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Intrinsic Action

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September 21, 2006

USASMA Class #57

Unclassified

ABSTRACT

This essay captures some of the history of unit deployments and the challenges that leaders face while on deployments. The United States Army deploys many places around the world; Intrinsic Action is one of many exercises that the Army has participated in. This essay gives a brief explanation of the purpose of Intrinsic Action. In addition, the paper emphasizes the tough and realistic training we faced. Moreover, the challenges faced while competing for limited resources within a unit.

Intrinsic Action

Intrinsic Action was a Joint Exercise with the Army, Marines, Kuwaiti Land Forces, and other Coalition forces. The United States Army used Intrinsic Action to test their rapid response and map the land for future operations in Middle Eastern region. Units were working and living in warehouses on Camp Doha, Kuwait and covered down on preposition equipment. In addition, Intrinsic Action showed the United States' military strength and sent a clear message to Iraq, deterring any future aggression.

Pre-deployment

After returning from a one year restricted tour in South Korea, I was very happy to reunite with my family. However, my spouse was only months away from obtaining a Master's degree, and the family was soon to divide again. While assigned to Charlie Company 3-15 IN The road I was about to embark on was quite different; my two boys were to PCS with me while my wife stayed to finish her degree. Fed up with the leadership in Korea, I was preparing to serve the last year of my enlistment contract at Fort Stewart and ETS. I arrived in Fort Stewart and was assigned to the 15TH Infantry Regiment. The company I was assigned deployed to Intrinsic Action 96-3 one month prior attached to 1-64 AR. The command informed me that I was to join my unit within two weeks in Kuwait. Being a geographical bachelor, I soon discovered the importance of a family care plan. After dropping my children off in New Jersey with my parents I joined my new unit in Kuwait.

Deployment

The unit's integration and reception process was non existent. As a senior Non Commission Officer, I was very disappointed that I was not met by someone from the unit or even given direction to the unit. I did not expect to be coddled; however, I did expect to be greeted. Still

bitter with the prior leadership, I began to look down on the Army as a whole. I wandered around Camp Doha for awhile, and stumbled into the Joint Task Force Headquarters. The Task Force Headquarters contacted my unit and I was met by the company First Sergeant. I was in the unit for only one hour, when I realized how busy they were, which eased some of my bitterness.

The unit had just returned from the Kabal a few days earlier, when we received orders extending our unit for a few months. As the unit's morale quickly began to deteriorate the leadership challenges increased. As a new Platoon Sergeant, I quickly assembled my platoon in the company bay to brief them on the importance of our current situation and mission. After calming down the platoon and the Soldiers calling their loved ones back home, the unit prepared to redeploy to Kabal. My unit redrew equipment and convoyed to our area of operations located fifteen kilometers from the Iraqi border.

The unit arrived into the Kabal where we faced our next challenge, inadequate living conditions. My company was a slice element of 1-64 AR; however, the treatment we received was less than desirable or hospitable. The Task Force ran low on funds and could not complete the infantry Kabal. The Kabal lacked portable restrooms for the unit, generators, and hygiene facilities afforded to other units. The temperature was 140 degrees plus, and while the armor companies had air conditioned tents while the infantry had to make due with what was available.

Training

The next challenge was battling the grueling heat as the unit began to train. Even though Georgia was hot, nothing could prepare me for the heat encountered in Kuwait. The unit had become accustomed to training from 0400 to 1200, however had to acclimate to training from sun up to sun down. Our battalion policy was that if any leader becomes a heat casualty they would receive UCMJ; force hydration was a must. I believe what was most beneficial to the

units success was the Soldier's top physical conditioning. Two days after settling in to the Kabal, the battalion commander and Sergeant Major became heat casualties. Needless to say, that the heat casualty policy soon disappeared.

The unit began to conduct intense gunnery training. There were no ranges established and being a former battalion master gunner I assisted the unit master gunner in designing a full range complex in the desert. Once the ranges were designed, targets in place, and met all safety standards, the units began to rotate through training. The units qualified on every individual weapon system, M1 tanks, and Bradleys. The units also conducted squad and platoon level live fires, to include tank and Bradley tables 11 and 12 qualifications. The ranges were designed so well, CENTCOM decided to leave the ranges in place for the next rotational unit.

