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Abstract

Operation Restore Hope in Mogadishu Somalia provided our country a historical perspective of why pre-war intelligence is critical to our success as a superpower. We engaged a hostile enemy determined to strike fear in the minds of the American people. What they encountered was a determined focused mission, and failure was not an option. We served the interests of the United Nations through relief efforts, and won the heart of many Somalia's. General Aideed and his clans were not able to withstand the will of the force. We learned as a result of the Rangers killed that to listen to the combatant commanders. The force conducted routing urban assault missions throughout our tenure. This was new war fighting for us but we prevail just like previous wars.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The experience fulfilled during Operation Restore Hope in Mogadishu Somalia provided a historical perspective of why “train as you fight” saves lives in combat. My unit was well equipped to accomplish any mission successfully. We deployed as part of a heavy mechanized force from the 24th Infantry Division, Fort Stewart. From the time we served as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF), we seemingly shift focus from a strategic objective to a robust mount operations with a determined enemy. My unit served as a subsidiary to the 18th Airborne Corps of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Before I discuss specific objectives, I would like to address the preparation process. It’s been stated a person will is more important than there weapon. This could not be more evident as a young Bradley Commander. The key leaders were able to instill a competent, confidence, group of young men willing to serve the interests of their country. It’s this reason why I believe we were successful in all our operations and objectives in theater. As stated earlier I taught my subordinates the importance of the culture, religion, resolve, and the determination of our adversaries. This diligence resulted in no international incidents, we displayed discipline and respect. From the time my unit was notified, we displayed to theater less than 72 hours. We arrived in Cairo, Egypt ready to support the interests of the nation. From there we moved to Mogadishu, Somalia arriving at the port to support the arrival of goods from the United Nations. My unit was well equipped, well-trained, and everyone were technically and tactically able to meet the mission objectives. As part of a heavy mechanized force, our primary focus was one of deterrence. This was the first unit to bring tanks and Bradley to theater. The results caused the enemy to rethink their strategy after our fallen warriors; the rangers were killed. The decision to do this was a pivotal strategy to winning the objective and restoring

democracy to the war torn country. As we provided tactical security around the port I learned as a Bradley commander why my crew was confident in their abilities. We had prepared on so many training exercises; particularly Table 8. It was then I realize that those young men lives were in my hands. As a leader all I could remember was bringing them home alive. Standards and professional ethic were at the forefront of this. Also prevalent was our commitment to sustain the training proficiency. Essentially our unit divided into three phases which incorporated the importance of maintaining equipment, and training on critical wartime skills. We also incorporated an effective rest and relaxation plan; sending Soldiers to Mombasa, Kenya to unwind. Our leaders were cognizant of what the Soldiers needed to sustain mission success. I was so proud to represent the 24th Infantry Division and sustain the proud legacy it had earned before. Discipline was ever prevalent especially at the port. The port was a critical element of the mission. It's where the United Nations support of goods were transferred to the country. My unit responsibilities were to provide heavy mechanized support fire if needed. Our presence was enough to deter the insurgents from engaging the port. The insurgents would drive in front of the port and point their anti-armor, and assault rifles at our position. My men displayed enormous resolve in adhering to the rules of engagement. Our rules of engagement stated that were not to engage the enemy unless fired upon. During the briefing a lot of Soldiers were dismayed by the decision. The decision were made and complied with unwavering devotion. Each Soldier was informed throughout our tenure in theater. The support of the Army and Air force Exchange services provided us an opportunity to continue and reconstitute essential personnel hygienic items. In addition mail was delivered on a consistent basis. The First Sergeant ensured Soldiers did not miss mail call. These services and actions by our leaders sustain the high morale of the troops. During our rest and recoup phase we got to know the Somalia people and were relieve

that they were not advocating the warlord position. They wanted to regain stability in the region. It was because of the firepower that they felt no other choice was viable. During my downtime I became an avid reader. Whatever I would get hands on I read. This allowed me to mentally not focus on just the mission. I also encouraged my Soldiers to find an endeavor that would provide some balance in their lives. Especially during and intense deployment and not worry about their family back home. The results were just as powerful. The dissemination of information was constant and on-going throughout the deployment. It was done where each member to the lowest level understood it. It reduced any anxiety and second-guess that would have had a negative impact on the mission. The experience in country allowed each of use to understand our roles and responsibilities to each subordinate Soldier. There were no anxieties as a result of not being properly trained to within and mission expected. I understood our role to not only be the aggressor if ask but also to restore a stable government that could withstand any obstacles they may have faced. In addition to the factors or conditions mention already Somalia presented several other challenges. I found that the attitude toward the service members was mixed. The females seemed to follow the males' perspective. It appeared that it were more culturally than anything else. They never spoke to us independently of the males' counterpart. There were some who very cordial and appreciative of our efforts. Throughout my stay in country I've often reflected on their true feelings for us. While on patrol I got somewhat of an answer to this question. Two people approach my position soliciting food and water. Once I determined my position would not be compromise I proceeded to accommodate their request. Once we establish rapport with them, they proceeded to ask why we were there. Of course we inform them of our goal or agenda of restoring democracy through the delivery of goods and services by way of the United Nations. They indicated that they appreciated our efforts to reduce the starvation but was

