half way through we got the improved ACU pants and they held up a little better. Where we screwed up was in the mis-management of the Army Direct Ordering Program. This needs to be handled by the individual and managed by a responsible NCO or Jr Officer in the Battalion or below. Initially we tried it at the BCT level and units were not getting their gear.

Casualties: They happen. Period. As we put more Soldiers into an operational environment we will see more and more casualties. Not just Americans or our ISAF partners either. Treating civilians was one of

the things I was amazed with in OEF this last go-round. Our medics and Soldiers in general were so amazing when it came to treating civilian casualties. This is where I was truly impressed with the knowledge base and abilities of all of our Soldiers. What made a difference with the younger Soldiers was the Eagle First Responder course that we had every Soldier complete prior to deploying. What I would change and add to our program would be a more comprehensive EMT program. We had some resistance at first on this during train-up, but I had success with it in the LRS-C and really believed that we could make a difference not just with combat medicine but with everyday emergency treatment as well. Since the population is the center of gravity in a counter-insurgency, this capability greatly increases our ability to make a real difference with the population and the ANSF.

Physical Fitness: I am a huge fan of Col. Gordon Roberts (Medal of Honor recipient, Vietnam 1969, B Co. 1-506th) and his theory of physical endurance as the key to success in combat. This comes from his days as a Spec-4 in Vietnam and being a high school cross country and track state champion the year before. Also, cross-fit, if it is done correctly, is a huge motivational positive for a unit preparing for OEF. The demands of terrain and altitude cannot be overstated. The effects of heat and altitude combined made a mockery of the level of physical fitness. What I always thought would be a good idea, that we were not able to take advantage of, was having a physical trainer/athletic trainer work with the company prior to deployment that could coach us on the “warrior as athlete” mentality. Helping us understand the reasons behind training cycles and rest. One of the big mistakes that I see happening in the Army still happened when we came home. We had not really worked out that much near the end of our deployment and right away, after leave, some of the leadership wanted to jump into ‘two-a-days’. Not a good idea. Injuries started popping up all over the place. We need to take a long-term, systemic approach to developing fitness in our Soldiers which takes training, understanding, and buy-in at all levels of leadership.

Soldier Morale: What made the most difference in improving or sustaining morale for your Soldiers? Staying honest with them and keeping the patrol schedule interesting. Focusing on the development of their understanding of what your mission set really is makes a difference in keeping their morale on the up-swing. We used a simple, but effective pocket card that explained that our key task was to win the tug-o-war with the Taliban and the people. The GIRoA and the Taliban both offer competing visions of the future and it was our job to help the people move toward the government. That the majority of the Soldiers in the company could explain this made a huge difference in understanding the long term goals of the battalion and the US in Afghanistan. The other thing that makes Soldiers feel special is that they are able to be special, that their mission is special, and that they have been specially selected for this mission. Tied into this is the understanding across the operational environment that all of ISAF is playing a vital role in the development of security in Afghanistan.

Family Readiness: The more time that you put into the FRG prior to deployment the less you will have to worry or think about it while you are gone. That being said, the best FRGs in our Battalion were constantly engaged by the commanders forward. Letters, photos, updates, and personal notes really do make a difference. Family Readiness is a huge factor in Soldier morale as well. The units with the most successful FRGs were also the ones that did not change mid-stream.

Professional Reading: What is one book that really helped you to be more effective in Afghanistan? Sarah Chayes’ “The Punishment of Virtue” and Greg Mortenson’s “Three Cups of Tea” are two great, off-the-beaten-path books to read. Our Battalion brought Sarah Chayes in prior to the deployment to talk with the leadership down to the Platoon Sergeant and Squad Leader level, and I firmly believe that hearing other points of view on the way the people view the war made a significant difference in our

deployment. Of course, a chapter of doctrine a day is the best form of professional development when nothing else jumps out at you.





James Bithorn, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: Able Company, 1st Battalion 506th IN, 4th BCT, 101ABN(AASLT)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Tagab Valley, Kapisa Province (5 months) Wardak Province (7 months)

Greatest Lessons Learned:

It is impossible to lump any two locations in Afghanistan into a single category in terms of their progress regarding security, economic and infrastructure development or governance. The immense diversity, mostly due to a deep history of conflict, sets each province, district or village at completely different levels of clear, hold and build. This one fact must drive commanders to mentally prepare and train their company for several different types of "campaigns." The goals of separating the insurgent from the populace, protecting the Afghan populace and showing improvement should remain the same regardless of where a company finds themselves, despite the fact that their start point may differ greatly from a sister company or battalion. So the question remains, into what key tasks do I focus my company's training and how do I cover such a broad spectrum in a short period of time?

There is no single or easy answer. Each commander will set priorities based off of his/her company's capabilities, manning and deployment experience. All this being said, commanders do have to find a way to set clear priorities in training and decide what areas to accept risk in.

My greatest challenge in Afghanistan was balancing lethal and non-lethal targeting and its execution. As much as I wanted to focus on Governance and Economic Development, I was consistently drawn back into Security, primarily kinetic operations. The best method I developed to manage my operating environment was to decide early on which areas (districts) I was going to accept risk in by not maintaining a presence and which ones I would focus my energies. While operating in the Tagab Valley, Kapisa Province, this was a much more realistic goal, only having 3 districts to manage. I felt that I had a much better balance with the number of Shuras attended, Village Medical Outreaches (MEDCAP) and Humanitarian Aid drops outweighing the number of Time Sensitive Target and SIGINT driven operations.

While in Kapisa, I also had the advantage of not manning any permanent combat outposts, which allowed for face-to-face interaction with my platoon leaders and platoon sergeants daily. My understanding of the operating environment spiked and I was able to cover all lines of operations more consistently.

The situation my company and I found ourselves in Wardak Province was significantly more difficult due to the sheer size of the operating environment, over 3800Kmq and 120km of Highway 1 (MSR Ohio), the major road artery for Afghanistan. Here, it was absolutely critical to decide on which areas I would

focus my company's efforts. Through an initial terrain and enemy pattern analysis it was easy to decide that Highway 1 security would remain my company decisive operation. The next and real challenge remaining in terms of company systems was how to effectively establish a targeting cycle while managing a company spread out over 100km. I ended up having three targeting meetings during the course of a two-week period. The first meeting would include my Human Collection Team(s) (HCT), 3-8 Platoon Leaders (depending upon the current task organization) and my Company Intelligence Support Team (COIST). Here I would have the platoon leaders nominate targets IAW the ASCOPE methodology (targeting Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People and Events) within each platoon operating environment. If possible, I would also use this event to gather each platoon leader for a 24 hour period to level the playing field in terms of their current understanding of commander's intent and how they see their district developing.

The second targeting meeting was focused on lethal targeting and would include my partnered ODA, HCT and COIST. Here we hashed out what the current trends were in terms of SIGINT and HUMINT activity as well as nominations for feasible Time Sensitive Targets.

The third and final targeting meeting was more of an intelligence "sharing" session between my COIST, the Afghan National Army and Police Intelligence sections, the Afghan CID (more Police investigators than anything else) and Afghan NDS (Afghan version of a combined CIA and FBI). We would utilize this session to either validate certain HUMINT we had received, help focus and refine the ANSF efforts across the province or simply maintain an understanding of the "ANSF Intelligence Picture".

Obviously it was difficult to keep this sort of battle rhythm up across the province, particularly when battalion or brigade missions took precedence. Regardless of whether or not I could be there, for the sake of continuity the meetings would occur as regularly as possible. The most important meeting to keep consistent was the ANSF one as it served several purposes, particularly in terms of development.

Weather/Terrain:

Bottom line up front, the weather and terrain in Afghanistan get a serious vote, one that commanders need to heed. In regard to weather and MEDEVAC capability, there are going to be certain times that UH-60 or HH-60 support is not going to be feasible, mostly due to a low ceiling. When this happens commanders need to weigh risk against outcome to decide whether or not scheduled patrols/operations need to occur. A movement within a kilometer of a Patrol Base or FOB to conduct a meeting with ANSF will more than likely have risks that can be mitigated by clear controls; however, a 35 kilometer movement to conduct a cordon and search under Red MEDEVAC will more than likely not remain at medium to low risk.

Terrain analysis must be conducted and updated based off of enemy TTP's. The Anti -Afghan Forces will utilize terrain to their advantage, gaining the high ground when possible and having established infiltration and exfiltration routes. Where and how you can travel will also evolve over time based off of the weather and the enemy. The paved roads in Afghanistan are few and far between, which makes the majority of the established routes much more susceptible to deep-buried IEDs and mines. Movement in and out of an objective becomes much more of a deliberate operation, something companies should

have an established SOP for. Do not expect route clearance packages to be available and **ALWAYS** have a plan to cover your exfil route. This can be accomplished several ways:

(1) Keep an element in overwatch of your entire route. This may not always be feasible dependent upon time spent on the objective and the length of the return route.

(2) Move an element to conduct route clearance just prior to your exfil. Whatever unit executes this mission will need the necessary tools and amount of time to execute such a mission.

(3) Return on a different route. We all know this may not always be an option. When dealt with this situation, I preferred to move a platoon in from outside the objective area, conducting route clearance and staging as a local QRF.

(4) ISR route coverage. This was my least preferred option. ISR can often times be pulled without a commander's immediate knowledge and may not always catch the right signatures for an IED emplacement.



CASUALTIES:

They are going to occur and commanders must find a way to prepare for them, both personally and in terms of SOP development. Commanders can count on key leaders being evacuated from theatre, so in turn each leader in the company must be prepared to execute their job one step higher. You can almost always count on a key leader being evacuated, whether for loss of life, limb or eyesight, or something less severe. This necessity must be communicated early on and the right mentorship applied to allow for no disruption in operations.

As for dealing with the loss of a Soldier's life, there is no easy answer. Companies and platoons must be prepared to continue operations; however, Commanders must make continuous assessments of their unit to determine if a change needs to occur in order to keep their organization mission focused. I personally had a difficulty with subordinate leadership maintaining a positive relationship with Afghans, particularly after a casualty. The increased presence of a Commander or First Sergeant can help rectify that situation or an extended refit. I do, however, recommend against the complete removal of a platoon from a specific mission set.

SOLDIER MORALE:

The presence of a Commander or First Sergeant must not be taken lightly. Commanders and First Sergeants should find every excuse to attempt to visit their Soldiers at Combat Outposts and other remote locations. There is much to be said about personal interaction that cannot be made up for during TACSAT traffic or a BFT message. Regardless of what they may say, leaders will start to feel neglected if a genuine effort is not made to keep them current as to what is occurring in the company operating environment. When this does occur, it can trickle down to the Soldier level if not caught. Additionally, commander's intent is much better understood and executed if there is a consistent face to that commander.

Another Soldier motivator is packages. We've all seen and understand how much of a morale boost a package can be. Take the time or assign someone to make use of the varying programs available for deployed Soldiers. Oftentimes all it takes is a number sent to an agency such as Soldiers' Angels, Any Soldier, etc to make this occur.



Spencer Wallace, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: B Company 1-506th IN, 4BCT Currahee, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Paktika

1. Issue: Relationships with the people are a prerequisite to successful kinetic operations

Discussion: The desired endstate for Giro District was developing an Afghan National Police (ANP) platoon to the point where they were capable of executing successful counter insurgency operations (COIN). Given this endstate was a no fail mission, 1st Platoon Baker Company was forced to re-look not only the purpose and intent for operations but how to incorporate ANP into every facet of planning, execution and refit during six months at Forward Operating Base Giro. Platoon leadership constantly focused the ANP on the people's needs as a means to build the trust necessary for COIN. After over 15 shuras, delivering supplies necessary to re-open schools, fixing wells in the local bazaar, and patching up the schools windows, the people of Giro trusted the ANP and understood their commitment to improve the district. At this turning point, the ANP chief began receiving information on the enemy's movements, their intent for Giro, and their residences from five separate sources. Securing the trust of the local leaders will lead to the receipt of actionable intelligence on local enemy leaders. The police's culminating event was building a plan based on such intelligence and moving to an objective to kill or capture a key Taliban leader. Along with 1st Platoon, the ANP killed four insurgents and wounded three, including the enemy leader. The results were marked by no further harassing fire on the FOB, reports that the key leader fled to Pakistan for treatment, and all the shopkeepers in his home village moved their shops to areas controlled by the ANP. The people trusted the ANP's ability to secure them.

Recommendation: Continue to teach junior leaders why the "tug of war" is important. At the Platoon level it is vital to understand the Coalition's purpose in Afghanistan. The COIN fight is executed at many levels but the relationships built at the platoon and squad level provide the capabilities for companies to shape the battle space. Post operational engagements with local leadership, information exchange, and the reassurance of Coalition commitment to improve the security and the government's ability to govern result in the changes necessary to fully gain the support of the people against the insurgency.

2. Issue: Friendly pattern analysis

Discussion: In Giro, the enemy observed where 1st Platoon Baker Company set up overwatch positions during movement between villages and mined these areas. The first mine was confirmed after being hit by a lead truck moving to a historic overwatch location. The enemy also observed where 1st Platoon's movement cross country was restricted by karez and villages. These locations became targets for their

mortar teams and 1st Platoon received accurate indirect fires during exfiltration on two separate occasions. Given the enemy's successful pattern analysis of the platoon's movement on the terrain, 1st Platoon reacted by mapping all previously traveled routes, short halt locations, observation posts, and choke points. By conducting a critical pattern analysis, 1st Platoon leveraged the enemy's understanding against him through several deception operations. Conducting deception infiltrations and false observation posts lead to the destruction of two enemy mortar teams and a DShK machine gun, crippling the enemy's heavy weapons assets in Giro.

Recommendation: Produce friendly pattern analysis as missions and operations are completed. The understanding of friendly tactics, techniques and procedures as the enemy might see it requires a non-biased assessment by leaders after each friendly action. By building a complete and current picture of how the enemy sees the Coalition and ANSF, options for deception plans become obvious and the enemy will not be able to exploit our patterns.



3. Issue: Coordination and complimentary operations with multiple agencies

Discussion: During Operation Enduring Freedom VIII, Baker Company achieved the greatest effects through coordination and synchronization with multiple agencies outside of the company. Our disruption operations were synchronized with the SOF NAIs and synched with their target set. This allowed the company to operate complimentary to the targeting with Strike Force 1 in Sharana. During disruption operations there was an increased signature that was exploited by SOF and allowed them to successfully target key leadership in Andar. As a result of post operation analysis a residence of a key Al Qaeda financier was discovered. Baker Company shifted its disruption operation location to the

compound and the village of Alizai, Andar. BDA was 1 x EKIA, 3 x Detainees, and significant SSE material. Post operation effects were achieved through coordination with the local radio station and the Andar District Chief to disseminate the effectiveness of the operations. Joint operations with the ANP, ANA, and NDS during these operations were also critical to building the capacity and reputation of the ANSF.

Recommendation: Continue to coordinate and maintain a complimentary relationship with PRT, CSTC-A, SOF, and attached enablers when applicable to maximize the perception of security to the population and target effects across all lines of operation. Create synergy through focused targeting and complimentary operations across all agencies. Units must maintain transparency through shared information to capitalize on the effects achieved by individual agencies. This must be synched and supervised by the battle space owner.

