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Task Force Lion

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Abstract

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait required air defense protection from Iraq. Prior to the pre-deployment preparation the battalion intelligence shop was in need of a senior Noncommissioned Officer. SFC Brimhall was selected for this position. During the pre-deployment exercises an officer was appointed as the intelligence officer. The security forces in Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia and Camp Doha, Kuwait consisted of two separate organizations. Coordinating became difficult from the intelligence NCOIC to the two different security forces in two separate countries. The Security forces were placed in strategic locations throughout Kuwait. Training was carefully planned and would never allow the security force to lock and load without prior approval from the security force NCOIC on site. SFC Brimhall briefed the main threat was Mr. Hussein; however the real threat was Osama Bin Laden.

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INTRODUCTION

The Lion Battalion was a good unit when LTC John G. Rossi became the battalion commander. LTC Rossi is known as a tough, demanding, disciplined, and the ultimate war fighter. During his tenure, the battalion knew that they would participate in a normal rotation to Southwest Asia. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait required air defense protection from Iraq. The mission is a difficult mission for any battalion. The Lion battalion faced a challenge in preparing to take the first PATRIOT air defense battery from the National Guard. The National Guard unit is stationed in Alabama and completed most of their training in their home state. Many members of the Lion battalion were concerned about how well the National Guard battery was trained.

PREDEPLOYMENT

Prior to the pre-deployment preparation the battalion intelligence shop was in need of a senior Noncommissioned Officer. SFC Brimhall was selected for this position. The challenges appeared to be great. Many Soldiers did not possess the proper security clearance. The intelligence shop did not have a commissioned officer dedicated to the position. Therefore, SFC Brimhall had to fill the position of the intelligence officer and the intelligence Noncommissioned Officer In charge. One Soldier was assigned to the intelligence office that had several months experience. SPC Covington was an air defense Soldier and only received on the job training. His knowledge and skills set him apart from his peers. During the pre-deployment exercises he took charge when his skills were needed most. This allowed the intelligence NCOIC the opportunity to complete the tasks at hand, such as the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), weather reports,

briefings, and many other duties. During the pre-deployment exercises an officer was appointed as the intelligence officer. She was very knowledgeable and met the requirements needed within the battalion. Unfortunately she had developed a medical condition that prevented her from deploying. Therefore, she was medically boarded and found unfit for military duty.

The Lion battalion was difficult on senior NCOs and Soldiers. The training was challenging and rewarding at the same time. General Patton once said "...we are fighting a war! We can be killed, and should be, if we do not pick good leaders!" (Williamson 1988). LTC Rossi subscribed to the same attitude which helped the battalion become better than it had in recent memory of the Soldiers. This attitude made the intelligence NCO honored to be running the intelligence shop. They continued to excel and was allowed to become innovative in the training that was conducted prior to the deployment. The war like attitude brought realistic training that was unequal to any pre-deployment training ever accomplished in 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery regiment. The site survey that was conducted was accomplished by the Officer's In Charge and some NCOICs in critical positions. The survey paired up the incoming with the outgoing personnel in key positions. The outgoing intelligence officer was one of the best detailed intelligence officers that SFC Brimhall had met. She was able to take fragments of information and develop accurate courses of actions. Her ability to speculate what the enemy would do was unmatched by her peers. Several meetings took place and several after action reviews were typed. The site survey and information exchange lasted one week. The exchange of information and established contacts made a

significant positive impact. The Lion battalion could not wait and were ready for the desert of Southwest Asia.

DEPLOYMENT

Many Soldiers had a difficult time with separating from their families on the day that they deployed. However, Soldiers were eager to arrive in the desert and provide the air defense coverage that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait needed. The transition between the incoming and outgoing units did not affect the mission. There were many laudatory comments on the professionalism that were displayed by all involved. The security forces in Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia and Camp Doha, Kuwait consisted of two separate organizations. Coordinating became difficult from the intelligence NCOIC to the two different security forces in two separate countries. The intelligence NCOIC would travel between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia every two weeks to ensure the security and intelligence requirements for the commanders were satisfied. The security forces were due to rotate out shortly after the arrival of the PATRIOT task force. The security forces became complacent after five months in country. The concern was raised through the commands by the intelligence NCOIC that security may be compromised. The concern was noted and a higher state of alertness was adopted. The concern became the Task Forces concern about the replacements for the security force. SFC Brimhall developed an inspection program for guard forces in the Task force. The program consisted of announced, unannounced inspections, bomb searching techniques on vehicles and individuals. The program was adopted by the new security forces from the Iowa National Guard. The command team of the Iowa security forces requested the Lion intelligence NCOIC to do the inspections. The Task Force designated a new intelligence officer to

ensure the new requirements could be met. The Task force then agreed to allow SFC Brimhall to complete the security inspections in Kuwait.

