

Personal Experience Paper

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The Human Terrain Team (HTT) USAR

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Abstract

This personal experience paper will describe my personal, military history and current experience as the Human Terrain Team Sergeant Major with Multi National Forces West (MNF-W), Regional Combat Team (RCT-1) Brigade.

This paper will briefly outline the Human Terrain System history and the support the Human Terrain Team contributes to the Regional Combat Team-1 (RCT-1), Multi National Forces West (MNF-W). Supporting, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Currently, serving in support of (OIF), Camp Ramadi, Al Anbar Providence in western Iraq.

Personal History

I am currently serving as the Sergeant Major of The Human Terrain Team (IZ-7) attached to the Regiment Combat Team (RCT-1) stationed at Camp Ramadi, Iraq

My father and uncles served in the army in World War II. I became interested in the US Army at a very young age. When I turned 17; I went to my parents and asked if I could join the army. With parents consent, I joined the army in October 1968. I departed Newark, Ohio on 29 October 1968 on a bus headed to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for basic training. The M-16 was just introduced to basis training making the M-14 a part of history. I spent eight weeks there. In January 1969, I was sent to A.I.T. at Fort Eustis Virginia. I attended and graduated from a 16 week helicopter repairman course. In June 1969 I was promoted to specialist four (SPC-4) and sent to Fort Rucker Alabama to become a crew chief/flight engineer on Sky Crane (CH54A) helicopters. I spent several months there flying on e CH54A helicopters. I volunteered for Viet Nam several times while at Fort Rucker, but kept getting turned down (To Young). So, I volunteered for airborne training. I was all set to go Airborne, and then all of a sudden my orders came for Viet Nam and my orders for airborne training were canceled. May 1970, I was sent to Viet Nam. Even though my heart was set on going Airborne, I wanted to go to Viet Nam even more.

Viet Nam:

I remember arriving in South, Viet Nam, hot, humid and soldiers redeploying calling us (F N G's) and shouting, you're going to die. I was sent to the 355th heavy lift helicopter unit using Sky Cranes (CH54A) heavy lift helicopters. I felt bored and wanted

to be closer to the action and asked to transfer to a Huey (UH1-H) gunship unit. I became a door gunner. I must say I was no longer bored. Being a door gunner is anything but boring. After flying there for a few months, I was offered a crew chief position on Chinook (CH47C) helicopters, with the 180th AVN Co, 268 BN, 1st AVN Brigade. I accepted and became a door gunner/crew chief for a few months. I was then promoted to Specialist Five (SPC-5) and offered a flight engineer position on the Chinook (CH47C). I accepted and received my own CH47C ship, that I performed maintenance on and flew with daily. I ended up flying hundreds of hours and extending my combat tour to continue flying. I spent 18 months flying and supporting missions and supplying fire bases in North, South Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, I departed Viet Nam in Nov 1971.

I arrived back in the states and found a horrible welcome home by many. (Calling us baby killers by anti war demonstrators) My family was proud of me and the job we had done in Viet Nam. I remained in the Ohio army reserves for 3 years. I found it boring being in an engineer unit driving a dump truck and doing carpenter work. So I moved to the Ohio Air force air guard, thinking I would get to fly. I was wrong, the air guard ended up being a cable splicer position, climbing telephone poles and doing underground work. So I elected to join the Army National Air Guard. I was back to flying Huey's (UH1). I ended up being in several units. Units were being deactivated. After this happened several times I decided to get out. I got out in January 1982 and stayed out till December 1990. I then joined the 354th MED DET as a UH1-H crew chief. I remained with that unit until September 1995, when the unit deactivated. I then transferred to the 231st

Transportation Company as a maintenance NCO. In September 1996, I transferred to the IRR.

Being in the IRR, I had more opportunities to do tours. From September 1996 to December 2000, I completed more than 11 tours in the IRR. In the IRR you could do as many tours as you wanted as a reservist. I did tours and exercises in Saint Louis, Atlanta, FT Benning Georgia, Korea, Germany, Panama, American Samoa, Hawaii and others. Foal Eagle, RSOI, ULCHI Focus Lens, Roving Sands, and others. I took advantage of being able to go on tours and was rewarded by being promoted and receiving awards on the way.

In December, 2000 I joined the IMA program, and took a position with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Far East District (FED) in Seoul Korea in the position of Construction Engineer Supervisor.

Korea:

I volunteered for call up during 9/11 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and deployed to the Far East District (FED) Seoul, Korea with (USACE) as Force Protection NCOIC.

Afghanistan (OEF)

In April 2003 I volunteered for duty in support Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. I deployed to Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) for 180 days and ended up extending my tour. I deployed as Senior Construction Control Rep. as my primary position. Since we did not have a Sergeant Major, First Sergeant, supply sergeant, or force protection NCO. I covered down on all the positions. I also had a

construction project, building the Afghanistan National Army Training Center (ANATC) in Kabul. The project was valued at over 50 million US dollars. As Senior Construction Control Rep. I performed QA inspections in all phases of construction on the project. I trained and assisted contractors QA's and local Afghan workers in construction standards set by the (COE).

