



# Joint Center for Lessons Learned



*BULLETIN*  
*Volume I, Issue 1*



*"Those who cannot remember the past  
are condemned to repeat it."*

George Santayana:  
The Life of Reason,  
1906

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## FROM THE STAFF

The important lessons learned for all personnel to know are in the field with you, not with us. The JCLL has the mission and the means to share those lessons with the rest of the joint community. If you or your unit have a "lesson" that could help others do it right the first time, then send it to us. Don't wait until you have a polished article. The JCLL can take care of the editing, format, and layout. We want the raw material that can be packaged and then shared with everyone. Please take the time to put your good ideas on paper and get them to the JCLL. We will acknowledge receipt and then work with you to put your material in a publishable form with **you as the author**.

**We want your e-mail address**, please send your command e-mail address to us at [jcll@jwfc.acom.mil](mailto:jcll@jwfc.acom.mil). Our future plans call for electronic dissemination of various material.

### REMEMBER!!!

TIMELY SUBMISSION OF INTERIM REPORTS, AFTER ACTION REPORTS, AND LESSONS LEARNED RESULTS IN MORE TIMELY, QUALITY PRODUCTS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE JCLL STAFF.

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*Cover: U. S. Army Photo Courtesy of the 3d U.S. Infantry*



## Message From the Commander

**Maj Gen M. R. Berndt, USMC**  
*Commander, USACOM JWFC*

This is the fourth edition of the JCLL Bulletin and I am pleased to announce that it represents the start of a new direction. It concentrates on the lessons learned process and how some of the other individual lessons learned centers fulfill their roles. The Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) has also expanded its capabilities by having the lessons learned database available on the SIPRNET. The database is updated continually and you can conduct your search in real time using a simple search engine. This is of course a quantum leap over the previous method of asking my analysts to conduct a search and then mailing the results to the requester.

I want to take this opportunity to solicit your input to this or any of the other Bulletins. As the Bulletin continues to evolve we want to incorporate other features you feel will enhance joint effectiveness. We want to transition from a medium that features articles mainly written by my staff and others to a vehicle that promotes discussion, ideas, and articles from anyone in the joint community. We want to “wean” ourselves from writing the lion’s share of the Bulletin. After all, real learning takes place out in the field where you train and fight. Although we will continue to bring you the latest in lessons learned analysis from the reports we receive, we encourage and welcome your articles.



As I mentioned, the JCLL recently assumed guardianship of the lessons learned database. There are presently just over 1,300 lessons in the database and we are processing more lessons learned from numerous Joint After-Action Reports on a continual basis. We appreciate your efforts in the field to keep the lessons learned database as current and comprehensive as possible—I believe the following articles reinforce how important that role is in exercise and real world operations preparation.

The articles in this bulletin are intended to be thought provoking, professionally useful, and interesting to you as you plan and execute joint operations and training. We solicit your feedback and sincerely encourage your written responses for publication so that we may enhance the education and readiness for the entire joint community.

M.R. BERNDT  
Major General, USMC  
Commander

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## JCLL UPDATE

*CDR Wayne Grumney, USN  
JCLL Director*



The Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) has finally attained full operational capability. Since our last Bulletin, we have acquired Secure Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) capability and have put the lessons learned database online. This is in addition to our Non-secure Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNET) site where you can read any issue of the JCLL Bulletin, download Joint Universal Lessons Learned System software, and read the CJCSI for preparing your Joint After-Action Reports (JAARs).

After a year of feasibility studies and testing, the JCLL now attends those exercises that are part of the USACOM JWFC major exercise support and is available to provide lessons learned analysis for selected real-world operations.

Since its inception just over two years ago, the JCLL has grown both in size and operational focus. Its original goal of full operational capability (FOC) was reached on October 1, 1998. The mission of the JCLL is to collect, process, analyze, distribute, and archive lessons learned, issues, and key observations from joint operations and training events to enhance the combat effectiveness and interoperability of joint forces.

The most significant achievement in attaining FOC was the transfer of the joint lessons learned database from the Joint Staff J7 Exercise Analysis Division (EAD) to the JCLL. The Joint Staff J7 EAD retains the responsibility of receiving and tracking all Joint After-Action Reports, but the processing of these JAARs and the subsequent entry of the information into the database rests with JCLL. Processing of the JAARs starts with a focused review of the reports for content, and ensuring all the required data fields are completed. If further information is required, the JCLL works with the submitting command to clarify the reports. The JCLL ensures lessons learned, issues, and key observations from the reports are linked to the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL). This linkage assists future lessons learned users during database searches. The JCLL periodically scrubs the database for those items that are no longer applicable to current operations. As an example, lessons learned that discuss limitations of equipment no longer inventoried are removed from the active database.

The JCLL is also responsible for maintaining two web sites, one on the SIPRNET and one on the NIPRNET. Both web sites contain the CJCS instructions applicable to JAARS and the CJCS Remedial Action Program (RAP), a copy of the JCLL produced publications, links to other lessons learned sites, and the software needed to run the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULS). In addition,

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the SIPRNET database has a search engine for accessing specific lessons learned and after-action reports in narrative format. A list of all JCLL personnel and how to contact them is available on either web site.

Most recently, the JCLL became an integral component of the “major exercise support” initiative for those training events supported by USACOM JWFC. First, JCLL analysts research the goals, objectives, and the Joint Mission Essential Tasks (JMETs) for the exercise. Then, an analyst briefs the findings at one of the exercise planning conferences, or sends a copy of the findings to the applicable JTF representative. This ultimately saves valuable training time and money by giving staff exercise planners an historical view of previous exercises, associated problems encountered, and subsequent solutions. As part of the USACOM JWFC Training and Exercise Division’s exercise support, the JCLL analysts then prepare and train for the upcoming exercise. They concentrate on key areas, and arrive on scene with a coordinated collection plan for finding the best potential lessons learned. As the exercise progresses, their focus is modified to capture exercise highlights. Their goal is to provide an initial draft JAAR within 45 days of ENDEX for the CJTF’s review. The CJTF then uses the draft to prepare his JAAR, a CJCS requirement, for submission to the J7 EAD. Two positive results from this process are first, an improved JAAR submission from the commanders, and subsequently, an improved Joint Lessons Learned database from which the entire joint community can benefit.



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## The Joint After-Action Reporting System

Colin Claus, Analyst  
Joint Center for Lessons Learned



What would you say is the most important aspect of a training exercise or mission? If you said the debrief, you are right. Granted, every aspect from research through execution is important, but if you do not review and analyze what you have just completed, you have lost the most important resource—lessons learned. Although it is important to know what went wrong or did not go according to plan, it is also important to know why things went wrong and how to avoid or work around similar situations in the future. It is equally important to study what “went right” and according to plan, so future operations can benefit from highly successful situations. The collection and promulgation of these lessons learned is a simple concept but one that requires two elements—contributions and a means to share the information.

