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2D MARINE DIVISION
UNIT 73805
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From: Commanding Officer, Regimental Combat Team 6
To: Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

Subj: POST DEPLOYMENT AFTER ACTION REPORT, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Ref: (a) MCO 3504.1 Marine Corps Lessons Learned Program

GENERAL SITUATION/ INTRODUCTION

   RCT-6's Campaign Plan focused on defeating the Taliban insurgency, developing governance and rule of law, and transferring lead security to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

   RCT-6 achieved this objective through two main overarching regimental and many supporting battalion and company-level operations. Within these operations RCT-6 set out to disrupt all INS safe havens, logistics staging areas, and command and control nodes in AO Tripoli, AO Guadalcanal, and on one occasion, within Task Force Helmand's AO. From these disruption and clearing operations the RCT was able to move to the periphery of the populated areas and pave the way to put ANSF in the lead to prepare for the transition of the battle space. This enabled the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and ANSF development within the Green Zone (GZ) of the Helmand River.

   RCT-6 also endeavored to build ANSF confidence by supporting independent ANSF operations to the maximum extent possible. Building ANSF confidence was the key to preparing them for Transition to Lead Security Authority (TLSA) in the focused key terrain districts of the Upper, Central, and Southern Helmand River Valley. As the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) gradually assumed a lead security role within the GZs, RCT-6 continued to support Afghan National Army (ANA) operations designed to disrupt insurgent activities along the peripheries of the AOR. This created space and time for GIRoA entities to take action and ultimately exceeded the Taliban in its ability to govern legitimately and provide essential services to the populace.

   During this time, the RCT also conducted the closure of several positions in accordance with the higher directive of realignment into company-sized positions. During the time of the closures, the retrograde of gear and equipment and the redeployment of all surge forces was continuous. In May of 2012, the regiment was directed to take control of AO Guadalcanal after the redeployment of RCT-5. On 5

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July, RCT-6 conducted the TOA with RCT-5. With 6 battalions under its cognizance and an additional 7 districts in Central and Southern Helmand Province under its control, RCT-6 was now responsible for the task of retaining the focused key terrain districts of the central Helmand River Valley.

Also during this time, it was determined that TFL would redeploy all but 30 of its Marines in preparation for the 1 October reset of the MAGTF, which would put it below the six thousand personnel limit. These changes led to the RCT's movement to Camp Leatherneck to assume the Division (TFL) operations. On July 28th the RCT partially assumed the control of TFL and reporting requirements to RCSW. At this point in time, the RCT retrograded 3 USMC infantry battalions, finishing the planned drawdown to a 6,000-strong MAGTF by 1 October. During October it conducted its RIP/TOA with RCT-7.

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1. ADMINISTRATION

   a. Topic: Supplemental Personnel Casualty Reports

      (1) Discussion: The supplemental PCR process causes undue administrative burden on lower echelon commands. Currently, as a casualty is moved through the medical evacuation process or the casualty's category changes, the Battalion is required to generate a supplemental report containing information from the medical LNOs or higher commands. The requirement seems better suited to those in closest proximity/contact to the casualty to provide the supplemental PCR information.

      (2) Recommendation: The one sentence supplemental PCR should be generated at the command or by the representative closest to the casualty. That organization assumes ADCON of the casualty and generates all supplemental PCRs.

   b. Topic: Authority of Letters of Release

      (1) Discussion: Before assuming TFL responsibilities, the authority to sign letters of release for departing personnel resided at the O-6 level. Unlike TFL, there is only one O-6 in the RCT. However, after much research, it cannot be determined where that guidance originated.

      (2) Recommendation: Allow the RCT to delegate the subject authority to the O-5 level or to the By Direction level to maintain responsive processing time for orders generation, especially for emergency leave.

   c. Topic: CMCC Accountability

      (1) Discussion: As the COMREL requires SFAATs to be ADCON to the RCT, the requirement for classified material increases. The increased demand requires significant coordination to ensure proper support while teams and units move around the battlespace and need maintenance.

      (2) Recommendation: Dedicate a full-time SNCO/NCO to account, report, and destroy classified material. At a minimum, conduct CMCC inventories twice a month.

   d. Topic: Postal Operations

      (1) Discussion: As SFAATs become globally sourced, there is no Battalion advocate for the SFAAT to make sure their mail is properly routed. In addition, the postal section is not made aware of the many types and locations of SFAATs. Many teams arrive without a mailing address assigned or full understanding of their assigned AO.

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       (2) Recommendation: Ensure the proper mail routing requests are submitted to verify type and location of the SFAAT. Then, at the conclusion of the SFAAT's tour, ensure mail is turned off IAW postal timelines.

    e. Topic: Administrative Authorities Regarding SFAATs

       (1) Discussion: The administrative authorities between GCE units and SFAATs are not completely defined. This makes administrative matters from, "Who writes the fitness report?" to "How many combat meritorious promotions are allocated?" complicated. While the RCT is not tasked to process emergency leave requests for TFL organizations, it makes sense with our capabilities to process those requests. While the RCT is tasked to provide fitness report support to SFAATs, it is not always reasonable for the RCT CO to write on all SFAAT OICs.

       (2) Recommendation: Fitreps, meritorious promotion allocations and related administrative processes with regard to SFAATs need to be flexible enough to allow the RCT CO to make changes to the extent that makes the best sense.

    f. Topic: CERP Training

       (1) Discussion: The training for CERP is limited to online courses and a class at the Regional Contracting Office. Training continues to be the number one point of failure in the use of CERP for Project Managers (PM), Purchasing Officers (PO), and Pay Agents (PA) inexperienced in fiscal law. The biggest problem is unfamiliarity with Money as a Weapon System – Afghanistan (MAAWS-A) CERP SOP. Required prerequisite training for Project Managers (PM) and Purchasing Officers (PO) includes: Defense Acquisition University (DAU) courses CLC 106, CLC 206, CLC 222 and CLM0003 as well as the MarineNet Combat Trafficking in Persons course – DD01AO0000. Required prerequisite training for Pay Agents (PA) includes DAU course CLM003 and the MarineNet Combat Trafficking in Persons course.

       (2) Recommendation: Future RCTs need to identify those Marines who will most likely serve as PMs, POs and PAs, mandate completion of online prerequisite training at home station, and implement training utilizing MAAWS-A CERP SOP to ensure PMs, POs and PAs understand the appropriate uses of CERP in order to streamline the appointment process in country and improve the understanding of appropriate uses for CERP.

    g. Topic: Rule of Law (RoL)

       (1) Discussion: Assessments of RoL were an ongoing issue for the RCT due to largely ineffective communication between the PRT and

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the operating forces. The DSTs report directly to the PRT, the Rule of Law Field Support Officers (ROLFSOs) do not share information with the RCT, and the education requirements for the justice Tashkiels are unrealistic given the demographic in Helmand Province. We are imposing a statutory justice system on a population that prefers tribal or community-based justice and conflict resolution. Land disputes arise around 30-plus years of war with no land documentation, so the RCT can do little to impact land reform.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Future RCTs should leverage traditional justice and dispute resolution when possible.

h. <u>Topic: Investigations</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Every unit will conduct multiple investigations covering a wide range of topics. It is anticipated that most of the investigations, as the drawdown continues, will be for missing or lost gear. The Consumer-Level Policy Supply Manual has a checklist, and the investigation must answer all the questions from that checklist in order to be sufficient. In addition, all Theater Provided Equipment investigations require separate documentation (A Financial Liability for Property Loss Form (FLPL)) before they can be closed out.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: It is vital that units conduct a thorough turnover on anything to do with the CMR. It is also important that units understand that some investigations can be closed out at the BN level, but that most investigations are required to be routed higher. Emphasis needs to be added on the endorsements and on what measures will be taken to prevent further loss.

i. <u>Topic: Detention Operations</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: With the ANSF role transitioning to leading in operations, Marines are transitioning to a role of coordination and oversight, ensuring that chain of custody and other detainee handling procedures are being properly conducted by the ANSF forces. Every advisor team in the AO needs to be aware of the transition and the need for continuing supervision. Marines still want to detain individuals, such as IED emplacers or suspected HVIs, and send them to the US-only pipeline for detainees. Misconceptions still exist as some teams believe turning detainees over to ANSF will result in the detainee's release or will provide the ability for a detainee to bribe his way out of confinement. ANSF in the lead have been shown to be effective and have yielded some unexpected benefits. With the ANSF in the lead, the amount of work for Marines remains about the same. Their primary function is coordinating biometric matches and pushing information to the RCT in order to bring the physical evidence back into theater to match it with the detainee.

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      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Every advisor team working with ANSF should be briefed on the transition procedures as they enter theater. The RCT tracks every detainee in the AO and is best suited to brief each advisor team on how to keep ANSF in the lead on DetOps and how to coordinate evidence. What is taught at EMV is still useful but needs to adjust to reflect the new operational relationship between ANSF and our Marines. Identifying someone at each team as the POC for detention operations and ensuring that they know who to contact at the RCT is vital.

    j. <u>Topic: Guards for MEDEVAC'D or Sick Detainees</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: TFL was responsible for providing guards at BSN hospital whenever a detainee was MEDEVAC'D from a battalion's battle space. If the detainee required a higher level of care and was moved to Kandahar Air Field, guards had to go with the detainee and stay until the detainee returned to LNK. In addition, when a detainee at the Detention Facility required medical attention from BSN hospital, one armed guard had to accompany the detainee for the duration of the time that the detainee was at BSN Hospital. With the drawdown in total forces, this burden was shifted to RCT-6.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: RCTs should identify at least 10 Marines that can rotate through detainee guard duty. This will ensure adequate guard availability and will account for temporary manpower shortages due to R&R leave and other functions.

    k. <u>Topic: US-only Detention Operations</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: EMV and the Pre-deployment Training Plan still train to the US-only system for detainees. In rare cases, taking a detainee and pushing them through the US-only system will be the only available COA. This should be the exception and not the rule. In the past, detainees with significant reporting were taken and submitted to the DFIP for confinement. As of 10 Sept 12, the DFIP is now under Afghan control. A US-only channel at the DFIP still exists, but only for extremely special cases. Detainees that are biometrically linked to multiple IEDs and are believed to have connections to multiple JPELs must go through the Afghan system. Detainees that are not biometrically linked to IEDs but who have significant reporting on them should not be detained unless the ANSF take them on their own.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Ensure that pre-deployment training briefs are updated to reflect that the US-only system is now an exception to the rule of ANSF Detentions. Making it clear to units up front that the ANSF will be processing the majority of detainees with oversight from Marines will be extremely beneficial in sustaining the ANSF in the lead.

    l. <u>Topic: Mental Health MEDEVAC Logistics</u>

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    (1) <u>Discussion</u>: There is a confusion amongst some units
regarding mental health MEDEVAC procedures (i.e., Letter of Release,
Escort). Individual Battalions are responsible for providing the
letters of release for the individual being MEDEVAC'd and the escort.
The escort typically needs to be equal to or one rank higher than the
individual being MEDEVAC'd. No E-3s or below can be escorts. The
escort does not need to be a Corpsman. The escort may need to escort a
patient all the way to CONUS.

    (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Guidance should be promulgated as
effectively as possible to ensure that all battalions are familiar
with the MEDEVAC procedures and requirements for Marines with mental
health issues.

    m. <u>Topic: COMISAF Tactical Directive</u>

    (1) <u>Discussion</u>: A recent update to the COMISAF TacDir (5.1)
has caused a lot of discussion over the employment of fires throughout
the battle space. Not everyone is interpreting it the same way. What
is important is that JA provide accurate advice to commanders
regarding the necessary considerations under the TacDir.

