

Running head: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE PAPER

Personal Experience Paper

MSG Daniel W Jostes

Operation Enduring Freedom, Stuttgart, Germany, 01/27/2003 – 01/26/2004

74D5X, First Sergeant/ Operations NCO, HHC, HQ, USEUCOM

18 September 2006

Class 57

Abstract

This paper recounts my experience while serving at EUCOM in Germany. I faced many challenges, but providing force protection to the installation was the biggest. The mission involved many agencies and sections and war was looming. I discovered that I needed the cooperation of each of these agencies in order to accomplish the mission. I would use tact, diplomacy, and respect to garner their cooperation, resulting in a successful Force Protection plan.

Personal Experience Paper

Army NCOs train to meet many challenges in their jobs. As a Senior NCO serving in the Army Reserves, one of those challenges came when I mobilized to serve as the NBC NCO in a unit in Germany. This story recounts just some of the obstacles I overcame transitioning from a citizen-Soldier to performing my duties everyday for the next year.

In the summer of 2002, Operation Enduring Freedom was well under way. I worked at the 1st BDE of the 85th DIV (TS) as an Observer-Controller Trainer. Our unit trained and evaluated other Reserve and National Guard units in their procedures of running a tactical operations center. At this point, very few Soldiers from my unit had mobilized with the exception of a few at our division headquarters. Several of our Soldiers had volunteered and served tours of duty in Bosnia, Kosovo, and other locations. I decided at this time it was my turn to step forward and help my country with the war on terrorism.

Up to this point, I had a long and varied career. In 1981, I started a four year tour on active duty as an Armor Crewman then reenlisted directly into the Reserves with a reservation to attend the Drill Sergeant Course. I served as a Tank Commander instructor, Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, and Chemical Operations Specialist. In 1998, I reached the rank of master sergeant and transferred to the 2nd Simulation Exercise Group with the 1st BDE, 85th Division. I also completed my Master's degree in Training Administration. In January 2002, the command group chose me as the First Sergeant for the 2nd Simulation Exercise Group. My unit contained 97 officers and 32 NCOs. I found tact and diplomacy instrumental to my duties.

I inquired to the S-3 about volunteering for duty overseas. The operations Major told me of a former unit member I should contact. I e-mailed the Soldier several times before I finally got a reply in early November 2002. He was working at HQ, USEUCOM and they needed an NBC NCO at the headquarters company. The tour was one year and I would probably start in January. He provided the contact information for the Joint European Reserve Unit in Stuttgart, Germany. Now, up to this time, I had never heard of any of these units. All I knew was that I was getting a one year tour in Germany.

After several e-mails and a lot of paperwork, I finally received confirmation that I would get the tour. January 2003 became a flurry of activity. The president was determined to deploy troops to the Middle East to force Iraq to comply with weapons restrictions. I received my activation orders and reported to Fort McCoy, WI. I accompanied other members of my unit to the processing station. I found myself among 5000 other Soldiers anticipating what deployment to the Middle East. In the midst of all this turmoil, I still had not received orders deploying me to Germany. I spent a day convincing the Mobilization operations personnel that I was not deploying to Iraq, but to Germany. After a few days and many phone calls to EUCOM and 1st Army, the NCOIC confirmed I was deploying to Germany. I guess the folks at 1st Army had more pressing business than one master sergeant deploying to Germany.

Finally, I received orders and boarded a plane for Stuttgart, Germany. At this point, I still had no idea what lie in store for me when I arrived there. The HHC First Sergeant met me at the airport and we left for Patch Barracks to start my in-processing. On the way, we discussed my background and some of his expectations. He remarked, "We didn't bring you here just to be the NBC NCO." He would not elaborate, but this was my first clue to the plans he had in mind. I must admit that my first impression of

the First Sergeant was a leader who used coercion and fear to get the job done. I began to realize that this was not your ordinary unit and I may have gotten myself into something bigger than I had planned.

The next week I spent in-processing into HQ, USEUCOM. The First Sergeant called me into his office at the end of the week. He said that I needed to finish my in-processing and be ready to work next week. He was deploying to Turkey and the commander selected me to be the First Sergeant in his absence. I spent a long weekend wondering about the situation I found myself. The following Tuesday, I reported to the First Sergeant who introduced me to the Senior Enlisted Advisors for the J-staff at USEUCOM. Almost all were Air Force NCOs with the exception of the SOCEUR First Sergeant who was Army.