4. Issue: Understanding of Afghan Languages and Culture

Discussion: During Operation Enduring Freedom VIII, one of the challenges that Soldiers face is a comprehensive understanding of the Afghan culture. Referring to the issued culture guides and discussing cultural differences between Americans and Afghans with interpreters, ANSF and local national will improve knowledge of the Afghan culture. The ability to speak greetings in Pashto and understand customs and courtesies such as the sharing of chai and respectful behavior facilitates key leader engagements with ANSF and village leadership.

Recommendation: Continue to learn and understand the Afghans in the area of responsibility. This builds a working relationship with ANSF and Afghan leaders. Further cultural awareness will be acquired from continued interaction with Afghans and willingness to understand more about their culture.

5. Issue: Techniques for clearing main supply routes for IEDs

Discussion: During Operation Enduring Freedom VIII, IEDs along MSR Florida in Andar District have been a major threat to all traffic. IED attacks on MSR Florida have led to multiple coalition, ANSF and civilian casualties. With the IED threat in mind, 3rd Platoon, Baker Company conducted multiple combat patrols along MSR Florida to interdict IED emplacement. During these combat patrols, many tactics, techniques and procedures have been developed and refined to defeat the threat. The effects of the disruption operations along MSR Florida include the reduction of the IED threat and led to the discovery of 6 IEDs. Most important to our techniques was constant evaluation of enemy TTPs and recent SIGACTs that was incorporated into pre-briefs by our COIST and platoon leaders. This Movement Control Team directed and managed from the BCT down to the company ensured situational awareness and understanding in planning patrols and other operations.

Recommendation: Constantly learning and adapting to enemy TTPs will lead to long-term success. Constant presence on main supply routes combined with frequent patrols of neighboring villages maximizes effects and increases the perception of security among the people. The people will become more confident in the Coalition's ability to secure them and their roads.



Jeff Farmer, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: C Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4 BCT, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Paktika

Insight: Empowerment at the junior leader level. I came to Charlie Company half way through the deployment. The company was already well established with an incredible, experienced NCO Corps and seasoned Platoon Leaders. Charlie Company operated as a combat team consisting of a 105 mm Field Artillery Platoon, 50 man Military Police Platoon, three Infantry Rifle Platoons, a maintenance section, the Battalion PA, and a Quick Reaction Force platoon consisting of approximately 18

Soldiers made out of hide from the Company. The Team also had various intelligence teams, resources, and various Information Operation assets.

As a company operating in an austere environment, the small level unit must be able to operate with limited resourcing. Due to time and space, Charlie Company was far from additional resources often available to units within a close proximity to higher headquarters. The ability for Platoon Leaders, and Squad Leaders to operate under the commander's intent independently, will facilitate the Company Commander's ability to synchronize and integrate assets much like a Battalion staff.

Additional Topics:

Quick Reaction Force: The QRF was composed of three M1117, Armored Security Vehicles and an MRAP. The M1117 (ASV) was by far the most effective vehicle for the soft, sandy terrain of Paktika. This vehicle maximized combat power with minimal manning, due to its dual capacity for a MK 19 and M2 machine gun. The company internal QRF often facilitated extended platoon and company level operations due to the ability to forward stage the element, allowing for a quick response time for smaller elements.

Internal Company Staff: A Company level staff was absolutely crucial in order to develop the situation and action-able intelligence for the platoons. Charlie Company operated on a company combat outpost while in Paktika. The rifle platoons shared three cycles during this time period for a duration of one week while in Paktika. The three cycles consisted of force protection, Combat Outpost (COP) development and improvement, and a mission cycle. The QRF did not share in these cycles and operated as a QRF at all times. During the force protection cycle and COP development cycle, one Platoon leader served as the current operations officer, and one platoon leader served as the future operations officer.

The current operations officer developed story boards and worked hand in hand with the intelligence cell. The future operations officer worked future CONOPs and in conjunction with the Company Fire Support Officer to synchronize assets for upcoming missions. The intelligence cell was run by a Staff Sergeant with two trained Soldiers on company intelligence development. The Fire Support Officer served as the collection manager, targeting officer, and asset manager. The ability for these young leaders to plan and manage their additional responsibilities greatly increased the combat effectiveness of the combat team.

Soldier Morale: What made the most difference in improving or sustaining morale for your Soldiers?

Many Combat Outposts will lack some bare essentials that boost morale.

All efforts to improve the quality of life for Soldiers will greatly boost morale. At our COP the company managed an MWR fund that provided gaming systems, TVs, DVDs, music capabilities that allowed Soldiers to take their mind off the current conditions. Internet and phones were also increased to allow Soldiers to call loved ones any time. This capability was essential to maintaining a healthy mental readiness.

Professional Reading: What is one book that really helped you to be more effective in Afghanistan?

Nate Self's *Two Wars*

Lester W. Grau's *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Have faith and trust in your subordinate leaders. Empower these leaders to make the tough decisions and they will not let you down.



Shelia Matthews, Quartermaster

Unit you commanded in AFG: E Co, 1-506th IN

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Wardak, Ghazni, and W. Paktika Provinces

1. Insight: Maintain technical expertise and strive for tactical expertise focusing on the basics: shoot, move, and communicate. Support Soldiers must be proficient in their MOS and leaders at the lowest level must work independently. Depth is essential for both skills and equipment as I had teams at every outpost the infantrymen were operating. Train and divide your Soldiers and pack your containers accordingly.

2. Story: Our TTP during engagements with the enemy was to maintain contact until the enemy was dead or left. Truck drivers must be capable drivers, mechanics, and gunners. Each truck commander must be proficient with all communication systems. The convoy commander will be able to effectively call for fire and communicate with CAS. Mount heavy weapons on maneuver and cargo trucks (we put a turret and gun on our wrecker) and be prepared to provide security for all soft targets (some convoys secured up to 100 host nation trucks). We utilized a 60mm from one of the maneuver companies during extended convoys for enhanced firepower.

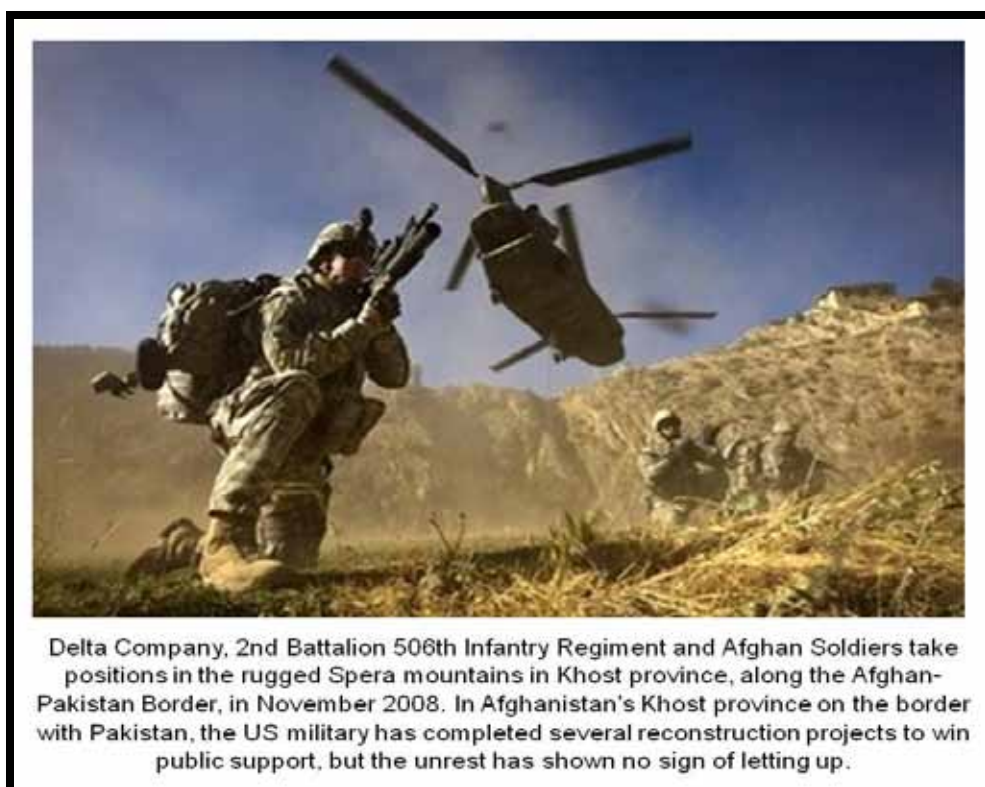
Cooks and mechanics were at every forward location in the BN's AO. Platoon-level firebases had one of each, an E4 or E5. The cook had to be skilled at both the administrative requirements of maintaining rations as well as operating a K-CLFF or MKT. Likewise, it is beneficial to train all your 63Bs on recovery operations. Terrain may not facilitate launching a recovery team from a sister FOB; each site should be as self-sustaining as possible.

Avoid the temptation of convenience to pack all like items in containers; 50 of my 60 authorized toolkits were pilfered en route (seven containers total with \$200k worth of equipment).

3. Is there anything else you would like to share? Cross-training is crucial as there is much area to cover with few Soldiers. Not only should the support Soldiers piggyback off the maneuver training (e.g. CAS and LWCMS) but also offer field maintenance training to the line companies (e.g. hasty recovery and changing a half shaft).

Aviation assets play an enormous role in resupply operations. Contracted aviation (jingle air) was utilized almost daily. It was managed by the BSB and greatly accessible. Low Cost, Low Altitude (LCLA) and Containerized Delivery System (CDS) weren't preferred as it was labor intensive on the supported unit and could interfere with their maneuver mission. Sling load operations were essential for transporting major end items to or recovery from locations that were not accessible by ground resupplies (we had two firebases in this category). Air Assault School was an obvious asset for our unit, but all QM officers are sling load certified out of their basic course and can cross-training their Soldiers.

Echo Company performed its doctrinal mission. We conducted convoys to push and pull all classes of supplies organically without an escort from the line companies, attached cooks and mechanics to each forward location, and maintained fuel, water, and ammo points. We were able to successfully accomplish this mission because the BC understood our troops to task and didn't burden us with force protection requirements. This support and communication from fellow Commanders and our Battalion allowed us to better support the Infantry logistically.





Dave Lamborn, Infantry

Unit Commanded in AFG: A/2-506th

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Spera (Khowst), Zerok (Paktika), Naka (Paktika)

Continuity is going to be the key to our eventual success in counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. We have been in Afghanistan for 8 years now, but yet information is not being captured and passed along for each locality. In many cases each commander has to start from scratch, which is not only inefficient, but is also down-right counterproductive. The locals get sick of having a new guy re-searching his back yard every year, he gets sick of having to adapt to a brand new personality, and he gets sick of seeing the new rookie commander kill innocent civilians or make other rookie mistakes. So it is natural that so many Afghans are currently ripe for the political plucking of the Taliban or Mujahadeen. The answer to this is that higher headquarters need to project out further and lock in forces for rotation, and this needs to happen all the way down the Battalion Commander level. If this is done, then 9 or 10 months prior to a deployment a Company Commander can contact his counterpart downrange and get information on his specific area of operations. Granted, there will be some changes that mean that 20 to 50% of the Company Commanders who had been doing this will end up elsewhere, but that still means that at least 50% will be phenomenally well spun-up on the situation in their specific area when they first step foot in it. Continuity information for each district should be maintained, updated regularly, and easily shared amongst peer commanders.

2. Story: When I took over Zerok district, U.S. Forces had been there permanently for over two years, and before that U.S. forces had been in and out of the area for at least 6 years. However, no information was passed along for the local area. Certainly the Americans who had come before me had spent countless hours developing information and relationships, but none of that was handed off. I continually had locals making references to previous U.S. forces or commanders, and making claims (both good and bad) on what they had done. I could sense their frustration with U.S. forces, and their desire for STABILITY, which we were denying them based on our inability to ensure CONTINUITY.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share? I posted a 30-page "continuity book" in the "Member-created Publications" part of the Pro Reading forum (accessible to PL.army.mil and CC.army.mil members). Just search for "Zerok Continuity Book" and you will find it.

The continuity book was a means to capture and share our information and lessons learned in our specific AOR (Zerok) with A/3-509 IN who relieved us. Some information is applicable to all, some information is only relevant to Zerok, but hopefully it can be used as a template for future Company Commanders to capture information about their areas. In addition to this, we passed on a database of the locals, pictures, imagery, old plans and operations, and classified intel reports to our counterparts,

but the continuity book serves as the primer for all of those documents. And our leadership stays in regular touch with the leadership from A/3-509 just in case we can be of assistance in any way.

This is the table of contents from the continuity book:

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| Easy Company 2/506 th INF 4 th BCT (TF Currahee), 101 st Airborne (Air Assault) Division ZEROK, AFGHANISTAN | |
| ----- | |
| The book was written by Dave Lamborn (Co Cdr), Chad Campbell (PL), Concho Moore (XO), George Bruchs (FSO), Seth Varayon (PL), and Nick Rogers (PL) | |
| ----- | |
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David Conner, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: B/2-506 IN, 4th BCT, 101st ABN

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Kandahar, Zabol, Paktika Provinces

Insight: Know the culture of the area you are responsible for and understand that it may be completely different from your brother commanders. Ask yourself who is really in charge? Who are the real power players? Where are the real sources of conflict between the people in your area? What do they value? Take some time to figure this out. You can then use this information to shape your themes, messages, and operations to meet your end state much more effectively.

Story: We were trying to get a local government center built. Everyone seemed to want it and it was consistent with higher's intent along the government line of operation. It took us a while to figure out what the problem was, but we determined it to be one elder who worked behind the scenes to get things done. We needed to engage him directly and figure out what he valued and convince him, through our Afghan partners, why it was in his interest to support the government center. He had many ties to Pakistan and was concerned that supporting an Afghan district center would jeopardize his business dealings across the border. We laid out how the government center would eventually anchor a new business center and would insist the general contractor hire subs from the local villages. This reassured the elder who took the risk and supported the project.

This is a dismounted fight. Be prepared to climb mountains and tailor the load to appropriate mission requirements.

Additional Topics:

Human Dimension/Culture: Afghan Army are on the right track and respected generally. They still need encouragement to patrol on their own, but were always willing to go on patrol with us. Afghan National Police (ANP) need work as do Afghan Border Police (ABP). They were not reliable with the exception of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOPs). Afghan government leaders at the district level are still more loyal to their tribes than to the government. Getting a government official not from that local area will solve this somewhat. Civilians in our area were illiterate. Education is very poor. Don't assume they will follow your logic based on your values. Try to see how they view the world when communicating ideas to them.

Weather/Terrain: Weather will limit what you can do outside the wire. You can dress for cold, but that won't be your limiting factor. What the CCA and CAS can provide in a weather situation will determine how much you can do.

Equipment: Anything to lighten the load. Plate Carriers would be a great addition.

Casualties: Enforce standards and conduct rehearsals. Let Soldiers know you care for them by knowing they will be taken care of if something happens. I don't think you can do this too much.

Mental Fitness: Vary the patrol schedule/ OPTEMPO. Require backbriefs and conduct OPDs to ensure everyone knows the ROE. No one leaves the wire without a patrol/mission brief to ensure all know the threats and the purpose of why you are asking them to risk their lives.

