



Third Marine Aircraft Wing provides unprecedented support to the Division as evidenced by the marking scheme of this F/A-18 D From VMFA-225.



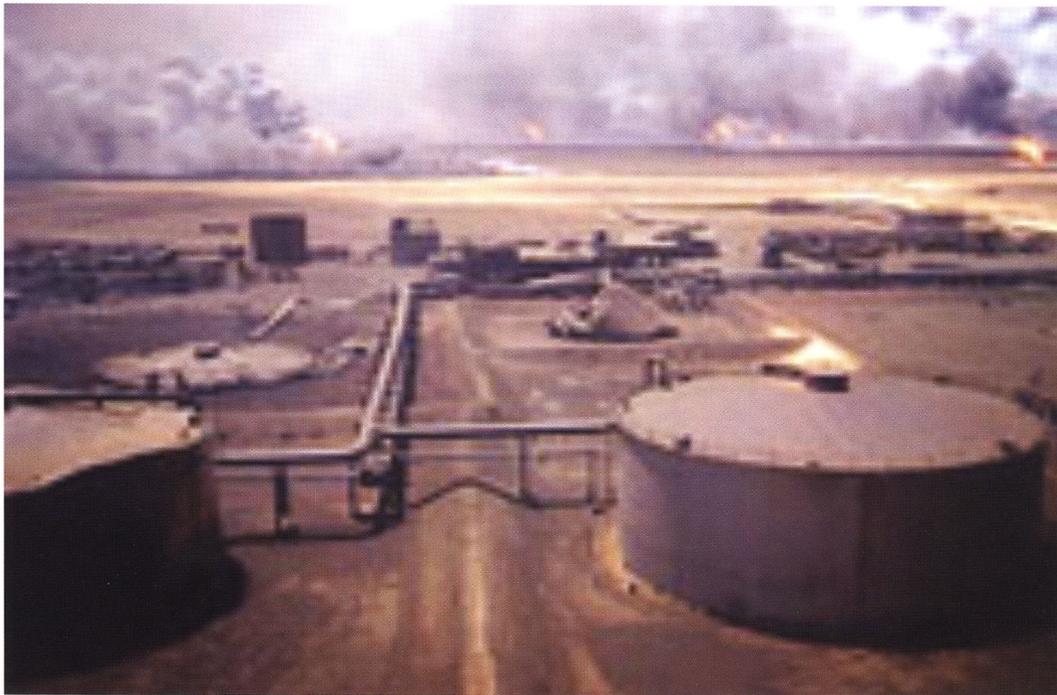
Intelligence Planning

Intelligence planning was driven by a recognition that the enemy situation drove the Division's operations, and the G-2's synthesis shaped how that enemy situation was perceived. The Division would receive intelligence information from a tremendous variety of sources, and it would be a key challenge for the G-2 operations section (headed by Major Tim Oliver, Master Sergeant Jay Joder, and Gunnery Sergeant James Cecil) to convert this information into intelligence. The speed at which the Division hoped to move meant that there was little time for a 'paralysis of analysis'. The CG's intent was clear, and getting useful synthesized intelligence quickly into the minds of his commanders was the measure of effectiveness. The passion for dissemination on the part of Colonel Howcroft helped ingrain this mindset across the Division's intelligence effort.

In September 2002, the Division initiated an Iraqi 'Understudy' Program. This program was designed to match an officer of the Division staff with each of the Iraqi division and corps commanders the Division expected to face on the battlefield. The officer would research the birthplace, tribal affiliation, education, and professional track record of each of these Iraqi commanders with the hope that the Division could better anticipate their actions on the battlefield. The G-2 prepared a detailed assessment of the capabilities of each of the Iraqi units to complement the personal information about the commander, and the understudies met regularly to discuss the tactics, capabilities, and likely reactions of their respective Iraqi generals. This program was an innovative way to get into the minds of the commanders faced by the Division.

The intelligence community had a good handle on the military capabilities of the equipment the enemy possessed, but insight into the moral aspect of the fight was in short supply. Would the enemy commanders turn against Saddam if the Division attacked? Would RG and RA units cooperate on the battlefield? Who was likely to fight, and how aggressively? In marked contrast to the amount of information published in open sources about American commanders, the tightly controlled Iraqi society produced little information on anyone but Saddam Hussein. There was exasperatingly little data available on Iraqi military commanders. As a result, the effectiveness of the Understudy Program in understanding individual personalities was a difficult thing to measure. For its efforts, however, the Division gained a cadre of officers well schooled in the tactics, techniques, and capabilities of the Iraqi Army. The Understudy Program allowed for concentrated research efforts and a tactical focus on the enemy that might otherwise have been diluted. In execution, many of the Iraqi units that the Division had so carefully analyzed seemingly 'evaporated' in the face of 1st Marine Division's combat power, and the enemy commanders seemingly had little control over the actions of their units.