I recently read an article about a military doctor who happened across a simple and effective way to treat tachycardia (rapid heart beat). In an age where “wonder drugs” are

encouraged, this doctor wondered why there was so little publicity regarding the use of this drug. After successfully treating two patients in a relatively short time, he called a colleague in another hospital and was told, “We use that here all of the time.” This situation makes one wonder how many other emergency room doctors are unaware of this treatment. And, other than scientific periodicals, why is there no medical “lessons learned” medium? (There could very well be, but this doctor did not allude to one.)

The concept of capturing and recording these experiences in operations and exercises is the principle for the Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) database. Simple in concept but again, critically dependent upon one resource—lessons learned. Our sole source of lessons learned are those submitted via the Joint Staff J7 EAD (Exercise Analysis Division) in the Joint After-Action Report (JAAR). This is to ensure that any material submitted by the joint community for use by the U.S. military and those agencies having access to the SIPRNET (Secure Internet Protocol Router Network) has been reviewed and forwarded by the respective CINC. Limiting the avenues of input to the database also ensures the highest fidelity of review and checks and balances, thereby eliminating the possibility of conflicting reports regarding the same event.

The process and methodology for collecting and submitting these lessons learned is via the Joint



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Action-Action Reporting System (JAARS) per CJCSI 3150.25. This instruction establishes the reporting policies and general responsibilities for submission of the JAARs and who is required to comply. As mentioned, this is the exclusive vehicle from which we at the Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) receive inputs for the lessons learned database. One of our main goals is to obtain as many lessons learned as possible since, as of this writing, there are about 1300 lessons learned in the database. Not only is the volume of the database important, but the timeliness of the data is also critical. Although we have lessons learned dating back to the early 1990's, the relevancy of that information has diminished considerably.

As processes, technologies, and operations evolve, it will become increasingly important to capture and disseminate those lessons learned that lead to more efficient utilization of resources. As one of my favorite sayings states, "Learn from the mistakes of others because you won't live long enough to make them all yourself." This embodies our mission of enhancing combat effectiveness by providing the lessons learned from others so they will not be repeated. Our cover also reinforces the need to be aware of the problems encountered in the past because it may result in casualties—we are not the only ones who study history.

The primary reason for stressing the number and timeliness of the entries into the database is for us to return to you, the user, the best product possible. As was mentioned at the

start of the article, every step in the Joint Training System is critical and research is the first step. For the sake of argument, there are few things that the joint forces have not done before. But when we receive requests for lessons learned on certain areas of operations, we sometimes do not get any "hits" from the database. This may be even more frustrating for us than it is for you because we both know that at some point, someone else has performed that task and one would think there should be supporting observations or lessons learned regarding its employment.



*Members of the 437th Security Forces Squadron, Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., board a C-141, Starlifter, as they deploy from their home station in support of Operation DESERT FOX. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Diane S. Robinson)*

In an effort to facilitate the joint task force's preparation of a JAAR, the JCLL has been tasked with the preparation of a draft JAAR in conjunction with those exercises to which the USACOM JWFC provides major exercise support.



*USS Enterprise (CVN 65) steams toward the southern end of its operating area during Operation DESERT FOX. (USN photo by Photographer's Mate 1<sup>st</sup> Class Todd Cichonowicz)*

After over a year of research and attempting different methods for draft JAAR preparation, we will provide two analysts on those fully supported exercises along with the analysis section in order to best position the analysts for observing the exercise. The analysts have access to the observation database and to all of the turnover briefs where the exercise's progress is discussed along with areas of interest for observation.

This in conjunction with the Facilitated After-Action Review (FAAR) is the foundation for our composition of a draft JAAR that we will forward to the CJTF. Realizing that this does not include participant input, we are working on a "user friendly" input form for use on the exercise LAN to encourage as much feedback as possible. The timeliness of information in the database applies as well to the timeliness of inputting observations while at the exercise site since the more information collected will translate into better accuracy of the draft JAAR.

The principle of a lessons learned system is simple in concept but challenging to keep current and viable. Although many commands have their own lessons learned database, the joint community at large can only benefit if the flow of JAARs to the J7 continues. The JCLL's exercise support via the draft JAAR is an effort to help the CJTF capture those lessons learned that will be of benefit to all.



# US Army Europe Lessons Learned

Everett A. Johnson  
US Army Europe, Center for Lessons Learned

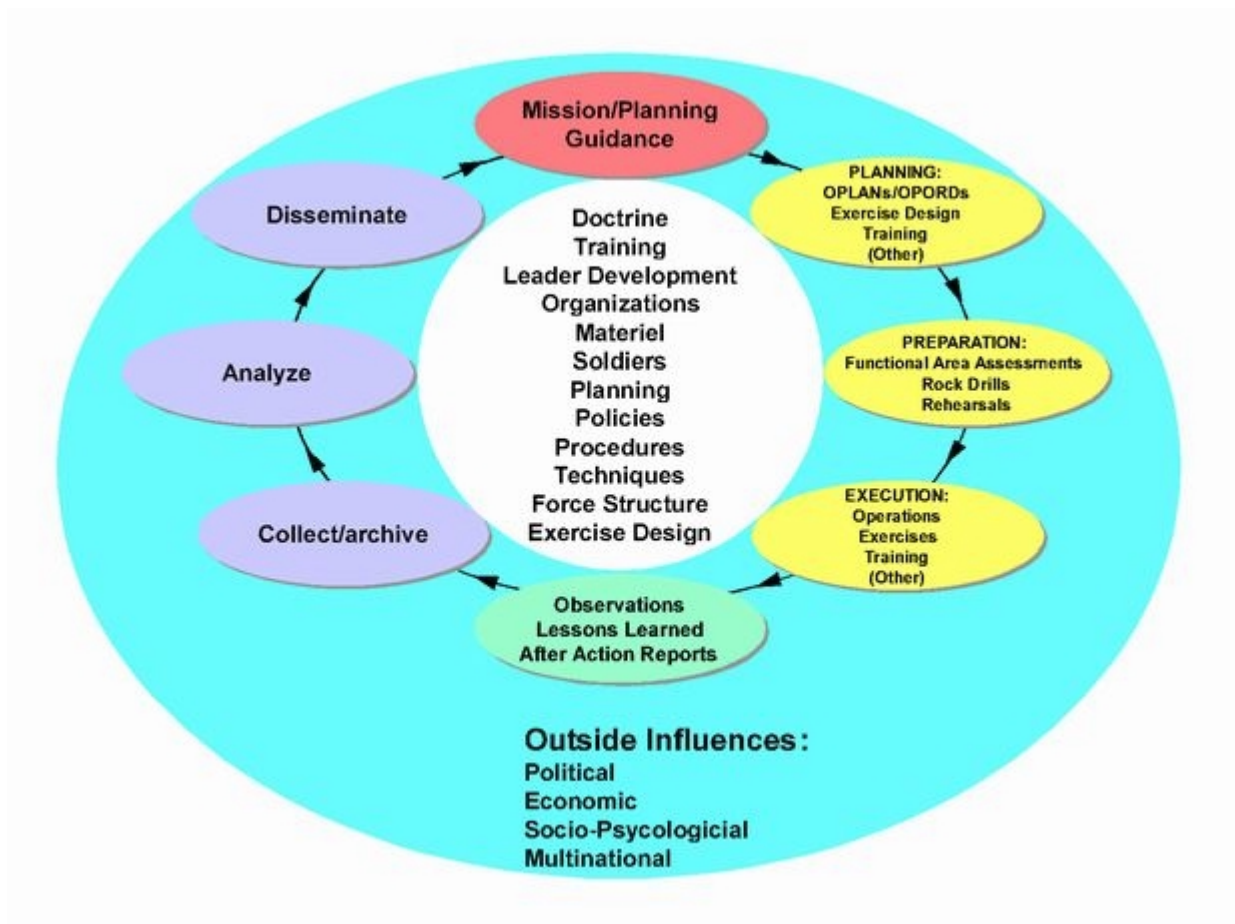
In 1995 Headquarters United States Army Europe, recognizing it was a learning organization with heavy personnel turbulence and an uncertain operational future, established the USAREUR Lessons Learned Office (ULLO) and began work on instituting the USAREUR Lessons Learned Operating System (ULLOS). The goal was to create a program which would fill a void within the USAREUR Command system. One that would provide operational level lessons for use by USAREUR and Army planners for future contingencies and training events. The ULLOS, as it is termed, is not intended to replace either the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) or the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) processes. It is designed to fill the operational level gap between the tactical focus of CALL and the joint strategic focus of JULLS. As a result, it complements the two programs and at the same time highlights the operational arena in which USAREUR is engaged.