Physical Fitness: Stay active. The mountains will take care of this largely by themselves.

Soldier Morale: What made the most difference in improving or sustaining morale for your Soldiers?

Not being so serious all the time. Knowing there is a time to let loose a little. We did platoon on platoon flag football, Madden tournaments, and watched football games as a group. We joked around a lot and no one was immune to a wisecrack. The internet and gym were great for this as well.

Family Readiness: Keep the dialogue open with your FRG leader. Ensure soldiers know that there are multiple ways to reach the commander and the FRG is one of them. When used properly we've had much success solving problems through FRG channels before they become command issues.

Professional Reading: *The Kite Runner*. It gives a small impression of Afghan culture. *The Other Side of the Mountain* is good as well.





T. Sean Troyer, Armor

Unit commanded in AFG: HHT / 1-61 CAV, 4th BCT, 101st ABN

Locations in AFG that you operated in: OEF 08-09 – Conducted COIN Operations in Northern Paktya from March – August 2009; COP Herrera - Paktya Province – AO included 3 Border Crossing Points (BCP) along the Pakistan border and 9 districts.

Brief background – HHT / 1-61 CAV was my second command. Due to Squadron task organization changes very shortly before our deployment, I was assigned an AO in Northern Paktya to execute COIN operations with a Scout Platoon, an MP

Platoon and all the standard/conventional enablers. My outfit was similar to an old CFT or cross functional team. My COP was approximately 4-5 hours by ground from my Squadron HQs/nearest FOB. The COP was cigar shaped; roughly 300 meters long and 75 meters at the widest point. I commanded A/1-61 CAV in eastern Baghdad during OIF 05-07, so I was fired up and grateful that I was a 'born-again' maneuver commander.

When asked for OEF advice or experiences, I tend to tailor my response in the 'if I had to do it again' format. I feel that every company sized element is already prepared to conduct successful combat operations relative to your lines of operation (LOO), commander's intent, and in terms of battle drills and reacting to contact. So, if I was tasked with conducting combat operations in eastern Afghanistan again, I would definitely have increased my focus on non battle drill related programs. A few things are listed below:

ABP, ANA, ANP – Is the MAIN EFFORT!

Local police, border police and the national Army will play a major role in your mission and will impact and affect your LOOs. I recommend finding out who at your BDE HQs has staff proponency on this subject (most likely the PMO cell). They can help you understand/conceptualize the big picture and layout any issues that are realized in your TFs AO. They can provide manning, equipping and resourcing data that will enable you to employ them better and incorporate that into your CONOP process. Joint and combined operations are the standard in OEF. Bridging that gap and connecting with your partnered force will embolden the ANA, ANP or ABP which a huge reason why conventional forces are there! Personally, I believe the ABP are the most important force in the ANSF structure. If you own battlespace that includes a portion of the Pakistan border, I recommend conducting an internal ABP immersion training to decrease the amount or propensity of smuggling materials, arms or personnel which could lead to a decrease in cross-border attacks and events. Also, the local tribes along the border (or Durand/Zero line) will have a strong sense of ownership and responsibility of the border and, in my case,

were personally involved in border disputes. You must gain local/tribal leader buy in concerning most all border issues.

Commander's Programs

Learn the benefits and process configuration of CERP, FOO and CA programs. These programs are for commanders and can compound success in your AO. I didn't get a total grasp on these programs until my second or third month in theater and so I was only able to maximize the effort for a short time. You must know and realize how these programs are related to your commander's intent and lines of operations. The better you tailor programs that support these, the more support your AO will receive, which ultimately gains the trust of the local government in your respective AO. The PRT (provincial reconstruction teams) can also provide you/your AO with additional funds/focus for rebuilding efforts within your AO. Most all the locals know what the PRT brings and what they could potentially do for them. Most PRTs we worked with had an agricultural expert who helped with crop and irrigation management which is a priority for many tribes and key influencers/power brokers. Healthy and abundant crops translates into feeding families and increased market flow of commerce.

If you (and you should) start projects that require labor (i.e. road improvement) ensure that the contract and statement of work (SOW) demands from the contractor that they hire all labor from the local area and not to bring it from outside the district or the province in some cases. Many of the large contractors are from the dense population centers like Kabul, Kandahar and Bagram. Local hired labor will dramatically increase the local economy and will keep that military aged male from emplacing IEDs and working for the enemy by having an honest job and earning an honorable wage. Use this as a selling point during your shuras/KLEs (key leader engagements) to show the elders/leader that you are attuned to the importance of people's needs.

An example in my AO was the emplacement of solar lights in two local bazaars which were co-located with my COE (Center of Excellence) and my COP (COP Herrera). The bazaars were only a few kilometers apart and each belonged to separate, rival tribes. When I assumed control of the AO, only one of the bazaars had received solar lights and it took me a while to see that this didn't bode well with the rivaling tribe. Consequently, when I realized how to effectively tie-in the need of solar lights with how it supported the governance LOO, the process from cradle to grave became more intuitive. We are told as company/troop commanders to make positive and immediate effects in our respective AOs, whether kinetic based or not and these type of actions are enduring.

The entire process of requesting CAS to drop a GBU, or CCA to action an enemy formation in support of ground forces is relatively quick and efficient and can result in immediate and positive (if executed correctly of course) effects. The total cost of one of those actions alone is much more than a solar light but I could argue that a solar light can have an equal or increased enduring effect. You can further argue that experiencing tribal friction or disputes is a form of contact that should warrant immediate effects. The faster you begin to realize those 'effects' with the local nationals and government concerning vocational, agricultural, education, health care, etc are enduring and ultimately can bridge the gap

among the populace and Afghan government and foster the much needed trust among CF, the local populace and district level governments, then you will experience greater success in your AO. Your CTF or TF commander can approve immediate kinetic strikes in a matter of minutes compared to the weeks-long processing and approval of CERP projects. Having a good understanding and grasp of the CERP process (as well as other commander's programs) and how it meets your COIN Methodology, CTF commander's intent and LOOs, can and will undoubtedly bring effects to your AO much faster and more efficiently.

UAV/FMV/ISR

Prior to deploying, it is imperative to know and have a healthy understanding of all the different types of ISR platforms that will be available in your AO. Make your S2 work for you (the commander) and get characteristic slides for each platform in country that are supporting operations in your AO, or at least the ones that will directly support your BCT. Don't get caught up in using or requesting, or really 'depending' on, UAV for convoy security or terrain denial for ground forces. Understand that they are collection assets and they should be used as such. We had great success using them for ISR collection on historical IED emplacement routes. However, this goes back to understanding what capabilities each ISR asset has such as hellfire missiles, SIGINT, etc. All of the kinetic strikes we executed from ISR platforms were on target which contradicted briefings we received prior to deploying so I recommend using and knowing this ability as an option. On this subject, you must be attune to the process that your TF and CTF HQs must go through to approve kinetic strikes from ISR and CAS platforms. Tactical patience must be a honed and mature skill/virtue when considering sensor to shooter reactivity. I had very little conceptual knowledge of the staff process of Collateral Damage Estimate (CDE) and drop authority that the BDE staff went through. I recommend that you review your higher staff's battle drills on this subject, or at least measure this during your RIPTOA tasks. Bandwidth depending, you can view footage from the ISR assets on the CJTF portal. I was not aware of this viewing capability until we were in country for a month or so. Consider this in your planning or real time C2 efforts/synergy.

CAS can and will also provide ISR for ground forces. Consider this as an alternative for non-traditional ISR as traditional ISR platforms are a very competitive resource.

RIAB / IO

Many FOBs/COPs have a radio in a box (RIAB). There was one on my COP but during RIPTOA, I had little knowledge of what it was or why it was there, other than to play radio messages and music. A RIAB is absolutely huge and adds another capability of out-reach that is unmatched due to terrain restrictions. Recommend to get your hands around your BCT Information Operations (IO) and understand how to effectively use IO integrated with the RIAB and how it can meet your commander's intent. This radio's ability to reach out to the populace is amazing and is also a very popular source of entertainment, specifically among the middle/military aged males. Your CTF PYSOP cell can also augment your RIAB knowledge and planning. The RIAB's role in Consequence Management is huge as it can counter the enemy's propaganda almost immediately with a wider range than the traditional Arabic 'word of mouth' method for information dissemination. If you're lucky enough to have a RIAB co-located with you, you

could find yourself playing/initiating IO messages (whether pre-approved/programmed or reactive) for adjacent AOs that could impact yours in the form of potential rioting, unrest, etc. The RIAB is such a multiplier that it should be on your task organization since it can provide effects in its own respect equal to that of a mortar system or sniper team. Recommend RIAB familiarization and capabilities brief prior to deployment for your Company Operations NCO, PLs, FSO, and XO (but most notably, get your FSO spun up on this, as your TF FSO will most likely be the OIC at the BN Level). Most important, we ensured that there was ONLY an Afghan voice on the radio. Never allow a US "face" on these RIABs or you will reduce its influence and effectiveness among the Afghan ownership. Remember, it is the Afghan at the forefront.



HTT – Human Terrain Team

Your BDE/CTF HQs should have a significant HTT working cell attached especially since it is a priority of GEN Petraeus. An HTT comprised of two civilian personnel outfitted in ACUs and M16s came to my AO for a week by my request. I didn't fully know what they offered a commander but in an effort to gain exposure and knowledge of my AO, and more specifically the people, I was grateful they provided the energy they brought. HTT deals with many things but for my benefit the tribal mapping and market flow were the most beneficial. In my case, it was the first time that human analysis has been done in my specific districts and their analysis provided me key details regarding how the tribes, clans and sub clans related to each other in regards to the AO and other factors. It was very educating and enlightening for

my professional use on decision making concerns in my AO. I highly recommend determining if an HTT element has done an analysis of your AO. If so, ensure you get their executive summary and if not, then definitely request them to conduct tribal mapping and market flow analysis for your AO.

Mullahs, Mosques

Mullahs have a resounding impact on just about everything at the district level. Ulema shuras are meetings with Mullahs and occurred in my AO about once per month or so at my request. I had my squadron chaplain on site to conduct/facilitate three Ulema shuras which began to establish increasing credibility on our/Coalition Forces' part. LNs will usually trust Mullahs before they trust government so the establishment of trust or at least understanding and respect for them is paramount.

MRKs (Mosque Repair Kits) can be requested as a small CERP funded project and are extremely useful and relatively cheap and has the potential of becoming an enduring effect. They consist of a kicker box full of rugs, paint, solar panels, PA systems, Kurans, etc, and could be viewed as a Mosque starter kit in a sense.

Of note, an excellent TTP developed was the Interfaith Breakfasts sponsored by the Afghan Army Religious Cultural Advisor. Here, we brought together all religious leaders in the area as well as Afghan government and military leaders to generate unity led by Afghans. As Coalition Forces, we remained in the background and responded only to questions directed to us. It is an excellent tool to gain support and inform the population.

Physical Training (PT)

Before deployment -- everyone will beat this topic to death and the bottom line is that you/your organization will never be fully fit for fighting in or becoming acclimated for the Afghan terrain. But, of course, you want to get off to a good start. I recommend high intensity circuit drills that focus on performance in short durations, 20-30 minutes, with little time for recovery. Core conditioning proved vital during dismounted operations while negotiating difficult terrain. Big biceps and chest will not enable you to negotiate elevation. A strong and balanced core will. There are several workout regimes available: Crossfit (personally recommended), P90X, Gym Jones, Insanity. Bottom line – push ups, sit ups and a 2 mile run metric will not cut it.

During deployment – whether your AO is highly kinetic or not, your organization will and must participate in conditioning PT. Many firebases/COPs are not large enough to run/jog so ensure to maximize the use of treadmills/elliptical and rowing machines. Rowing machines are a great total-body exercise that can pay huge dividends for quick non-impact workouts and relatively cheap. Kettle bell and medicine ball workouts are fitting for core strength. Purchase these and similar items prior to your deployment. Absolutely ensure your formations conduct some sort of PT as some troopers have the propensity to gain weight and lose conditioning; this cannot be compromised.

Bullet comments/nuggets:

Attaining local leadership/governance buy-in for certain named shaping operations will have lasting effects with the local populace and district level government.

If there is a USSF team operating in your AO, strive to work with them and share information and encourage them to reciprocate because ultimately, you're the commander of the AO and responsible for answering RFIs through your chain of command.

Rotary wing AC drives most all resource and manpower moves. Ensure your Air NCO is squared away and a self starter and not 'that guy'. He has to be switched on and motivated; rank is not a discriminator.

Have pre-staged HA (humanitarian assistance) at your location in the event of consequence management. You'll need to apply immediate energy during catastrophic event, whether natural or at the fault of the CF.

The local populace is the key terrain. Show them respect and compassion and the payoff is G2. It's all about the local populace gaining trust and confidence in the Afghan government.

In some areas of the terrain, VETCAPs are more vital than MEDCAPs. Look and plan for both to create effects in your AO. These are INTEL-based operations which drive operations. Don't always think that Operational-based actions drives intelligence.

Kill bad guys without making more bad guys; Kill the population with kindness; drill PID and hostile intent.

Recommended reading:

- The Bear Went Over the Mountain
 - Other Side of the Mountain
 - Not a Good Day to Die
 - On Killing
 - Unveiling Islam
 - Blink
-

Joe Black, Armor

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: A/1-61 (Reconnaissance Troop)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Zormat, Paktya Province

We broke our training focus down into 6 separate tasks:

"The Big Six"

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|--|---|
| (1) Essential Recon and Battle Drills <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Area, Zone, Route Recono React to contact, React to IED, Platoon Attack | (4) Combat Medical Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">o EFR (100% across your troop or you're wrong)o Non-standard MEDEVAC and 9-line procedureso Advanced Medic Training |
| (2) Marksmanship <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Mounted Heavy Weapons (.50cal, MK19, TOW)o Light Weaponso LRAS3, ITASo Sniper and SDM | (5) Supporting Effects <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Air Assault operationso Expert on all Communication platforms, Digital and CREW skillso Fire Support and CCAo Influence Operations |
| (3) Physical Fitness <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Core Strengtho Footmarcheso Combativeso Endurance | (6) Maintaining <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Soldierso Familieso Equipment |

My goal as a commander was to never have a Soldier or leader come to me and say, "I wish we would have had more time dedicated to training." You see it across the Army every day – a leader complaining saying there just isn't enough time for training. It's our job as the commander to make the time. BLUF: train your company/troop to become a jack of all trades.

- Battle Drills: Know them, train them, become an expert at every one of them. It's critical to establish a strong base and let everything else build off of that foundation.
- Marksmanship: Become an expert on every assigned weapon in your company. Know the ins and outs of each weapon system and become intimate with it. It's impossible to shoot too many rounds in training. Ensure that your marksmanship training is tough and combat focused.
- Physical fitness: You can't do enough of it as a company. Afghanistan is the most unforgiving terrain I have ever fought in. Get your men used to carrying loads over 100lbs across rocky/uneven terrain. Without sounding like an advertisement for a particular workout program; here are two programs that worked well for the Soldiers in my reconnaissance troop: Military Athlete (CrossFit based program) and CrossFit.com. Bottom line up front – the more physically prepared you are for

Afghanistan, the quicker your body will adapt and overcome the challenges you will face from the moment you step off the bird.