    (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: There is no training on this subject
during work-ups for deployment. All JA's assigned to units that will
operate under the RCT should be required to meet with the RJA while
the unit is going through RSO&I to discuss the TacDir. Commanders
should meet separately and discuss the subject.

    n. <u>Topic: Public Affairs Personnel</u>

    (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Prior to OEF 11, battalions would often deploy
with Combat Correspondents (CCs) by replacing a line number, but in
order to better control public affairs at higher echelons, the MEF
stopped that practice and CCs were consolidated at the MEF level. The
current iteration of public affairs at the RCT has a PA officer and
one CC. There are no Division (FWD) PA assets, and MEF (FWD) has four
PA officers, a PA chief, and three CCs. The reduction from 11-15 CCs
spread evenly throughout the battlespace to 4 CCs consolidated at the
command element has made it very difficult to provide coverage for
coalition and ANSF units in support of strategic communication LOOs.
Because CCs no longer deploy with battalions, it has become difficult
for them to communicate their role to units they become embedded with.
Also, units newer to the AO often lack confidence in CCs sent down
from a higher headquarters and will employ them too far away from
kinetics or points of friction, which are the very things which CCs
need to be capturing. The MEF will often demand that their CCs get
over to the GCE because of the limited newsworthiness of activity at
the CE. Also, battalions will not usually have a trained Unit

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Information Officer (UIO) to plan for and handle external civilian embeds, in which case the collateral duty will fall to the adjutant.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Returning to the method of deploying CCs with battalions would solve the problem of consistent coverage within the GCE, allows for CCs to build increased trust and confidence with their unit through time and training, and gives the unit an organic UIO trained in public affairs matters and media handling. Keeping PA personnel at lower levels is critical to giving the unit fair staffing representation when PA planning at higher levels occurs.

    o. <u>Topic: Coordination of International Media Embeds</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: PA Combat Correspondents produce accurate products, but their reach is much smaller than that of major international media correspondents. Therefore, embedded civilian reporters are in a unique position to report to a wide audience on operations and personnel from an outside perspective. Unfortunately, there is a misperception that the RCT is involved only in kinetic operations, and media seeks this out, often neglecting coverage of positive stories regarding the transition to ANSF/GIRoA lead. Battalion leadership is acutely aware of civilian media tendencies and will usually request to deny the embed. Also, battalion level factors such as the operational tempo, the RIP/TOA process, and a high volume of embeds may not allow for new media embeds at any given time. Also, because of the high profiles that media embeds carry, more than 2-3 embeds at any unit can be logistically or operationally burdensome or unsupportable. However, this tendency is not in keeping with the Marine Corps and ISAF communications strategy to communicate with minimal delay the maximum amount of accurate information regarding operations and ANSF transition.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The RCT must continue to consider and push for media embeds, especially during this time of transition. Ideally every approved media embed request would be accommodated, but it is up to the RCT CO to determine if the reason for request denial is adequate. Units must be pushed to accept media embeds when feasible, as international media coverage is critical to countering misperceptions on the state of Helmand Province. Media entities must also be negotiated with and not simply embedded at any time and location of their choice. Recent successes with major American news outlets (CNN and NBC) have shown that negotiating an embed at a location of our choosing still provides the media with plenty of newsworthy material, but also tells the Marine Corps and ANSF story in keeping with higher echelon communication strategy.

    p. <u>Topic: Medical Rules of Eligibility (MRoE)</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: MRoE established for Afghanistan are straightforward for Coalition Forces injured in theater. For ANSF,

the rules are more restrictive. Traditionally, the ANSF have depended heavily on CF assets to take care of their sick and wounded. As they now stand, the MRoE do not provide for MEDEVAC of ANSF members for non-combat related or non- life/limb/eyesight-threatening injuries. These MRoE are now strictly enforced, causing friction between ANSF and their partnered CF personnel when MEDEVAC requests are declined for medical issues that the ANSF feel are justified. In the context of "Green on Blue" threats, forward-based CF work extremely hard to assist the ANSF by addressing immediate medical concerns at the Role 1 level and coordinating ground CASEVAC of the patients to local or Afghan military clinics or medical centers. In many cases, this approach has led to "Afghans finding solutions to Afghan problems," with the desired effect of decreasing dependence on CF for such important issues. In a few others, the refusal of MEDEVAC to CF Military Treatment Facilities has been seen as an affront and resulted in escalating tensions between ANSF and their CF partners.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: More emphasis from higher authority must be placed on the development of ANSF-organic medical capability, from the combat medic level to Role 2+ treatment facilities. ANSF are not likely to develop air MEDEVAC capabilities in the near term, so the solution will involve more extensive use of ground transport to get their sick and wounded to higher levels of care.

    q. <u>Topic: Medical Force Distribution and Shortfalls Throughout the Area of Operations</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The force drawdown due to the surge recovery process left fewer Marines and Sailors in the field to cover the same battle space. This required the manning of multiple COPs and FOBs by a single battalion within each AO. The medical force laydown in this environment was constrained by the number of credentialed healthcare providers assigned to the BAS. As a result, many of these bases were "uncovered" from a Role 1 medical capability standpoint. Smaller patrol bases with fewer assigned personnel were manned with line corpsmen who had no direct supervisory oversight except that which was provided by phone or internet communications. This proved to be sufficient overall. On larger bases, the shortage of credentialed providers was problematic, as sick call involved more patient traffic with the potential for issues that were beyond the scope of practice of a general corpsman. Individual battalions optimized their medical force laydown within the given constraints. However, this problem will likely worsen as the numbers of CF in the battlespace continues to dwindle. Without local Role 1 capability, the number of routine MEDEVACs for non-life threatening injuries and illnesses will be higher, and the quality of medical care given in the field will suffer.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: All battalions deploying to this AO must bring their full T/O of credentialed medical providers (MO, PA, and 2

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IDCs). Shortfalls in Role 1 medical care in the battlespace should be addressed by MEF's drawing from supporting entities such as the LCE and the ACE.

    r.   Topic: OSCAR Services

        (1) Discussion: The OSCAR provider is the mental health asset for the GCE. All mental health issues should come through the OSCAR provider first. If the OSCAR provider is conducting BFC, then the Combat Stress Team is the default mental health resource. Not all of the Battalions are aware of the services that the OSCAR Team can provide (i.e., mental health education, mobile mental health assets, command climate assessments etc.).

        (2) Recommendation: Battalion Leadership, Surgeons, and Chaplains should be made aware of the OSCAR Team's capabilities as they transition into the battle space.

    s.   Topic: Compliance with Theater Medical Requirements (CENTCOM MOD 11 Unit Deployment Policy)

        (1) Discussion: Personnel are still arriving in theater without their required stock of chronic medications and medical equipment. The current supply system (MEDLOG) can support most medications and equipment; however, sending the supplies to the supported unit is time-consuming and could result in personnel going without their required medications/equipment for an extended period. MOD 11 specifically forbids the use of contact lenses in theater (due to increased risk of very serious eye infections). Smallpox vaccination is not readily available in Afghanistan.

        (2) Recommendation: Ensure effective promulgation of mandatory requirements as published in CENTCOM Unit Deployment Policy (MOD 11) Medical Requirements, prior to unit deployment.

    t.   Topic: Unplanned Early Redeployment of RCT Personnel

        (1) Discussion: One of the issues MAGTF Plans had over the course of the deployment was unplanned early redeployers, i.e. Legal, PCS orders and EAS. Planners cannot redeploy non-emergency leave requirements promptly due restrictions within available lift, aggregation solutions and FDP&E processes. Also, PAX cannot utilize Space-A from APOE to APOD. STRATLIFT is the primary method for redeploying PAX.

        (2) Recommendation: MAGTF Plans posts available windows for aggregation at the end of each month. Unit S-1s should scrub alpha rosters for personnel who will be EAS'ing, executing PCS orders, etc. by the close of each month for verification of redeployers at the pre-

determined windows the following month. Unit S-1s should coordinate with the RCT's S-1 and turn rosters over to MAGTF plans. This will mitigate the need for a General Officer Endorsement (GOE).

   u. Topic: Maintaining Force Management Level (FML)

      (1) Discussion: In order to maintain the 3061 Force Management Level for the GCE, MAGTF Plans needs to remain vigilant in the tracking of units and personnel coming into theater.

      (2) Recommendation: All incoming personnel numbers should be tracked and verified within the S1 and S3. The S1 and S3 should cross-reference deploying numbers against the approved Base Force List (BFL) set by USMARCENT for accuracy of PAX counts. If one unit is coming in over the allowed amount of PAX, HHQ need to be aware of it to make sure it was approved.

2. INTELLIGENCE

   a. Topic: Aerial ISR Feedback Submission Requirements

      (1) Discussion: The volume of feedback submissions required daily, weekly, and monthly can be overwhelming and tedious for collection management cells. Despite its tedium, units are encouraged to provide feedback which identifies not only issues and problems, but success stories and best practices/procedures used as well. Worthwhile feedback from the supported unit at times has been neglected because of competing priorities and manning challenges. While understandable, neglecting to provide quality feedback that articulates the value of a platform may be used to justify re-allocating limited ISR assets to other regional commands. Additionally, feedback submissions serve as a mechanism to share TTPs, best practices, and creative utilization of low-density, high-demand tactical, theater and national intelligence collection assets.

      (2) Recommendation: Units should assign at least one individual to record asset utility, lessons learned, and areas for improvement using the feedback process. These duties should be their primary responsibility.

   b. Topic: Shared Situational Awareness Across the Staff

      (1) Discussion: Palantir has become an invaluable tool accessible to personnel across the RCT staff sections. However, Palantir is generally only used by personnel within the S-2.

      (2) Recommendation: Palantir should be integrated across the staff sections in order to promote sharing of information and awareness of the battle space. It should be a mandatory pre-deployment training requirement for personnel in the S-2, S-3, COC, FOPS, Targeting, Counter-IED (CIED), and Advisor Teams (AT).

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    c.   Topic: MarineLink's Diminishing Relevance

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: MarineLink (ML) was originally developed and fielded to OIF by the Intelligence Analysis System Family of Systems program of record in 2004 as a rapid technology insertion gap-filler. However, for several reasons (accessibility, non-intuitive GUI, creation of more collaborative intelligence tools [Palantir, Google Earth]), ML is not being used as designed. Diminished use of ML is also due to a lack of enforcement. The result is that ML is no longer an authoritative intelligence data source. Additionally, ML is causing a redundancy in SIGACT reporting, leading to duplicate SIGACT records in Palantir which, if S-2s are not data-vigilant, may result in inaccurate analysis and reporting.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Enhance Palantir for the use of more collaborative and effective tools and databases in order to analyze SIGACTS, SIGEVENTs and intelligence reporting. Establish Palantir as the USMC Program of Record for intelligence analysis and dissemination.

    d.   <u>Topic: Intelligence Writing and the INTSUM</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The ability to write analytical assessments and intelligence summaries is fundamental to all intelligence analysts. Many junior Marines lack the necessary skills and training to meet DOD analytical writing standards upon completion of MOS school. The development of writing skills is a lengthy process which requires dedicated training.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: PTP for an intelligence section should be designed and scheduled in such a way to give the section as much exposure to intelligence writing as possible. Provide Marines with intelligence articles and task them to write an executive summary and assessment. The ability to condense large amounts of information into succinct and salient points with an assessment of what this information means to current operations is an invaluable yet perishable skill.

    e.   <u>Topic: Intelligence Enabler Integration</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Intelligence Enablers are an invaluable resource; however, there was limited opportunity to incorporate enablers into pre-deployment training. The numerous contracted intelligence organizations available to the S-2 during a deployment can quickly become overwhelming without proper training and an understanding of their capabilities and best integration practices.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: During PTP, include enabler representation. This will help the section understand the

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capabilities of the enablers, and allow them to develop a plan to effectively integrate them into the section.

   f. Topic: Reliance on the S-2 for Proper Marking, Handling, and Disclosure of Classified Material

   (1) Discussion: Historically, intelligence personnel, through exposure and access, were deemed the subject matter experts on how to properly use and mark classified material. However, in today's operational environment, all sections are required to immerse themselves in classified material and media. This shift in access and exposure requires that all sections familiarize themselves with the proper marking, handling, and distribution of classified material. In today's joint environment, it is extremely important for individual users to understand the foreign disclosure process IOT prevent inadvertent disclosures or spills. It is the responsibility of individual sections to maintain a Foreign Disclosure Representative, and conduct foreign disclosure reviews on their own products. The staff section requiring disclosure and/or release is generally the subject matter expert on the material; if not, they likely know the correct POCs who can make a classification determination. There are ample resources available to provide training to the staff sections of how the FDR process works, where to find reference materials, and to certify FDRs.