I soon found that the Air Force NCOs followed the lead of a Chief Master Sergeant from J-2. During the meeting, he continually argued with the First Sergeant. I could see the problems rising already. I would work with these Soldiers for the upcoming months and war was looming on the horizon. EUCOM was gearing up to deploy forces into northern Iraq through Turkey. My job would be to coordinate with these NCOs and other agencies around Stuttgart to ready the troops to move to Turkey and set up a forward operations base. Apparently, most of the Senior Enlisted Advisors did not regard the First Sergeant too highly. His abrasive manner and direct approach caused dissension among them all. I felt the tension in the air as the meeting adjourned.

The First Sergeant left the next day, and I settled into my duties. The first order of business was to publish an SOP for the Force Protection of Patch Barracks, the location of HQ, USEUCOM in Stuttgart. The First Sergeant only told me to look for the information on the S: drive on the EUCOM network. Well, I looked on the S: drive and

found hundreds of folders of information, but could not locate anything on Force Protection. I contacted the First Sergeant in Turkey and he told me to have a staff sergeant from our personnel section work on it. The First Sergeant warned me that the Provost Marshall and the 6th Area Support Group would not offer much help. Likewise, no one else in the headquarters company had any clue where to start. As the week passed, I found the Force Protection project lost relevance as other issues arose.

I managed to contact the Provost Marshall Operation NCO. I introduced myself and he inquired about the First Sergeant. We talked about the current Force Protection condition and the responsibilities of HHC and the First Sergeant. He filled me in on the random antiterrorism measures currently in place, manning the teams, and scheduling the patrols. The operations sergeant gave the impression that he had a strained relationship with the First Sergeant. I stressed to him that I understood his role and that I was there to work these issues with him. I told him the immense responsibility overwhelmed me a bit and I needed all the help I could get. He referred me to the Operations Sergeant Major at the 6th ASG.

When I contacted the Operations Sergeant Major, he provided me with a lot of the information I needed. He explained how the current patrol schedule worked and what HHC's responsibilities were to provide roving guards. Several units were involved with randomly providing patrols through two of the local posts and the golf course. Our arms room provided weapons for some of the units involved and I needed to coordinate times for them to draw their weapons. The Sergeant Major also explained the program we worked out with the German Army. We had a squad of German soldiers assigned to Patch Barracks to provide additional manpower for the guard duty. He told me to

contact the Provost Marshall about assigning these soldiers if the Force Protection level rose to Charlie.

I again contacted the Provost Marshall and reached the Major in charge. He also inquired where the 1SG was and I explained the situation. He replied, "Well, maybe I can work with you." I explained that we would provide 30 personnel for a continuous roving guard force if the Force Protection level rose. This caused a large labor force problem for the different sections to provide guards and continue their primary functions at each staff. Additionally, some of the sections were exempt from duty which shrank our available pool to draw the guards. He agreed to provide 12 German soldiers to provide assistance with our security. We adjusted our guard force to 24 and began to set the schedule for each shift.

With the manpower issue settled, I turned my attention to establishing the Emergency Operations Center for the guard force. The 1SG had started the project before he deployed, but we still needed to accomplish a lot before we could run the guard force from the designated building. I contacted the Directorate of Public Works to learn more details of the project. The EOC needed an arms room, secure windows, telephone lines, alarm system, electrical wiring, and lines for both classified and secret LANs. The 1SG had placed the work orders, but I constantly found myself following up to secure dates for the work to be completed. I found everyone very cooperative, but the German contractors conducted business on their time.

As the weeks went by, the Senior Enlisted Advisors kept pressuring me for a Force Protection SOP. I knew the requirements for the guard force, but I also knew that the guard force was a small portion of what needed to be in the SOP. The Air Force Chief Master Sergeant was my toughest opponent. Eventually, I convinced him that my

ego was not an issue and I needed his help. He offered to provide a senior NCO that worked for him to help on the SOP. This NCO was Security Forces and had a lot of experience with Force Protection. We both agreed to work together professionally in the future.