The advent of open-ended peace keeping operations required that specific operational level lessons be collected, analyzed, stored and disseminated to the planners of these type contingencies. The objective of the ULLOS is to present a lessons learned system which is PROACTIVE, RELIABLE, ACCESSIBLE and SIMPLE. One which improves the overall readiness posture of USAREUR units and allows them to achieve a greater degree of success in combat as well as peace support operations. The mission of the USAREUR LESSONS LEARNED OFFICE is simple:

***“The USAREUR Lessons Learned Office collects, analyzes, and disseminates Operational and Strategic Theater lessons learned from USAREUR operations and training events in order to improve operational readiness and provide the CG USAREUR with trained and ready forces.”***

## **THE PROCESS**

In any valid lessons learned or remedial action program, the process must be cyclical and continuous in order to be effective. Lessons Learned pamphlets, After-Action Reports and Operational Summaries are of limited value if the experience gained is not analyzed, disseminated and accessed to improve a follow-on iteration of the mission. The USAREUR system insures the cyclical approach is maintained by delivering analyzed or "finalized" lessons learned to the appropriate planning groups and subsequently collecting observations from the operation or training event when it is conducted. Figure 1 depicts the cyclical nature of the process from the initial Mission Planning Guidance through the dissemination of lessons learned from the conduct of that mission. It also depicts the various categories within which the observations are analyzed.



**(Figure 1)**  
**USAREUR Preparation, Planning, and Execution cycle**

The principle categories for analysis are the "TRADOC DOMAIN" of Doctrine, Training, Leader Development, Organizations, Material and Soldiers. The ULLOS has added another group of criteria to this list since many observations do not lend themselves to analysis using only this domain. The additions include Planning, Policies, Procedures, Techniques, Force Structure and Exercise Design. All of these categories are combined to make up the "DTLOMS Plus" domain. Through the use of this process the ULLOS represents a dynamic system which uses change to achieve improvement and sustainment.

One of the most important factors in analyzing observations from USAREUR sponsored missions is an assessment of the effects of elements which lie outside USAREUR control. These elements generally fall under the categories of the national elements of power: Political, Economic and Socio-Psycological. Finally, an added aspect which must be considered in the analysis of today's contingency planning is the constraint placed on the commander by operating in a multinational structure.

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When all of these factors are considered the product is a valid and authoritative lesson which, if followed, will help improve the ability of USAREUR to satisfy the mission essential tasks assigned to the commander.

## **HOW THE ULLOS OPERATES**

Essentially, the ULLOS is the key to accomplishing the ULLO mission. It is the process used to collect and archive raw observation data, analyze the data, recommend sustainment or change and disseminate potential lessons learned to the USAREUR staff and subordinate commands. When it is appropriate, lessons are also shared with other Army and DOD agencies.

## **COLLECTION**

An observation is a written description and discussion of a condition or incident which has taken place and which affected the event or operation favorably or unfavorably. An observation is entered into the system from various sources. These include:

1. Unsolicited via the WWW. An observation form is available on-line at the ULLOS WWW homepage ([www.ullos.army.mil](http://www.ullos.army.mil)) and it is simple to use.
2. Targeted Event Collection. Based on guidance from the DCSOPS USAREUR certain operations and exercises are targeted for collection by the participants and by observer/collectors from the ULLO.
3. Interviews. Personal interviews of leaders and participants are often conducted by ULLO collectors.



*Soldiers from a convoy prepare to enter the main gate at Steel Castle Base, Bosnia-Herzegovina. (Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR photo by SPC Richard F. Cancellieri, 55<sup>th</sup> Sig. Co. (Combat Camera))*

4. After-Action Reports (AAR). Reports from participating units and action officers conducting or administering the event.

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5. JULLS & CALL products which reflect possible trends in USAREUR unit performance.

As a first step in the process, the raw data is collected and screened for content and classification. It is also vetted at this point and irrelevant material is discarded. Once the screening process is completed the raw observation is then entered into the database using the observation-input form found on the ULLOS homepage. The format used includes four parts:

1. Title
2. Observation
3. Discussion
4. Recommendation

### **ANALYSIS**

The initial examination of an observation or group of observations helps determine the course of further analysis. Qualified analysts within the ULLO categorize the raw data within the "DTLOMS Plus" domain and research it to determine its validity and precedence. They then refine and broaden the information to insure its relevance at the operational level and to present it in a standardized format. Finally, they match the data against the USAREUR Mission Essential Task List (METL) to determine how best to direct its dissemination. Once the observation has been analyzed and categorized, it is presented to the ULLO supervisor as a completed lesson for approval and dissemination.

### **DISSEMINATION**

The Chief of ULLO is the resident approval authority for the finalized lessons and represents DCSOPS USAREUR in that capacity. He is a senior Department of the Army Civilian and supervises the work of the contractor analysts within the branch.

The ULLOS, which is designed around the ORACLE8 database, allows the supervisor to pursue several options once he receives the analyzed lesson.

1. He can approve its dissemination for general use by the Army community and place it on the WWW homepage.
2. He can also approve a lesson for distribution and availability within HQ USAREUR. In this instance the lesson is stored within the database and is available to USAREUR planners through the use of an entry code.
3. The supervisor can also hold or table the lesson until he verifies either the data contained in it or his proposed channel of dissemination.