   (2) Recommendation: All sections that need to use, handle, or process classified material need to be properly trained. Specifically, each section needs to maintain an internal FDR to act as the section's subject matter expert. This would help to reduce the high number of inadvertent disclosures and spills that occur in theater. This will also speed up the review process and would ensure that materials are being checked closely by individuals who understand the material.

   g. Topic: Biometrics Targeting and Collection Employment

   (1) Discussion: Due to the complexity of developing human terrain, biometrics presents one of the greatest opportunities to achieve an understanding, with scientific certainty, of the demographics of a given area. There are multiple tools that can be used to focus the biometrics collections effort based on density of reporting, analysis of latents of value, and population patterns. External agencies such as NGIC and COIC can provide products to tailor biometric collections. Additionally, internal tools such as Palantir can provide timely products given the appropriate training.

   (2) Recommendation: Liaise with NGIC and COIC prior to deployment to gain a better understanding of what they can provide to support biometrics targeting. Also, seek out instruction on incorporating CEXC reports and biometric matches in Palantir. From

the onset of the deployment, emphasize the necessity of biometric collections by all MSEs.

    h. <u>Topic: Role of the Targeting Cell at the Regimental Level</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The S-2 Targeting Cell is not equipped to unilaterally identify, track, and act on HVI targets and thus must better integrate with adjacent and supporting units IOT have a meaningful impact on the battlefield. The S-2 Targeting Cell is tasked with analyzing insurgent groups and identifying vulnerabilities where kinetic and non-kinetic assets can be applied to disrupt and degrade the effectiveness of targeted networks. However, the Targeting Cell is limited in its ability to find, fix, and finish targets due to a lack of tasking authority, a void in organic collections assets, and the absence of a responsive action arm to pursue fleeting targeting opportunities.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The S-2 Targeting Intelligence Officer should continue to solidify relationships with the Regional Targeting Cell (RTC) and the RC(SW) C-2 Targeting Section who possess the means to action targets and direct Intelligence collections efforts, respectively. The Regimental Targeting Intelligence Officer should facilitate this relationship by conducting broad all-source analysis on the volume of Intelligence collection generated by the RTC, identifying targetable individuals whose removal will significantly affect the battlespace, nominating those individuals for JPEL status, advocating for expanded collections on the newly identified targets, and by providing a holistic picture of the battlespace to guide future precision targeting operations.

    i. <u>Topic: Routine Access to the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS)</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: There is a regular requirement to access Intelligence products that are held at the Top Secret / Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) level. The Intelligence Community, as a whole, relies almost exclusively upon JWICS as the primary network for Intelligence sharing and dissemination. The lack of dedicated JWICS support has decreased the Intelligence Section's ability to collaborate with and acquire information from other members of the Intelligence Community in the pursuit of developing our common understanding of the battlefield. The Regimental Intelligence Section routinely had difficulty gaining access to needed information due to an almost exclusive reliance upon SIPR network. JWICS is host to a large number of tools and databases that can be leveraged to access information of tremendous intelligence value. Access to JWICS also improves sharing of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). In the best case scenario, an exclusive reliance on the SIPR network forces the Intelligence Section to go through great lengths to access the required material; at its worst, the Intelligence Section cannot

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access the needed information, is unable to accurately understand the operating environment, and is thus unable to present the Commander with all of the information he needs to make decisions.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The ability to exchange timely, relevant, and detailed information with supporting agencies would be of great utility in developing a clear Intelligence picture for the Regimental Commander and the MSE. JWICS access should be a priority for Intelligence sections both in garrison and while deployed. Several of the more useful databases require training before they can be accessed. Both entry-level and sustainment training must be undertaken in garrison so that the practiced skills can then be applied while deployed. Access while deployed should be the standard for all Intelligence Sections. As the ultimate end user for much of the sensitive Intelligence that is generated at the TS/SCI level, it is inadequate to isolate the Intelligence Section from access to valuable intelligence products and from collaboration with the greater Intelligence Community. If the Intelligence Section is to provide the Commander and his supported elements with the best possible analysis and recommendations, they must be able to collaborate with the broader Intelligence Community and analyze the full range of Intelligence information available; this can only be supported through consistent access to JWICS.

j. <u>Topic: Collections Integration</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: The traditional structure of C/G/S-2 sections does not support full integration of the diverse intelligence disciplines. Too often collections cells are pigeonholed into the management of aerial Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR) assets and capabilities at the expense of the overall intelligence collection effort. Collection managers should focus on all collection resources and methods available, including special activities, IOT create a holistic collections plan encompassing all collection disciplines. Collection cells tend to focus their efforts on the allocation and employment of aerial assets, leaving the direction and employment of other collection assets (HETs and SSTs) as separate entities. This segregation of collections capabilities at the higher levels of command (G2X and Radio Battalion) often leads to divergent collection efforts that are not mutually supporting or working towards a common purpose (intelligence gaps).

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Assign dedicated Liaison Officers from the G2X and Radio Battalion to the RCT S-2 to advocate for RCT requirements and facilitate the sharing of information between organizations.

k. <u>Topic: ISR Allocation and Employment</u>

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(1) <u>Discussion</u>: The introduction of multiple and diverse ISR assets into the battlespace has brought previously unavailable collection capabilities to the Battalion and Company level. As a provider, it is imperative to understand the full capability set of each asset that is, and can be, allocated to a parent or subordinate unit. The increasing access to national/theater level capabilities at the tactical level increases the training requirement so that assets can be properly employed to maximize utility. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Field Support Representatives (FSRs) exist in theater to provide training and advice on proper employment.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Ensure the regular rotation of theater SMEs/FSRs to company and battalion collection cells to provide instruction on successful employment methods and to gain a better understanding of customer requirements.

l. <u>Topic: Data-Retrieval and Indexing of Intelligence Information</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Databases of intelligence information have been maintained on S-2 servers since 2009, leading to an enormous quantity of information archived for future use. A lot of time and effort has been spent to manage the storage architecture of this information with varying degrees of success; however, because no information management standard exists across the multiple databases, critical information can be extremely difficult to locate. Google Desktop is a simple-to-use program that uses keyword searches and Boolean logic to quickly identify the needed information amongst hundreds of thousands of documents. Google Desktop requires little to no training to employ properly and exponentially enhances the ability to research and streamlines data-retrieval capabilities. Despite its utility, there is resistance to the use of Google Desktop by network administrators because it is not a program of record.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Approve Google Desktop for accreditation for use on USMC intelligence systems and inclusion to IOW standard software load.

m. <u>Topic: Named Areas of Interest (NAIs) Synchronization</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Proper utilization of a common NAI process leads to effective management of limited collection resources and provides a shared understanding of the intelligence picture. Currently, Intelligence Sections across the MAGTF employ a variety of methods and naming conventions to identify, report and track NAIs in their battlespace— creating discrepancies and confusion. This situation is often further complicated after a RIP/TOA or battle space handover as incoming units create "new" NAIs over historic NAIs.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: A systematic process that names, prioritizes, and categorizes all areas of interest in the AO and MSCs

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AOs should be adopted and widely distributed to both supporting and supported units. The process should use enduring criteria that reinforces continuity of target areas up and down the collections chain. Implementing a standardized method for tracking NAIs across the MAGTF ensures a common understanding of the threat situation.

    n. Topic: Enabler Support to Biometrics

       (1) Discussion: The effective employment of contracted civilian intelligence enablers is a critical element of an effective intelligence effort. Historically, WTI/DAC analysts were tasked to track evidence and report information of interest back to the unit who submitted the evidence. Recently, the collection, processing, and dissemination of Biometric-Enabled Intelligence (BEI) was added to their billet description. As CF transition to the security force assistance operations, there will likely be less traditional evidence to track and report on. This means there will be an opportunity for WTI/DAC analyst to focus more time on other recently-assigned duties associated with BEI. Shifting WTI/DAC analysts' expertise to focus more on BEI will prove more beneficial to future intelligence requirements.

       (2) Recommendation: Expand the role of WTI/DAC to not only serve as an advocate for biometrics collections/analysis but to produce a standardized product that fuses all-source intelligence with BEI.

    o. Topic: Persistent Surveillance System (PSS) Management

       (1) Discussion: Currently, the PSS is incorrectly labeled as an AT/FP asset; however, they are being employed by battalion intelligence sections as an ISR asset. PSS capabilities expand far beyond their ability to provide force protection to the base and play a vital role in the battalion's collections plan and target development. It is essential that the collections manager at the RCT has input and buy-in to the employment and distribution of PSS.

       (2) Recommendation: PSS systems need to be moved under the collections umbrella and be managed by the Intelligence Sections at the higher levels.

    p. Topic: Injecting ANSF Intel into CF Channels

       (1) Discussion: As CF shift from COIN to Security Force Assistance operations, diminished collection capabilities will narrow our understanding of the battlespace, and CF will become increasingly more reliant on ANSF reporting to develop the intelligence picture. A structured mechanism to capture ANSF reporting and inject it into the CF intelligence cycle should be developed. However, due to discrepancies inherent in ANSF reporting there is the potential to

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corrupt CF intelligence databases with inaccurate information that cannot easily be corroborated.

(2) Recommendation: Require Advisor Teams to submit a daily intelligence report with SIGACTS and reporting. Inject these SIGACTS into Palantir under their own data set that is separate from, but can be layered with CF reporting.

q. Topic: KMZs and a Layered Approach

(1) Discussion: With the multiple streams of intelligence reporting available, information can quickly become overwhelming and disjointed. Using programs such as Google Earth and Palantir, one can convert this information into an overlay file, KMZ, that can be graphically displayed over a geospatial image. Multiple KMZs can be combined to create a layered overlay. Layering KMZs allows you to quickly view multiple streams of reporting in a fused manner over a geospatial reference (map or imagery) IOT gain a holistic intelligence picture. KMZ have the ability to provide dynamic feed that continually updates to provide the most current information.

(2) Recommendation: Whenever possible, intelligence organizations should be required to produce dynamic KMZ that automatically update. All intelligence products should have an accompanying KMZ.

r. Topic: Threat Finance

(1) Discussion: In an effort to identify movement of illicitly obtained money used to fund lethal aid for the INS, the Delaram Police Advisor Team conducted a hawala registration project. Utilizing AUP information, some of which was validated by intelligence reporting, the PAT visited several hawalas in the Delaram bazaar and from pre-scripted interview questions collected as much information as possible. Information collected was recorded in IIRs. The largest hawaladar and suspected narcotics trafficker/Taliban lethal aid facilitator was identified and interviewed on several occasions. The AUP seized his books and records which were subsequently photographed and translated. The books were returned. Cursory investigation revealed approximately $300K to $500K in weekly transactions to Herat, Kandahar, Iran and Quetta, PAK. While the transactions could not be identified as illicit without some additional corroboration, many entries and amounts recorded were highly suspicious. The hawaladar was biometrically enrolled and would have been interviewed further had the PAT not left Delaram. All information was passed up the chain of command IOT transfer the case to Afghan FINTRACA investigators.

(2) Recommendation: Battle Space Owners should initiate a registration project with the following or similar tasks as appropriate to their AO:

(a) With the assistance of either the AUP, ANCOP, or NDS and merged with intelligence reporting, identify hawaladars suspected of providing financial aid to the INS.

(b) While on partnered patrols, visit each hawala store and identify personnel, enrolling each biometrically.

(c) Obtain hawala slips and have them translated; provide all information to appropriate S-2 collectors for reports which can be disseminated.

