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OIF Embedded Trainers

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### Abstract

During mid months of 2005, 13 Missouri Soldiers were notified of deployment to Iraq. This deployment was to be the first rotation for advisors that would train and fight with Iraqi Commando's Special Police Tactic Teams and was made up of personnel from AC/RC, Army reserve units and Army National Guard Soldiers. This paper tells of the issue's and concerns that faced the soldiers with a deployment of mixed units, and it will cover the time period from notification, pre-mob, training, mission an redeploy to home.

In mid-May 2005, The Missouri National Guard notified Officers and 1 Missouri Senior NCO was notified that they were being deployed to Iraq. Notification and selection of individuals who were to SRP were chosen from a Combat arms MOS and were made up of MP officers and one Infantry NCO, around 30 individuals were notified with less than a 30 day mobilization period. From this pool of officers the decision on who would be filling the 12 officer positions on the battle roster was not made for 5 days after the SRP. With this process the individual soldiers had approximately 20 days before they were to report to Fort Carson, Colorado to begin mobilization training, which cause's many issue with families not being prepared and civilian employers trying to replace these individuals in the work force.

Once the decision had been made and the Officers notified, many questions began to come up about the mission. Because of this being a new mission there was a lack of or very little knowledge for the embedded trainers as to the task or purpose on how and what would be the needs to accomplish our mission with the Iraqi Commando's. The personnel began researching the mission and found that the Iraqi Commando's were a paramilitary force modeled after the Italian Carabinieri, much like our own SWAT teams, due to a lack of proper research into the mission and failure to match troops to task, some of the Missouri officers were placed in positions that they were not familiar with or would have been better suited for NCOs. For example one CPT was a driver and one MAJ was a gunner on an M114 the entire tour.

The group arrived at Fort Carson, CO in early June to complete mandatory pre-deployment Warrior Task Training (WTT), from there the group moved to Kuwait for

10 days of WTT, then into Taji Iraq to attend the Phoenix Academy, to receive hands on training, purpose and scope on what, and how to be embedded trainers and advisors.

While receiving advanced training in Fort Carson a lack of knowledge, about the mission requirements by the unit responsible for mobilization led to much confusion as the Special Police Training Teams (SPTT) and Military Training Teams (MTT) were group together to accomplish advanced training. The mobilizing unit did not have a clear understanding of the mission for either the SPTT or MTT teams and were not able to answer any questions for either group on mission requirement, and operations.

Quality, realism and a lack of coordination between Fort Carson, Kuwait, and Taji led to soldiers receiving the same training over in all three locations and not being prepared for their mission in Iraq, which meant all soldiers had to learn their mission while on the job. Convoy live fire and convoy lane training was poor and unrealistic, and trained different at all locations, soldiers were not allowed operational time on up armored M1114s HUMVEEs, not given the opportunity to qualify with PAQ-4s, language training was roughly a one and half hour block of instructions. The training at the Phoenix Academy in Taji Iraq was not specific, again SPTT and MTT teams were lumped together, there was no clear descriptions or guidance on mission requirements, The soldiers were trained by personnel not associated with the mission that had never been advisors or worked with Iraqi counterparts, the training was a repetition of what was received in Fort Carson and Kuwait.

In order to properly train soldiers as advisors, those teaching must have expertise in the specific areas and have an understanding of success, both culturally and militarily, as well as knowledge on what an advisor's duties are.

most current intelligence from Coalition sources and stay abreast of operations was critical to mission success, given the fact that with SPTT missions it didn't matter if up to date intelligence was known. When the Commandos went on missions the SPTTs were also going on mission.

Most soldiers from Missouri did not observe any Tactical Humint Teams approach their Commando counterparts. The senior leadership of the Commandos are all well respected, highly placed officials Iraqi's capable of providing intelligence, analysis and opinions that can be taken by the coalition and used at their discretion for mission planning. Since this was the first SPTT mission in Iraq, it is possible that most Coalition Commanders did not understand the Commandos and their mission. The soldiers of Missouri found that there were basically two types of Coalition Commanders; those that understood both the SPTT mission and the Commando mission and were willing to help and listen, and those that felt the Commandos were used best as "cannon fodder". On numerous occasions, the Commandos were asked to do things that the Coalition would not do, (i.e.; pick up bodies, clean up battle sites). Often Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) were not available for the Commandos or the SPTT members.

SPTTs were to be supplied by Coalition Forces wherever they went, that did not turn out to be the case, because of communications between Coalition and not understanding the missions of the SPTTs, Commanders of Forward Operating Bases' (FOBs) were reluctant to help for fear of reprisals. It was a constant struggle to build support relationships, in one example a motor pool at FOB Shield would not even supply the SPTTs with oil, making them drive 20 minutes on a route known for EFPs to have routine maintenance accomplished. The SPTTs got by through begging, borrowing and appropriating by any

means available in most instances. Knowledge of the SPTT mission was almost non-existent from Coalition Forces.

The Equipment issued to SPTT teams was exceptional, if not excessive. An 8-11 man team with 3, M1114 HUMVEEs could not move itself once all personnel and personal team equipment was loaded, and was forced to pull trailers while moving to, controlling and holding operations in different sectors. SPTTs were issued equipment, such as vehicular SatCom radios, while a highly effective piece of equipment, Coalition Units did not have the same equipment. Since SPTTs are embedded with Commandos, there was no way to properly secure team equipment while deployed on missions, as a result, all equipment went with the SPTTs everywhere we went, or personnel were left to guard equipment left behind which then down graded mission capabilities.

This is a general description of the soldier's from Missouri experience. There are variances, but what follows is the common theme through out the deployment: Initially, the established teams on the ground a month before our arrival in country looked upon the new guys poorly; a large part was the resentment toward National Guard (NG). The teams already on ground were Active Component/ Reserve Component (AC/RC) soldiers as time progressed forward most National Guard personnel were accepted and respect for their jobs and service was established. Leadership styles between the National Guard and AC/RC were also issues. AC/RC soldiers like to micromanage and try to do everything within one person, NG soldiers seem to take a delegation approach and include all personnel involved with the mission. This may be in part to the stigma Active units having on the capabilities of National Guard soldiers.

As re-deployment neared and the short timers attitude became present the SPTTs became almost dysfunctional as the Active Component soldiers rebounded, and many of the Missouri soldiers went back to being the Guard guys and no longer part of the team. When NG and AC/RC soldiers are going to work together on the same small team in the future, teams need to be established in the Continental United States (CONUS) prior to training and deployment. This will effectively let all soldiers spend more time becoming an effective unit.