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4. He can raise questions on the observation and send it back to the analyst for resolution.

The supervisor is in a position to clearly assess the desired priority and expected impact of published lessons. He uses that knowledge to choose the most appropriate channel for dissemination.

In addition to the electronic dissemination of lessons learned, there are several other forms by which they may be distributed. They can be downloaded by event or operation and collated for distribution to those planning a similar event. For example, the lessons learned from Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR or Exercise AGILE LION can be downloaded and delivered to those responsible for planning the operation follow-on mission or the sequel to the exercise.

Finally, when the lessons learned database indicates that a trend is occurring with regard to a particular functional area such as Force Protection or Reserve Component Augmentation, those pertinent lessons, which make up the trend, can be collated and produced in the form of a report or pamphlet.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

No lesson learned system is successful unless it can be accessed by those who wish to use it. The ULLOS is both a simple and effective archive for USAREUR sponsored events. It none the less requires command emphasis to insure it is used to its capacity.

Those desiring to access the system from within the .army.mil community need only log on to the ULLO homepage at, [www.ullos.army.mil](http://www.ullos.army.mil). They will then be instructed to obtain an access code. This is a simple process using E-mail as a means of verifying that the information is only going to appropriate users. Once they have reached the homepage, a simple menu will direct their search for specific lessons they wish to acquire. Those planners within HQ USAREUR use an access code that allows them to access a larger field of lessons from specific USAREUR events.

The USAREUR Lessons Learned Office maintains a close relationship with both the Center for Army Lessons Learned and the EUCOM and Joint Centers for Lessons Learned. ULLO products are available to these agencies on an open basis and are often combined with products from CALL and ECLL to form reports to the USAREUR command group. The ULLO may be contacted by e-mail at [ullos@hq.hqusareur.army.mil](mailto:ullos@hq.hqusareur.army.mil) or by phoning DSN: 370-8092 (commercial phone is (49) 6221-578092). They stand ready to clarify capabilities and to assist with specific lessons learned on USAREUR sponsored events.



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## U.S. Marine Corps Lessons Learned System Overview



Major James Gough  
USMC Lessons Learned

The Marine Corps Lessons Learned System (MCLLS) was established in 1989 and was based on a 1988 Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) initiative and directed by the JCS in an April 1989 Memorandum. MCLLS is the after-action reporting system for all Marine Corps commands and provides for the collection, processing, validation, and dissemination of lessons learned and other useful information on a Marine Corps-wide basis. The MCLLS software program is compatible with the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) and the Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS) and is invaluable in the transferring of information and lessons learned between these operating systems. This capability vastly enhances the Marine Corps' information research potential and allows for better preparation for Joint Operations and Exercises.

The objective of MCLLS is to provide the Marine Corps a single repository of lessons learned gleaned from After-Action Reports (AAR) of real world operations, exercises, and the day-to-day functioning of units and agencies. It also provides a responsive method for identifying deficiencies and initiating corrective action in the areas of doctrine, organization, equipment, training and education, and facilities and support. These actions are a crucial step in the Combat Development System (CDS).

The Operational Focus of MCLLS is to provide the official description of operations, exercises, and other reportable occurrences that identified significant lessons learned. These reports are not considered an evaluation of the participating units, but rather a vehicle to identify strengths and weaknesses that must be recorded and addressed for the overall benefit of the Marine Corps. Lessons learned are defined as procedures developed to "work around" shortfalls in doctrine, organization, equipment, training and education, and facilities and support. Depending on the magnitude or impact

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on readiness, they may reflect a deficiency which should be addressed through the Marine Corps Capability Assessment Program (CAP), or could be a response to a problem or process that worked well. Regardless of their origin, recorded lessons learned allow Marines to refine operational procedures ultimately resulting in their ability to function at a higher level of proficiency. The Marine Corps CAP functions in a continuous cycle of input, analysis, corrective action, monitoring, and feedback to the MCLLS user. This cycle identifies action items through the analysis of MCLLs, assigns a Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) and/or Headquarters, assigns a Marine Corps (HQMC) office of primary responsibility to develop possible courses of action, monitors the progress of corrective action, and closes the action item when the solution has been implemented.



*U.S. Marines from the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU depart for ships of the Belleau Wood Amphibious Group after seven days on the ground in support of Operation DESERT FOX. (USMC photo by Sgt. Maj. Greg Leaf)*

In order to maximize the benefits of the lessons learned process, MCLLS emphasizes capturing experiences and exploiting this knowledge in all phases of Marine activities. It will be used to support the CDS and Concept Based Requirements Process (CBRP) through:

- a. Mission area analysis.

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- b. Development of concepts, doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.
  - c. Force structure studies and analyses.
  - d. Operations, exercise, and wargame planning.
  - e. Professional military education and training.
  - f. Identification of equipment needs.

The MCLLS software provides an automated system for the preparation of lessons learned and features pre-formatted screens. This feature is very user-friendly enabling anyone to submit a lesson learned, and the MCLLS software is available throughout the Marine Corps. MCLLS are submitted within 60 days of the reported occurrence to CG MCCDC (C39) via the appropriate chain of command and are required for the following occurrences:

- a. Unit/ Joint/combined operations and exercises.
- b. Combined arms exercises (CAX).
- c. Unit deployments.
- d. Marine Aviation Weapons Tactics Squadron 1 (MAWTS-1) courses.
- e. CMC Inspector General (IG) evaluations for items deemed appropriate by CMC (IG) for Marine Corps-wide dissemination.
- f. Conferences that produce a listing of possible deficiencies or shortfalls that have Marine Corps-wide ramifications.
- g. HQMC and/or MCCDC sponsored wargames.
- h. Collection efforts sponsored by the Commanding General (CG), MCCDC that generate lessons learned.

After receiving the lessons learned they are placed in a database and are stored under two separate subtitles: Information and Action. As its name implies, the Information portion of the database consists of MCLLS that are informational in nature. They provide a wealth of information that may not be by strict definition a “lesson learned” but are a source of accumulated corporate knowledge. By performing keyword searches for selected topics, the MCLLS user may access a substantial number of narrowly focused lessons and therefore benefit from past experiences of other Marines. The Action portion of the database contains MCLLS that, after review by the MCCDC CAP, have been determined to warrant remedial action. MCLLS users can access the Action

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database to take advantage of timely feedback and periodic updates on action taken on these MCLLs.



*Members of the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU ground combat element seen honing their skills in the Kuwaiti Desert prior to Operation DESERT FOX. (Official USMC photo by Cpl. R.M. Katz, 31<sup>st</sup> MEU)*

A tailored database consisting of those lessons learned grouped by a specific topic or area of interest may be requested to support specific operational/exercise objectives or to support any other academic or operational requirement. A database of this type may be requested by contacting the MCLLS Section, Capability Assessment Branch, Warfighting Development Integration Division, MCCDC (C39) at DSN 278-4913/6081.