- **Combat Medical Skills:** Ensure your company is 100% first responder qualified. Medical training will prove invaluable during your deployment and at any given time, one of your Soldiers will be called upon to perform duties as a combat medic regardless of his MOS.
- **Supporting effects:** Train your company to become an expert on all supporting operations. Become familiar with all communication platforms and understand how to employ them under combat conditions.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Learn to adapt. Afghanistan is a very fluid environment. Kill the enemy on your terms and under your conditions. Stay focused.

The best way to reach me is through email at joseph.c.black@us.army.mil





Tom Kilbride, Infantry

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: C Troop, 1-61st CAV, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4 BCT, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: COP Wilderness, KG Pass, Paktya

1. Insight: Always focus on the basics and the fundamentals. I was in command for approximately 9 months when we arrived in Afghanistan to tackle the problem set of the KG Pass.

Throughout the deployment I constantly kept reinforcing the basics. When we first arrived we focused our efforts on increasing base defenses and understanding the battlefield through Area Familiarization. These efforts paid dividends throughout the deployment especially in developing and understanding the battlefield. We would conduct patrols that would overwatch our movement to identify whether or not we were setting patterns. This allowed us to avoid complacency and focus on the basics. I continually focused on the following:

Leading

- Lead by example
- Lead from the front
- Empower junior leadership
- Enforce the chain of command
- Leaders must be flexible and decisive. Understanding the mission and the commander's intent is critical to success. Plans can and will be changed; we must be prepared to meet rising challenges of a given situation.
- Problems exist and so do solutions. If a problem is identified, then the leader that identified the problem will provide a recommended solution to the problem with appropriate analysis to justify his recommendation.
- Strive for excellence in all areas.
- Seek self-improvement. If you do not know something, ask an expert.
- Leaders will teach and mentor soldiers, NCOs, and officers to help them achieve knowledge and increase their proficiency.
- Leaders accept responsibility for the team's, squad's, the platoon's and the company's shortcomings, and strive to improve those areas.

Teamwork

- This is not a one man show. We are in this together.

Discipline

- The expectation is that we dress like professionals, act like professionals, and be professionals.
- Do the right thing

Physical Training

- All platoons will develop a physical training schedule. Our physical training plans need to be progressive and challenging for the month. Stamina, strength, and quickness.

Training

- Training must be tough and challenging.
- Focus on one goal: maintain combat readiness to ensure the company fights and wins on the battlefield.
- The thought process: Think, decide, and act; we must teach our leaders how to think, not what to think. Each situation is different and requires the leader on scene to quickly gather the facts, identify the problem, process the information and determine a recommended course of action.
- Train subordinate leaders, because they must be prepared to take charge if the current leader(s) is injured, dead, or not present.
- Become experts in the basics:
 - o Marksmanship and platoon battle drills
 - o Use of indirect fires, attack aviation, and close air support
 - o Casualty evacuation

Additional Topics:

Casualties: We lost a total of 7 soldiers and several Afghanistan National Army Soldiers during the deployment. Dealing with casualties is not something the school house teaches you and it is a terrible event that can either build a cohesive company or destroy a company. You must allow your company to properly grieve (Memorial Service). Allow them to pay their respects to their fallen comrade but you must also refocus them and move on once they have done this. Not forget, but move on as quickly as you can. You need to grieve as well but remember that you are the company commander and what you do or fail to do resonates throughout the company. You must conduct an Official AAR and determine the 5 W's. Develop potential enemy TTP's and methods of countering them. Where did they come from, where did they go, how often have you been there before, etc. Question it until you are comfortable with it. Then go back and reinforce the basics: Pre-combat checks & inspections, detailed mission briefs, rehearsals (Actions on contact/IED/enter/clear room/house, vehicle breakdown/ tire changes) test fires, etc. Then get after the enemy. Flood the area. Never allow the death of a soldier to

go unanswered. Dominate the region, collect intel, and execute deliberate search ops and checkpoint ops, while at the same time build your control of the area through collective cooperation with the indigenous forces. Use them to your advantage. Let their deliberate presence in one area give you an opportunity to strike the enemy in another. Spread hope and improvement to the area in exchange for intel and enemy forces. Reward them for their assistance.



Your soldiers will be scared and angry which in combination make people do stupid things that will detract from the overall mission of success in a counter-insurgency. Your Soldiers must be the epitome of disciplined professionals during these trying times. Reinforce your standards and expectations and make them live them.

A good company will see its way through times like this, and remember the sacrifices of the fallen and living, which will strengthen our resolve and our commitment to complete the mission in Afghanistan. Never let them forget that.

Uniform and Load for Personnel: Uniform and Load considerations must be taken in to account for each mission. Operations in austere terrain with full kit, body armor (minus side plates), gloves, eye protection, and ruck sacks are options we used. The load for each man was approximately 125 pounds with combat equipment. Each M240B and M249 carried additional rounds. The concept was to carry the bare necessities of two day supply to allow the ground force to quickly clear each objective by foot movement. The loads should be reduced when conducting long foot movements because it will make the men lighter and faster. Having lighter and faster personnel will allow the assault force to quickly insert, isolate, and clear the objectives. The water weight encompassed the majority of the weight. Having the ability to reduce the amount of water in the rucks would allow the assault force to maneuver quickly and quietly without burning a target.

Soldier Morale: Morale on COP Wilderness was never a problem because we were constantly improving the camp. We would identify a problem and immediately work on a solution. We made significant changes to the living and eating areas on the camp. The best improvement was turning a two story Class 1 storage facility into a gym with an indoor basketball court. This was essential for the soldiers in the winter weather.

Professional Reading: What is one book that really helped you to be more effective in Afghanistan?

1. "Not a Good Day to Die" by Sean Naylor. 2. "The Bear Went Over the Mountain" by Lester Grau's.



Thomas J. "TJ" Bouchillon, Logistics

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: D TRP, 1-61 CAV, 4th BCT

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Paktya Province

1. Insight: One of the greatest challenges for small unit leaders in Afghanistan is to establish and maintain a balance in your Soldiers of current COIN methodologies, emerging TTPs, and tactical fundamentals. In addition to standard warrior tasks and drills, our Soldiers must understand cultural nuances and (to some degree) the nature of a joint fight. Also, platoon and squad leaders will be expected to lead and employ battlefield enablers (EOD, RCP, HCT, etc.). Without a mastery of basic Soldier skills (i.e. shoot, move, communicate, own the night) and battle drills (react to contact, etc.), units will find themselves with a steep learning curve early in the fight.

2. Story behind the insight? The scope of missions for a properly employed FSC is greater than most any other unit on the battlefield. As a FSC for a RSTA Squadron, we executed our doctrinal mission of support the Squadron's line Troops (ground and aerial resupply, maintenance, recovery, food service, etc.). We also supported a RCP, PRT, HCT, EOD, and a host of other units in our province. Additionally, we ran the small FOB – to include a HLZ and FARP – and had inherent security responsibility around the FOB. We also partnered with ANA units and local security guards (ASG) to assist them in bolstering their capabilities. Also, we maintained an active QRF. We would have failed at our additional missions if our Soldiers did not have a mastery of the fundamentals – both support and tactical.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share? The first time your Soldiers make contact with enemy forces can set the tone for the entire deployment. You or your 1SG may not be present. Most of your PLs have never seen combat. None of your young Soldiers have seen combat. The burden of the early fight quickly falls to squad leaders and platoon sergeants. Fortunately, most NCOs in today's combat units are intelligent, aggressive, and well-trained leaders. When Soldiers gain confidence in their leaders at that critical point in time, it sets the conditions for success for all future operations. Furthermore, platoon-level leaders will gain confidence in the Troop and Squadron's ability to support and assist the fight as necessary.

Additional Topics:

Human Dimension/Culture: The ANA has a critical shortfall in sustainment capabilities. We made it a priority to assist our Squadron's partner unit with developing their internal logistics systems. This

ranged from conducting combined CLPs, establishing combined LRPs, and combined aerial resupplies. I established a good relationship with the ANA Kandak leadership immediately and this resulted in him (over time) placing an increased priority on sustainment. Their greatest logistics achievement was an independently planned, resourced, and executed ANA aerial resupply.

Weather/Terrain: Terrain is the overarching dominating factor in the fight. For us, the limited road network was our greatest challenge. Our maintenance teams were phenomenal, and this allowed our Troops to have extended freedom of maneuver. The other challenge that limited road networks create is funneling of forces. Several times, the enemy would allow our forces to get deep into an AO and then back-seed the roads with IEDs. This caused tremendous challenges for our recovery teams. On numerous occasions, every wrecker on the FOB (our two, the PRT's, and the MP's) was simultaneously conducting IED recoveries.

Equipment: The MK-19 was definitely the difference maker during our mounted patrols. Secondly would be the TACSAT radio as this allowed reliable long distance voice communications.

Physical Fitness: There is no way to fully prepare your Soldiers for the physical challenges of the elevation and terrain of Afghanistan. You can, however, stress them to the physical limit during deployment prep. This will give them the confidence that they need to drive on when the mission is long and they are tired. Change up your PT program to include non-standard events like obstacle courses, hill runs, and extended foot marches. Physically fit Soldiers are less likely to get injured, and more likely to survive if they are injured.

Soldier Morale: It seemed that morale was highest when we were the busiest. I don't think our Soldiers had time to dwell on issues that affected morale. When the mission set slowed a bit, we saw an increase in Soldier issues. Also, we saw tangible progress in our AO that contributed to steady morale. Our Soldiers were happiest when they were doing their job, whether it was fixing and recovering trucks, delivering supplies, or feeding a firebase.

Family Readiness: Stay organized with updated phone rosters and call down lists. We enlisted good volunteers which helped tremendously. Also, if you know that the FRG leader will change during the deployment (e.g. if the commander's wife is the FRG leader and he changes command), identify a solid and reliable replacement early. We did this and it helped my wife tremendously.



Danny Pedersen, Field Artillery

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: BN Fire Support Officer TF 2-506 IN and CDR A/4-320 FAR

Locations in AFG that you operated in: East Paktika: Firebase Lilley, FOB Boris, FOB Tillman, FOB Orgun-E, COP Zerok; Khwost: FOB Salerno; Ghazni: FOB Wilderness; Kandahar, Zabol

1. Insight: Junior leaders must be trained and prepared to operate within commander's intent with little to no supervision. Terrain doesn't allow for commanders to oversee most operations. In many cases, operations are conducted at platoon level or below. Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan's terrain prevents commanders and leaders from centralized C2 operations. In other words, "Message to Garcia."

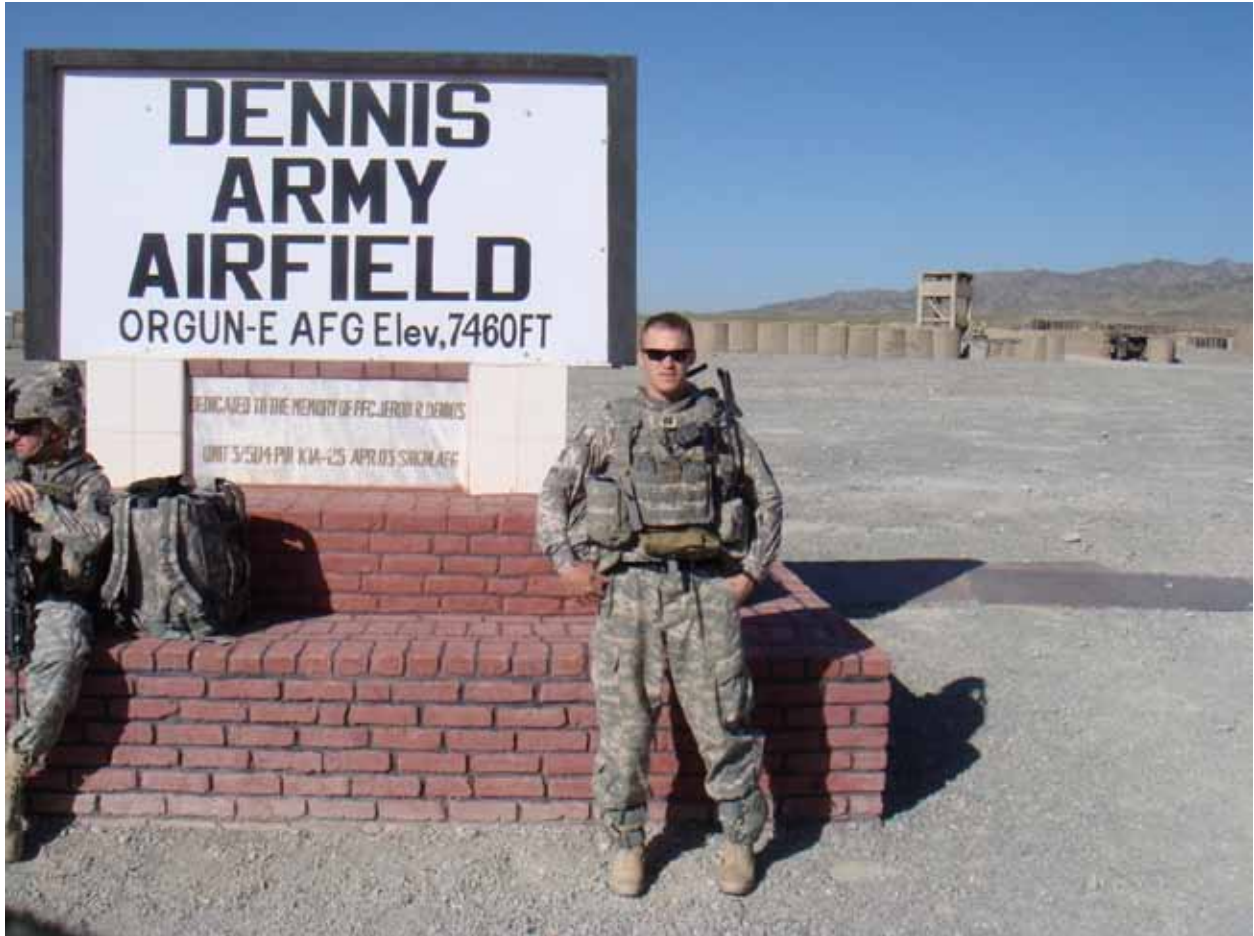
2. Story: As a Battery Commander, I had four platoons spread across four bases (FB Lilley, FOB Tillman, FOB Boris, FOB Wilderness) and personnel at two other FOBs (BAF and FOB Salerno). From BAF near Kabul to FB Lilley in Shkin, Paktika, I was responsible for operations and logistics of 114 personnel. Communications and transportation in Afghanistan is not conducive for decentralized operations. Leaders have to be agile and problem solvers. They have to be able to understand commander's intent and make decisions within that framework without the guidance of their higher HQ.

Additional Topics:

Weather/Terrain: Terrain and weather dictate everything. Night operations are only possible if MEDEVAC can fly, many times weather and illumination make air operations extremely hazardous. Operations are built around terrain and weather constraints. We own the night in Iraq, we sometimes are able to borrow the night in Afghanistan. On many occasions FOBs would not see any rotary wing resupply or transportation for over 3 weeks. Rotary wing transportation is often the only way to move around the battlespace. Soldiers going on R & R were gone for 5 to 6 weeks. Second- and third-order effects – minimal manning is a standard operating condition and not an exception. This digital battlefield applies down to the platoon level and Soldier level at the most remote COPs.