(d) With the concurrence of the partnered Afghan unit, seize the hawalas' books and records, photograph them, and return them as soon as possible. After books are translated, conduct forensic audit and attempt to determine suspicious transactions. Re-interview the hawaladar.

(e) It is recommended that S-2 conducts a persistent collection effort in order to gain SA on lethal aid provided to TB.

(f) Provide all information to FDO for eventual dissemination to Afghan threat finance investigators. (FINTRACA)

s. Topic: Saving and Storing Critical Information for Long Term Analysis

(1) Discussion: Hard-won data and understanding is not being stored in a user-friendly place for long-term analysis and exploitation. After each RIP/TOA, understanding is lost and JPELs have escaped capture as a result. When a company commander walks into a shura with an elder for the first time, he should do so armed with every report and piece of analysis CF have ever written on the individual.

(2) Recommendation: S-2s need to use Palantir as the central repository for all information about HVTs, elders, NAIs, etc. Also, intelligence officers, in conjunction with the Operations Section, need to establish a simple SOP for quality control and assign the responsibility for updating the database. This should be coordinated up and down the chain of command, ensuring a common operational picture is maintained.

t. Topic: Standardization of Command and Control Systems in the Marine Corps

(1) Discussion: Currently, the Marine Corps uses Command Post of the Future (CPOF), Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC), Palantir, CIDNE, MarineNet, and Google Earth to exercise command and control. These systems require significant amounts of additional time

and training in order to be effectively used; however, all of these systems do essentially the same thing: they provide a system to catalogue information and access it upon command, but they are not compatible with one another. Therefore, information must be manually added to each system; thus, wasting time. Additionally, each one of these systems requires their own stand-alone servers and contracted support, with associated costs.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The same system that tracks unit boundaries, friendly locations, enemy actions (significant events), operational graphics, and provides imagery to the ½ meter Controlled Image Base (CIB), can also be used to catalogue compounds of interests, rat lines, locations of persons of interests, tribal overlays, targets (kinetic and non-kinetic), etc. This system, whatever it is, must be compatible with other systems and capable of fulfilling the requirements of synthesizing operations and intelligence products into a single system.

u. <u>Topic: SharePoint – Use and Applications</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: SharePoint has the ability to make staff collaboration more efficient; however, it requires some training. Unfortunately, the only people qualified to deliver this training are IMOs (and not in every case), which are not usually staffed at the Regt or Bn level until they deploy.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Implement a SharePoint training program for staff primaries, alphas, and chiefs. IMOs should be primary instructors of SharePoint at all levels, which will require IMOs to receive comprehensive training.

v. <u>Topic: Security Forces Assistance (SFA) Model</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: RCT-6 units transitioned from conducting partnered COIN in the Central Helmand River Valley to conducting SFA across the Focused Key Terrain Districts. The SFA model required distributed operations working by, with, and through ANSF. The RCT chose operating locations that allowed CF to advise and assist ANSF to secure the District Transition Teams, to maintain situational awareness, and to protect specific Ground Lines of Communication (GLOCs). As CF presence decreased, ANA-led operations maintained pressure on the enemy throughout the fighting season. As ANSF operations became more independent, coordination between various elements increased, primarily due to the emphasis placed on the development of the OCC-Ds.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Despite a great deal of discomfort as situational awareness and intelligence reporting significantly decreased, the ANSF have proven capable of planning and executing operations with the assistance of CF enablers. Many have concluded

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that ANSF will subordinate themselves to CF as long as CF allows them to do so. During previous transitions leading to an increase in ANSF responsibilities, it was remarkable how quickly the ANSF leadership adapted once they accepted that CF were no longer able to support. Although these transitions are uncomfortable for CF because of a loss of direct control and situational awareness during consolidations, it was apparent that the ANSF were capable of handling anything the insurgents could muster during the fighting season as their confidence continued to grow. RCT-6 assessed that simply having CF within the districts to provide leadership mitigated the threat of a "crisis of confidence."

    w.   Topic: Aerial Interdiction Force (AIF)

       (1) Discussion: RCT-6 employed an AIF to interdict/disrupt smuggling routes in the eastern and western desert outside the green zone in AO Guadalcanal. This force conducted day and night interdiction operations to search vehicles moving materials to and from Pakistan and Iran into the SHRV/CHRV. The AIF consisted of ~10 Marines from an advisor team, a narcotics military working dog with handler, a Joint Tactical Air Controller and ANA military police soldiers that had trained with the Marines specifically for this mission. The numbers of ground forces varied between missions based on aircraft availability from 21 to 30(+) PAX. The aviation package included 2 CH-53D/E(s) or 1 x MV-22, a mixed section of UH/AH escort, and a full motion video capable platform used to confirm a vehicle's location and cargo. As this package evolved the MC-12W became the preferred FMV platform since it had enough speed to track vehicles across wide expanses.

       (2) Recommendation: Maintain an AIF capability at the RCT or Bn level and use it weekly to maintain a trained and cohesive ground, aviation and ISR package that can be sourced in case of time sensitive targeting. This force conducted operations during both day and night and provided a visible deterrent to INS attempting to move narcotics and lethal aid into the CHRV. Locals traveling through the desert frequently thanked the ANSF for reducing the illicit activity that occurred along these facilitation routes. The AIF has disrupted historical facilitation routes into the CHRV and forced some smugglers to bypass Reg-e-Khan Neshin, extending their lines of operations and exposing themselves to targeting in Nimroz and Kandahar Provinces.

3.   OPERATIONS

    a.   Topic: MAGTF Planner Acting as RSO&I Training NCO

       (1) Discussion: The MAGTF Planner, with his ability to track the daily changes of ULN's and flights, as well as units' PAX counts,

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should be utilized to increase training schedule efficiency, especially in regards to conducting RSO&I.

       (2) Recommendation: MAGTF planners have access to timelines and pax counts for unit RSO&I. The training NCO should keep in close coordination with the MAGTF planner to help maintain accurate unit training plans/schedules. A daily flight tracker produced by the MAGTF planner would be an invaluable asset for the RCT training NCO.

   b. Topic: Integration of SOF Task Forces

       (1) Discussion: The integration of SOF task forces into the RCT battlespace was accomplished through a variety of means. They were integrated early in the planning of operations to discuss complementary effects and a large amount of intelligence sharing was conducted. Additionally, weekly SOF coordination meetings were held to ensure actions on the ground were integrated or at least complementary. When the task forces inserted, they were given an OPERATIONS BOX (OPBOX) –a non-doctrinal measure that functions as a temporary Area of Operations, activated and deactivated in a manner similar to a boundary shift. This allowed the most permissive use of fires, C2 and unity of command. The SOF operations proved valuable to security in the RCT AO by operating in deep areas on the seams and edges that were outside operational reach of conventional forces. Additionally, by the latter stages of the deployment, after surge reduction, the SOF forces became the economy of force effort in Northern Helmand.

       (2) Recommendation: Integrate SOF into planning and operations early. Develop procedures for intelligence sharing. Ensure commanders and staffs establish rapport with liaison officers from TF/JSOTF and SOF commands.

   c. Topic: Integration of ANSF into Planning and Operations

       (1) Discussion: The primary focus of the RCT's mission was to set the conditions for ANSF to assume the lead in security. While this was accomplished through partnering and daily operations at the Battalion/Kandak level, the ANA at the Brigade and Corps level are still lacking in planning and direction of forces. The lack of an overall plan for ANA operations was a major obstacle in the development of a RCT plan to support transition.

       (2) Recommendation: RCT and Task Force (Div) level headquarters should focus on assisting ANSF forces in developing an overall plan for operations and transition.

   d. Topic: Force Protection Versus Advising

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      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: A tension exists between having access and close continuous contact between advisor and advisee and having enough separation for advisor team force protection. Obviously advisors need to work side-by-side with their counterparts to effectively advise. However, advisor teams, who live with their foreign counterparts and rely on them for security, are particularly susceptible to insider attacks. The natural reaction to this threat is to put security measures in place to mitigate the threat to the greatest extent possible. During September 2012, a spike in insider threats occurred, causing the RCT to evaluate FP measures at locations where advisor teams were located and at RCT MSE locations. The force protection environment at each location differed somewhat, making it difficult to establish and enforce a baseline standard. In several instances, external force protection surveys were beneficial to identifying deficiencies in FP that were easily remedied without significant impact to mission. In other cases, the force protection measures were somewhat "over-steered" and had the potential for a perception of an increase in distrust between CF and ANSF units.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Continue monthly evaluations of the FP environment at all locations. Ensure messaging supports any increase in FP posture and the ANSF leadership understand the strategic impact of insider threat attacks.

    e. <u>Topic: Battlespace Management (BSM)</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: For the majority of RCT-6's deployment, BSM was managed by the RCT COC. This included construction, deconfliction, and dissemination of temporary areas of operations (TAO/OP BOXES), Bn/ Co boundaries, and now, with the advent of Transition Lead Security Role (TLSR), ANA battlespace. With regard to the OP BOXES (SOF) and ANA battlespace (C10/ TFL), the RCT is not the higher or coordinating HQs for either element. The RCT does have the preponderance of CPOF experience and has become the default BSM agency in RC(SW). This has resulted in a significant workload increase for the Current Operations Chief and SWO. Coordination of temporary battlespace occurs at the RCT/SOF level, when in reality, the RCT should ultimately be responsible for deconfliction with the BN that is responsible for the requested ground. This ad hoc process has worked in the past due to the diligence of the COPS Chief and SWOs and was built on personal relationships between the RCT and the various SOF elements operating in RC(SW). As the RSA collapses and the ANA 215 Corps begins to take its own battlespace, there is a significant possibility that the USMC RCT can lose situational awareness on force disposition across the battlespace.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The 215 Corps and BDE ATs should be receiving and deconflicting temporary requests for battlespace with and through their ANA partners. When the RCT arrived in theater, the BDE ATs were subordinate to the RCT which facilitated this

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coordination. As new ATs rotate in, the Corps AT is their HHQs and the remnants of previous PTP relationships will fade. Ultimately as TLSR gains momentum, the ANA can and should have a vote in who operates in their assigned battlespace. As the senior HQs, RC(SW) should coordinate and deconflict BSM.

    f.   Topic: Battalion Rotations and Reporting Procedures

        (1) Discussion: A consistent weakness in battalion reliefs-in-place (RIPs) was an insufficient understanding by the new unit of RCT-6 reporting expectations and requirements. Invariably following TOA between battalions there would be a period, usually lasting two to three weeks, of heavier adjustment and correction to reports received by the RCT-6 COC. Generally, Battalion COCs, with immediate remediation by the SWO or watch chief, conform to the reporting standard; however, miscommunications WRT intentions or lack of pertinent information can create intrusive RFIs from HHQs.

        (2) Recommendation: During RSO&I, the key players in the battalion watch staff should spend a period of time (6-8 hours) in the RCT's COC in order to build rapport with their regimental counterparts and have reporting procedures explained face to face. This would reduce a significant amount of misunderstanding and/or hesitation in reporting felt by newly arrived watch sections. Incorporate TTECG personnel into the RCT watch, on an episodic basis, to learn theater specific C2 procedures. These personnel can return to MCAGCC to train deploying Battalion staffs during predeployment training events.

    g.   Topic: Cross Training by the COC Watch Standers

        (1) Discussion: There were several instances where a specific watch stander in the COC would find himself covering down on another watch stander's job. Leave rotation, sick watch standers, or unforeseen circumstances would result in specifically-trained watch standers being absent from the COC.