CG MCCDC (C39) distributes the updated MCLLS database via CD-ROM on a semiannual basis. This update will also contain the latest version of the other Service lessons learned, the MCCDC Outreach newsletter and Topical Books.

Mobile training teams from MCCDC provide training on an as needed basis on MCLLS software utilization. Students are provided the MCLLS input software during this training.

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## Air Combat Command Center for Lessons Learned

Steven McCoy  
ACC Center for Lessons Learned



The Air Combat Command Center for Lessons Learned (ACCCLL) was established in March 1996 in an effort to improve the ACC lessons learned process. The main focus of the ACCCLL has been on the knowledge sharing piece of the operation and exercise cycle. Our primary mission is to gather lessons learned data from ACC and ACC gained units, validate the data as lessons learned and analyze it for problem areas, and provide that information back to units participating in like deployments. Units can then use the information during their planning.

A U.S. General Accounting Office Report, "Potential to Use Lessons Learned to Avoid Past Mistakes is Largely Untapped," drove the Air Combat Command (ACC) to renew its interest in the lessons learned process. In general, the report said that lessons learned information was not readily available nor analyzed to identify trends in performance weaknesses, and that follow-up and validation of

corrective actions was insufficient. In ACC we knew this process needed work. So, we took the information from the report, looked at the history of other programs, and checked all the guidance to determine the current lessons learned requirements.

One of the most important steps was to determine who our customers were. After identifying our customers, we then had to decide if the current lessons learned processes were meeting their needs. We found this to be a formidable task because hardly anyone knew ACCCLL existed. We were here to help, but no one knew it! Those that did know were not interested, because the lessons learned process was too cumbersome. We realized that we needed to heighten awareness of knowledge sharing and show how it could help those in the field. We developed a strategy that included briefings, advertising, training, and ways to make the data more readily available. We called this the Better Utilized Lessons Learned (BULL) initiative.

Before starting on the road, we first needed to determine how we would share the knowledge once we convinced people to provide it to us. We already had some data available to share, but how could we best share it with those in the field? We decided not to invent something new, but to use a medium that was already in existence and familiar to most people. That medium was a



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home page on the Internet. A two-pronged marketing plan was implemented with both an Internet and a Secure Internet Protocol Routing Network (SIPRNET) site being used to allow access to lessons learned data. Both the Internet and SIPRNET sites were to be identical except for the classification level of the material. Once established online with some knowledge to share, we scheduled visits to tout the benefits of knowledge sharing.

After briefing all the proper decision-making authorities, we were given permission to take the BULL program to all the ACC bases in order to promote our new initiative. Once in the field, we learned more about why we were not getting those after-action reports. It appeared that JULLS had a negative connotation with past users who were unenthusiastic about repeating past problems. We then knew our first task was to convince users that there was a new and improved input device and that we could teach them how to use it. In conjunction with our BULL briefings, we included training on the Air Force Instructional Input Program (AFIIP). We also handed out newsletters everywhere we went

After the first year we reviewed our progress and looked at what needed improvement and what else could be done. As a result of the BULL program the number of lessons learned we received increased 10

fold over the previous year. Feedback from the field was overwhelming. Requests for access to the lessons learned database greatly increased so we put unclassified ACC lessons learned on the Internet with a “.mil” restriction.



*Photo by SSgt David G. Shoemaker, 20<sup>TH</sup>/CS/SCSV.*

This allowed users to get lessons learned at their desks without having to track down an elusive SIPRNET terminal. We also improved the Internet and SIPRNET site search capability to allow customers to customize the way they looked for information. On the SIPRNET they could now search through over 30,000 lessons.

While successful in most areas, we still needed to put more emphasis on showing the benefits of using the data during the planning process, on getting the exercise staff officers involved in the lessons learned process, and on closely coordinating with deploying units. We decided a simple way to help in this area was to send information to the units in the form of lessons learned

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bulletins. These bulletins are now customized for each unit and their particular deployments and provide a sampling of data which should be useful during their planning processes.



*B-52H Stratofortresses on the flight line at Naval Station Diego Garcia before performing air attacks during Operation DESERT FOX. (USAF photo by Senior Airman Sarah E. Shaw)*

As we close out the first two years of the BULL initiative, we are happy to say that there is a significant increase in the number of reports submitted. It appears that pushing the bulletins down to the users has been a success. But we still have a long way to go. OPTEMPO in deploying units may prevent a unit from completing their after-action reports, as it is overcome by the preparations for the next deployment. This is probably the toughest problem we face and may be impossible to solve as long as OPTEMPO remains high. We will continue to champion the knowledge sharing process and make it as easy and painless as possible to contribute significant lessons learned. By showing the

benefits of learning from mistakes and emphasizing the lessons learned process, we hope units will submit quality reports which will benefit the exercise and operations planning process.

As we continue to improve the lessons learned process, we are trying to become more involved at the beginning of the planning process for each deployment. This involves contacting the deploying unit's project officer early in the planning process. This early contact and continual involvement in the planning process seems to be the key to a successful lessons learned program. As we look to the future, we hope that one day everyone in ACC realizes the tremendous benefits of reducing redundant mistakes and learning the good things from each other.



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## Some Thoughts on the Remedial Action Program

Drew Brantley  
Analyst, Joint Center for Lessons Learned

### **What is the Remedial Action Program and why is it important?**

The Remedial Action Program or RAP Program was developed to solve issues that are identified during a joint operation or exercise that have no formal process for resolution within the local command. Depending on who one talks with about the program, it is either a “black hole”, a bureaucratic process that takes forever, or a good way to solve an issue that does not lend itself to a “quick fix.” The importance of the RAP Program rests in it being the **Chairman’s program** to correct deficiencies found during the conduct of joint operations and exercises.

**So what is a RAP?** “A Remedial Action Project (RAP) is a shortcoming in existing policies, plans, procedures, supporting strategies, material, or forces that may be corrected by specific action. The CJCS Remedial Action Program focuses on issues with joint significance that require the Joint Staff, Services, combatant commands, OSD, or other Federal agencies to initiate, coordinate, or monitor corrective actions.” (*CJCSI 3150.01 dated 11 July 1997*) This same CJCSI defines an issue as, “...a shortcoming or deficiency identified during training or operations that precludes training or operating to Joint Mission Essential Tasks (JMET) standards and requires focused problem solving.” The issue must be defined and analyzed in terms of doctrine, organization (force structure), training, material, leader development (education), and people (DOTMLP) to facilitate resolution and validation.