A security inspection would start by SFC Brimhall, coordinating with SFC Kukac and coordinating for a time. The PATRIOT and National Guard task forces commands would be notified of the upcoming inspection. The date may be classified or a block of time would be blocked out. Both representatives would leave in the same vehicle. The PATRIOT sites were located on United States Air Force Bases throughout Kuwait. The Security forces were placed in strategic locations throughout Kuwait. When entering a PATRIOT site the vehicle would enter the Air Force base prior to placing a simulated improvised explosive device on the inspector's vehicle. Then the vehicle would attempt to penetrate the PATRIOT site without detection of the simulated IED. The security force would require the vehicle occupants to stand in an area where they could be monitored while the vehicle was inspected. If a device was located the security force would take action with the occupants. The security force always maintained live rounds. Training was carefully planned and would never allow the security force to lock and load without prior approval from the security force NCOIC on site. As soon as the inspector's vehicle pulled on site the NCOIC was notified immediately to ensure the safety of all Soldiers. Once the inspection team was on site detection would be called from a specific area of the perimeter. This would allow the inspectors the opportunity to evaluate the reaction of the Quick Reaction Force. Upon completion of the drill the evaluated members would receive an After Action Review that would be led by the Intelligence NCOIC. Whenever the security forces failed an inspection they would be locked on site until they passed the evaluation. The next

evaluation would be requested by the commander or within 48 hours after the last inspection.

THE BRIEF

The PATRIOT task force received many very important people throughout the duration of their deployment. There was one briefing that was different than the other VIP briefs. The Air Defense Center Command Sergeant Major required a briefing near the end of May 2001. During this time the intelligence brief was going to be conducted by SFC Brimhall. He dedicated a great deal of time and effort in preparing the brief for the Command Sergeant Major. The briefing was classified Secret which gave the Intelligence NCOIC the opportunity to give a detailed brief. The day that the Fort Bliss CSM showed up was a beautiful day with everyone prepared to give their brief. The Command Sergeant Major received the normal tour of Camp Doha and had lunch prior to the brief. The brief was an official brief which started by being introduced and then starting with the S1 and moved down the different staff sections.

When the Intelligence section briefed SFC Brimhall began with the classified slides. The brief touched upon the weather and the concerns with each site. The enemy portion of the brief identified Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden as the two main threats the United States was concerned about. Most people were aware of Sadaam Hussein but very few people were aware of Osama Bin Laden. SFC Brimhall briefed the main threat was Mr. Hussein, however the real threat was Osama Bin Laden. The Center Command Sergeant Major concern was why. The explanation was determined from some current actions of the Al Qaeda network. Osama Bin Laden had given a Fatwa which ordered the killing of any American. The Fatwa read:

“To kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim” (MSNBC, 1998).

This statement was not enough to convince the Center Command Sergeant Major of the significant threat that Osama Bin Laden was at that time. This surprised the Intelligence NCOIC, because of the high level briefings that the Air Defense Command Sergeant Major received. The assumption of the Intelligence NCOIC is that Osama was not seen as a threat to the senior leadership, specifically the leadership of Fort Bliss.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, “the skillful fighter puts himself into a position that makes defeat impossible and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterward looks for victory” (Tzu, 1988). The warrior, LTC Rossi, sat SFC Brimhall down in a small office on his last trip to Eskan Village and gave him some words of praise. The honor was the Intelligence NCOIC when the Lion told him that with professional NCOs the battalion did not need Officers in that position. The praise came from a true warrior, which will be treasured. The Lion battalion completed the deployment and returned to their home station in Fort Bliss in June 2001. SFC Brimhall was in the Battle Staff course when September 11, 2001

happened in the United States. His first thoughts were of the classified brief in May 2001 at Camp Doha, Kuwait.

Lions and warriors roamed the desert in early 2001 with the enemy that would soon attack. All information presented to leaders should be analyzed and taken as a real threat. Never underestimate the enemy as they may attack when you least expect it. The enemy may not appear as the enemy. Osama Bin Laden had worked with the Americans in Afghanistan to ensure the Russians did not take over that country. Osama appeared to be a friend, when trained and ready to kill, he turned on the country that helped the Taliban and Mr. Bin Laden. In many different areas the country has analyzed to try and understand why the Americans did not stop 9-11 before it happened. As other reports the intelligence was not shared or taken seriously. Since the incident all threats are reviewed and analyzed through several agencies to determine their validity. The lesson has been learned.

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