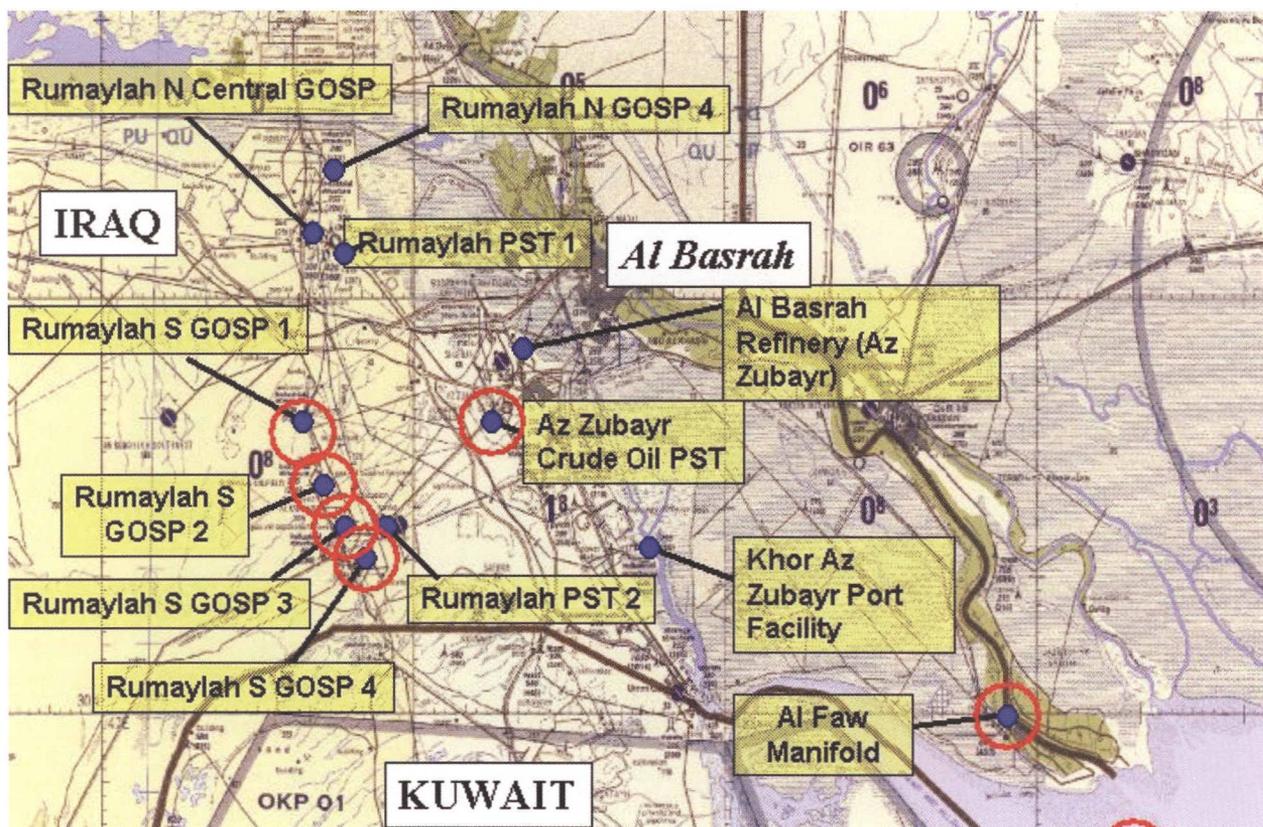
During this period, the G-2, with the assistance of Colonel Dave Larson at MCIA, arranged for a former Iraqi General officer (now living in the US) to visit and speak to the understudies, the Division Staff, and subordinate staffs. This officer painted a picture of an Iraqi military in a serious state of equipment disrepair. The requirement to use a large portion of the armed forces to maintain internal order left the Iraqi regime without an effective combat reserve. The Regime had saturated the army (RA and RG) with informants and political officers, creating an environment of distrust that permeated the armed forces. The palpable disgust with which the professional military and educated segment of the population held the Saddam Hussein Regime could serve as a source of popular support if the Division attacked, but was only one of many social dynamics at work. Much to the chagrin of the assembled officers, he advised an attack using only the western desert corridors to Baghdad, and dismissed out of hand the idea of an attack through the former marsh areas (he did not know, nor was he told, that this was the battlespace allocated to 1st Marine Division.) He made repeated references to the instability of Saddam's decision-making process, in which carefully developed plans were disrupted by irrational and impulsive decisions at inopportune times.



The oil infrastructure of southern Iraq was a complex maze of pipes, pump houses, and hazardous Gas Oil Separation Plants (GOSPs). All of these facilities would need to be secured by Marine forces to ensure Iraq's oil production capability would remain intact to provide the 'new Iraq' an economic base.

This information confirmed much about what the Division had previously assessed about the Iraqi armed forces. The Division tried to use the General's description of the decision environment to help understand what the trigger for chemical weapons employment might be. His predictions for the brittle nature of the enemy's defenses (i.e., rapid collapse if confronted directly), cooperation by portions of the citizens, and the larger political environment would later prove accurate. At the time, the Division accepted his comments as one of many possible scenarios, possibly meant to influence as well as inform, and continued to plan for a wide range of possibilities, including more dangerous assessments from other sources.

By October 2002, the G-2 planning team had developed a more mature picture of the Iraqi military situation, one that was decidedly more complex. One of the issues of concern was the importance of selected elements of the Iraqi southern oil infrastructure. As the Division's understanding of this complex system matured, oil specialists began to describe the Rumaylah oilfields as a series of interactive nodes. Some of these nodes were more important than others and were subsequently identified as special targets for Division operations. The Division's own troop-to-task analysis revealed that seizing all of these nodes would quickly drain the combat power of the entire Division, and the G-2 worked with I MEF and the CFLCC headquarters to narrow the list to the smallest set of 'critical' nodes possible.



The South Rumaylah oilfield infrastructure, accounting for nearly two-thirds of Iraqi oil production, is composed of several critical nodes. Oil was pumped from wells in South Rumaylah to major pumping stations and refineries in Az Zubayr and Al Basrah.