**What are some characteristics of the RAP Program?** The RAP Program has two guiding principles. First, an issue should have no other formal process for resolution. For example, any issue concerning joint doctrine should be forwarded directly to the Joint Staff J7 Joint Doctrine Division (J7 JDD). While this does not automatically mean a solution will be quickly provided, it does place the issue directly with the organization responsible for finding a solution. This is much quicker than using the RAP Program. This does not preclude an issue being proposed as a RAP with another formal process, but this should only be done on an exception basis in coordination with the Joint Staff J7. Second, an issue should be of “joint significance”. For example, during a joint exercise Army Air Defense Forces protecting an Air Force installation run short of air defense missiles of a certain type. By cross leveling with other Army Air Defense Artillery (ADA) elements, enough missiles are found to resolve the issue without compromising security elsewhere. The joint arena does not have an issue. If the issue does not have joint significance, it should be sent by the command to the appropriate agency, service, or organization with the authority

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to solve the problem. Sending this issue through the RAP Program would only delay appropriate action. In this case the JTF Commander would send this information through his CINC to the Army.

**How does a command, usually a Joint Task Force (JTF), submit a RAP?**

Upon completion of a joint exercise or operation, the command is obligated to prepare a Joint After-Action Report (JAAR) IAW *CJCSI 3150.25, Joint After-Action Reporting System, dated 15 July 1997*. By identifying an issue as a potential RAP in the JAAR, the command has formally submitted that issue to the RAP Program. (A RAP is nothing more than a Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) report annotated as a RAP contained in the JAAR.)



*Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 1-35 Armor, 1<sup>st</sup> Armor Division finishes final practice at a range in Glamoc, Bosnia. (Photo by PFC R. Alan Mitchell, 55<sup>th</sup> Signal Co. (Combat Camera))*

**Ok, so then where does this proposed RAP go?** The JAAR is forwarded to the CINC in whose AOR/Command the exercise or operation took place. The responsible office at the CINC level for processing the JAAR will forward the report only after determining there is no solution for the issue/potential RAP within the command. It should also check the RAP database, which contains all current active RAPs, to make sure the issue is not already in the program. The CINC staff also has the responsibility to review the potential RAP for

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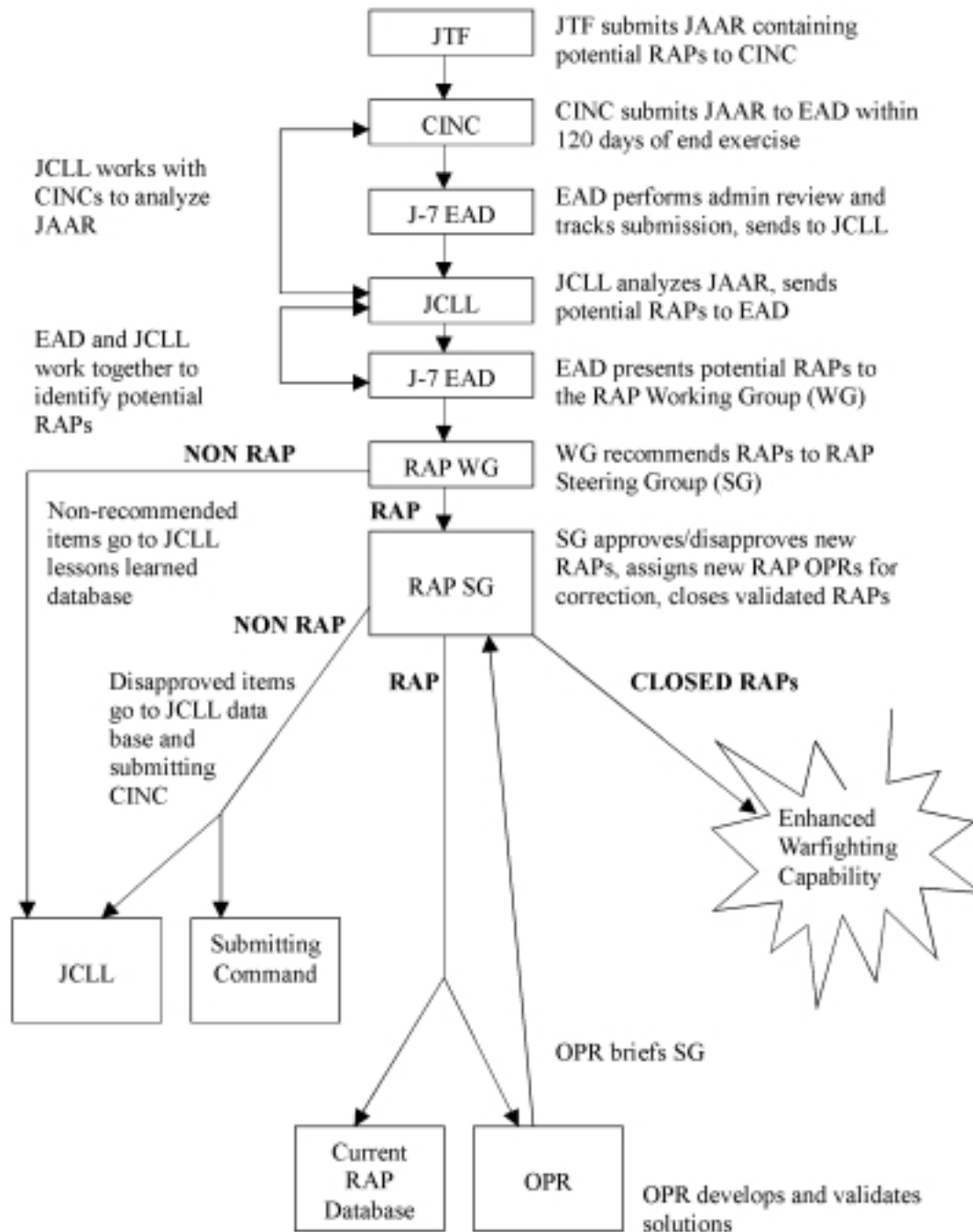
completeness, clarity, and readability (who, what, when, where, how, etc.), and assign a POC. Once this is done, the potential RAP contained in the JAAR is forwarded to the Joint Staff J7 Exercise Analysis Division (J7 EAD).

**So now that the potential RAP has made it to the Joint Staff, one might think the process is over. Wrong!** At the Joint Staff J7 EAD the potential RAP is received, logged, and then sent to the USACOM JWFC Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) where it is checked for completeness, clarity, and against existing RAPs. The JCLL also analyzes the potential RAP to determine if another process exists where the issue can be resolved (JWCA, JMRR, etc.). The potential RAP is then sent before the RAP Working Group that presently meets four times a year (twice in person and twice by VTC).

**What is the RAP Working Group and what does it do?** The RAP Working Group is chaired by the Division Chief, J7 EAD, and is composed of representatives from all the combatant commands, joint staff sections, OSD, Services, and other agencies (FEMA, etc.) that participate in the program. The RAP Working Group determines whether the potential RAP should be recommended to the RAP Steering Group for inclusion in the RAP Program. It also makes a recommendation on which Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) will be responsible for resolving the issue. The RAP Working Group will also review all active RAPs to see what progress has been made, entertain a change in OPR, and determine which RAPs will be recommended for closure at the RAP Steering Group.