Equipment: Cold weather gear, TACSAT, mIRC, JLENS, MRAPs.

4. Casualties: They're going to happen and you'll never be as ready as you want to be.....most times you're not ready for them at all. Be willing and able to pull units out of operation if they suffer a loss. They'll need time to recover but it is a double edge sword, too much time can make the situation worse.



Mental Fitness: You have to make some downtime for yourself every day. Take a little time to read or correspond with love ones. If you don't, you'll burn out and won't be any use to your Soldiers.

Physical Fitness: Afghanistan is much more physically demanding than Iraq. Battle focused PT, ruck marching, and stress shoots will help prepare Soldiers for the harsh conditions of Afghanistan. But, if you aren't stationed in Hawaii or Colorado, nothing will prepare you for operating at 8,000 ft and above. You have to build time into the beginning of your deployment for Soldiers to get acclimated.

Soldier Morale: Mail does not come as often as you hope – every 3-6 weeks in many places. You have to figure out a way to break the Groundhog Day effect, whether it's through training or downtime activities.

Family Readiness: Be ready to run the FRG without much contact with the command.

Professional Reading: Kite Runner, A Thousand Splendid Suns, Afghanistan (Steven Tanner)



Dan Westergaard, Field Artillery

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: A/4-320th FAR, 4BCT, 101st ABN DIV; HHC BDE, 4BSTB, 4BCT, 101ST ABN DIV

Locations in AFG that you operated in: FOBs Lilley (East Paktika); FOB Tillman East Paktika); FOB Bermel (East Paktika); FOB Wilderness (Paktya); FOB Salerno (Kwost); FOB Sharana; BAF

Now that I am back, I realized that the vast expanse of responsibility a command actually has. The enormous amount of terrain and the critical reliance on moving personnel and logistical support items around the battlefield were huge. The most valuable thing I learned that would have been nice to know prior to deploying is the challenges that logistical support has in Afghanistan.

Being a Field Artillery Battery Commander really caused me to get "into the weeds" with logistical support, especially when it came to getting my boys the big bullets they needed to fire their howitzers on a daily basis. On any given day, one of my four fire bases would fire several fire missions often bringing them into critical resupply situations. The amount of time, effort, luck and perseverance that is required to ensure big bullet ammo was always ordered and delivered was incredible.

Company commanders: Be prepared to allow your subordinates to operate in a decentralized mode. The vast amount of space that you will cover in your AO does not allow you to be everywhere at once. You will truly have to rely on your PLs to act on your behalf when you can't physically be there. Train your subordinates very well and prepare them for the enormous responsibility that lies ahead.

Human Dimension/Culture: Being a Firing Battery Commander / HHC BDE Company Commander I did not interact with the local populace as an Maneuver Commander did.

Weather/Terrain: Weather will control every aspect of your mission. Weather will determine when, where, and how you move PAX, equipment, and supplies around the battlefield. Overall, the winter months are more difficult because the number of days that rotary wing A/C get cancelled. But don't forget about summer. In the height of summer, the hot temperatures and thinner air limit the payload capacities for the A/C.

Equipment: What piece of gear/equipment has made the most difference for you personally in Afghanistan? For your Soldiers? Good quality boots; quality eye protection; quality gloves will vastly improve your mission.

Casualties: Write a solid draft of a letter to parents of an injured/deceased Soldier before you deploy. This is something you will not want to start from scratch when the unfortunate day arrives.

Mental Fitness: Ensure you teach yourself & your Soldiers how to pace yourselves. It is way too easy to get "out of control" when trying to deal with the OTEMPO. Once you get into a good battle rhythm, you will be able to operate with better ease.

Physical Fitness: Find a good routine that works for the mission you have. The biggest key is routine and persistence.

Soldier Morale: Make sure that you procure and provide your Soldiers outlets (internet, morale phones, etc.) so they can stay in touch with their families. When a Soldier is not worrying about home, they are focused on the mission.

Family Readiness: Ensure that your unit has a solid FRG program. This is something that you cannot repair or fix from theater.

Professional Reading: What is one book that really helped you to be more effective in Afghanistan?

We were Soldiers Once & Young

Black Hawk Down



Ben Shaha, Field Artillery

Unit you commanded in AFG: B/4-320 FAR

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Wardak: FOB Airborne; Ghanzi: FOB Warrior; Kandahar: TTF; Oruzgan: FB Cobra; Paktika: FOB Orgun-E; BAF; Khwost: FOB Salerno; COP Gorbuz

1. **Insight:** Limited air availability will compound mission accomplishment in the following areas:

Ammunition: Ammo will be delivered different ways (Green air, CDS drop, LOGPAC) depending on the FOB. Ammunition support may not agree with what you want at a FOB. We had a problem convincing Class V at Division Support that we really needed M927 HERA for a while because Ammo manuals state it can be replaced by M913. However, Sight to crest problems in Afghanistan necessitate the use both munitions.

Personnel: R&R will take longer to rotate through. Manning will also be squeezed for the Artillery maneuver mission. Mail delays can be severe.

Maintenance: Howitzers are going to get beat up. M187 mounts are very valuable. We had 1 man per section trained as a U6 prior to deployment which helped. In addition, switching out down computing systems will require a courier. Most systems (AFATDS, CENTAUR, etc.) need to be fixed at BAF, and I would often drag items needing maintenance with me from FOB to FOB to turn in at BAF. Bring all the computing devices you can. HTUs with old BCS software are still the best air assault raid device since batteries are easily ordered and obtained and they last. The more systems you have, the better you will be prepared for the maintenance challenges.

UPL enforcement. Soldiers will try to get drugs in combat.

Property inventories. Stay on top of SHRs or things will go missing when property is so spread out.

2. **Story:** As a Battery Commander, I had four platoons spread across four bases, each led by a LT/CPT whose platoon was attached, usually, at a company level. I had logistics personnel at BAF and KAF. In addition to this I detached a squad-sized group of soldiers to an artillery battery (A/3-321 FA from Ft. Bragg who were on a separate deployment timetable than us). I moved constantly among these locations to live and operate with soldiers while overseeing A&L. Both organizational and TPE property was spread out across all of these locations. Since my Battalion Commander, in addition to running the Field Artillery in the BCT AO, was the maneuver commander in charge of the Khost province, our communications were more limited than usual. My main challenges were to keep fire bases stocked with ammunition, to keep certified sections minimally manned while rotating Soldiers through R&R leave, getting critical equipment moved, turned in, maintained, and issued where it needed to be. Section level problem solving and clear, precise reporting were critical at my level and below. Soldiers need to cross train on section specific responsibilities to include artillery air assault operations. LTs need to perform as mini battery commanders.

Additional Topics:

Weather/Terrain: Terrain created many intervening crest problems. This led to a lot of high angle shooting which led to severe stress on the guns. We broke multiple M187 mounts during the deployment. Max range is fired often.

Equipment: Cold weather gear.

Casualties: A soldier in my detached squad was wounded early on in the deployment. Another of my soldiers in that squad shot and killed the suicide bomber (failed to detonate) who had shot the other soldier. This situation brought light to many difficulties that come with Task Organization since these Soldiers were attached to A/3-321 FA. Families of course turned to my FRG at home station for support.

Mental Fitness: Artillery problems will arise with your computers and even basic gunnery procedures that arise from intervening crests, ammunition issues, etc. Your LTs will have questions and need help with problems they hadn't run into in training. Be able to get them answers.

Physical Fitness: Altitude and multiple round missions make aerobic and strength fitness especially important for Afghanistan deployments. Soldiers will of course need to acclimate, but good aerobic fitness will help them the most with the high altitude. Lulls in missions occurred, and our PSGs did well pushing Soldiers to keep in shape.

Soldier Morale: Mail is the biggest morale boost next to visual/audio/computer communication back home. They are indispensable. Mail will be a challenge for artillery troops who are attached to various maneuver companies. Generally it flows through BAF and is an ALOC issue. When mail units at BAF switch out, routing may get confused and sent to the wrong FOB.

Family Readiness: Because of communications challenges in Afghanistan, your FRG can be very effective—both ways. Stay on top of it. Appoint a good NCO to be on Rear D who can, at a minimum, communicate respectfully with spouses.

Professional Reading: My time was consumed with artillery. I had little to no interaction with the Afghan populace. My reading recommendation is "FM 6-40: TTPs for Field Artillery Manual Cannon Gunnery."



Brendan McEvoy, Engineer

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: A Company "Sapper" 4BSTB, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: COP Altimur, Logar Province; Gorbuz DC, Khost Province

1. Insight: Always be prepared. I always figured that I would have a lot of time to mentally and emotionally prepare myself for taking command. I had the timeline worked out in my head of exactly when it would happen. Then, while I was working on the BCT staff, my Brigade Commander randomly called me into his office one day and told me that I was taking command immediately and to go pack up my gear.

When I arrived, the company was in turmoil. The commander, my predecessor, had been relieved. Instead of walking into a well oiled-machine conducting steady state operations, I found a broken chain of command, a lot of scarred egos, and a group of Soldiers desperate for a leader that they could trust and that would listen to them.

I was able to find success there through empowering leaders at every level. First Sergeants cannot just be enlisted advisors to the commander. They must also be able to take on their own responsibilities and have their own lanes; their own areas of day to day operations that they can influence.

Platoon Sergeants have got to coach, mentor, and counsel their platoon leaders. It is their job. We have a lot of young Lieutenants with prior service time. That doesn't mean that they know what their own NCOs know. Those Sergeants still have a closer connection to the Soldiers and a better insight into the internal dynamic of each fire team.

Conversely, Platoon Leaders have a great deal more responsibility now than they did ten years ago. Lieutenants are planning and executing their own missions in combat. Even the best of them are going to have a hard time if they are not consistently counseled, mentored, and coached by their commanders. When I first came up, a lot of time used to be spent telling young cadets and lieutenants that they need to be with their troops and doing what the troops are doing. That is fine occasionally, but Platoon Leaders need to know that they have a bigger job than just executing the mission and having fun. They actually have to lead that platoon. I counsel everyone on paper. From the First Sergeant on down, it is the right way to do it. It shows them you care enough to take the time out for them. It also gives you a record of how they have improved so that you can measure progress and adjust fire accordingly.

Our junior leaders in the squads and fire-teams are doing an amazing job. We must give them time to train their troops. We must resource their training. As long as we keep pushing them to think all the way through their problems and use the troop leading procedures, they will execute beautifully and continue to grow as leaders.

2. Story: Always be prepared. As soon as I got to my company and talked to the Soldiers, I found that their biggest beef was with training. There was never time to train and there were never enough or the right resources for training.

Before the company deployed to OEF, they never had a chance to train on M1151 HMMWVs. Once they got in theatre, they fell in on a full complement of these vehicles. None of the Soldiers ever got any training on MBITR or Thales radios or the TacSat system. No Soldiers had attended the Javelin Course, but were expected to employ that weapon system during the deployment. No training had been conducted on mortar gunnery, but the company received and employed two mortar tubes. In possibly the most egregious oversight, because it would be such an easy fix, no one had been trained on the M2 .50 cal machine gun, because it is not an MTOE item for a Sapper Company. During the RIP/TOA, we fell in on six of them.

Upon arrival to theatre and assuming battle-space, the company was immediately task-organized with an additional platoon from the Cavalry Squadron, but had never trained with the platoon before. Due to the hasty train-up and need to complete every task that needed to be completed before deployment, we violated a very simple doctrine, train as you fight. It wasn't the company or the battalion commander's fault, nor could it be blamed on anyone higher or outside the organization. Victims of circumstance, the training that would have helped the Soldiers in the company just never happened.

If a unit has the time to train, then it must train on its mission essential tasks. Those tasks will not come out of any one book, but instead will come from MDMP, following contact with the unit forward that will be replaced. By finding out what is actually happening forward, and getting everyone on the same common operating picture, a unit can better plan and resource training early, thereby better preparing for combat operations during their deployment. As soon as a unit knows where they are going, their staff should be working to make that company level contact happen.

A unit shouldn't stop training just because they are in the fight. Incorporating training time into the battle rhythm is essential as it provides time for junior leaders to focus on the needs of their Soldiers. It provides a forum to implement changes based on lessons learned and gives teams and squads a chance to mentally reset, focusing their energy on a specific task for the greater mission.

Any new equipment received must be trained on and tested. When we traded in our M1151 HMMWVs for MaxxPro MRAPs, 12 operators were sent to Bagram to get trained up. The day after the vehicles were delivered we were taking them outside the wire on missions. We ran into a myriad of issues early on. The comms system was different than the M1151 and the operators had trouble getting them to work right. They were wider than the M1151 and drivers kept hitting Hesco barriers while going through serpentine. All of the vehicles were configured differently and we had to retrain on level one care MEDEVAC procedures in order to successfully load a stretcher.

These are just some examples on how we would have benefitted from having some time to test our new equipment and then train on it before taking it out in sector. The Army will not stop fielding its newest equipment to units on the line, nor should they. The troops in the fight need the best stuff available, but they also need their leadership to take the time out to ensure that it is being employed correctly and safely. This can only be accomplished through training on the equipment that we will actually be using.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Company Command has been an honor, a privilege, a challenge, and one of the best experiences of my life. A few small lessons that I have learned are:

- Never lose momentum on an operation. Even if you are moving slow, keep moving. This is especially vital if you are working with indigenous forces or other groups that you don't fully control. Jingle truck operators will fake engine problems in the middle of K-G pass so that you can't continue moving in the middle of the night, because they want to sleep. So you let your guys have a few hours of rack time. Then illumination goes red and CAS can't fly. Then weather rolls in and MEDEVAC goes red. You realize that you stopped for an extra few hours so that guys could get some rest and you got stuck in the Wilderness for three days. Next time, don't lose momentum.
 - Physical fitness is key. Guys will get smoked tired running up the side of a mountain, even if they are in great shape. It takes time to acclimate to the mountains. High altitude training would have helped.
 - Early establishment of SOPs will pay dividends in the long run. Create a TACSOP that everyone in the company can refer to and make sure that they are on the same page. This will help a lot when replacement Soldiers arrive and need to assimilate.
 - Cross-training on all common convoy tasks should be part of MEDEVAC training. Have the driver, gunner, and TC simulate being wounded and have others in the vehicle take over everything that they need to do. Cross-training once isn't good enough. It needs to be recurring training.
 - PCCs and PCIs need to happen at every level. Company Commanders need to check up on their guys and make sure they know the mission, know their equipment, and have all the right PPE and special equipment that the mission calls for. Don't expect what you don't inspect.
 - Train and rehearse battle drills until you are blue in the face. Every combat unit in Afghanistan must be able to fight mounted and dismounted. FM 25-101 defines a battle drill as "a collective action rapidly executed without applying a deliberate decision-making process." Our squads and fire teams need to be able to execute with very little thought. Instead of thinking hard about what they are supposed to do, they should be thinking about what the enemy is doing and how best to kill him.
 - Marksmanship is the single most valuable element of training for Afghanistan. Send as many troops to long range marksmanship courses as possible. If any of your Soldiers get the chance to kill the enemy at distance, they need to have the tools and the training to take him down. They may only get one shot. Their leaders need to make it count.
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Kevin Groppe, Military Intelligence

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: B Co, 4th BSTB (MICO)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: CP @ Salerno (Khowst), Prophet Spiral Team at Sabari District Center, (Khowst); LLVI team at W. Paktika and Paktya; 2 x HCTs at FOBs Sharana and (W. Paktika), 1 x HCT at FOB Shank (Logar) Human Intelligence Collection Teams (HCTs) supporting elements at Sharana (W. Paktika) and support elements in Gardez (Paktya), OE (E. Paktika), Wazi Kwah (E. Paktika), Airborne (Wardak), BAF and Kushmond (W. Paktika).