        (2) Recommendation: The RCT-6 COC watch staff ensured that all watch standers were cross-trained in at least one additional job. For example, the CPOF manager was cross-trained in the journal clerk's job and the journal clerk was cross-trained in the UMCC clerk's job. This kind of cross-training gave the COC watch staff greater depth and redundancy and allowed the watch standers to shift from one job to another in order to meet operational commitments.

    h.   Topic: IMO/Data Support in the COC

        (1) Discussion: The RCT COC relied on numerous C2 systems in order to maintain SA and coordinate actions on the battlefield (C2PC, CPOF, Transverse Chat, MiRC Chat, Email, SIPR/CENTRIX phone lines, SharePoint, and SATCOM radio to name a few). It was not uncommon to

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experience temporary or long term failures of individual systems throughout the deployment. In order to remedy these issues, the COC would often have to request technical assistance from S-6 Marines or from civilian FSR's. The SATCOM radios had 24/7 support (provided by the S-6 Marine on radio watch). The IMO was able to troubleshoot SharePoint, Transverse and MiRC during daytime hours (there was not an IMO night watch). Troubleshooting for certain systems like email and phones required the COC watch staff to call over to the S-6 shop for technical assistance.

(2) Recommendation: Having a data-trained Marine on hand in the COC would have greatly expedited the resolution of many of these technical issues. For a period of 3-4 months, the RCT-6 COC did have a data Marine attached to one of the watch shifts, who was also cross trained as a COP manager (CPOF). His general knowledge of data systems was instrumental in allowing the COC watch staff to internally resolve many technical issues when they occurred. As well, his ability to accurately explain the causes or context behind extreme data failures to his counterparts in the S-6 shop enabled them to resolve many issues in a more efficient manner. It is recommended to have at least one data Marine on both the night watch and day watch shifts in order to provide internal data support.

i. Topic: Common Operational Picture (COP)

(1) Discussion: CPOF has proven to be extremely valuable and essential in displaying the RCT's COP. It provided the COC watch staff with an all-encompassing digital map with up-to-date info on friendly positions, unit boundaries, MSR's/ASR's, provincial district boundaries, and approximate locations for fire support control measures (the FSCC used C2PC for all fire support de-confliction). However, it was not universally applied and used at the battalion level. Some battalion COC's preferred to use Google Earth (which was much less accurate than CPOF).

(2) Recommendation: HQMC should adopt CPOF as the primary source for COP in OEF and ensure EMV training programs enforce its use at all levels. Not only will this ensure operational units are able to accurately plot grids, it will also facilitate the RCT's ability to transfer CTP products (overlays, friendly locations, op boxes, ect.) down to subordinate units and across boundaries/higher via the CPOF server.

j. Topic: COC Shift Changeover

(1) Discussion: The staff of the MISTC in Camp Johnson, NC teach a single shift change with an example format for a shift change brief in order to maintain situational awareness and tie up any lingering issues when the second watch section takes its posts. The watch staff of the 1st Marine Division (Task Force Leatherneck) used

this method. The RCT, however, decided before deploying that it would stagger the changeover of the various watches in order to better maintain situational awareness across the COC. Special attention was paid to ensuring that key positions such as the Watch Chief, SWO, Air Officer, and Fires Watch Officer did not change over at the same time. As a consequence, the RCT experienced no significant (i.e. impact to operations) loss of situational awareness between watch shifts in an 11-month deployment.

        (2) Recommendation: A staggered shift changeover will better serve a COC by reducing the risk of issues being forgotten about in the process of turnover. In addition, situational awareness is not lost while focusing on a shift change brief. As a tool for keeping the commander informed, the battlefield update brief and command journal are sufficient to make a shift change brief unnecessary.

   k. Topic: Operation JAWS

        (1) Discussion: The RCT-6 overarching concept of operations in AO Tripoli from January to July 2012 was Operation JAWS. The RCT maintained a high level of operational tempo while disrupting the enemy in a series of intelligence-driven clearing operations. Operation JAWS caused constant INS shortages in manpower, ammunition and finances through AO TRIPOLI. The RCT's efforts maintained CF initiative and disrupted INS ability to achieve a cohesive summer offensive. Operation JAWS allowed conditions to be set for the retrograde of three battalions from the battlespace as part of Phase II surge recovery and the transfer of the RCT HQ to Camp Leatherneck. Our assessments reflected that it successfully achieved this end state. The directive from RC(SW) was to blunt the INS summer fighting season and this was accomplished by Operation JAWS.

        (2) Recommendation: Continue to implement operations like Operation JAWS to keep the enemy on the defensive.

   l. Topic: Operation HELMAND VIPER

        (1) Discussion: Operation HELMAND VIPER was designed to be the bridging operation that would build on the success of JAWS and maintain pressure on INS networks even with a reduced footprint of forces. While the enemy was able to execute a few high profile attacks in Sept 12, overall the significant actions (SIGACTs) were on average half of what they had been the previous year.

        (2) Recommendation: Continue to execute operations like Operation HELMAND VIPER to maintain pressure and tempo advantage on the enemy.

   m. Topic: Assumption of AO Guadalcanal

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(1) <u>Discussion</u>: On July 5th 2012, the transfer of authority took place between RCT-5 and RCT-6. RCT-5 had been on station in AO Guadalcanal since Aug of 2011. RCT-6 had been in charge of AO Tripoli since Jan 2012. The transfer of authority was accomplished successfully after a standard RIP in which the staffs of both RCTs conducted information exchange and the RCT-6 CO and staff primaries conducted a BFC of AO Guadalcanal. RCT-6 assumption of the additional battlespace proved possible largely due to the reduction of forces, which allowed the RCT HQ to more effectively exercise C2 over the extended battlespace. For a short period of time the RCT commanded 6 battalions and 2 independent companies, two of those battalions were retrograded within 2 months as part of phase II surge recovery.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Command and control of 6 battalions will challenge an RCT HQ to its limits and is not recommended for extended periods.

n. <u>Topic: Planning for AO Fires Coverage</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: With the reduction of the British GMLRS scheduled to leave on 15 December, gaps in PGM coverage, specifically surface to surface fires, are created within our BNs' AOs.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Coordinate closely with the Btry LNO in order to ensure coverage of PGM gaps as firing units move or plan to move. Ensure this coordination information is passed to the battalions early enough to let them plan use of their assets to cover PGM gaps as needed. As we continue to turn over more battle space to the ANSF units and as firing units get drawn down, there will be less coverage for some of our enduring unit positions on the ground. As long as they are made aware of these changes in advance they will be able to do the proper planning to gain the coverage they need.

o. <u>Topic: Processing Fire Missions Over Voice Communication Systems</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Transverse and mIRC chat failures (due to temporary network outages) forced operators to resort to radio voice communication for live mission processing numerous times during the deployment. Though radio use became an effective backup, it has inherent C2 limitations that are not ideal for prolonged periods and can slow operational tempo.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Changes to the TTPs for voice mission processing should be implemented inside the Appendix 19 to minimize fire mission delays. The use of multiple line CFFs and MTOs that are ideal for use in the network chat systems wastes time in transmitting over the radio and slows down overall processing times. The 3 transmission CFF should be utilized with the standard MTO. In cases where more information is needed, such as BIP grids with Excal, it

should be added as standard information transmitted back from the firing unit vice being requested. This has been informally changed between the RCT and firing units but formal changes should be made and distributed to the Battalions through the Appendix 19.

  p. Topic: Immediate Suppression Mission Processing

    (1) Discussion: The need for immediate suppression coverage for battalions within range of conventional HE from the 155MM cannons has been validated but the processing time must be sped up.

    (2) Recommendation: Previously firing units were required to produce an MTO when performing an immediate suppression mission. This ultimately slows down the processing time, which defeats the "immediate suppression" concept. As long as the firing unit confirms the grid when they copy the initial request, whether it is over voice or chat, there should be no need for an MTO. Currently this change to TTP has been agreed upon by the RCT and the firing units but this process should be added to the Appendix 19 and passed down to the RCT's subordinate BNs.

  q. Topic: Tactical PsyOp Teams (TPT) Read in to Alternate Compensatory Control Measures (ACCM)

    (1) Discussion: In the past, TPT Team Leaders were not read-in to ACCMs. This hindered the battalion's ability to successfully act on deception opportunities in the AO.

    (2) Recommendation: When a new TPT comes in country, the Detachment Leader, Detachment Staff Non-Commission Officer in Charge and all the Team Leaders should be read-in to the ACCM program. This should happen during their RSO&I, before they are sent to their respective AO.

  r. Topic: Employment of the Tactical PSYOP Teams (TPT)

    (1) Discussion: In the past TPTs had not been used in every district in the Regiment's AO due to Battalions detaching them. The follow-on Battalions are likely to continue to not utilize a TPT, which limits the PSYOP capability for that district and AO. This hinders the ability to message against the insurgents and in favor of GIRoA and ANSF.

    (2) Recommendation: A TPT should cover each district for the RCT's AO, maximizing the RCT's messaging campaign. Also due to PSYOP's inherent doctrinal structure, a TPT should always be attached to the BN HQ IOT successfully capture the full picture and ensure that commander's intent is being met.

  s. Topic: Top Secret Clearance for IO Officer Billet

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(1) <u>Discussion</u>: The IO Officer is responsible for the RCT's military deception planning and coordination. A top secret clearance is required to get on the compound, where coordination meetings are held with all the military deception enablers.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: It is highly recommended that the IO Officer gets a top secret clearance before deploying in order to gain access to the coordination meetings.

t. <u>Topic: Switching out Targeting Information Officers (0803) (TIOs) at the Halfway Mark</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: It was decided by the 0803 community at 10th Marines to change out Targeting Officers at the halfway point of the deployment IOT allow new TIOs to develop their skills as Targeting Officers and be part of a Regimental Staff. One issue associated with this move is that as a result of the new TIO not participating in the workup, he misses all of the planning that goes into how the Targeting Cell is formed and operates. Another issue is that it takes about 30-45 days IOT to become familiar with enemy TTPs and the Area of Operations in general. Although getting the targeting and staff experience is very important for a junior 0803, it should be tempered with requirements of the RCT and needs thorough preparation and coordination to conduct effectively. The incoming TIO needs to be very proficient with the targeting process and a fast learner to be able to step into a deployment at the halfway point.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The TIO replacement plan should be coordinated with the respective RCT HQ well ahead of deployment to ensure continuity and cohesion throughout the deployment.

u. <u>Topic: Determining the Collateral Hazard Area (CHA) for Munitions When Employing Fires in Self-Defense</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Due to the recent release of the Tactical Directive 5.1, there was some confusion with regards to what measures to use when employing fires in self-defense. The SOP 398 defines the CHA as "an area formed by measuring the collateral effects radius (CER) from either the edge of a target facility boundary, the aim point for a target, or the edge of an engagement zone or artillery sheaf for an area target. The CHA is the area where the weapon's effects are estimated to produce collateral damage." The CER is only found in the Collateral Damage Estimation (CDE) tables. Formal CDE is only authorized to be conducted at the ISAF Joint Command Tactical Operations Center (IJCTOC) by qualified individuals. The guidance that was passed was to utilize Pi and the associated risk estimation distance (RED).

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: It is recommended that all Targeting Information Officers and Fire Support Coordinators (FSC) be trained in Collateral Damage Methodology IOT allow them to use CER's associated with table 3. This will give the commanders that are making the decision to fire or not fire a better understanding of what mitigation really means in regards to CDE, so that they can make a more informed decision.

      v. <u>Topic: DoD Rewards Program</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The DoD Rewards Program's purpose is to pay local nationals for tips on improvised explosive devices (IEDs), High Valued Targets (HVT), or weapons cache locations. In order to successfully complete a Rewards payment a unit is required to establish three individuals to fill three separate roles; a Paying Agent (PA), a Certifying Officer (CertO), and a Rewards Authorization Officer (RAO). The role of the PA and CertO is to physically deliver the payment to the local national providing the tip. Both the PA and CertO are required to be an E7 or higher. Because the RAO is ultimately responsible for the unit's program and reports all payment to higher headquarters, he is required be an officer. CertO and PA training are conducted at the closest Disbursing Office (outside the AO). SNCOs and officers at the battalion level are typically filling multiple critical billets and cannot afford to leave their AO for a long duration due to operations. Critical billet vacancy implications often drive units to balk at committing their SNCOs and officers to CertO and PA training. This decision, in turn, hinders the unit's ability to exploit the valuable tactical advantages of the DoD Rewards Program.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: It is recommended that the RCT and MEF have a Rewards Program Team with the ability to travel the AO and make payments for battalions. This team will keep the battalions from sending key personnel away from the fight for training, money collection, and payments.

      w. <u>Topic: Combat Camera (COMCAM) Attachment to Units</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The Regiment's Combat Camera is attached to the S-3 Future Operations section under the Information Operations Officer. While attached to the Future Operations section, the COMCAM section was linked into upcoming operations, which allowed them the most up-to-date timelines for any upcoming operations. The Information Operations Officer can work with the COMCAM SNCOIC to send the COMCAM photographer and videographer along on upcoming operations which are not covered by Battalion COMCAM personnel. In the past, battalions have occasionally put the COMCAM under their S-1 shop in order to cover administration requirements such as promotion photos. This hinders the battalion's ability to capture operational success and the training of Afghan National Security Forces.