**Another committee, what for?** The RAP Steering Group meets twice a year and is chaired by either the J7 or the Director of the Joint Staff. This committee is composed of Colonels and civilian equivalents from the combatant commands, joint staff, OSD, services, and other agencies participating in the program. The group has two main responsibilities. First, the RAP Steering Group representatives discuss and vote on whether the recommended potential RAPs belong in the program. (Non-recommended RAPs are returned to the JCLL database by the J7 as another JULLS report and to the nominating command for review. A non-recommendation is very rare.) The committee also assigns the OPR for each RAP. Second, the other main function of the RAP Steering Group is to review the status of all active RAPs. A representative from the OPR for each RAP reports on the status to the committee. Once this process is complete, the Director of the Joint Staff signs the RAP Steering Group Report and forwards the report to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. This allows the Chairman to better understand the various issues confronting the joint arena and may lead to a CJCS Commended Training Issue (CTTI). Copies are also furnished to the CINCs, organizations participating in the RAP program, and each OPR.

## THE REMEDIAL ACTION PROCESS (RAP) PROGRAM



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**Finally, the potential RAP is a RAP! So how long before a solution?**

Progress in resolving and closing a RAP is usually slow because of the timelines within the program and the requirement to validate all proposed solutions prior to publication. (Validation is normally done in an exercise environment that requires a command to deal with the issue using the proposed solution.) In order to close a RAP, it is necessary to convince the RAP Steering Group that the proposed solution has been fully developed, tested, and can be implemented. Following a successful validation the Chairman of the next scheduled RAP Steering Group will direct the responsible OPR to distribute the solution and the RAP is closed and moved to the Inactive RAP database. The Joint Center for Lessons Learned will also distribute the solution via the JCLL Bulletin, articles in the Joint Force Quarterly, articles in the USACOM JWFC periodical "A Common Perspective," and in the lessons learned database. The solution will also be published on the J7 Homepage under the specific RAP.

**Great, a solution at last! How long does this entire RAP process take?**

The RAP Program requires a great deal of patience. Under the best of conditions a solution will take a minimum of one year from submission at the JTF level. Generally, it will take one and one half to two years. *What value is this program if it takes this long?* It gets the job done. *Could it be faster?* Probably not, due to the timeline requirements and the testing built into the program. *Does this mean a critical issue will not be expeditiously handled?* No! Any issue that is an "immediate show stopper" must be immediately addressed by commanders. The RAP program is designed to resolve issues that are not "immediate show stoppers" but nevertheless require a solution or "fix" to enhance joint operations.

The purpose of this article has been to illuminate and focus on an often-misunderstood program that can dramatically improve the ability of joint forces to conduct successful operations. The American Military is henceforth and forever tied to "joint operations". It must either resolve and apply solutions to "joint issues" or risk defeat.

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# Methodologies for Collecting Lessons Learned

Major Arthur N. Tulak  
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## **“Experience is the best teacher”**

“The old saying ‘Live and Learn’ must be reversed in war, for there we ‘Learn and Live;’ otherwise we die. It is with this learning, in order to live, that the Army is so vitally concerned.”

U.S. War Department Pamphlet No 20-17, July 1945

## **Active and Passive Collection Methodologies**

In war and military operations other than war (MOOTW), the experience of others is the best teacher, as it allows us to learn from both their mistakes and successes. The price of failure in war (and in many MOOTW) is death, injury, or capture at the hands of the enemy who succeeds when you fail. How then can we maximize the learning experiences of others in actual and training operations, and record and disseminate those lessons throughout the Joint Force, as opposed to learning the same lessons over and over again?

The lessons learned process generally adheres to a four-step process of **Collect, Process, Analyze, and Disseminate**.<sup>i</sup> This process is applied in one of two methodologies for collecting lessons learned – passive collection and active collection. This article will analyze passive collection as it applies to the U.S. Army and the joint community. It will also analyze the active collection methodology as it is practiced by the U.S. Army, and suggest an active collection strategy for the joint community.

### **Passive Collection**

In passive collection, lessons learned in the field are sent through the chain of command to a central repository for processing, analysis, and dissemination. Joint and Service regulations govern the responsibilities of units in capturing through After-Action Reviews (AARs), Command Histories, and Lessons Learned observations. Following training exercises and actual operations, commanders direct their staff and subordinate commanders to conduct AARs of the unit’s performance during the operation or training event. The AAR is a review of the units training or actual operation that allows soldiers, leaders, and units to discover for themselves what happened and why. It is used to solicit ideas on how the unit could have performed better.<sup>ii</sup> Through the AAR, units determine lessons learned and identify which Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) were effective, and which were not.



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At the joint level, lessons learned are written in Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) and forwarded up the chain of command to support units faced with a similar mission or operation in the future. These individual JULLs are analyzed by the command and recorded in Joint After Action Reports (JAARs). Commanders submit JAARs to the Joint Staff (J7) who sends the reports to the JCLL for dissemination to the entire joint community through the JULLS database at the JCLL.<sup>iii</sup>

The Army's passive lessons learned collection methodology is spelled out in Army Regulation 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program*.<sup>iv</sup> This regulation established the requirement for Major Army Commands (MACOM) to provide AARs to the Commander, Combined Arms Center and CALL. AARs, unit-level Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), operational documents (e.g. operations orders), and successful unit training plans submitted to CALL are archived in CALL's Lessons Learned Data Base (accessible over the Internet from the CALL homepage to authorized users) and support the development of CALL Newsletters, Handbooks, and Special Studies. Observer/Controllers at the four Combat Training Centers<sup>v</sup>, doctrine writers, trainers at the Army's centers and schools, and leaders throughout the Army submit articles on new lessons learned, which are published in CALL bulletins in both hard-copy form, and on the Internet on the CALL homepage.

"The Army lessons learned system receives input from each major exercise and CTC rotation, processes it, and makes it available to the Army."

Field Manual 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*, p. D-10.

## Active Collection

Active collection implies a coordinated *proactive* effort to identify solutions to existing problems or issues identified by a proponent. The issue may come from training experience, or from actual operations, and the identifying proponent may be commanders, units in the field, instructors, analysts and doctrine writers, or the training centers, such as any of the Army's four Combat Training Centers. At the joint level, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Commended Training Issues could also serve as issues for collection.<sup>vi</sup> Having identified the issues to be collected on, a collection event must be identified. The collection event could be a "real-world" contingency operation, or a scheduled training exercise, such as a rotation through any of the CTCs. Army training doctrine emphasizes that even in real-world contingency operations, units are expected to record lessons learned from their operations.<sup>vii</sup>

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Active collection in the Army follows a four-phase process:<sup>viii</sup>

- Phase I: Mission Analysis and Planning
- Phase II: Deployment and Unit Link-up
- Phase III: Collection Operations
- Phase IV: Redeployment and Writing the Report

**Phase I, Mission Analysis and Planning** - Observers are tasked to collect observations and are selected based on their qualifications as a subject matter expert relative to the identified issues. The subject matter experts (SMEs) form a collection team and build a collection plan by organizing the issues into sub-issues and questions that will result in clear and focused observations. The collection plan allows the SMEs to “eat the elephant one bite at a time.” With the collection plan complete, the SMEs build a collection “campaign plan” that links questions to forecasted actions or operations in the collection event. The questions are linked to that phase of the training event or operation that will provide an opportunity to observe those anticipated unit actions that will answer the question.