Insight: I was humbled and proud to assume command of the MI Company during combat. I will always cherish my command time ensuring my teams were supported and in place to collect intelligence based off the Commander's intent and priorities.

The mere collection capability offered by an MI Company organic to a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is not enough to accomplish all the collection requirements for the BCT Commander. I understand there needs to be a prioritization and that it is the decision of the BCT Commander. However, per my MTOE I have 1 x Unmanned Aerial Sensor PLT, 3 x HCTs and 1 x Operational Management Team (OMT) and either a Prophet Spiral Team or Low Level Voice Intercept (LLVI) team. My BCT had nearly 6,000 Soldiers operating across 25,000 square miles. There simply is not nearly enough organic collection capability based on the requirements and priorities from the BCT to act independently.

There are not enough "analysts" to sift through all of the information collected. More analysts need to be pushed down to the Battalion and Company level. However, if done correctly, the Battalion Intelligence Team (BIT) can enhance the company commander's situational awareness / understanding as well as provide insight to Battalion and higher commanders. This will simply allow leadership the ammunition to request additional assets (NGOs, collection assets, etc) for your area of responsibility (AOR).

What are you aware of now that would have been valuable to you before you deployed?

Educating our leaders at all levels needs to be a focus. Ensure, at a minimum, that every platoon leader and company commander knows the capabilities of the MI Company and how to properly integrate these enablers, such as a Low Level Voice Intercept Team (LLVI) into their formations. MI Soldiers are combat multipliers to patrols. Each commander must understand what these assets are going to do for him before, during, and after a hostile engagement and peaceful key leader engagements.

What one key insight would you like to share with current and future Afghan Commanders?

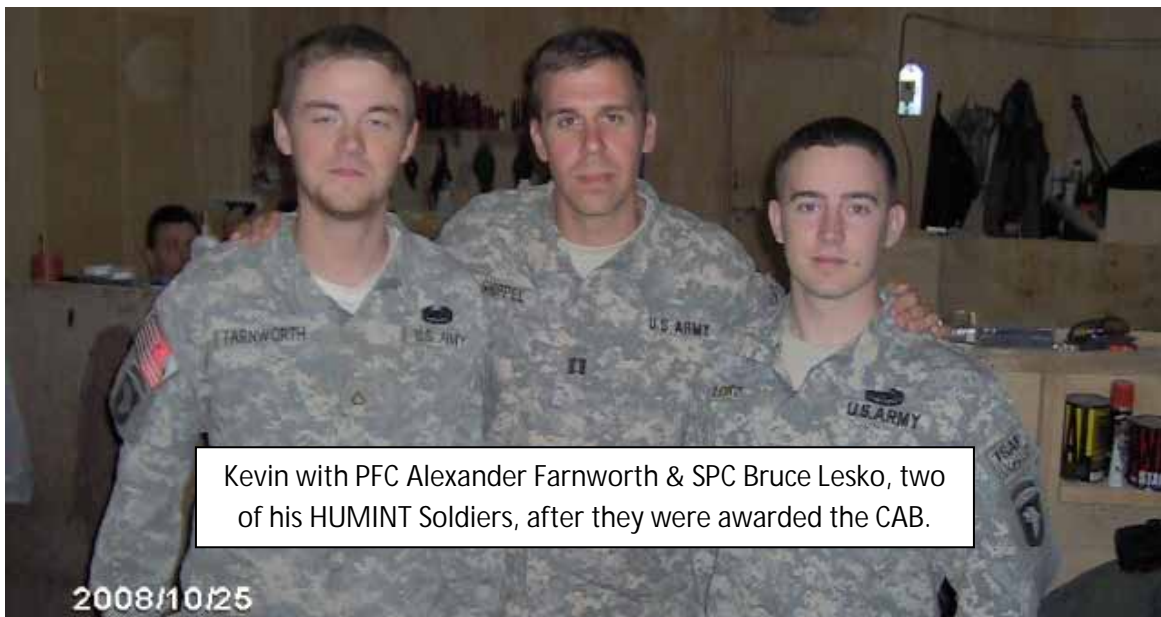
Integrate the MI teams within your formations prior to the NTC or JRTC rotations. Training with the enablers during collective training will allow both you as a maneuver commander and your Soldiers the

understanding of how to fully integrate with these combat multipliers. If this does not occur, no problem, talk with the team leaders of the assets you are provided. They are competent to advise you on their strengths and capabilities. Interface with them during mission planning and not the day of the assault on any objective.

Background: I wanted to share the above because many do not know the capabilities of the MI Company. More education is needed at all levels in order to fully understand the organic assets. Moreover, it will take time and rehearsals to integrate the assets into your formations which are important so that the first time leaders must incorporate an enabler into their patrol is not during combat.

I was told to move one of my LLVI teams to another location within 72 hours in order to assist on an assault mission. The BN TF Commander asked the BCT Commander for this asset and the decision was made. However, no one told the maneuver commander the asset was requested, or was granted. The commander did not know how to incorporate the asset into his mission planning. Rehearsals were not conducted. The LLVI team was moved on the day of the assault. This caused problems because the first time a face to face was conducted was on the helicopter landing zone (HLZ). The commander asked why the team was not receiving any intelligence like the other team supporting another company in the similar area. After the mission and during the After Action Review (AAR) the commander that incorporated LLVI team during mission planning, knew the capabilities of the LLVI team. He allowed the team leader to maneuver to the best location in which to operate. To no fault of his own due to the circumstances of short notice insertion of the LLVI team, the commander who received the LLVI team on the HLZ did not conduct mission planning and did not employ the LLVI team properly because of the lack of understanding of how to employ the team.

Ensure as a MICO that you proactively are part of BCT planning of MI assets in Afghanistan. Also, at home station, take the time to visit Battalions and educate fellow Company Commanders and Battalion S3s on your capabilities. Bottom line: educate and coordinate early.



Kevin with PFC Alexander Farnworth & SPC Bruce Lesko, two of his HUMINT Soldiers, after they were awarded the CAB.



Nick Miller, Signal

Unit(s) you commanded in AFG: C Co, 4th BSTB (Signal Company)

Locations in AFG that you operated in: Soldiers at various FOBs throughout AO Currahee.

1. Insight: Digital Communications (Computers, Voice of Internet Phones (VoIP), Email) in Afghanistan is critical as a way of exchanging information at all levels of commands all the way down to the lowest echelon unit manning its own

permanent Forward Operating Base or COP. AO Currahee had (at one point) 44 FOBs with 36 Digital Communications Nodes of various flavors all providing SIPR/NIPR Connectivity to maneuver units (These included; JNN, CPN, SPOP, STOW [sipr terminal over WAN], Traffic Terminal, VSNAP). This is over 4 times an organic Brigade Combat Team Digital C2 system allocation yet the delta to resource the manning requirements is left to the BCT to source from BN S-6 shops and the Signal Company.

Task Organizing within the BCT signal community is a must prior to arriving in theater and must be clearly articulated to Battalion level S-6s but also understood by maneuver battalion commanders. The troop to task requirement of all digital command and control satellite based nodes in the BCT battle space must be led by Brigade S-6 with input from the Battalion S-6 and the Signal Company Commander. Ultimately the SIGO team provides a clear understanding for Battalions and Brigade Leadership of Soldier Troop to Task for these low density systems.

The more Signal Soldiers that can be placed on these missions, the more maneuver Soldiers can be utilized to focus on their primary missions. Our Soldiers were mostly FOB bound performing more traditionally theater Signal Mission vs. tactical signal missions due to the extreme demand for digital C2 services from Platoons through Brigade. If I could have done it again, I would have pushed my Soldiers out to platoon and company CPs earlier to man the digital C2 systems and then figured out how to support the strategic nature mission of FOB Salerno with a tactical signal company.

2. Story: Throughout the deployment various Command and Control platforms (JNN, CPN, etc) were moved to better posture the digital communications architecture to support the commanders intent as well as re-align the battlespace based on new units rotating into theater. The manning requirements for these systems would continually be brought into question as a system moved from one battlespace to another as no Soldiers are MTOEd against the system and no additional Soldiers were provided to man the system.

A poorly manned system faced extreme challenges with maintaining OPTEMPO and providing reliable digital communications. Often Company Commanders would call me asking about how to get one of their platoon nodes back up on the SIPR after one of their systems would go down. Due to vast terrain and limited air frames system outages could last days until a trained operator or Field Service Representative (FSR) arrived on site and diagnosed the issue or a needed repair part. Without question, sites with trained dedicated operators had superior uninterrupted service. Those sites with Soldiers from the Signal Company usually only had outages due to equipment failure not lack of operator knowledge.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share? The relationship between the Signal Company Commander and the BCT S-6 is extremely important. and must be clearly articulated prior to deployment. Within 4th Brigade Combat Team the command clearly articulated the authority and roles and responsibility. Additionally the command enabled the BCT S-6 to provide direct guidance to the Signal Company regarding missions needing to be accomplished as well as priorities of work; while not eliminating the command relationship and responsibility of the BSTB and the Signal Company. This clearly articulated relationship enabled unity of effort across the signal lines of effort and enabled the Signal Company and the Brigade S-6 to better accomplish its mission of providing uninterrupted C2 systems to the Brigade Combat Team.

Signal Branch Issue: The role of Fiber Optic Cable installation is at a premium. The more Soldiers can get trained on this equipment the better. Given the dispersion of all the enablers in a BCT footprint the ability to distribute services (NIPR/SIPR/VOIP) to disperse locations outside a couple hundred feet can only be accomplished with fiber optic. Identify a team and get them training to be the large scale project coordinators. Train the battalion S-6 shops to operate and maintain fiber optics as well as repair. On bases not supported by theater signal assets and their trained contractors, the Signal Company installed miles of cable that not only allowed more access to command and control services but also provided superior reliability for customers.



Additional Topics:

Human Dimension/Culture: Both the Afghan and Pakistan Command teams greatly respect what their Communications Officers bring to the fight. They clearly recognized that the ability to communicate with the US Military has huge benefits across all efforts. While many of the programs are being managed at the CJTF level there is a huge role in implementations and ensuring the equipment is being utilized and integrated into any combined operation as designed. Additionally TTPs have to flow up about what systems work with the vast terrain and what don't.

Throughout our time in Afghanistan the Brigade S-6 worked very closely with the Corps Afghan National Army G-6. This allowed them to synchronize efforts on all of the Brigade's Campaign Plan for AO Currahee.

In the second half of our deployment our Command began requesting the Pakistan Military bring with them their Communications officers to any Border Flag Meeting to allow US and Pakistan communications officers to better dialogue about how to more effectively communicate between militaries. While a network of high frequency radios was in place it was not very reliable and this interaction provided us a means to address communication issues in person with certain PAKMIL locations, listen to their challenges with communicating with the US Forces and also chart a way ahead to improve comms at sites that we routinely had challenges communicating with during incidents. It also enabled us to provide a face to the counterpart working towards the same effect—keeping his command and subordinate leaders communicating at very critical junctures in the War.

A heavy emphasis on ensuring these systems are utilized went a long way in building ANSF capacity and helped the CJTF look for better means to improve the communications architecture for this critical mission. This is especially true at the company commander level where near real-time communication must happen reliably among CF and ANSF during operations.

Weather/Terrain: The weather in Afghanistan cannot be understated in terms of maintenance for equipment. Snow, heat, dust of course provided the same challenges as in Iraq (i.e. they are not favorable for communication equipment and parts will break more regularly, need more maintenance and system will have more down-time than state side). This translates into ensuring company maintenance functions happen regardless of dispersion and Soldiers are checked by leaders for -10 level maintenance on their systems.

What made Afghanistan unique was the limited mobility across the battlespace as it increased overall system down time across the board. Any finger-drilling of this maintenance was quickly evident. This increased the need for more spares at BNs and BCT level and made the process of repairing systems very difficult as generally the quickest method was to evac a system. If there was an area I felt we could have improved it was the C2 maintenance process, equipment turn in and SOPs and spares tracking.

Also, units in Afghanistan need to know how to Sling load a CPN, JNN, Ku Trailer and any system that could not survive a CLP or patrol on some of the rough roads throughout Afghanistan. Identify this requirement, train signal leaders how to sling their equipment to protect it and ensure safe transportation via air between locations.

Equipment: Units could not have enough C4I equipment in the fight; at least not given the quantities we were able to provide during our rotation. Computers, VoIP Phones, CAT-5 Cables, Power over Ethernet Switches, Fiber Optic Cable and equipment were in constant demand. If we could find any of this equipment and it could provide another green tab leader or staff function access to SIPR/NIPR/VoIP our command could find a way to utilize it to help them fight. Our battlespace had roughly 4000 devices, well over what you are MTOEd and we could not quench a thirst for more connectivity to lower echelon units and more staff officers and NCOs.

Family Readiness: Don't pay lip service to this requirement. We used a series of team building / company FRG functions to form the basis of a tight knit company family support group. These events

definitely allowed families to meet the command, gage their effectiveness on a personal level with regards to concern for their Soldiers and enabled them to put a face to their Commander and First Sergeant. We had a small and tight-knit FRG that was effective because of the time spent in Garrison forming this organization.





Bruce Roett, Ordnance

Unit commanded in AFG: Alpha Company (BCT Distribution Company)/801st Brigade Support Battalion

Locations in AFG that you operated in: All provinces in Regional Command (RC) East: Khowst, Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni, Logar, and Wardak, KG Pass, Kabul, and Bagram.

As the Brigade Combat Team's (BCT) Distribution Company Commander and as a senior logistics officer for the BCT in Afghanistan, I quickly learned that supporting 6 Task Force Currahee Battalions and their International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) counterparts, a Polish Battle Group, 6 PRTs, 2 ADTs, and an Engineer Brigade all in excess of 10,000 Soldiers, across a battlefield similar in size and terrain to West Virginia was a monster. I relate our situation to when a master physical fitness instructor is demonstrating a new exercise that your body has never done before, and while observing him demonstrate you think to yourself "That doesn't look too hard, no sweat, I'll just do it like him." But then you start knocking out repetitions and after about ten seconds you are smoked and start thinking "Holy cow, how am I going to keep this going for a minute." That is logistics in Afghanistan, a test in endurance for muscle groups you have never used before. My Battalion Commander had a great saying in which he compared logistics in Iraq to "being on cruise control" where everything is on a schedule and supply and demand rarely change. However, he referred to logistics in Afghanistan as "graduate level studies" where even when seven different modes of delivery are in place, other means would sometimes have to be identified to overcome seven obstacles and keep the war-fighters supplied. Our "way ahead" slide in the Battalion's Concept of Support brief which was briefed to our Commanding General and multiple senior DA and DOD logistics officers even listed "brute force" as a means to an end.