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       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: COMCAM personnel should be attached to the battalion's operations section, preferably the Information Operations Officer, in order to allow them the most flexibility to cover upcoming operations.

   x.   <u>Topic: The Joint Prioritized Shaping and Influencing List (JPSIL) Process</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The process for removal of a GIRoA official or for promoting and supporting a good official is through the JPSIL package. This is a long process, and during the time it takes to complete the package, the individual's behavior may change or reporting may become outdated.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Update the JPSIL package every 30 days and remove any reports that are older than 90 days. Work with Civil Affairs, the Tactical PSYOP Team, and the S-2 Targeting Officer to get the most recent reports. This will prove to the chain of command and the Afghans how productive or counter-productive the official in-question is.

   y.   <u>Topic: RSO&I Counter-IED (CIED) Training</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The RSO&I CIED training aboard Camp Leatherneck needs to be enhanced. Currently the training provided is generalized for TTPs throughout the entire RC(SW) AO. This is inadequate for infantry, engineer, and EOD units deploying to specific districts with in RC(SW). The training must reflect the current specific TTPs of the area to which these units are deploying.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Revamp the CIED lanes to include the intricacies of the specific battle space, review and war game post-blast analyses (PBAs) from events from that area, review in-depth the enemy TTPs current to that AO, and then conduct practical application of the counters to those TTPs.

   z.   <u>Topic: CIED Skills</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The units most successful at detecting IEDs are those most proficient at patrolling fundamentals. They conduct rehearsals, thorough patrol briefs, after-actions and honesty traces and integrate every enabler available (ISR, ANSF, IDDs, MWDS, etc) into their plan. As much as eighty percent of IED detection is accomplished visually, reinforcing the idea that reliance on the fundamental patrolling skills of the individual Marine is critical to CIED success.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Emphasis must be placed on patrolling basics to help out-think our opponents on the ground. Combat hunter

exercises, and language and cultural awareness training are also effective means of improving CIED skills.

    aa. Topic: Man-packable CIED Equipment and the Individual Marine's Combat Load

        (1) Discussion: With the addition of man-portable countermeasures, some Marines are patrolling with 80 to 100 lbs of equipment, severely diminishing the time and distance they are able to move on foot.

        (2) Recommendation: R&D efforts should focus on improving existing systems in four areas: lighter weight, improved battery life, improved ergonomics, and increased simplicity.

    bb. Topic: Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

        (1) Discussion: More training with ISR assets, to include Aerostat, GBOSS, and platoon/company level UAV's such as Raven, WASP, and PUMA, will increase Marines' understanding and confidence in their ability to use these systems effectively. This in turn will allow units in OEF to better integrate the systems into operations and maximize their effectiveness while reducing threat exposure to Marines on foot. Battalion and company staffs need more opportunities to rehearse their battle drills using ISR.

        (2) Recommendation: Push to expose battalions to the full spectrum of ISR prior to EMV. Increase opportunities for Marines to train on these systems during PTP. This will further increase the unit's ability to plan and weight their patrolling efforts.

    cc. Topic: Persistent Surveillance System (PSS) Employment

        (1) Discussion: The RCT uses a number of different PSSs such as PTDS, PGSS, 107' GBOSS, 80' GBOSS, GBOSS Lite, CSBC, and Cerberus Lite. These systems have allowed the BSOs to establish and maintain PID on INS where other means would have exposed Marines to undue risk.

        (2) Recommendation: Continue employment of these systems throughout OEF retrograde and redeployment.

    dd. Topic: PSS Line of Sight Studies

        (1) Discussion: The RCT maintains a Line of Sight Study for all 80' GBOSS, 107' GBOSS, PGSS, and PTDS on SharePoint. This allows the operators and leaders a quick and easy way to analyze dead spots within coverage.

        (2) Recommendation: Continue to request Topographical maps showing the Line of Sight whenever a PSS is moved.

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    ee.   Topic: AT/FP Officer

       (1) Discussion: The insider threat highlighted a lack of AT/FP plans at most units. The AT/FP officer for most infantry BNs is the CBRN Officer, who is also the COC SWO. At the battalion, the AT/FP officer is required to visit the various battalion positions, to make base AT plans, and to conduct vulnerability, criticality, and threat assessments. These requirements on top of the Marine's primary billet duties are often extremely difficult to fulfill. To compound this issue, some BNs are coming into theater without AT level II trained AT/FP officers. This issue is mitigated by the observance of basic tactical procedures and defense principals taught to all Marines.

       (2) Recommendation: It is highly recommended that each unit train as many Officers/SNCO's to be AT/FP Level II as possible. At a minimum, there should be one for each company headquarters.

    ff.   Topic: AEROSTAT

       (1) Discussion: There are multiple requirements that must be met to place in an AEROSTAT system, including area size requirements. There were complications with two of our AEROSTAT installs, which required engineer assets to be sent back out to positions to fix work that was incomplete. These could have been avoided had a site survey been conducted prior to AEROSTAT installation.

       (2) Recommendation: Conduct a thorough site survey prior to any installation of an AEROSTAT. AEROSTAT leads should be part of the planning process IOT allow for SME input for the builds.

    gg.   Topic: CBRND Mapping/Plotting Programs

       (1) Discussion: The COC uses many different programs for its mapping capabilities to include Palantir, Google Earth, CPOF, PSS-SOF, AFATDS and C2PC. Currently JWARN only works on C2PC, which is installed on the SIPR network.

       (2) Recommendation: Contract a consolidated program which has the capability to interface between all COC programs, or at least those most heavily used.

    hh.   Topic: M50 Masks On Hand

       (1) Discussion: RCT-6 had 100 M50 masks on hand. This allowed the unit to have enough masks to replace damaged or missing masks and to ensure all Marines maintained serviceable IPE.

       (2) Recommendation: Keep a small number of extra masks on hand as replacements.

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    ii.   <u>Topic: Equipment Tracking</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: To comply with RC(SW) Frago 360-12, all units are required to use a tracking program called the NBCDEMP. This program is an old program that has to be installed by a computer administrator and also requires the administrator to grant full local access rights to each individual user. Furthermore, it lacks flexibility for entries and could likely be functionally duplicated using Microsoft Excel.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Because Microsoft Excel is already installed on most machines, an Excel based spreadsheet should be built and used to track all required items that the NBCDEMP was previously used for.

    jj.   <u>Topic: Route Selection is the PRIMARY Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Tool</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The most effective means of defeating the IED is to avoid it. While IEDs remain one of the greatest threats to the CF/ANSF mission in Afghanistan, finding IEDs is by no means the mission objective. The majority of IEDs and consequent EOD responses continue to be in highly predictable locations (tree lines, choke points, intersections, footpaths, roads, wadi crossings). IED locations are predictable because Marine patrols are predictable. Avoiding IEDs through meticulous and varied route selection is the most effective method of countering the IED threat.

       (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Stress the importance of taking the "harder path" IOT make patrols difficult to target by IEDs. Traverse fields or open desert vice dirt paths and roads. Understand that old vehicle tracks are veritable minefields. Incorporate the use of GPS honesty traces to examine patrol patterns and determine potential danger areas. EOD should brief units on current IED trends and assist in route selection when planning patrols.

    kk.   <u>Topic: Abandoned Compounds</u>

       (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Throughout the past two years, significant Marine casualties have been sustained inside of abandoned compounds. Large caches have been discovered inside of abandoned compounds in the past but the majorities of such compounds are heavily mined with IEDs and possess no tactical value. The inherent risk in entering abandoned compounds is generally not worth the reward of potential cache finds. Significant casualties were sustained during OEF 12-1 while executing searches of abandoned compounds which yielded no tactical value. Considerable tactical advantage must drive the decision to enter or occupy abandoned compounds. Justification for entering abandoned compounds is regularly attributed to the

identification of such structures as Homemade Explosive (HME) and/or IED factories by Local National tip, intelligence, or patrol leaders. The robot can be thrown over walls and has approximately a 100' range. With 550 cord attached, the robot can be can be retrieved but has a tendency to become entangled on the line. The rechargeable battery lasts one hour and cannot be recharged in the field.

    (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The recommended TTP for abandoned compounds is to pitch the Throwbot over the wall for cursory searches IOT determine the necessity of sending Marines inside. Other alternative approaches to searching compounds include conducting a breach (mechanical or explosive) of the exterior wall and employing the Dragon Runner vice sending Marines inside to search. It is recommended that leadership attempt to substantiate claims of an IED/HME factory prior to committing dismounted forces to walk into IED-laden compounds of no tactical value. It is recommended to utilize robotic assets currently in theatre to facilitate a visual search of compounds. Robot platforms include the Throwbot, Dragon Runner SUGV 310, and SUGV 510.

    ll. <u>Topic: Significance of Conducting a Post Blast Assessment (PBA) After an IED Strike</u>

    (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Conducting PBAs allows EOD personnel to keep both battalion- and company-level commanders up to date on current IED trends by type and function. PBAs also allow for intelligence exploitation at the post blast site. In many cases, they allow CF to eliminate specific IED threats in the AO through the targeting of enemy personnel linked to IED activity and through biometric evidence gained from the recovery of IED components. Additionally, conducting consistent PBAs ensures EOD personnel have the ability to document and track the latest EF IED emplacement TTPs, thus enabling CF to mitigate EF IED activity by rapidly adjusting to new EF TTPs. The enemy is continuously altering their TTPs IOT exploit CF weaknesses and to effectively achieve their goal of causing CF casualties and denying CF freedom of movement. C-IED is a continuous evolution in which CF must also adapt and change their TTPs. Without consistent PBAs conducted by properly trained personnel, we squander the ability to swiftly adjust to changes in enemy IED TTPs. The only personnel qualified to conduct a PBA are EOD technicians, Weapons Intelligence Teams (WIT), and Tactical Exploitation Teams (TET). Untrained Marines conducting a PBA are simply unable to assimilate all relevant facts surrounding an explosive event. Observations by untrained personnel become circumstantial and contingent upon presumption and speculation. When patrols conduct a PBA without EOD it frequently results in misleading reports to company and battalion COCs and subsequently to MEF and all MSCs. The intelligence gleaned is far less valuable than a PBA conducted by trained personnel and disseminated through Asymmetric Threat and Tactical Analysis Casebook (ATTAC) reporting. Furthermore, any evidence recovered from the site cannot be properly processed by

the Afghanistan Captured Material Exploitation (ACME) system without an incident report associated with it.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Conducting PBAs is one reason infantry units have EOD in DS. Impress upon commanders and staff officers that a PBA is crucial to the success of attacking the network, targeting the cell, and providing up-to-date and accurate information IRT enemy TTPs. The closest EOD team to a strike should be sourced to conduct a PBA. If that team cannot respond due to concurrent operations, then the next available team should be sourced. Sourcing, tasking and providing security for EOD response can prove difficult at times while operating throughout one of largest AOs in Helmand Province. Plan ahead for prioritization of EOD response IOT achieve proper utilization of DS EOD assets. Make every effort to source EOD to conduct PBAs for the protection of your Marines and the security of your battle space.

   mm. <u>Topic: Thor III Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) Usage and Maintenance</u>

      (1) <u>Discussion</u>: V17's SOP was to employ multiple THOR III low-band systems on every patrol. The battalion's ability to supply the necessary ECM systems coupled with the Marines' understanding of ECM employment resulted in zero RC IED strikes on Marine partnered and un-partnered patrols. This figure is in stark contrast to the rise in RC IEDs in the Sangin AO throughout OEF 12-1. The one major difficulty regarding THOR III low-band maintenance has been the fragile nature of the antenna system. The Field Service Representatives (FSR) were readily available to travel and replace the antennas, but replacements could not be maintained on hand at the battalion due to the antenna's serialized nature. The result is damaged antennas employed on patrol which degrades the effectiveness of ECM coverage; a significant risk in this environment.