I contacted the NCO who agreed to write the SOP and sent him my material. Within a couple of days, he completed the SOP. I discussed the plan with the other Senior Enlisted Advisors. They were still concerned that the required personnel would hamper their day-to-day operations but we felt that we would not be at a sustained level of Force Protection Charlie. At the time, I was under the impression that the 6th ASG dictated the number of guard force personnel needed. I later found that it was an arbitrary number provided to the 6th ASG by the 1SG that we could change.

As the war grew closer, we began to prepare to initiate our plan. Qualified Soldiers conducted classes on guard duty, the use of deadly force, search procedures, and detaining suspects. The EOC started to come together as the contractors installed the arms room, alarm system, telephone, and electricity. The computer network lines proved difficult, but I contacted the Senior Enlisted Advisor from J-6 regularly. Finally, the job became complete as we added a sleeping area. The Deputy Commander's Office donated funds for a refrigerator, a television, and a microwave. We even installed an air conditioner in the EOC so the guards could rest comfortably during their break. Air conditioning in Germany is a premium and the troops really appreciated it.

The day came in March 2003 when war was certain. I received the call from the 6th ASG operations NCO that they raised the Force Protection level to Charlie. I informed the Senior Enlisted Advisors and we went to work. Soldiers, airmen, and sailors drew weapons and radios, and we designated the shifts. A month of hard work

finally came together. Everyone acted in a professional manner and accepted their duties. The next day, the war started. I felt relief as our guard force reported and conducted their patrols. We cut the deadline close, but we were ready for whatever lies ahead.

The ensuing weeks proved difficult as the Force Protection level remained at Charlie. The J-staff struggled to meet their duties while personnel continued to report to Force Protection duty. Everyone pulled his or her weight. Senior Enlisted members volunteered to pull duty to allow the other troops rest and the opportunity to work in their office. I even volunteered to pull a 24-hour shift on a Sunday just to provide relief for my office. Other problems arose as personnel discussed the mission with their sections. The heads of the sections applied pressure on the Senior Enlisted Advisors to return their personnel to their office. Nevertheless, the Force Protection level remained at Charlie and we had an obligation to secure the post.

The staffing problem arose when I received a phone call from the senior Enlisted Advisor from J-6. Evidently, an airman had complained to the new Air Force Colonel of J-6. This colonel called the Senior Enlisted advisor and told him to pull all their troops from this duty. I told him to do as the Colonel directed and I would take care of the problem. I contacted the HHC commandant and informed her of the problem. She in turn called the Chief of Staff's office. The chief of staff, a lieutenant general, left to visit wounded troops in Landstuhl, but would return on Monday. Monday afternoon, I received a call that the chief of staff had solved the problem. The general had a conversation with the colonel. He advised the colonel to return his troops to Force Protection duty or the colonel would be walking the perimeter. The chief of staff informed the rest of the staff to leave the Force Protection duty to the NCOs and

directed the Assistant Chief of Staff to look into our plan. I reported the plan with the help of the Air Force NCO from J-2. The assistant Chief of Staff agreed that the plan was solid and assured us that no more officers would interfere.

They plan continued well into May. Eventually, we received the call that the Force Protection level dropped back to Bravo. EUCOM went back to work, and I awaited the return of the 1SG. When he returned, he found many of the agencies more cooperative with HHC. I moved to the training office and continued working with the Force Protection duties. At first, the 1SG resumed his gruff approach to leadership, but soon found that he didn't need it. We worked well together for the remaining months prior to his departure to the United States Sergeants Major Academy. When I readied to return to the United States, the staff thanked me for my diligence and professionalism. The HHC commandant and the newly appointed CSM asked me to stay on as an operations sergeant but it was time to return home.

My experience at EUCOM provided me with great insight to my own abilities. The best ability I possessed was to work with others to get a job done. As leaders, we often take on tasks to prove ourselves, but I found that accomplishing the mission is more important than my own ego. I received many awards for my time at EUCOM, although I know that a combined effort with cooperation resulted in my success. We often tout Army Values of respect, honesty, and selfless service. We receive training, memos, and dogtags to remind us of these values with no account for practical application. Army leaders often do what is needed to complete a task with no regard for the impact their actions or attitudes have on others. I learned the real meaning and worth of those values during my time at EUCOM and will keep those lessons with me throughout my life.