**Phase II, Deployment and Unit Link-up** - This phase begins with the deployment of observers/collectors to the theater of operations or training area where the collection event will occur. Teams link-up with participating units and deploy into the field to observe operations.

**Phase III, Collection Operations** - The collection team conducts interviews, collects successful TTPs/operational documents/SOPs/AARs for archival in the CALL Data Base, and records observations of Lessons Learned. The team chief serves as a special staff officer to the supported unit, and is responsible for the function of Lessons Learned while attached. While collecting observations on operations, the team chief ensures the supported unit receives immediate feed-back on observations the team collects.

**Phase IV, Redeployment and Writing the Report** - The collection team reassembles at CALL to develop an Initial Impressions Report (IIR), and articles for publication. The IIR provides a source of information for the development of derivative products such as articles in military periodicals, the CALL bulletins, handbooks, or newsletters, when taken together with relevant observations and archived materials in the CALL Data Base.

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## **CALL's Active Collection Tool - CALLCOMS**

Today CALL uses a valuable software tool in the active collection process. That tool is the CALL Collection and Observation Management System (CALLCOMS). CALLCOMS is capable of aiding an assembled collection team in building a collection plan that organizes the issues, sub-issues, and questions around the Blueprint of the Battlefield (BOB). CALLCOMS is at once an observation entry, observation management, and observation analysis tool for those engaged in the lessons learned process. A CALLCOMS collection plan supports organized and efficient collection of observations by assigning questions to observers according to their expertise or place on the training or actual operation battlefield. A CALLCOMS collection plan lists applicable doctrinal or training references relevant to the issue and sub-issue focus. Instructions to the observer can be tied to each question, focusing collection efforts at those events or personnel which will best provide relevant information.

Collection plans, input into CALLCOMS, are available for use in subsequent collection events, either in whole, or in part. The next collection team can “borrow” relevant portions of extant collection plans from previous collection events as the building blocks for their plan. It is important to note that the plan the collection team carries with it into the field does not have to be the one-hundred percent solution – only a calculated one that focuses the collection efforts of the SMEs to be at the right place at the right time to capture lessons learned as they occur.

Once the collection effort begins, CALLCOMS supports organized and managed collection efforts for collection teams large or small. The team chief can import new observations daily into the CALLCOMS database for review, revision, and further coordination as necessary. The Army's Operational Testing and Experimentation Command (OPTEC) and TRADOC Analysis Command (TRAC) managed a collection team of over one hundred SMEs who collected over 6,500 observations during the Division Advanced Warfighting Experiment (DAWE) exercises at Fort Hood TX in November 1997.

CALLCOMS can support collection efforts during actual operations by allowing split-based operations where the analytical support staff remains in CONUS. Once observations are entered into CALLCOMS, they can be sent electronically to analysts for review, revision, and coordination. This technique has been proven in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH in Kuwait and Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR/JOINT GUARD/JOINT FORGE in Bosnia.

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Following the collection effort, CALLCOMS serves to archive the collected observations for analysis. Each observation can be entered against the collection plan, which automatically categorizes the observation according to the Army Universal Task List (AUTL).<sup>ix</sup> In addition to being labeled with the appropriate AUTL code, each observation can be assigned subject indicators, environmental indicators, interoperability indicators, and equipment indicators as applicable to support analysis. The relational database capability of CALLCOMS gives the analyst a powerful tool to extract those observations relevant to current information requirements. Units preparing to deploy on contingency operations can query CALL for lessons learned from previous operations to shorten their mission analysis and course of action development phases, and to provide subordinate units proven TTPs (tactics, techniques, and procedures) to train before deploying into theater.

When alerted to deploy to a contingency operation, US Forces consult the JULLS database for lessons learned from previous operations that are relevant to the operation at hand. “Existing CONPLANS and lessons learned from the joint and Army repositories (Joint Universal Lessons Learned System [JULLS] and the Center for Army Lessons Learned [CALL]) should be the starting point when conducting crisis action planning.”<sup>10</sup>

Field Manual 100-7, *Decisive Force, The Army in Theater Operations*, p. 6-15.

## Conclusion

Both active and passive collection methodologies are important to the lessons learned process in both the joint community and the Army. Passive collection provides commanders the means to share their good ideas, proven TTPs/SOPs, AARs, and operational documents with the total force through established lessons learned repositories. Active collection provides immediate collection on identified issues requiring resolution through real-world contingency operations, large-scale training exercises, and regularly scheduled training at the premier training centers. Applying the active collection methodology and using an automated Collection and Observation Management System to support that collection allows CALL to conduct active collection on short-notice anywhere in the world with consistent results.



## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, Newsletter 93-2, *Learning Lessons in a Force Projection Army*, (Fort Leavenworth KS: CALL), May 1993, Section III. Available on-line at <http://call.army.mil/call/newsltrs/93-2/932toc.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, *Battle Focused Training*, Field Manual 25-101, Washington DC, 30 September 1990, p. G-1.

<sup>iii</sup> For an overview on the Joint process, see Mel Schaller and Jim Waldeck, "Lessons Learned and Training," *Joint Center for Lessons Learned Bulletin*, Summer 1998, downloaded from <http://www.jwfc.js.mil>

<sup>iv</sup> Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, AR 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program: System Development and Application*, Washington DC, 1989.

<sup>v</sup> The Army's four Combat Training Centers are the National Training Center at Fort Irwin CA, the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk LA, the Combat Maneuver Training Center at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, and the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth KS.

<sup>vi</sup> The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Commended Training Issues (CCTI) are special interest items developed from all-source lessons learned, readiness reports, and operational assessments. These issues are incorporated into the Joint Training Master Plan (JTMP) to ensure appropriate visibility by the combatant commands in developing their joint training plans. See *Joint Center for Lessons Learned Bulletin*, Summer 1998, downloaded from <http://www.jwfc.js.mil>

<sup>vii</sup> Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, *Battle Focused Training*, Field Manual 25-101, emphasizes that "the AAR is not restricted to field exercises," on p. G-1.

<sup>viii</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, Handbook No. 97-13, *A Guide to the Services and the Gateway of CALL*, (Fort Leavenworth KS: CALL), June 1997, pp. 5-11.

<sup>ix</sup> The Army Universal Task List (AUTL) is still evolving. Currently, the tactical portion of the AUTL, the Army Tactical Task List (ATTL) remains the Blueprint of the Battlefield, or "BoB," explained in Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 11-9, dated 10 September 1993.

<sup>x</sup> Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, *Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations*, Field Manual 100-7, Washington DC, 31 May 1995, p. 6-15

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