      (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Stress the necessity of employing multiple ECMs on dismounted patrols. Place specific emphasis on employing the correct ECM pack to combat current RC threats in the AO. EOD remains current on RC IED trends throughout Helmand Province and will advise accordingly. Due to the fragile nature of the Thor III low-band antenna prongs, recommend stressing the importance of protecting the antennas. Ensure Marines understand the resulting degradation of ECM coverage when the antenna is damaged or bent beyond its intended configuration. Utilize FSR support to repair broken systems immediately. Coordinate with FSRs to implement a system for maintaining spare antennas on hand at the battalion and company levels.

   nn. <u>Topic: Persistent Surveillance Systems (PSS)</u>

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(1) <u>Discussion</u>: Persistent surveillance currently consists of Persistent Ground Surveillance Systems (PGSS), Persistent Threat Detection Systems (PTDS), and Ground Based Operational Surveillance System (GBOSS). The system is mainly used for intelligence collection, target identification and tracking, and post-event video forensics. The Full Motion Video (FMV) program is currently trying to link the video feeds of PGSS and PTDS. Once GBOSS receives the Department of Defense (DoD) Information Assurance (IA) certification, it will also be able to connect to FMV. An Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) was submitted with a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) to gain a designation capability for PGSS and PTDS (laser or otherwise), as GBOSS already has a laser designator. A second platform is currently required to conduct target designation.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: PSS should be completely integrated across the three existing systems and all should have certified designation capability. Once linked across BN/RCT AOs and COCs, these PSSs will form a fully functional targeting system across any battle space in which they are employed.

oo. <u>Topic: Joint Tactical Air Controller (JTAC)/Joint Fires Observer (JFO) Employment</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: The learning curve for JTACs once they arrive in country is steep. The majority of incidents involving CIVCAS/fratricide have involved new arrivals into the theater who are not yet familiar with the environment and the SOPs/ROEs/Tactical Directives. Through specific training focused events, some of these issues could be minimized. The pre-deployment training and incorporation into fires exercises of the battalion JFOs would enable the use of these personnel to further support the GCE.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Provide additional guidance to battalions for JTAC/JFO pre-deployment training to increase their ability to support kinetic fires once in the AO. Training recommendations for battalion's PTP include:

(a) MEDEVAC request and coordination

(b) Tactical Directive chalk talks

(c) Type II CAS controls from a COC – Most controls are type II in the AO but this is the least-emphasized method in training. JTACs need to be comfortable with use of FMV for controls and recognize the limitations to SA from operating in a COC.

(d) JFO Employment and JTAC coordination: The more time and controls the JTAC and JFO get together, the better their employment will be. This is a critical way to manage the Type II

controls when SA on POL is low. This requires practice on interchange of information and division of responsibilities.

        (e) EW capability/asset training: Understanding of the availability of EW assets and capabilities available in the AO.

        (f) GRG use/correlation training: Standardized GRGss have been the quickest way for most JTACs to immediately talk air assets onto target and affect fires. Most of the organic air is showing up with the IPADs loaded with the GRGs. This enables them to pull up the identical GRG and correlate building numbers. Practice with these talk-ons prior to arrival will make this an effective TTP.

        (g) UAS Employment/Capabilities: Each of the different UAS have different capabilities and control chains. Understanding of the abilities and weaknesses of each type will enable better use of the strengths and weaknesses of each. The optics, audible signature, laser capabilities, weapons available, and caveats for employment should all be understood.

        (h) ROE and SOP 398/311 understanding: There are significant ROE and SOP restrictions for fires support in OEF. Detailed understanding by every ground force commander and JTAC is required to avoid CIVCAS and fratricide. Scenario vignette talk-throughs are valuable and should include Operations Officers and Judge Advocates as well. Having all of the players, who will be in the COC making these decisions, involved in the training is valuable.

        (i) Training opportunities with ISR assets, both organic and non-organic, must be allocated during PTP and EMV for the TACPs and S-2 personnel. VMU squadrons must be heavily integrated with the GCE during PTP IOT facilitate a smooth transition to combat operations once in theater. TACPs must be given more dedicated access and control of these assets IOT become proficient in a kinetic, combined arms engagement when a fleeting target presents itself.

    pp. <u>Topic: Air Space Control and Management</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: MAGTF aviation operates under the principal tenet of centralized command and decentralized control. The goal of decentralized control is to optimize the flexibility, versatility, and responsiveness of aviation by allowing control of assets to be conducted by agencies both responsive and in touch with the dynamic changes of the operation. This capability enables the GCE to seize the initiative, maintain tempo and exploit battlefield opportunities in a timely manner. The DASC provides the ACE the ability to provide procedural control of aircraft for deconfliction of aircraft and responsiveness of fires. The Tactical Air Control Party can facilitate this decentralized control by being an extension of the DASC. Air officers are trained to provide both procedural control and

terminal control of aircraft (manned and unmanned) within their AO. By clearly defining the relationship and division of responsibilities between the DASC and the TACP, a balance can be achieved of flexible, versatile fires while maintaining adequate safety margins. The time required for airspace clearance for fires (whether surface-based or aircraft-delivered) is not always satisfactory for the GCE. Additionally, the DASC relies heavily on predetermined, restrictive FSCMS when deconflicting airspace for CAS 9-Lines. The DASC currently maintains the majority of the responsibility for deconfliction at their level due to having the best overall picture of the larger AO for fires and all aspects of aviation (military, civilian, unidentified). Current methods being used in RC(SW) for airspace deconfliction requires all kinetic/non-kinetic actions of aircraft to be coordinated with the DASC. Tactical operations must be prioritized for airspace over general assault support. The battalion, via the air officer, should be able to prioritize competing requirements for airspace and deconflict assets in support of tactical operations. Within their own battlespace they have the best situational awareness of all assets that are under their control.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: With a decreased number of Battalions operating in the RCT battlespace, each remaining battalion has a larger battlespace to control. This larger battlespace lends itself to more doctrinal command and control where the Air Officer is permanently delegated the airspace in his AO. This delegation will increase the Battalion/Regimental Air Officer's situational awareness and allow for increased and timely fires. The application of doctrine and established TTPS with trust between the MACCS and TACP will allow for effective, lethal and safe employment of multiple airborne assets throughout all spectrums of the battlefield.

qq. <u>Topic: Air Shop Manning</u>

(1) <u>Discussion</u>: The RCT Air Shop is not manned adequately to manage the air requirements for a Division level element. The RCT is staffed with 2 Air Officers, which is adequate to fulfill the requirements by a Regimental level element. When RCT-6 took over duties from the Division, this increased the requirements to be available for planning and coordination with the MEF and MAW. These additional and important requirements are not feasible for a 2-person Air Shop which also serves as 24/7 watch post. As a result, there is the potential for future operations planning, JTAC management, and other coordination to slip through the cracks. As the RCT assumed MSC status, a manning requirement that at least mirrored that of the Division should have been implemented.

(2) <u>Recommendation</u>: The air shop should be staffed with the same number of line numbers as the Division. The best manning solution is to have an Air Officer, two assistants Air Officers (who are JTAC qualified) and if possible two NCO's (Strong admin skill's

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but not necessarily JTACs). This would allow the Air Officer to be intimately involved in future operations planning, current operations execution and JTAC management. The assistant Air Officers (and NCO's) would stand the 24/7 COC position and be able to focus on the current operations fight to include an increased role in facilitating command and control in the RSA.

4. LOGISTICS

    a. Topic: Battalion Mess Chiefs

        (1) Discussion: Battalion Mess Chiefs should ensure they arrive in theater with sufficient knowledge on the basic aspects of food service. They should know how to calculate DOS, how to store items properly, how to make a feed plan, and, most importantly, how to manage and analyze the LOGSTAT report.

        (2) Recommendation: Prior to the deployment, battalion mess chiefs should review proper field feeding procedures and seek out administrative food service training for the deployed environment. During pre-deployment field exercises, field mess chiefs should be required to execute the above mentioned responsibilities to the greatest extent possible. Subordinate Marines must be included as junior Marines have the responsibility of managing a field mess sites alone and at great distances from the chief.

    b. Topic: Class I Accountability at Georgian Positions

        (1) Discussion: Georgian positions experienced problems in accounting for rations and water at their positions. There is only one 3381 cook assigned to the Georgian Liaison Team (GLT). Georgians held 3 to 6 additional FOBS in their Area of Operations. This required LOGSTAT reporting to be performed by a Georgian soldier that oftentimes did not speak English and was not trained on LOGSTAT reporting.

        (2) Recommendation: Each position should have a soldier or USMC messman trained in LOGSTAT reporting to assist in the ordering, accounting, and receiving of rations and water.

    c. Topic: DASF (Due In and Status File)

        (1) Discussion: Over $30 million worth of equipment and supplies ordered on the DASF was cancelled by RCT-6 upon the completion of the transfer of authority.

        (2) Recommendation: It is imperative that only mission-essential gear is purchased. All major purchase should be validated

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by the S-3 if operational and XO if administrative to avoid erroneous and unnecessary requests.

    d. Topic: MOS Cross Training

       (1) Discussion: 3043 and 3051 should be cross-trained in order to fill temporary shortfalls in supply billets as operational demands increase.

       (2) Recommendation: All Marines who deploy in the supply field need to be thoroughly cross-trained. Warehousemen need to know how to manipulate the DASF, MAL, and CMRs. Clerks should also have attended licensing courses so that, if necessary, they can drive a TRAM, forklift, or other material handling equipment. This is especially important for year-long deployments, where R&R and emergency leave periods become taxing on personnel in smaller shops.

    e. Topic: Theater Provided Equipment (TPE)

       (1) Discussion: TPE will account for a quarter of the supply account.

       (2) Recommendation: The Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) office should provide more guidance to USMC Responsible Officers upon arrival in theater. Most Marines have never worked with TPE or its accountability software, Property Book User System Enhanced (PBUSE). PBUSE training should be mandatory for all unit TPE account holders and clerks. The TPE office should offer a class to all ROs and clerks as part of the RSO&I package before they ever sign for any gear. The TPE system is quite different from traditional Marine Corps supply systems and with the proper instruction, Marines would have a much easier time accounting for gear as well as ensuring that all transfers are properly conducted. The USMC should demand TPE software training either at home station or during RSOI training.

    f. Topic: Supply Warehousemen HE Requirements

       (1) Discussion: Warehousemen in CONUS most often utilize small indoor forklifts, as there is little to no requirement to handle loads greater than 4000lbs. During deployments, however, warehousemen manage hundreds of 20-foot ISO containers, Quad-cons, and Pal-cons. They load equipment directly from the warehouse onto tactical and commercial trucks and aircraft. Most of the supply warehousemen do not obtain HE licenses until the months immediately before deployment and have not obtained the experience necessary to begin work upon arrival in theater.

       (2) Recommendation: Ensure that all supply warehousemen get HE licenses, and get them regular opportunities to use HE in order to create familiarity with the equipment well before deployment.

    g.   Topic: PPE Availability in Theater

        (1) Discussion: There is no Initial Issue Facility (IIF) in theater, and the SMU does not stock PPE. It is extremely difficult to replace damaged or lost PPE in theater. The only way that supply officers are making the situation work is by utilizing undamaged PPE from the battalion's past personal effects cases. Numerous times over the course of the deployment, it took an unreasonable length of time to replace damaged PPE because the battalions that needed the PPE did not have the correct size.