Lessons Learned:

Some deployed Government employees, did not have any prior construction experience, creating additional work on the experienced Construction Reps (Building inspector) to train them. Additional problems included civilians not knowing requirements and regulations we follow in a combat zone. Personnel not, having prior experience, training to drive in a combat zone.

Hire Construction Reps, with previous construction experience. Train civilians, in more detail, before deploying to a combat zone, require training to drive a vehicle in a combat zone. Train civilians more on force protection; battle drills and security.

On 1 Feb.2003, I was promoted to Master Sergeant and slotted into a Sergeant Major slot as Operations NCO with the US army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Transatlantic Program Center (TAC).On 15 August 2005 I was selected by the promotion board to enroll in the nonresident Sergeants Major academy course.

Afghanistan (OEF)

In April 2006 I volunteered once again for duty to support Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. On 10 April 2006, I left for Afghanistan for a one year tour. I was sent to FOB Lagman as the NCOIC and Senior Quality Assurance Rep. for

(USACE) Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) in support of (OEF). My project was in excess of 67 million US dollars, building an Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Brigade. Project, included 105 buildings, To include Water treatment plant, water wells, sewage plant, power plant, clinic, maintenance garages, warehouses, dining hall, barracks, training buildings road projects, security wall, guard towers, fiber optic lines and fuel depots.

Lessons Learned:

This tour was similar to last tour in Afghanistan; civilian employees did not have experience in construction or in combat requirements.

Do not send civilians down range without proper training and experience, to include driving vehicles in combat conditions and prior construction experience to become a construction Rep. Do not use a combat zone to train personnel with no construction experience to become a Construction Rep. (Building inspector)

Iraq (OIF)

I departed Afghanistan in April 2007. In September 2007, I volunteered for a tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with the Human Terrain Systems (HTS). After intense training for 6 months with TRADOC, Human Terrain Systems, Fort Leavenworth Kansas, I deployed to Iraq in April 2008. Attached to, RCT-1, Multi National Force West (MNF-W) AL Anbar Province. Assistant Team Leader, and Sergeant Major of IZ-7, Human Terrain Team (HTT). Promoted to, Sergeant Major, December 2007 during training with Human Terrain Systems Kansas.

While serving as Sergeant Major and Assistant Team Leader duties included assisting team members with daily tasks, research, interviewing, briefings, preparing and executing Combat Missions supporting RCT-1 Marine Brigade Commander directly.

Human Terrain Team provides BCT/RCT commanders and staffs with relevant, socio-cultural data, information, knowledge, understanding and dedicated expertise to integrate that understanding into their military decision-making process. Maximize effectiveness of operational decisions by harmonizing Courses of actions (COA) with target area cultural context. Minimize loss in continuity between units relief in Place/Transfer of Authority. Research, interpret, archive and make readily available cultural data, information and knowledge to enhance operational effectiveness Provide BCT commanders and staffs with dedicated, locally focused researchers that provide cultural context to reduce or prevent threats while deployed in both operational and training environments. The Human Terrain System is comprised of deployed Human Terrain Teams, supported by Map-Human Terrain (Map-HT) Toolkit, CONUS-based, theater specific, Reach-back Research Center and a Subject Matter Expert Network.

Human Terrain Information: Open source collected, unclassified, referenced (geo-spatially, relationally, and temporally) information about the roles, goals, relationships, and rules of behavior of an operationally-relevant group or person.

The Human Terrain Team not only works with the Brigade, battalions, and companies but also works hand and hand in current operating missions with Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (EPRT), Provincial Government Centers (PGC) Civil Affairs (CA), and PSYOP throughout the Al

Anbar Province. Most of the missions by our team are near Ramadi and Fallujah.

Ramadi is the capital city of the Al Anbar Province.

Lessons Learned:

Shortage of equipment, computers, printers, radios etc. Computers not imaged proper for deployment. Lack of good internet connection and sites restricted, needed for research. Splitting up team created multiple shortages in equipment and increases work load. Non Tactical Vehicle is mission essential, due to shortage of vehicles in RCT-1, no vehicle available for team. Some team member's lack, knowledge on sensitive items (OPSEC).

Planning, discussing and ordering additional equipment is critical, prior to splitting up a team. Look into a leasing program for non-tactical vehicles prior to going down range. Add (OPSEC into training program prior to deploying.

This paper has been written while deployed with The Human Terrain Team IZ-7 as Sergeant Major of the team at Camp Ramadi Iraq.

References

1. Human Terrain Systems: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Website: <http://hts.army.mil>