Inundation warfare was another issue of concern in the Iraqi battlespace. The Iraqis had a well-developed doctrine for the use of water as a weapon, and had done this on a massive scale during the Iran-Iraq war, where they used water diversion to deny the Iranians avenues of approach. It seemed clear that if the Iraqis were to seriously defend along the limited avenues of approach available to the US, that inundation warfare would be a natural element of their



The manpackable Dragoneye UAV system would prove invaluable for decentralized intelligence collection at the Battalion level.

1954 flood, the Division identified alternate maneuver options if the Iraqis chose to use water as a weapon.

In late October and early November 2002, the G-2 was also able to work with Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) to accomplish the rapid acquisition of laptop computers loaded with the Falconview software for 3D terrain visualization. By MARCORSYSCOM's proaction, these laptops were fielded down to the battalion level across the Division, giving every maneuver commander the capability to 'fly-through' his objectives prior to the attack. The G-2 also worked with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory to coordinate the deployment of prototypes of the Dragoneye UAV system in advance of a formal system fielding. These systems proved very useful in the close fight, as they were beholden only to the requirements of the owning maneuver commander, and were not co-opted or tasked by higher headquarters.

Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) Warfare

The Division contemplated the coming fight against an enemy who was expected to employ WMD. This threat demanded that Division personnel develop patterns that made donning Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear second nature on the battlefield. During September, the Division began 'Gas Mask Wednesday' to instill this concept in all its members. Gas masks were worn all day on the body and donned for a 30-minute period.

Chief Warrant Officer Stacy Jeambert, the Division NBC Officer supervised an aggressive training effort to demystify operations in the NBC environment. Sergeant Taryne Williams, the Division's NBC operations chief, conducted a series of briefings that stressed proper wear,



As part of a thorough demystification training program, Marines spent a great deal of time in their MOPP gear. Meals were especially difficult.

maintenance, and storage of MOPP gear. Familiarization training with the detection and decontamination assets each unit maintained was conducted. Instilling confidence in the Division's protective and detection equipment contributed greatly to the individual Marine's fighting effectiveness. The confidence with which the Division entered a probably chemically contaminated battlefield was a direct result of these efforts. Saddam could potentially employ a multitude of chemical or biological weapons against the Marines, but they would be prepared. From running obstacle courses in MOPP IV, to conducting a reenlistment ceremony similarly attired, the Division made itself ready.

Training for War, Exercises in CONUS

Almost two years before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the events of September 11, 2001 gave special impetus to the Division's preparations. On that very day, the Division was conducting a preparatory planning session for a series of combined arms training exercises in Twenty-nine Palms, based on an Iraq scenario. The exercise planners present were eager to get into action against those responsible for these heinous acts, and considered aloud whether the Division should change the focus of the exercise. Colonel Steve Hummer, the Commander of 7th Marines, calmly recommended that 1st Marine Division should change nothing in their preparations, "When this all shakes out, our role in this will be to attack and destroy those responsible for this, using a well trained combined arms team. The best thing the Division can do for our Nation right now is to keep training. Our turn will come."

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He was right. The 'Desert Scimitar' series of exercises formed the foundation for successful execution of Division Command and Control in the combat operations to come. In anticipation of the requirement to conduct command and control over long distances, conduct deliberate river crossings, and spend extended periods in the field, the Division carefully crafted the Desert Scimitar exercise to contain all of these challenges. The plan called for an exercise in two parts; a defense against two attacking Republican Guard Divisions, followed by a rapid exploitation

attack over a long distance culminating in a major river crossing operation. The distances covered in the California desert during the exercises were hauntingly similar to what would be expected of the Division a year later, and environmental restrictions encountered in the US mirrored real terrain restrictions in Iraq. The exercise scenario included objectives such as seizing key oilfields, isolating large cities, traversing impassable terrain, and conducting major river crossings.

During these exercises, the Division headquarters practiced multiple passages of control between Main and Forward CPs and gained valuable experience in providing command and control over large distances. The staff exercised satellite communications, long distance radio communications, and developed a battle rhythm for sustained 24-hour combat operations. The Division G-4 stood up Unit Movement Control Centers to control battlefield circulation and movement on main supply routes. The exercise culminated in a simultaneous two-site, expeditionary crossing of the Colorado River. All of these tasks would be critical in the fight the Division would conduct in Iraq less than a year later. The Division was able to arrange for training between Twenty-nine Palms and the Yuma Proving Grounds by negotiating land use with a variety of private and governmental agencies. The patriotism and cooperation of the citizens in the training area was inspirational, and made a difference in their Marines' ability to fight just one year later.

Aggressive Training Schedules

The regiments and battalions of the Division struggled with doing the additional preparatory work in getting ready for this particular conflict, while trying to maintain elements of normal training plans, and juggling the requirements for larger events such as MEU workups, Combined Arms Exercises (CAX), and the Unit Deployment Program (UDP). The combined training and operational tempos were brutal, and drove plans for 2 day weekends or summer vacations off the table. Even so, the Marines of the Division did not bemoan their fate. Marines, recognizing that their skills would soon be tested against a potentially tough opponent, were eager to hone their skills. In true warrior fashion, the Marines of RCT-1, RCT-5, and RCT-7 each shouldered their unique additional burdens without complaint. Their actions well before the conflict ever started were nothing short of heroic.