        (2) Recommendation: Create an IIF equipment storage block in theater to replace damaged or missing PPE as required by the using units.

    h.   Topic: Billeting

        (1) Discussion: Managing the billeting for all of the RCT-6 subordinate units quickly became a daunting task as multiple inbound/outbound battalions transited through Leatherneck at the same time. The transition periods resulted in the need for nearly 2,000 bed spaces at a time. The lack of phones in the billeting manager's office meant that de-confliction had to be made face-to-face. As the billeting office was across the base and vehicle support was unpredictable, this resulted in the mismanagement of reservations and untimely support.

        (2) Recommendation: Assign an individual dedicated to the task of ensuring billeting is available to support subordinate units. Coordination needs to be made with the billeting manager, training officer, and embarkation/air officer in order to maintain visibility on pax movement in and out of theater.

    i.   Topic: Security Force Assistance Advisor Team (SFA-AT)

        (1) Discussion: SFA-ATs oftentimes arrived in theater without the knowledge of the RCT, and with very little support coordination. The mission, pax, and EDL of the teams should be identified before arriving in theater.

        (2) Recommendation: In order to provide support for the teams, they need to be identified to the RCT S-4 before arrival, and the team must have a clear understanding of the reporting procedures and equipment sourcing requirement.

    j.   Topic: Georgian Equipment Accountability

        (1) Discussion: The Georgian supply account includes Coalition Readiness Support Program (CRSP), TPE, Special Equipment Items (SEI)

and temporary loaned USMC equipment. Managing the account would be difficult even for a seasoned supply Marine; however, the Georgian account has been the first for many of the recent Supply Officers. For these Supply Officers, gaining initial experience on the coalition account presents a unique challenge.

(2) Recommendation: Georgian equipment accountability is complex and requires a skill set beyond that of a first year Supply Officer. The GLT should be staffed with the most experienced personnel that can be sourced. The visibility and dollar value of the account calls for a Marine supply personnel of equal experience and skill.

k. Topic: Generator/Environment Control Unit (ECU) Maintenance

(1) Discussion: The Force Laydown plan requires numerous generators and associated environmental control units which the infantry battalion is not equipped to properly maintain due to lack of sufficient utilities mechanics in the manning document. RCT-6 was able to deploy (12) generator mechanics, but still struggled to maintain generators across the AO. A majority of the maintenance issues stem from the lack of operator level maintenance and PMCS.

(2) Recommendation: Increase the number of generator and ECU mechanics assigned to each infantry battalion and supporting engineering attachments. Additionally, include training on PMCS for all diesel mechanics on the deployment roster to serve as incidental operators. Educating combat MOS Marines on operator level maintenance will also add depth to maintenance capability and decrease the necessity for corrective maintenance.

l. Topic: Maintenance Reporting for Mission Essential Equipment (MEE)

(1) Discussion: Maintenance is continuous and in greater demand in a deployed environment. Some TAMCN's are crucial to operations (MEE) and when they require maintenance, reporting these deficiencies and solutions becomes much more critical and time sensitive. Real-time information is difficult to obtain over the widespread AO and the ability to relay pertinent information to those that provide support is delayed.

(2) Recommendation: Establish a communication method that keeps HHQ's and IMA units informed of immediate maintenance needs at the unit positions. CLC2S could be used for Mission Essential Equipment (MEE) in such a way that would allow maintenance managers at all levels to view status at all levels, and take appropriate actions to correct deficiencies to keep pace with the operational tempo.

m. Topic: Mine Roller Training

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        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The use of mine rollers on convoys in Helmand Province is mandatory. Marine drivers have arrived in country with little to no training behind the mine roller. The effects of the mine roller on the handling of tactical vehicles change the capabilities of the vehicle greatly. The weight and position of the mine roller can direct the vehicle in undesired directions. As seen with several incidents, inexperienced drivers operating a vehicle with a mine roller can be devastating.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Ensure drivers and incidental operators receive ample training and road time with mine rollers attached to vehicles. This will give them more understanding of the effect on the handling of the MRAPs and MATVs and provide the needed experience on driving with the mine rollers before they are in country.

    n. <u>Topic: Motor Transport Maintenance Training</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: The dependence on FSR maintenance support has degraded a skill set in the Marine Corps that will be hard to recover. The knowledge base among Sergeants and below as well as some of our junior SNCOs is very noticeable when dealing with troubleshooting vehicles and repairing them. Though their support has been very valuable to the mission, this option has become the first one and USMC mechanics' skill and knowledge are dwindling because of it.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Ensure mechanics are allowed the opportunity to attend follow-on training in maintenance on MRAPs and MATVs before their deployment. Also ensure the mechanics are taught to handle the most difficult maintenance tasks because several areas in the AO have little to no FSR support.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

    a. <u>Topic: Subordinate Unit Equipment Turn-in</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Communications equipment turn-in for small teams retrograding tended to fall outside of timelines established by RCT policy.

        (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: RCT should ensure that the policy for retrogradable items is provided to all small teams early enough to facilitate the equipment turn-in process during retrograde.

    b. <u>Topic: Information Transfer Between SIPR and Centrix</u>

        (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Centrix is the main classified system utilized by OEF units due to its ability to share information with coalition

partners. This system also exists in CONUS, but is not typically available to units below the Division-level. Almost universally, the SIPR is the classified system used by units in CONUS. When the requirement to pass classified information between CONUS and OEF units arose, it involved a cumbersome process needing a Data Transfer Authority (DTA) to move the files from one system to the other. The requesting units for this transfer are required to have personnel certified on the DTA process to initiate these data transfer requests, but often these personnel were not available or not trained.

   (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: CONUS units should keep enough DTA certified personnel on hand to ensure transfer between Centrix and SIPR systems can occur in a timely fashion.

  c. <u>Topic: Communicators For Liaison Teams</u>

   (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Although teams rate a certain number of communicators, often those positions are filled with non-communicator MOSs. RCT and battalions can sometimes replace the non-communicator MOSs in theater as needed, but only at a cost to their own ability to support MSEs across the RCT.

   (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Ensure liaison teams bring the correct compliment of communicators to ensure full communications capability.

  d. <u>Topic: The Marine Corps Needs More Cyber Marines</u>

   (1) <u>Discussion</u>: Extensive cyber capabilities are required during deployment, even more so than they are in CONUS. The difference is that contract support is available (and needed) in CONUS, but not for deployed units. More Marines trained in cyber capability are needed to augment deployed units and to facilitate 24/7 cyber/data communications capability. However, this was overcome by the Computer Training Courses and Centers that provided that training. Learning basic and advanced CISCO routing provided immeasurable in troubleshooting data communications at the battalion level.

   (2) <u>Recommendation</u>: Increase cyber Marines to support our information-intensive environment. Cyber Marines should take advantage of computer training courses and centers ahead of deployment. Basic and advanced CISCO routing courses proved invaluable for troubleshooting data communications at the battalion level while deployed.

  e. <u>Topic: Wire/Cable Fabrication Capability Shortages</u>

   (1) Discussion: Wire Marines are mainly used for tipping fiber, running lines, installing voice over internet protocol (VOIP) phones, and managing the call managers. Technical Controllers (TechControllers) are taught to perform a multitude of communications

functions to include wire fabrication. The problem is that there are very few TechControllers, many Wire Marines, and always a need for wires of many types to be repaired. By adding more tools in the tool box of a wire Marine, we can reduce the number of incidents of the Marine Corps needing to buy new wires, cables and other corded accessories.

(2) Recommendation: Train wire Marines to fabricate wires, cords, and cables.

f. Topic: Training Marines to Repair Newer Items (Radios)

(1) Discussion: The Marine Corps has purchased a lot of radios since the Global War on Terror (GWOT) began in 2001. As the radios were acquired, much of the maintenance support went to contractors. Marines are able to do some simple maintenance, but are not currently trained to perform higher level maintenance on the radios. As a result, the Marine Corps has radio technicians that cannot repair radios without contractor support, leading to significant lag times in radio maintenance/repairs. Contractor support will eventually end with the ever-tightening Marine Corps budget, precipitating the need for Marines who can perform the higher level radio maintenance themselves.

(2) Recommendation: Train radio technicians to perform higher level maintenance/repair on newer radios before the contract maintenance goes away.

g. Topic: Communications Officers and Strategic and Theater Communications

(1) Discussion: Communications is becoming more and more "joint" as it evolves. We have gone from small networks that are Marine Corps specific to larger networks that touch multiple Combatant Commands, Military Services, Agencies and Field Activities (CC/S/A/FA) across the Department of Defense (DoD), the United States Government, and coalition forces. In light of that, there are many different assets, applications, and processes that most Marine officers are not exposed to unless they are deployed or allowed to go to a joint command. Not possessing the necessary appreciation for these services presents a roadblock for all those communicators trying to support their commands. The appreciation for these services, plus the interaction and peer development that can come from joint service can exponentially increase the situational awareness of the communications for the MAGTF.

(2) Recommendation: Communications Officers need to learn joint communications to be able to support operations while in joint billets (i.e. United States Cyber Command, Defense Information Services Agency, etc). If they cannot serve in a joint tour,

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Communications Officers at the RCT or higher level commands should attend the Joint C4I Staff and Operations Course (JC4ISOC).

   h. Topic: Proper Accounting of Retrograde Gear

      (1) Discussion: With all the gear sets and SL-3 that go with those assets, units should budget more time to account for equipment. This is especially true for classified hard drives and other assets. Maintaining accountability for every piece of gear throughout the battlespace during combat operations and retrograde is a daunting challenge. Retrograde timelines often don't factor in sufficient time to perform the necessary accountability checks that could minimize missing, lost or stolen items.

      (2) Recommendation: Allow units at least a full day to recoup and recover gear before retrograde. This will minimize equipment losses and allow better accounting for equipment condition.

   i. Topic: Tactical Long Haul Communications Capability

      (1) Discussion: The RCT provided battalion level communications for the GCE with gear that was not on its table of equipment (T/E). In order to facilitate extensive unit reporting requirements, the RCT needed to provide multiple long haul communication links with assets that were not organic to the RCT. Eventually the requirement grew enough to require commercial vendors to provide these services. In particular, the Joint NetOps Communications Center-Afghanistan (JFCC-A) leased Microwave Line of Sight (MLOS) capabilities with the Afghanistan Wireless Communications Company to provide up to 150Mbps of bandwidth to support the forward operating bases (FOBs) and the RCT. Handling of service outages for this leased capability required negotiating with contractors, rather than the more efficient and expedient process of using our own Marines to perform the required maintenance/upkeep of the equipment. The SIPRNet/NIPRNet Access Point (SNAP) terminals we were given in country were not on the regiment's T/E and therefore required additional training to employ.

      (2) Recommendation: The current T/E for the regiment needs to be reviewed and modified to respond to the ever-expanding need for greater bandwidth to support data/voice communication needs.

   j. Topic: High-Power Generators and Generator Support for RCT Operations Centers.

      (1) Discussion: The RCT's organic equipment is not sufficient to power the Combat Operations Center (COC), the Combat Logistics Operations Center (CLOC) and the Systems Control (SysCon). It took five (5) 807 Marine Corps generators to provide this capability.
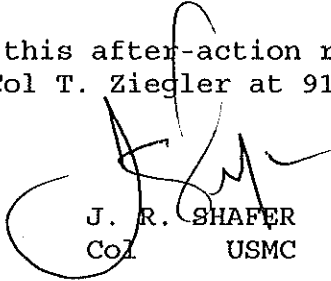
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However, the RCT Communications Platoon owns none of these generators, which were provided via contractor support.

      (2) Recommendation: Field RCT with larger generators to support required combat deployment power needs.

6. Point of contact regarding this after-action report submitted by Regimental Combat Team 6 is LtCol T. Ziegler at 910-451-8293.

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