During gunnery, I was faced with the additional challenge of training a new gunner. My gunner was a former driver with no gunner experience. Being a former Bradley instructor, normally this would not have posed a challenge; however, I had thirty-three other Soldiers in the platoon to consider. I condensed three weeks worth of training in to two days. My gunner and I qualified distinguished first time, which was quite an accomplishment.

After thirty long days of training, it was time to leave the Kabal. While the armored companies departed for Camp Doha, the infantry companies were tasked to move into the tankers' Kabal and clean up all the Kabals in the area of operation. The tasking infuriated the company commander as well as the First Sergeant. The commander and the First Sergeant were relieved for failing to comply with the clean up portion of the tasking. After a good night rest in the tankers' air conditioned tents, the commander and First Sergeant were reinstated the next day. The company cleaned most of all of the Kabals and the tankers were sent back out to assist with clean up.

We redeployed to Camp Doha and commenced equipment turn-in. We were given five days to turn in all equipment and all deficiencies had to be corrected to 20 level standards. Like the National Training Center at Fort Irwin California, crews worked continuously day and night preparing vehicles for final inspection. The infantry company was the first to turn in all vehicles and tasked to assist the armor companies in turning their vehicles. In addition, the infantry company was tasked to perform PLL, staff duty and other details on post.

For the next thirty days, the task force had time to enjoy themselves. After Soldiers begin to feel homesick, the inadequate warehouse was the closest thing to being home again. Camp Doha offered a variety of recreational activities for the soldiers. Frostys offered free billiards and all you can eat burgers, fries, and hotdogs. The Doha movie theater offered new release videos. In addition, the Marble Palace offered free live entertainment, a lounge area, and swimming facilities. Finally, the task force offered a variety of tours to Kuwait City.

Redeployment

The redeployment phase to Fort Stewart, Georgia was at best an emotional rollercoaster. The Soldiers were lined up and manifested for a flight, waited several hours just to be told no flights were leaving that day. As with any redeployment, the hurry up and wait status, shakedowns, and custom inspections began to take its toll on many of the Soldiers. This situation went on continuously for approximately one week. A lot of Soldiers lost faith in the senior leaders and felt that they were lied to from beginning to end. Finally, the battalion flew as a whole on two separate aircrafts. Eighteen hours after departing Kuwait we landed in Hunter Army Airfield and finally we were back in U.S. soil. Several months later, I became the First Sergeant of the same unit.

Reintegrating with your family is one of the toughest challenges that a Soldier may face. Spouses have become accustomed to working independent from the Soldier. Reintegrating with my family was a slow and tedious process. I had to relearn family values, likes, dislikes, and their new way of doing business in my absence. I took for granted that things would be the same as it was when I departed.

Lessons Learned

Some of the lessons learned from my deployment were not new issues. However, they were issues that have never affected me before this deployment. After a large deployment, many units found flaws in their execution plan. We would capture our flaws in the After Action Reviews and lessons learned. The first lesson learned was having a good Family Care Plan. No Soldier wants to worry about the family while deployed. Planning who will take care of your family members during deployment can alleviate a lot of undue stress. Second, lesson is to find what motivates your Soldiers and to keep your Soldiers motivated no matter what the situation. Next, lesson learned was physical fitness. Physical fitness was vital to our success in maintaining continuous operation in the harsh desert environment. Then, incorporate sponsorship for incoming Soldiers at every level. The next lesson learned was to ensure Soldiers communicated with their family members every chance that they could get. One of the most important lesson we learned was to incorporate tough and realistic training during home station pre-deployment training. Next, be upfront with your Soldiers. Do not make promises that you can not keep. In other words, if you do not have the decision-making authority, do not tell your Soldiers unofficial information. In addition, treat all attached units as if they were your own unit. Favoritism can break the foundation of a unit's core; there is no room for favoritism at any level. Remember one team, one fight. Fight for your Soldiers and do not allow your Soldiers to be

mistreated. Last lesson learned is it takes time to reintegrate the Soldiers with their family members.

Intrinsic Action was one of the most important training exercises that prepared us for operations in Iraq today. Intrinsic Action allowed the United States Army to train realistically in a harsh desert environment. Intrinsic action also allowed us to become accustomed to working with multi-national coalition forces, our sister service units, and prepared us for working with the civilian population. From deployment to redeployment, we found better ways of planning and executing the Army's war time mission.