Seventh Marines was an example of the tremendous amount of work all members of the Division were accomplishing in preparation for this conflict. The Regiment had originally been scheduled to participate in CAX 5 & 6 in March to May 2002. The demand for Regimental participation in the Desert Scimitar series of exercises bumped this plan to CAX 1 & 2 in October to November 2002. The Regiment made the adjustment to their training plan and conducted the Desert Scimitar series, a September Division Command Post Exercise (CPX), a double CAX, and the Steel Knight exercise in December. They did all of this while simultaneously supporting Division-level Operations planning, NBC Defense training, and a vigorous syllabus of embarkation planning and assessment.

Individual battalions played heavily in the preparatory actions. One example was 3^d Battalion, 7th Marines, who trained in Camp Pendleton in May in the Basic Urban Skills Training - Assistant Instructor (BUST-AI) program to build a cadre of Military Operations in Urban

Terrain instructors, then used those skills in Millennium Dragon 02 and an Urban CAX in July and August 2002. In September, the Battalion participated in the Division's CPX, then was evaluated in an NBC Defense Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation (MCCRE). With no rest, the Battalion served as the Ground Combat Element (GCE) for the October/November CAX.

Another fine example was 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. This battalion dealt with the unpleasant manpower implications of returning from a UDP rotation. Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Conlin planned to lose half of his well-trained and experienced Marines, and replace them with new personnel, within a matter of months. The Battalion established an impressive series of junior leader's schools, as well as participating in the BUST-AI training and the Steel Knight exercise. Layered on top of these training events was an extended cycle of planning and re-planning for combat operations in Iraq. Because the mode of employment for the battalion was uncertain (a limitation in the equipment carried in the MPSRON), the battalion had to plan and train for employment as a heliborne force, a mechanized force, and as truck-mobile infantry. Battalion training regimes for each of these methods of employment were developed and implemented.

First Battalion, 4th Marines, faced similar shortfalls in manpower. Having returned from deployment in June 2002, they assumed duties as 1st Marines' Training and Support Battalion, providing over 200 Marines to support the Fleet Assistance Program (FAP), the Camp Augmentation Program (CAP), and the Camp Guard. Coupled with the natural attrition of Marines reaching their end of obligated service, the battalion's on-hand troop strength was a fraction of what it once was. Lieutenant Colonel John Mayer, who served as the Division's Plans Officer, assumed command in August 2002 and charged his commanders and staff to "get your outfit in order". He directed the training priority as command post exercises, small unit leadership, NBC defense readiness, physical fitness, and combat marksmanship. The battalion's forward and main command groups and logistics train conducted weekly Command Post Exercises (CPXs) to refine their techniques and procedures. Select members of the staff also participated in the Mountain Warfare Training Center's Staff Planning Course in December 2002.



1st Reconnaissance Battalion outfits for HMMWV-mounted patrolling instead of its traditional dismounted team employment.

First Reconnaissance Battalion Trains for a New Mission

With the arrival of the new CG, came a new concept of employment for the Division's Reconnaissance Battalion. The Battalion had focused its training prior to this time on team operations, operating as the Division's eyes and ears near the limits of indirect fire range, and observing key Named Areas of Interest (NAIs). Over the year prior, the Division had worked to integrate the reconnaissance teams into the Division deep fight, inserting small teams to observe enemy artillery and troop concentrations so long-range fires could be brought to bear decisively against these targets.

The Iraqi battlespace was not conducive to this scheme of reconnaissance, and a new concept was developed. The CG's vision was to use reconnaissance as an independent maneuver element, providing reconnaissance-in-force and direct action capabilities on the flanks of the Division. One particular mission for the Battalion would be to set up a 'picket line' to the east of the Division, protecting the Division's flank as it moved up Highway 7. There were some significant changes in store for the Reconnaissance Battalion as they adjusted to the shift in employment strategy. Lieutenant Colonel Steve Ferrando shifted his battalion into high gear in preparation for the new missions. The Battalion began to re-equip, including armored vehicles (HMMWVs), heavy guns, and vehicle weapons mounts.

Recon battalion revamped its training plan to include heavy weapons. New communications systems were required to support battalion operations. VHF had not been a priority for the battalion S-6, but now they needed to support a number of new battalion nets. VIASAT cards for long-haul data communications were also integrated. The battalion's command and control mechanisms underwent some changes as well. According to Lieutenant Colonel Ferrando, "I just pointed them in the right direction, and those guys always made it happen."

Planning for Rotary Wing Aviation Support – Teaming with 3^d MAW

At no point during the tumultuous build-up for deployment did 3^d MAW fail to be an active part of the solution to the Division's challenges. The responsive support provided by 3^d MAW was instrumental in everything from Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) employment to casualty evacuation planning. Marine Air Groups 16, 29 and 39, provided most of the Division's rotary wing support. MAG-16 and MAG-29 were planned to provide support from the decks of amphibious ships, while MAG-39 would support from Ali Al Salem Airfield in Kuwait. Mission analysis determined that each Division CP and each RCT would require a minimum of one UH-1 for Command and Control support, preferably two. In addition, each RCT would require ready CASEVAC capability in the form of two CH-46Es. These assets would be in direct support of the RCTs and would be co-located with each Regimental CP. With guidance from the CG and through the OPT process, it was determined that a habitual relationship between RCTs and squadrons in direct support was essential for mission success. Squadrons vied for which RCT they would support. MAG-39 squadrons were assigned with HMLA-267 supporting RCT-1, along with HMM-364. HMLA-169 and HMM-268 supported RCT-5. HMLA-169 and HMM-364 supported RCT-7. Division general support was provided by HMLA-269 from MAG-29.