appalled that it would come from the United States. They mentioned since birth they were conditioned to hate Americans. It was this reason that clans were formed, particularly to oppose the West. I was impressed with the way both of these people articulated themselves. With very little opportunity to enhance oneself in a impoverished country. They seemed very certain of their ideas with very little technology to verify it. They ask if we believe in what we were doing and se stated yes. They were mystified by our commitment to the cause. It was then that our leaders were at the forefront of that belief. Somalia provided a lot of valuable learning lessons. We grew as an organization, person, leader, and supervisor. My training as a Bradley commander reassured myself and my squad that whatever happens we would be ready. Prior to deployment I've often wondered why there was so much time dedicated to training on Table 8 training exercise. Competence breeds confidence and vice-versa. My platoon never doubted all the missions given. They were confident in their weapons systems and believe in each other. The Bradley fighting vehicle is a tremendous weapon system able to reach out from afar and put huge rounds toward the enemy. It wasn't until the Rangers were killed that our elected leaders realized the importance of combat multiplier had they acted upon it earlier. The Bradley fighting vehicle just by its sheer size put a lot of fear in the Somalia's. We did constant training exercises in the desert to illustrate this awesome fire power. The commanders planning for training was critical in our success in theater. I recall we were always rotating between the ports of training areas throughout the country. Our operation temp was very high. As a machine gunner my Soldier's role and expectation was critical to our success with the dismounted element. As a Bradley commander I was responsible for nine men. My training as a commander coupled with my experience as a squad leader prepared me for whatever situations that arose as part of an on-going operation. During our tenure in country we became very well verse in mount assault urban

operations. Actually before we arrived in theater we constantly rehearse and train for this new type of combat operations. Somalia presented unique opportunity in gorilla warfare that we did not prepare for. This training required the most difficult part of engagement. We had to believe in each other or we would have been doomed from the start. Again with the training conducted before and during operations we carried out missions successfully. I arrived in country after the Rangers were killed and viciously portrayed in the world for all those to see. To say our unit was a little upset was an understatement. As a unit we had to garner our aggression towards the Somalia people and concentrate on the mission. No Soldier likes to see his brother bodies portrayed in that manner. That's exactly what the enemy wanted. They wanted us to be portrayed as a ruthless killer, like them. We adhered to the Geneva Convention and the rules of war. We followed the rules of engagement, which in its infancy attracted a lot of resistance. We were briefed to not fire until fired upon. So there were some thought about what if that one shot was critical and we did not have time or opportunity to engage back. Again as Soldiers we were expected to comply with all orders and we did. So from the beginning of our deployment we had a lot of resentment for the Aideed clans. When time passed we were able to understand that a few bad people don't represent the will of the masses. There was a lot of talk about why our administration did not honor the combatant commander's request for heavy mechanized forces from the onset. Clearly that would have assisted and possibly prevented the untimely death of these Soldiers. As a result of then secretary Les Aspen decisions Soldiers died as a result. With the support of heavy tanks and support assets we would have been a huge force multiplier for the assault element. I felt the administration needed to listen to their military commanders on the ground and they legislate whatever were needed to assist in our efforts in theater. Politicians' in my opinion created in an incompetent articulation leading up to the war. The administration was

not precise and clear to the American people, primarily at the defense department. The Commander and chief was articulate and clear in garnering enough support for the war but the strategy of deploying a capable force of defeating the enemy was done very hastily. We did not understand the ramifications of the department actions until all the information surfaced. Did Secretary Aspen underscore the importance of a more mobile unilaterally force able to resist a hostile enemy? Why did it take the loss of all those Soldiers to get the right force in theater? Soldiers are not politicians and never will be, it's very disheartening to see our comrades paraded in front of the world. We are a super power and the decision making should have resulted in it. These lessons learned should provide future leaders of any administration and combatant commanders that pre-war intelligence should be precise and accurate. Soldier lives depend on it; as a result of war one would expect certain number of casualties' just not senseless slaughter of American forces as a result of incompetence at the defense department. It further illustrates the importance of having our elected leaders to have some experience in military affairs. If not having worn the uniform then certainly have a thorough background or simply just listen to your commanders on the ground.