That is my preface for any logistics leader preparing for an operational deployment to Afghanistan and particularly the mountainous and tough terrain regions of RC East. Rather than list lessons learned individually in theater, I have listed five insights that would have been useful knowing and focusing on during training prior to deployment which would have better prepared myself and my Company for each lesson learned in combat. Though they sound generic, I will explain my rationale for each and relate why I would have loved to use these five pillars during pre-deployment training, encompassing every exercise and applying them to every tactical training situation, embedding them and almost using them as the glue to keep my Mission Essential Task List together:

- Afghanistan Frame of mind
- Shoot, Move, Communicate
- Be, know, do
- "What if" everything
- Test of endurance

Frame of mind for any leader is critical to his/her organization and the course that they plot towards meeting training objectives, especially when preparing for a combat deployment. A leader's frame of mind is how his/her intent is molded and subsequently translated into a training plan. Many commanders stay close to their higher commander's intent, while others take recommendations for

training from their Battalion S3. Some have experience in where their upcoming deployment will be taking place and draw on past knowledge while others attend LDESP seminars and conduct plenty of professional reading. All of these are great tools but if I had to recommend the number one tool for getting in the right frame of mind for an Afghanistan deployment, it would be mission analysis. I would have gotten my hands on the mission OPORD as soon as possible, and I understand that is hard to do prior to your training schedule begins, but creating the right frame of mind is dependent upon a thorough understanding of Paragraph 1 of the OPORD, specifically OAKOC and Enemy and Friendly Forces and Paragraph 3A, Concept of the Operation which for a Brigade Support Battalion is basically the concept of support. Understanding the concept of how your unit intends to support the BCT is essential and then drawing out what your role in each mode of delivery is critical. Quickly identify which tasks will be your responsibility, such as: Low-cost and low-altitude rigging and delivery, running a FOB support area helicopter landing zone, running a Forward Area Re-fueling Point, civilian supply receipt processing, and loading Mi-8 helicopters with 4K forklifts are not doctrinal to a BSB Distribution Company, but those were all mission essential tasks for my Company in theater. Concept of support is huge and understanding your role in that concept is so important for logistics Commanders.

As far as Enemy Situation goes, Battalion S2s may be limited on the amount of intelligence available CONUS, but there are so many agencies and organizations that exist to provide real time intelligence and significant activity reporting that Commanders must force their S2s to provide analysis related to enemy attacks on logistics and its effect on your missions. Understanding the enemy and how he fights in Afghanistan and understanding criminal elements and the ways in which they try to steal from ISAF is crucial to identifying training requirements that are essential and those that are good to do when time permits. The vast amount of time spent planning, resourcing, and executing a convoy live fire exercise remain a valuable training task but capturing the realistic enemy threat that exists in Afghanistan for logistics forces for that convoy LFX is critical as well. Consequently, as a company commander you need to develop a training exercise to replicate that threat, turning it into more effective training. For example, many of these tasks did not even exist in my "shoot, move, communicate" frame of mind prior to deployment, but nevertheless these tasks were all mission essential in Afghanistan:

- Host nation truck escort training (Task: Move 15 each 10,000 gallon fuel trucks driven by local national contractors from point a to point b safely without loss of more than 2 trucks)
- Aggressive driver's training on rough terrain (Task: Move your MRAP/Up-Armored HMMWV out of the kill zone quickly, negotiating around the disabled vehicle in front of you, crossing a culvert, and establishing 12 o'clock security on the route of travel)
- BATS HIIDE training (Task: Digitally enter 15 local national drivers into the HIIDE system the night prior to a patrol execution and screen all 15 drivers for any red flag history)
- React to ambush (IED initiated) battle drill training as every combat logistics patrol turns into a react to ambush due to the nature of re-supply operations (Task: React to IED ambush)
- Local national fuel truck receipts (Task: Safely and accurately receive and account for 10 each 10,000 gallon fuel trucks in 10 hours while identifying any pilferage through broken wire seals, forged documents, or incorrect amounts-day and night, good and bad weather)
- Local national supply truck receipts (Task: Safely and accurately receive and account for 10 each 40 foot milvan supply trucks in 10 hours while identifying any pilferage through broken wire seals, forged documents, or incorrect amounts-day and night, good and bad weather while supervising local nationals in the warehouse)

OAKOC is self-explanatory and CPOF/FalconView is a great training aid to better understand it but your real money is made in contacting your counterpart you will be replacing and finding out which vehicles can actually maneuver on certain routes and those that are too big or don't have the turning radius to make a mountain pass. Which COPs can receive internal Chinook loads and which are sling-load only. Which COPs and FOBs have cranes and other material handling equipment to download your delivered supplies and which don't (may have to bring your own MHE or configure the package differently). OAKOC turns into an element of identifying avenues of approach to friendly forces and obstacles in the way of providing support.

The key to understanding Friendly Forces for logistics is not so much the traditional, "Where are all of my adjacent units located?" but more, "What are my friendly enablers out on the Afghanistan battlefield, and how can I harness their power?" And, "How can I simulate these enablers during training so the first time I utilize them is not in theater?"

- Afghan Contracted Security Forces (Excellent escort package and superb route clearance package as they dismount and deliberately clear every historic IED site)
- Afghan Police, Afghan Soldiers, Afghan Border Patrol (Excellent escort packages through highly populated areas, and required when maneuvering through the city of Kabul which is the only way to get to Bagram from the South)
- Route Clearance Packages (Army Combat Engineer teams with Husky IED-detection vehicles and EOD teams which their availability is often patrol conditions check go/no go criteria on many routes across RC East with historic IED sites every half kilometer)
- BATS/HIIDE (Great inspection tool and deterrent to keep contracted drivers honest)
- Indirect fire support from local FOBs (Established TRPs and calling phase lines to that fires asset to have them raise and lower their guns as you travel increases your overall security)
- Attack aviation whether assigned or QRF (Air-ground-integration is critical training and incredibly useful during fifty vehicle convoys through a mountain pass)
- Electronic Frequency Burns from the Air Force (Excellent tool for historic remote-control IED sites)
- Fixed wing shows of force (French Air Force F1 Mirages will conduct fly by's at 150 feet AGL setting the ground on fire but more importantly deterring any type of ambush preparation)
- UAV and FOB "air-camera" support (Useful during planned patrols and even more useful during troops in contact situations)

Bottom-line, finding the theater mission OPORD and clearly understanding what your Battalion's concept of support and what your role in that concept is, and then analyzing terrain, to include human, understanding how the enemy is going to come at you as a logistics force and how he is going to try to steal from you, and finally identifying friendly force enablers that will be available to you are what will give you the most accurate, relevant, and problem-solving frame of mind as you develop your training plan. Training on realistic and worthwhile tasks as a support unit will ultimately better prepare your Company for deployment.



With that being said, and emphasizing non-standard types of training tasks, warrior skills and common tasks should not take a back seat during training. However, as mentioned above, it is easy to get tunnel vision in relation to CTT and only focus on ranges, convoy live fire lanes, and shoot houses. The best way to stay grounded in relation to training on non-standard mission essential tasks while always adhering to CTT is to remember shoot, move, communicate. You can be as imaginative, brilliant, and sexy or as dull, static, and redundant as you want when it comes to CTT but if you apply shoot, move, communicate you will train your Soldiers to be prepared for what they will encounter in Afghanistan.

Marksmanship is 100% qualification on primary weapon iron sights and then scope and two qualified firers for every one of your MTOEd crew served weapons and squad automatic weapons. Familiarization is every Soldier on a patrol to include medics and mechanics are familiar with every weapon system on that patrol and can put it into operation without guidance. The MK19 is your most valuable weapon in Afghanistan and every patrol should have at least two.

Move has somewhat to do with physical fitness training but more to do with battle-drills and collective four-vehicle formation movements and maneuvers pertaining to enemy contact and escaping the kill zone. Communicate is Company 100% trained on FM platforms (ASIP, Thales, Harris), VIC3 system, TACSAT, FBCB2, SAT phone, and knowing the limitations for each and interoperability with CREW.

Communicate also requires some additional training when you start identifying your enablers as well as assigning roles and responsibilities for which of your elements will communicate with the Route Clearance package, will communicate with higher headquarters, will communicate with the battle space owner for check-in and fires coordination, will communicate with air assets, will communicate with local forces via Motorola radio, and will communicate with MEDEVAC.

For logistics forces shoot, move, communicate is the foundation and can be added to but not taken away from. Upon completion of these three core tasks, trained and certified more than three times, logistics leaders can then focus more on the previous mentioned non-standard types of training and continue to build competency skills relevant to the Afghanistan Theater while always staying grounded to shoot, move, communicate.

Be, know, do is not so much a training task but more of an over-arching theme during all Army operations which when mentioned at all training events will set the right climate for your Soldiers during deployment. FM 6-22 is the Army's new manual on Army Leadership, but I still default to its predecessor FM 22-100 and its primary emphasis on the time-honored Army tradition, be, know, do. These three pillars are so critical for any operation but especially for a logistics operation in Afghanistan.

"Be" is particularly important in relation to the seven Army values and how it relates to logistic operations focusing on personal courage and integrity, all pointing to character. The Supply Support Activity (SSA) can expect to receive and download at least ten trucks per day, dealing with local nationals who are career bargain hunters, beggars, and thieves that will try every approach they can think of to persuade your Soldiers to allow them to keep supplies in exchange for money, allow them to take tires identified for turn-in that are marked for retrograde, or will try to sell drugs in exchange for cash. NCO supervision with leader checks is an unbeatable deterrent but NCOs cannot always be around during local national interaction with your Soldiers and the local nationals know this. They will wait until the Soldiers that they perceive are in charge walk away to in-process a supply or go to a meeting and that is when the local national will approach your Soldier and it will ultimately come down to your Soldier's character. Briefing punishment and reinforcing Army standards is paramount in getting a head start on deterring your Soldiers from making bad decisions. Additional checks and balances will be implemented by your team and gate spot checks will be conducted but no leader wants this type of activity to exist and be caught by an external party as with any Army operation, one foul-up will overshadow 100 "atta-boys". This concept applies to local national fuel truck downloading as well, where local nationals will try everything to entice your Soldiers into letting them keep a few gallons of fuel. Again, the best way to combat these types of criminal activity are to let your formation know you are aware of them, brief the types of checks and balances that will be in place to prevent them from occurring, review consequences, and then preach the Army values in reference to these activities at every opportunity. Character and the "be" concept apply as well to treating the local national populace with respect and dignity and treating detainees fairly and acting in a professional manner during all local national engagements from the Commander down to the lowest private. "Be" is also vital in regards to just basic Soldiering on the FOB as far as not trying to seek out alcohol and drugs, or violating general orders of abstinence and fraternization, gambling, illegal activities; all practices that can very easily rear their ugly heads if not attacked at early stages prior to deployment and their existence/consequences continually beat to death into the Soldiers through deployment. The seven Army values start and end with each individual Soldier regardless of rank, while basic standards are endorsed by officers and strictly enforced by the NCOs. When this premise works like it is supposed to and all parties conform to the standards and really try to live their deployment lives by adhering to the seven Army values, your Company's character is created. Less likely at large FOBs but most certainly at the smaller COPs and FBs, there is no gray area or line in between as far as standards go, and if you send Soldiers out to the smaller COPs and FBs, you will understand. Either standards exist and are enforced or there are no signs of them; you will arrive by rotary wing and immediately see an orderly United States Army outpost, or you will see something directly out of the movie "Apocalypse Now," nothing in between and only either or.

"Know" specifically pertains to Technical, Tactical, Interpersonal, and Conceptual competency skills which are invaluable traits to logistics leaders in Afghanistan but also very important to teach and reinforce down to the lowest level. Every Soldier in the Distribution Company should be technically proficient on not only their MOS specific equipment but on all warrior related (shoot, move, communicate) equipment as well. Every Soldier and leader should have trained on interpersonal skills in reference to dealing with local nationals and third country nationals as they will exist everywhere on the battlefield and on the FOBs. Every Soldier should be tactically sound whether they work in the orderly room, SSA, or in the transportation platoon to the point where at any given time they can be called upon to Truck Command a vehicle going on patrol and do so with zero hesitancy and full understanding of their job. Finally, every Soldier and leader should be extremely conceptual and able to think outside of the box. This assumption goes hand in hand with my final point of a test in endurance, because being conceptual is in a sense being objective, and removing yourself from your SOP, TTPs, and common battle rhythm and really examining where you are vulnerable in your Company and what type of unnecessary risks your Soldiers are assuming. Being conceptual becomes especially valuable when an obstacle or challenge presents itself with no known Army methods of defeating the issue, and diversion from Military doctrine or field manuals may be the only way to solve a problem. An example we fought through was receiving the mission to move a Brigade Combat Team's worth of Authorized Basic Load from one FOB to another which entailed approximately 40 twenty foot milvans to be moved through enemy territory with a time distance of roughly eight hours. This requirement would have taken my Company four to five missions and ten days to complete. Though, ammunition had never been transported on local national trucks at this point in the deployment nor does Army doctrine permit this method of movement of ammunition in combat, local national truck movement with my Company escorting them was the best choice as it could be done in one mission and two days. Obviously we assumed some risk but not without identifying where problems could arise and mitigating those risks and ultimately succeeding in only one mission, preventing our Soldiers from having to make multiple turns on the same route at the same time, exposing us to the enemy at a higher risk than transporting ammunition on local national trucks. Basically, the four attributes of technical, interpersonal, conceptual, and tactical are the primary ones for logistics leaders to hone in on and to teach, develop, and coach in junior leaders and even Soldiers that are preparing to fight in Afghanistan.

Finally, "do." Leaders and Soldiers must roll it all together and do, complete the mission.

In conclusion, my final two pillars of training I would have liked to know prior to deploying to Afghanistan are leaders must "what if" every training scenario to death either in a senior leaders' huddle, with all leaders in the Company, or with all Soldiers included as well, either at the end of a training event or even prior to execution. What if this happens, what if he gets wounded, what if the wrecker breaks down. Asking this question at every level of leadership and at every phase of the training event will spark some great training discussions and hopefully address issues and questions that can be solved in training, so that again, when they rear their ugly head in combat, it will not be the first time your Soldiers have encountered the problem; "what if" everything to death. The last pillar is the resounding theme of this AAR in which logistics operations in Afghanistan are tests of endurance; weather, terrain, time distance, lack of communication, and troops in contact will always present last minute requirements and the term "emergency re-supply" will become so overused that it will find its place in your daily battle rhythm. Being prepared for anything, trying to incorporate these five pillars into your training, and remembering it is a test of endurance will improve your chances of keeping all of your Soldiers safe and out of trouble and accomplishing the mission in Afghanistan.



Matt Tillman, Medical Service

Unit commanded in AFG: C / 801st BSB

Location in AFG that you operated in: CP @ Salerno (Khowst). Aid Station at Sharana (W. Paktika) and support elements in Gardez (Paktya), OE (E. Paktika), Wazi Kwah (E. Paktika), Airborne (Wardak), BAF and Kushmond (W. Paktika).