Creative and Proactive Logistics Planning

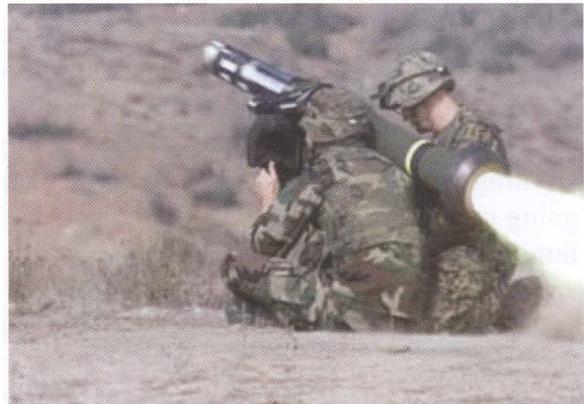
During the planning phase, the CG's guidance, "Speed equals success," drove the logistics preparations for combat. The Division's logistics team, headed by Lieutenant Colonel John Broadmeadow, was up to the challenge of supporting an aggressive scheme of maneuver over great distances with extended and vulnerable lines of communication. Unconstrained by doctrinaire approaches, the logistics planners set out to develop a concept of operations facilitated by smaller staffs, less lift, and occupying the smallest possible footprint that could still support large scale operations. The Division CG made it clear that he would accept risk to ensure the maintenance of a rapid operational tempo, and units would operate at times with less than three days supply of food, fuel, or ammunition. Marines following in support would, at times, have to fight their way up to re-supply the Division's combat trains, handling enemy raids and ambushes in the rear area themselves. The desired end state was a light, lean, lethal organization for combat that could fight and win on a 'logistics-light' diet.

The Division looked internally and made the first of many changes by altering the size and composition of the G-4 staff. Composed of 120 Marines and Sailors, (including the Medical section), the G-4's Logistics Operations Center (LOC) occupied several tents-full of space and several trucks-full of lift. Division logisticians assessed staff functions by how they impacted current operations commanded and controlled at the Division Main CP. If a function supported a Division's maneuver element, G-4 mobilized it and included it in the Main CP, but left other functions in the Division Support Area. Watch standers would have specific technical or commodity expertise but also have the capacity to function as MAGTF officers – working in logistics functional areas adjacent to their own specialty. This approach reduced the Main LOC staff to 31 multifunctional Marines and Sailors, responsible for logistics operations, movement

control and medical operations. Using reach-back capabilities, the complementing functions of supply (including ammunition), maintenance management, food service, mobility and embarkation could set up at key nodes to affect liaison with supporting agencies and push sustainment forward. As a result of this reorganization, the LOC was small enough to be physically incorporated into the tentage of the Main CP, and was able to provide integrated decision-making information to the CG while maintaining full situational awareness of current and future requirements. Anticipating future requirements, and finding ways to meet them before they became a problem, would prove critical to the Division's swift attack to Baghdad.

Similarly creative initiatives originated across the Division. The commander of 3^d Assault Amphibian Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Rob Abbott, anticipated that repair parts for Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs) that had not received system upgrades (those embarked aboard MPF ships) would not have mature Class IX assets available in the Marine Corps' Supply System. As the remaining fleet of older AAVs went through these upgrades, serviceable parts removed from upgraded AAVs were retained and provided to the Battalion. These parts were subsequently categorized and prepared for embark in support of the Division's AAVs on MPF shipping. The result was a high state of AAV readiness throughout the fight.

In increasing the efficiency of the logistics support to the Division, the staff was careful to ensure that they did not sacrifice effectiveness. The confidence of commanders and their units in the logistics system was paramount. In one instance, several key leaders in the Marine Corps expressed concern over the lack of training allowances for the Javelin weapon system. The Ordnance Readiness section sought and received approval to conduct a live fire of the weapons system as a benchmark for the weapon's advertised performance. The round missed. They obtained a second round, fired it and recorded another miss. This raised several questions regarding the issue of 'break glass in case of war' type weapons. Working in concert with MARCORSYSCOM, Division logisticians and operators developed the solution set to improve the weapons system's performance and bolster crew and commander confidence. The effectiveness of those solution sets would be seen when the Division deployed to theater and began rehearsals for combat.



Lance Corporal David Evans and Corporal William W. Robertson from Weapons Company, 2^d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, fire the Javelin Anti-Tank missile.

A New Concept For Combat Service Support

Throughout the early planning and preparation phase, the G-4 worked with the 1st FSSG and its Brigade Service Support Group One (BSSG-1), which later became Combat Service Support Group Eleven (CSSG-11) for wartime operations in support of the Division. Together, they developed agile, capable, Combat Service Support (CSS) units. The challenge was to provide a logistical element with shared situational awareness with the supported commands, which could

proactively calculate logistical needs and have them out the door before a unit even registered a request. BSSG-1's staff of 32 Marines, commanded by Colonel J.J. Pomfret, would form the nucleus of this new CSS organization. They understood that logistics would be the critical link to keep the 1st Marine Division moving without an operational pause. Logistics had to be mobile enough to keep up with the rapidly advancing force, and flexible enough meet changing missions. It was important that CSS units execute as a maneuver element of and be fully integrated into the 1st Marine Division.

1st FSSG's answer to the challenge was a light, fast-moving, highly capable Combat Service Support Company (CSSC) in direct support of each RCT. CSSCs would answer to the RCT staff for sustainment, and maneuver in concert with the RCT's combat trains. They planned to carry food, water, fuel, and ammunition packages tailored to the RCT's mission. Supporting the CSSCs was Combat Service Support Battalion Ten (CSSB-10), which kept an additional three to five days of supply on hand, and was maneuverable enough to keep up with the rapid pace of battle. Tying the two together was the headquarters of CSSG-11. They were the critical link coordinating logistical requirements from the Division, and ensuring the replenishment of the CSSCs and CSSB-10 by the rest of the FSSG.

For the first time in recent history, the 1st Marine Division would fight with its own integrated CSS, and the Division embraced the new CSS elements as part of its own task organization. Colonel Pomfret was considered a maneuver commander of the Division, and his staff was thoroughly integrated. This 'family-building' approach was the model for all elements working with Blue Diamond. From embedded reporters to bridge companies, everyone who was going into the fight with 1st Marine Division was made part of an extended and tightly integrated family.

Planning For Casualties

In order to plan for the evacuation, movement and treatment of casualties, the Division had to estimate the number of casualties expected. The Division G-1 Operations Officer, Captain Sherel Ryan used a variety of tools to estimate the total number of casualties based on intelligence estimates of the fight ahead. The initial estimation of casualties was below 5% of the total expected strength of the Division. This assessment was used by the Division Surgeon's office as well as the FSSG to begin their preliminary planning of medical supplies, field hospitals, and re-supply.

The planned rapid advance of the Division's forces also required special consideration with respect to casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). The distances that air evacuation platforms would travel and communicate presented challenges to timely evacuation. The Division began planning with the Navy's medical support, the Wing's lift support and the FSSG's administrative and logistical support branches in order to build a swift and efficient system for the extract of potential casualties from as far forward on the battlefield as the tactical situation allowed. Two dedicated air evacuation platforms were provided in direct support of each RCT. Additionally, the U.S. Army would have UH-60 CASEVAC birds that the Division could task if needed. Speed of evacuation to a fully capable medical facility was the measure of effectiveness. To refine techniques and increase the speed of this process, the Division conducted two CASEVAC

drills at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) at Twenty-nine Palms, California. The distances and conditions provided by this training base would prove a near perfect match for those the Division would operate under in Iraq only months later. The CG stressed that, as part of our commitment to the Marines of the Division, it was imperative we build trust and confidence in the medical system. The best of American warriors would receive the best of American combat medical support.

Personnel Augmentation Planning

Planning for personnel augmentation to fill both existing shortfalls and additional requirements based upon the war plan presented unique challenges. Initially, the G-1, Lieutenant Colonel Cathy Powalski, identified personnel shortfalls based on the 1st Marine Division's current Table of Organization (T/O). Critical manpower shortfalls to T/O were evident early on as battalions just returning from deployments, most notably 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7), were at 65% of T/O due to heavy attrition (which normally follows post deployment under the Corps' cyclical readiness paradigm.) This policy caused many units to fall to 'non-mission capable' manning levels for readiness reporting status. There were shortfalls in NCO ranks across the board, especially in low density MOSs. Some of the Division units prepared to go in harm's way well short of full strength. Trusting in the spirits of their Marines to compensate for their fewer numbers, commanders focused on preparing the Marines they had, and put their faith in Lieutenant Colonel Powalski to find as many Marines as possible to fill the ranks. The G-1 worked non-stop, using many creative innovations to find ways to increase the Division's endstrength.

Manpower Management Enlisted Affairs (MMEA) did assist in limiting the impact caused by personnel shortfalls. They redistributed School of Infantry (SOI) graduates programmed for 2^d Marine Division to reconstitute 1st Marine Division's critically short Battalions. They allowed extensions in 90-day increments for those who did not want to reenlist for four years, but wanted to fight alongside their fellow Marines. Where feasible, they also modified approved retirement dates for those who wanted to stay for the fight.

One of the most critical personnel shortfalls was in trained Forward Air Controllers (FACs). The G-3 air shop began efforts to staff FAC billets to T/O, but by the end of January 2002, deficiencies still existed. Manpower Management Officer Assignments (MMOA) branch would not meet these requirements, as no deployment orders were yet issued. 3^d MAW once again stepped forward as the Division's best friend in the fight. 3^d MAW began to look at ways to fill every gap to set the team up for success. The Wing also began to set aside training days to ensure these FACs, once



The Secure Mobile Anti-jam Reliable Tactical Terminal (SMART-T) provided improved data communications to the Regiments of 1st Marine Division.

on board, would be brought up to their potential capabilities. Ultimately, the Division identified the need for an additional 18 FACs and Air Officers. This number would be sufficient to staff the Division and subordinate commands for combat operations. The Division would continue the fight for FACs until the end of February 2003.

Communications Planning

The G-6 conducted detailed communications planning and preparation to support the Division, taking maximum advantage of the Desert Scimitar exercises earlier in the year. This exercise series closely resembled the communication distances that the Division would experience in Iraq. Colonel Nick Petronzio directed the planning efforts of Major Tom Davis, Major Pete Copeland, Chief Warrant Officer Bruce Gere, and many other Marines who would take these lessons learned and apply them to future communications support. For example, the Desert Scimitar exercise demonstrated the importance of radio retransmission teams for extending Line-Of-Sight communications. It also identified the importance of High Frequency (HF) radio and Ultra-HF (UHF) Tactical Satellite communications. This training was further enhanced through the CG's mandated weekly HF and UHF Tactical Satellite radio training for all Division units.