1a. Insight: The medical support mission in Afghanistan was a challenging and extremely rewarding mission. I am very grateful that I was allowed the opportunity to lead in that demanding environment. It allowed the company to support the BCT in a wide variety of roles and stretched the assets inside the BCT to the point that junior leaders were required to take initiative and lead their people to mission

accomplishment. From the beginning I tried to impart on my Leaders and Soldiers that we were there to support the Battalion's Medical Platoons. If we had the asset, we supported them however we could from forward-deployed medics to pin-point distribution of CLVIII to over 40 locations. I only wish I had a little more to spread around. Finally, it was a constantly evolving and changing mission that required us to adapt, adjust and sometimes just suck it up in order to continue the mission.

1b. What are you aware of now that would have been valuable to you before you deployed?

The tendency of medical company commanders is to focus a lot of their attention on 68W (medic) training and discount the low density MOS in their formation. While you can't discount the value of a well trained medic on the battlefield, there are many other no fail missions that actually needed as high a priority as the medics. Specifically the Environmental Science Officer (ESO) and his tech (68S), the Dentist and his tech (68E) and most important your Brigade Medical Supply Office (BMSO). The importance of these sections is primarily due to the lack of external enablers in Eastern Afghanistan. Initiate a training program early to train these low densities and cross train at least one additional Soldier in each area. For the ESO and tech this means time with installation support agencies like the HAZMAT folks and the PM Det. Let the ESO run this for you. In the Dental arena, get your tech to the clinic with the Dentist. Ensure they have time to work together and build that cohesiveness. In the BMSO, find out what automation system is being used in country (if there is one it should be DCAM) and use that at home. If your installation doesn't support training, contact USAMMA. Scrub your ASL with your supported units before you leave and start using the system you will use in country NOW.

1c. What one key insight would you like to share with current and future Afghan Commanders?

Someone (BCT Surgeon cell or SPO MEDOPs) needs to constantly evaluate mission requirements for the limited medical assets in the BCT. We fell in on a set that worked well for our predecessors but the environment (and the battle space boundaries) will continually evolve. Without a devoted planning element at the BCT level, you will mis-utilize assets and won't be able to support the maneuver elements as well as you could. The fight will always be getting assets back, not giving them up. Several times during our deployment, requirements surfaced for additional medical assets in support of planned operations but we didn't have a body left to use, especially medical providers because they had been attached to another unit that would give them up.

2. Background informing responses above: Importance of the BMSO: The Brigade Medical Supply Office (BMSO) is the only support asset for CL VIII in your BDE battle space. Afghanistan is supported by only one Med Log company located in BAF. That company is made to support one division sized element and they are stretched VERY thin. The doctrinal 3 DOS in the BMSO will not support the weather constraints or the demand generated by the huge numbers in your supported battle space (as large as 6,000 service members). Keep all of your 68Js (Med Supply SPC) in the BMSO. MTOE strength is the lowest point you can reach. Special attention must also be paid to narcotics distribution as well. We hand-carried all controlled substances into the battle space and ensured that we had chain of custody at all times. This is hard but will keep you from the mess caused by missing drugs. Finally, one of your strongest LTs needs to fill the 70K position in charge of the BMSO. The medical logistics mission will touch your supported units daily.

Keys to using the Dentist: Our BCT had one dentist to support everyone in the battle space for all emergent and urgent dental needs (again about 6,000 service members). The only external support was located with the CSH in BAF. We initially tried to move the dentist to support the units based on a patient trigger. This only caused a vacuum of support to the other Soldiers in the battle space. Our final solution was to keep the dentist in a fixed location and bring the Soldiers to him (utilized MEDEVAC at times). Fortunately, we had cross trained two 68W (medics) in the technical areas of 68E (dental tech) prior to deployment. Not only did this ensure that we had the redundancy in the dental arena but allowed these medics a break from the daily grind. Finally, if the unit you replace hasn't done so already, build redundancy in your equipment. Your dental section will fail if the operatory set or sterilizer fails so order additional units. Because this equipment is CL VIII you have multiple options to order (PR&C and CL VIII system). Also think about getting state side quality chairs so you can save your dentist's back.

Field Sanitation and Environmental Science Importance: The Environmental Science Officer (ESO) is a key battle field enabler especially in Afghanistan and emphasis must be placed on the team's ability to train Field San Teams (FST) and evaluate environmental threats in the field. The ESO did have some back up support provided by a PM (preventive medicine) Detachment in BAF. However, IOT evaluate and assist in ensuring healthy conditions at every site the BCT AO, we had to make his movements a priority. Our ultimate solution was to incorporate our PM team with the Div IG team that travelled the battle space and hit every location (over 40) at least twice. The ESO provided detailed back briefs through the local chain of command (1SG or CDR usually) and focused on the solutions to the problem. After return to Salerno, the ESO then sent his reports through the BSB CDR to the maneuver TF CDRs and helped BN S4s with any logistical requirements like NSNs and ordering procedures. This system enabled the leaders at the COP / FOB to fix health problems and then followed up with command influence minimized the loss of combat power in the AO due to preventable disease and injury. Upon arrival in theater we started ordering FST supplies through the C/MED supply sergeant. Most of these supplies are CL II not CL VIII but supported units didn't understand that initially. This was a huge success initially and kept Soldiers in the fight but quickly I realized we couldn't support this mission all year. The ultimate solution was to mass order and push the supplies and educate on the ordering system. We finally weaned our supported units off of us onto the supply system but we could have solved the problem but ensuring FMC FST kits stateside at the PLATOON level. One final untested idea is to train platoon medics to draw and ship water and soil samples to help during the inevitable COP building.



PROFIS: Nature of the beast is you will only receive your PROFIS (Professional Officer Filler Information System) 30 days prior to deployment. I tasked one LT to serve as the sponsor, develop a training plan and hand-carry them through the process. This worked well. We didn't, however, get any training accomplished between our new doctors and their treatment teams or medics. That was a mistake that caused problems down range. I recommend building into the PROFIS training time line several events to get everyone on the same page. Also remember that you will need to coordinate for transportation and lodging for all of your PROFIS.

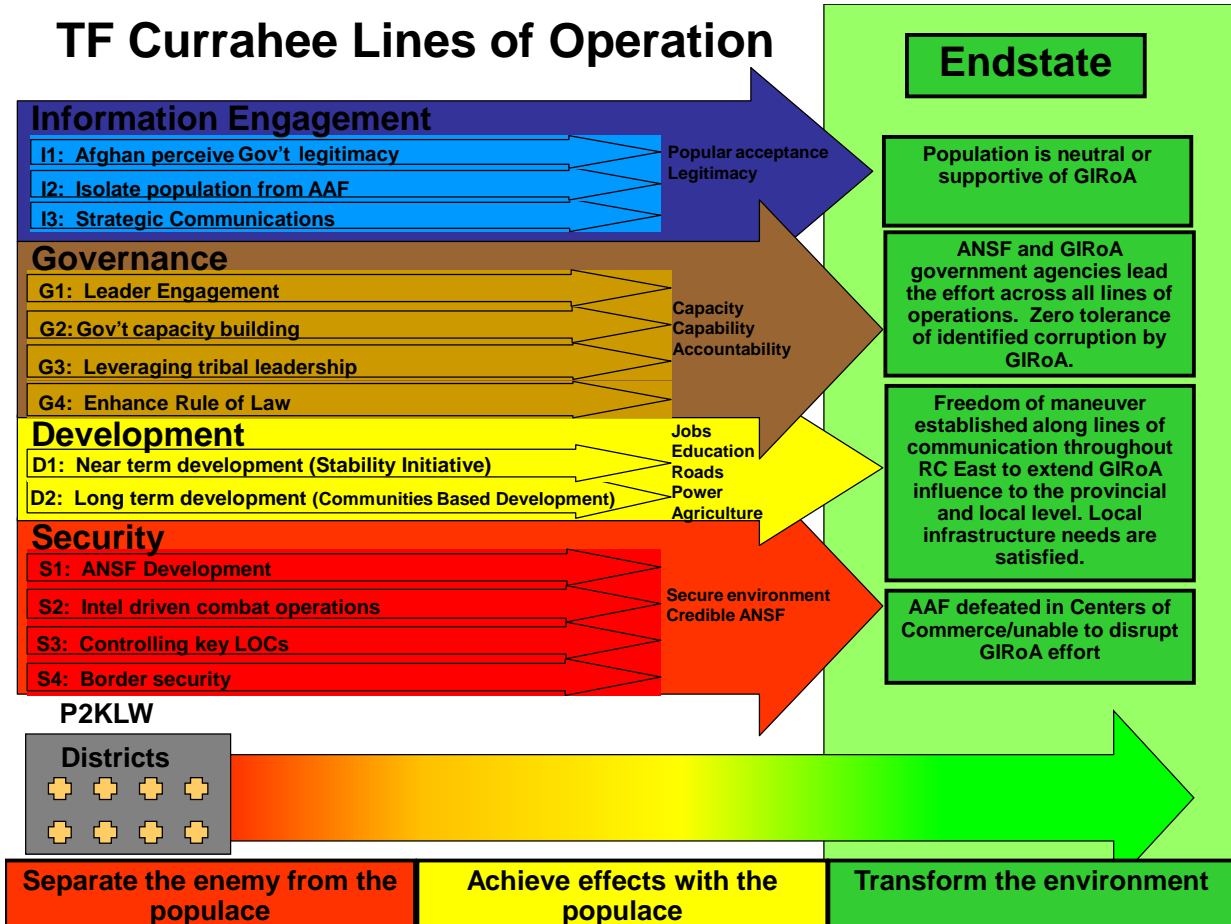
Stuff you will need: Two areas required significant improvements as far as equipment upon arrival in Afghanistan. The first was dental equipment. Again, build redundancy here with at least the operatory set and the sterilizer. Also, you will need to increase the amount of dental hand tools you have to support an average of six patients daily. The other area that required extensive equipment support was the Physical Therapy section. Our MTOE did not authorize this section. Prior to deploying we submitted an ONS for a PT MES and upon arrival in country fell in on message tables and an ice machine. Ensure you have both. Also we added a hydrocollator (heat pads) at mid deployment to help with the large amount of back pain we were seeing. Aid bags across the brigade were dictated by mission. Smaller bags were required by forces that were primarily dismounted (scout medics) but the STOMP II was the standard for most of the brigade. Final note, the PR&C system in country works well as long as you have a solid justification and fill out the packet correctly so if you can't get something at home, submit for it in country but understand shipment alone can take several months.

Theater Specific Requirements: Check with the unit you will replace about specific requirements they have in country. In our case, when we arrived in country CJTF-82 required several items in the IFAK that we were not tracking including individual space blankets and a combat pill pack. It was a significant emotional event to fill these requirements during RIP as 3,500 Soldiers flowed into country. For our replacements, we ordered their allocation of these items or cross loaded during RIP.



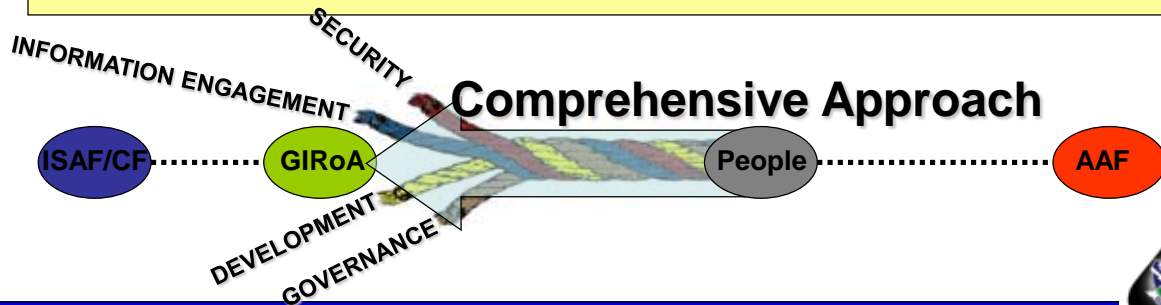
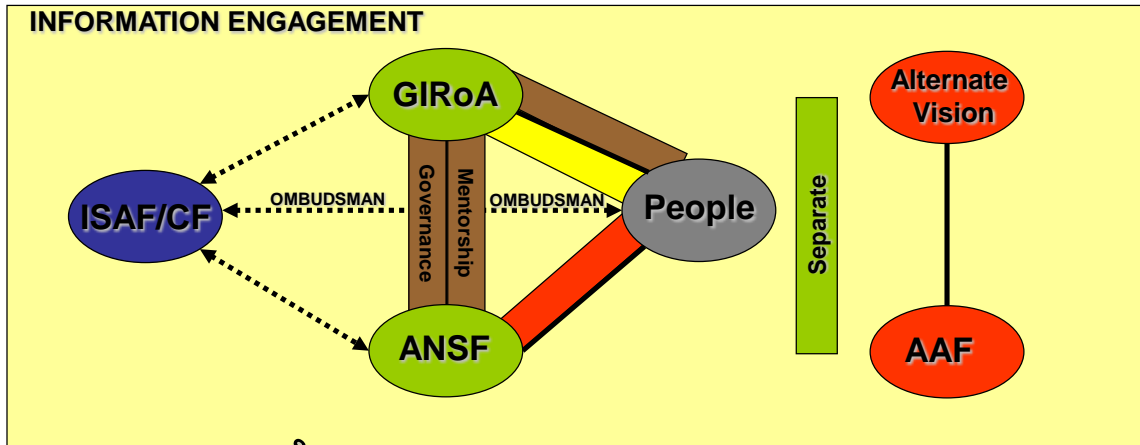
4/101 Counterinsurgency Strategy

TF Currahee Lines of Operation





Visualization of the Battlefield



Afghan Commander AAR Book Conclusion: Seven Points to Consider

We hope that the preceding paragraphs provide some insights, TTPs, and lessons for future Company Commanders and others that prepare for deployment to Afghanistan. A few common themes emerge from these Company Commanders:

(1) Do not underestimate the importance of developing your junior leaders. You will operate independently not only at the Company Commander level, but down at the platoon level as well.

(2) As a Company Commander understand the importance of Commander's Intent because it must be nested from the BCT down to the Squad. Understand it and communicate it through every order and during every visit.

(3) Do not underestimate the weather, physical and human terrain, and the enemy. If you cannot understand these factors, then you will neither "see" nor understand yourself and your capabilities. This analysis leads to new TTPs that will increasingly protect the force and separate the enemy from the population, both physically and psychologically.

(4) Understand the basics in battle drills and physical/mental training, and your unit will succeed. This terrain can break you physically and mentally. Train to be hard physically and mentally. Teach them how to think under duress in dealing with terrain and key leader engagements.

(5) Every operation, no matter your branch or specialty, is partnered with the Afghan National Security Forces. Each Company Commander will tell you that they had the capacity to partner during each operation at some level and in some manner. Organize your Company that way. Accept risk as a Commander and partner with the Afghan forces.

(6) Your presence among your platoon and troops at the remotest of outposts and your relentless energy in morale building will maintain the necessary command climate, ethics, and human dignity to do the hard right over the easy wrong. Fight for resources to visit your troops.

(7) Remain population centric and in coordination with the Afghan National Security Forces, for here you will gain the cultural intelligence needed to help separate the enemy from the people and connect the Afghan government to its people.

Afghanistan is hard and unforgiving, but it is also the best place to be a Company Commander.