One of the Division's major communication enhancements was the arrival of the Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical Terminal (SMART-T). This equipment was fielded to support the Division and RCTs. It was a secure data transmission system that allowed email, tactical phone, and data connectivity between major command and control nodes. With SMART-T, the Marines of the Division possessed an organic satellite data transmission system with the operational agility and speed of support that could keep up with the Division's high operational tempo. This new technology significantly enhanced the Division's flexibility to provide phone and data support without concern for terrain limitations or extended retransmission strategies.

The Division coordinated with the MEF G-6 for combat operations support planning as well as for training exercises in theater. The planning requirements centered on communications support for a Division Forward CP in Kuwait. This would allow the Division to have a Command and Control element in theater with communications connectivity firmly established in advance of any major Division deployment. During these joint planning sessions the G-6 and Major Chris Nelson laid the groundwork for what became the Division's wartime communications architecture. One communicator victory was the successful argument for two different space segments, one for each AN/TSC-93, allowing simultaneous data traffic for both the Forward and Main Command Posts. This allowed for uninterrupted, sustained data communications across the Division, even when one or the other Division CP was displacing.

The G-6 recognized that the standard Table of Organization for communicators in the Division was not adequate to support the additional challenges the Division would face. Multiple Command Post echelons, widely spaced Life Support Areas (LSAs) a major Division Support Area (DSA), hordes of liaison officers that arrived without communications equipment, and other challenges stretched Headquarters Battalion's Communications Company to the limit in both manpower and equipment. One creative solution was the activation and integration of

the entire Communications Company from the 4th Marine Division. The addition of these Marines made the difference for mission accomplishment in the face of many of these non-standard challenges.

The G-6 resolved many of the communication problems encountered during earlier CPXs, and incorporated the solutions into subsequent training exercises. Of particular note, the 9th Communications Battalion attachments to the Division satellite and terrestrial microwave teams began to rehearse their habitual relationships. SMART-T and Single Channel Radio training internal to the Division began to pay off as communications links were established and maintained with a higher degree of reliability. Through practice, the Division also conducted field Video Tele-Conferencing (VTC) with a high degree of reliability.

Public Affairs Planning

The CG recognized the importance of the Public Affairs (PA) function, and continually hammered home the fact that, by every action, the Division would write its *own* headlines in the press. The Division also recognized the truism, “left unsung, the noblest deeds will die.” The Division’s recently arrived Public Affairs Officer, Captain Joe Plenzler, was faced with the daunting task of creating a PA section from scratch.

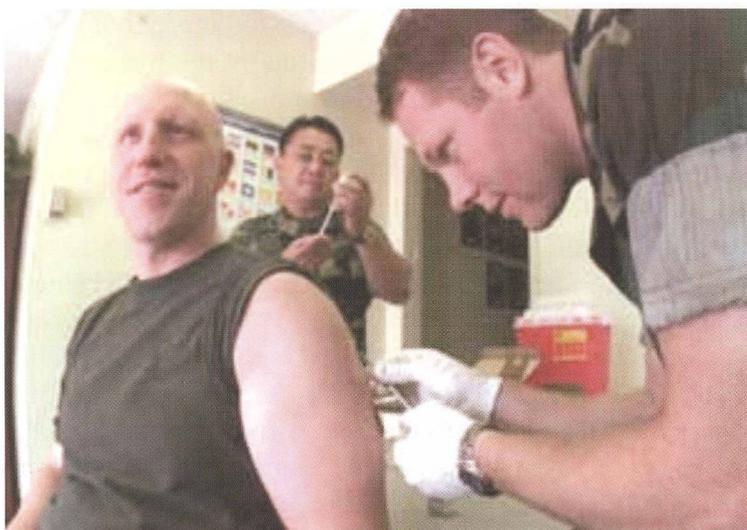
From the start, the PA section established a new focus for working with the media. The Marines dismissed words such as ‘handle,’ ‘escort,’ and ‘manage’ when talking about media operations. The CG exhorted commanders to win hearts and minds and adopt the media in the same fashion as a new private, rapidly integrating embedded journalists into the Blue Diamond family and give them complete access. He encouraged his Marines and Sailors to use interviews as an opportunity to show their courage to the world. The Division viewed the media, in every facet, as an entirely winnable constituency due to the strength of the example the Marines would make in the upcoming fight. The PA section paid special attention to the local Southern California media that would be critical in keeping the friends and family members back home informed of the Division’s activities and honored without question any habitual relationship between a unit and reporter when determining the assignment of embedded media.

Preparing for embedded media was a significant undertaking accomplished during the planning phase. The PAO formed Public Affairs Liaison Teams (PALTs) specifically to address the Office of the Secretary of Defense’s mandate to ‘embed’ international and national journalists within tactical units. The PA section split into 4 PALTs, allocated to each Regimental headquarters, while the PAO maintained a presence at the Main Command Post and Division Support Area. Each PALT consisted of 2 NCOs whose primary mission was to assist the regimental commands in facilitating the embedded media access and reporting. The PAO set a media embed cap of 80 journalists, approximately 4 per battalion, but adjusted this upward later with the support of the battalion commanders. Many major news organizations contacted the Division for embedded media opportunities, and many experienced war correspondents that had worked with Marines in Afghanistan were brought on-board, as well as novice reporters experiencing combat for the first time. The Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) television requested to bring along their own commercial HMMWV, hard-wired with satellite transmission equipment, allowing them to transmit live from anywhere in the world.

Deployment Readiness

In mid August, the CG tasked the staff to develop a Pre-Deployment brief to capture his mission, intent, and expectations. Recognizing the tremendous power of a Marine Division with a clear understanding of the commander's intent, the CG initiated a program to visit every unit and review his intent with them personally. Every staff function helped assemble a comprehensive briefing to 'image' every Marine and Sailor from their home duty station to Kuwait, and through their first five days of combat. The Staff touched on themes of aggressiveness, initiative, and the meaning of 'No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy.' The Staff hoped to reinforce to every rifleman in the Division how to destroy the enemy while maintaining his humanity. The objective was to allow them all not only to survive, but also to *thrive* in combat.

Junior enlisted Marines and a few company grade officers, the primary target audience, were selected to 'murder board' the initial drafts. The PAO supervised the briefing's preparation with a focus on images and photos, and short pitches by several different briefers. The brief was 90 minutes in duration and mandatory for all Marines and Sailors prior to deploying in harm's way. By all accounts, the briefings were very successful. According to one Lance Corporal, "This was the only briefing the Marines ever sat through in an auditorium that they actually enjoyed."



Marines received a series of inoculations, including Anthrax and Smallpox shots prior to deployment.

From October 10, 2002 to January 13, 2003, the briefing team gave over 30 briefs, reaching nearly every member of the First Marine Division. The team also flew to Camp Lejeune, N.C. in the first week of December to brief the 8,000 Marines and Sailors of II MEF, as a way to welcome them into the Division team, or provide information to those deploying under other commands.

While a select few participated in operational planning, every Marine and Sailor in the Division was actively engaged in preparations for force deployment. With the prospect of war on the horizon, unit deployment readiness and

embarkation training received renewed emphasis. The Marines and Sailors of the Division were made ready through a combination of physical and mental preparations.

One of the physical preparations was manifested in the CG's policy of 'Guardian Angels'. The Marines of the Division went nowhere or did anything without at least one ready Marine with a loaded weapon providing overwatch to their activity. The practice began even before deploying to Iraq, and continued until well after the last Marines had returned to CONUS. The

presence of one visible Guardian Angel, always in full gear and with weapon at the ready, provided a visible reminder to any would-be attacker that these were 'varsity' warriors. This was practiced from the departure from Camp Pendleton and Twenty-nine Palms to the streets of Baghdad and beyond. At every checkpoint, the Marines doing the searching or checking identification never had to worry about their backs being covered. The Guardian Angel concept proved a source of confidence for the Marines and a source of intimidation for any threat that might wish to test the preparedness of 1st Marine Division.

Mentally, the Marines and Sailors of the Division were made tough. With attitude as a weapon, the Marines would be prepared to face down the Iraqi army in a battle of wills. The Marines were reminded of A. A. Vandegrift's (a 1st Marine Division commander during World War II) commentary, "Positions are seldom lost because they are destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held." The Marines were ready to dominate the Iraqis in a contest of wills. Anticipating a potentially long and mentally exhausting campaign, the Division also planned to support the psychiatric health of the Marines. Regimental Recuperative Centers (RCCs) were planned-for as a way to limit psychological casualties and alleviate mental and physical exhaustion. Located just off the front lines, these RCCs would give local commanders the ability to keep Marines physically and mentally ready for sustained combat operations. It was planned that no Marines would be evacuated further back than these RCCs for non-physical conditions.

Tough but humane was the desired attitude for the Division Marines. This was best articulated in the Division motto: "No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy." The depth of warrior ethos in the Marines was neatly summed up in that one statement. Mature, compassionate, and lethal; the Marines of 1st Marine Division went into Iraq with the full confidence that they would so dominate their foes that they had no fear of showing compassion. Later, in the streets of cities across Iraq, the Marines would demonstrate time and again that a confident Marine walking among the people was more endearing and effective in winning the hearts and minds of the civilian population than soldiers riding inside armored vehicles or ensconced behind barbed wire.

Deployment of the Forward Command Post and Planning Team

In October of 2002, the Division formed its Forward CP to deploy to Kuwait. There had yet been no public decision to employ military force against Iraq, but by moving the Forward Headquarters and key planning staff into theater early, the Division would have a solid footing for participation in theater planning efforts, identification of assembly areas, and reconnaissance of Aerial Ports Of Debarkation (APODs), Surface Ports Of Debarkation (SPODs), and other facilities required. The efforts of the Forward CP in the upcoming deployment of the entire Division were critical to Blue Diamond's later success, and marked a transition in the Division's preparations for combat. The initial phase of planning and preparation ended, as the Division began to take action to flow forces into theater and closely integrate planning efforts with the MEF and CFLCC.

Chapter 2 Force Flow and Planning Refinements

*Merry Christmas from
Kuwait*



The Commanding General and Marines of the Division Forward Command Element spend a motivated Christmas 2002 in Camp Commando, Kuwait.

The arrival of the Division Forward CP and the Division planning cell marked the beginning of the Force Flow phase of the operation. The US Administration, exhausting diplomatic options before exercising military force, remained heavily engaged with the United Nations. Lacking approval and a clear deployment order for operations against the Iraqi Regime in late November, there was, understandably, a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the force composition, timing, and objectives of potential combat operations. Having the Division planners and a small CP forward allowed for the beginning of integrated planning among CFLCC, I MEF, US 3d Infantry Division, 1st UK Armoured Division, and 1st Marine Division. Although the progress toward finalizing

