



MARINE CORPS CENTER FOR LESSONS LEARNED



COVER STORY:

**Infantry Battalion Operations in Afghanistan:
Lessons from the Operation Enduring Freedom 11.2 Deployment of
1st Battalion, 6th Marines**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MCCLL REPORT:

3 **Infantry Battalion Operations in Afghanistan: Lessons from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6)**

This MCCLL report documents key observations and recommendations from 1/6 personnel based on their seven-month deployment, which included operations in both northern and central Helmand Province.

FEATURED ARTICLES AND LESSONS:

5 **Lessons from a Deployed Marine Logistics Group**

A first 100 days after action report (AAR) from 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) provides lessons from its initial experiences as the logistics combat element in support of Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)).

6 **An Infantry Battalion's Recent Experiences in Afghanistan**

This post-deployment AAR from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines (3/3) highlights the battalion's emphasis on the transition of localities and areas of operation to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

7 **Lessons from a Deployed Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM)**

A first 100 days AAR from VMM-365 focuses on topics that would assist in the preparation and planning for future VMM deployments.

8 **The Experiences of a Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) in Afghanistan**

This post-deployment AAR from MWSS-371 provides lessons learned based on its experiences providing aviation ground support at locations throughout the RC (SW) area of operations and in Kandahar Province.

9 **Resources on Electrical Safety and Heat-Related Illnesses**

Lessons from the CMC Safety Division and U.S. Forces Afghanistan highlight two of the most prominent safety and health concerns faced by Marines, both during deployments and at their home stations.

10 **Handbooks from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)**

Two new CALL handbooks provide guidance on the prevention of civilian casualties in Afghanistan and on planning the transition of functions from U.S. military forces to a relevant host nation government, U.S. civilian agency or non-governmental agency.

11 **The Afghanistan Drug Economy**

This five-part series from the Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC) compiles information on the production of illicit drugs in Afghanistan and the impact of counter-narcotics efforts on drug production and on Afghanistan's overall economy.

12 **Lessons from the Western Pacific Deployment of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)**

AARs from the 11th MEU and its Maritime Raid Force (MRF) address their experiences during seven months at sea, often as part of a split amphibious readiness group (ARG).

REGULAR FEATURES:

13 **The Most Popular Downloads from the MCCLL Website**

Documents in the MCCLL repositories that have been accessed most often tend to highlight topics that Marines and other readers find of particular interest.

14 **Briefly**

Three short articles are highlighted this month:

- **"Unlearned Lessons" from a Decade of Operations in Afghanistan,**
- **The Latest Bulletin from CALL on the Counter-IED Fight,** and
- **The Latest Newsletter from the Naval Operations Medical Lessons Learned Center.**

16 **Reading Lists and Book Reviews**

Two books on the Commandant's Professional Reading List are featured this month, along with a recent book on the Battle of Shok Valley in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan:

- **Wired for War** by Peter W. Singer,
- **The Accidental Guerrilla** by David Kilcullen, and
- **No Way Out** by Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer.

19 **MCCLL Products "in the Pipeline"**

Several recent, ongoing and planned MCCLL collections are scheduled to result in the publication of MCCLL reports in coming months.

20 **Contact Information for MCCLL Program Analysts**

This roster provides contact information for MCCLL representatives assigned at major Marine Corps commands.

Front Cover photo credit: LCpl Justin D. Loya

A Marine from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6) employs a Leupold Range Finder during weapons training at a range aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.

MCCLL REPORTS:

Infantry Battalion Operations in Afghanistan

LESSONS FROM 1ST BATTALION, 6TH MARINES

When 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6) deployed in August 2011 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 11.2, the battalion was initially scheduled to perform counterinsurgency and stability operations in the Marjeh District of central Helmand Province in partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and to assist in building the capacity of the ANSF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). This region of central Helmand had already experienced greatly improved security following earlier coalition operations, including the previous deployment of 1/6 in 2009, when the battalion was a key participant during Operation MOSHTARAK, the first major effort to clear insurgents from Marjeh. As a result of the improved security in the district and the evolving tactical situation, the majority of 1/6 units were almost immediately reassigned during this latest deployment to participate in Operation EASTERN STORM in northern Helmand in a major effort to clear portions of the Sangin and Kajaki Districts.

As a result, most of the battalion's OEF 11.2 deployment involved operations in the austere environment of northern

Helmand, comprised of limited road networks and an unforgiving terrain. During the summer months, patrols were conducted in day-time temperatures that often reached 110° F. The battalion's subordinate units had to adapt their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to ensure effective operations in this environment. The battalion headquarters did not always have the luxury of controlling operations from a forward operating base (FOB) or hard-stand command post.

During its seven-month deployment, the battalion found that as security improved in its area of operations (AO), the local population became more cooperative, facilitating coordination for infrastructure improvements such as road construction. Economic development in the AO was achievable in direct proportion to the level of security.

Following the battalions re-deployment, program analysts from the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) conducted interviews with the commander and key staff members to solicit their observations and recommendations. The results have been documented in a MCCLL report,

Photo credit: Cpl James Clark

Village elders from the Upper Sangin Valley (USV) attend a shura at Patrol Base Florida with Marines from 1/6. The shura allowed the elders to voice their concerns about a wide range of issues, including the need for additional educational opportunities and enhanced security.



entitled [Infantry Battalion Operations in Afghanistan: Lessons and Observations from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, August 2011 - February 2012](#). A classified version of this report is also available on the MCCLL SIPR website at: <https://www.mccll.usmc.smil.mil>. A complete set of For Official Use Only (FOUO) and classified comments and observations are included in the two versions of the MCCLL report. Among the observations releasable in this newsletter are:

- **Training.** The pre-deployment training program (PTP) should emphasize the need for units to be able to choose and employ the best weapons system for a particular situation, including non-kinetic systems, when appropriate. Training should incorporate scenarios that assist in the identification and employment of appropriate systems.
 - Combat Hunter training was considered to be a creative way to teach observation skills and establish common terminology concerning baseline observations and anomalies.
 - During PTP, each company trained extensively on mounted operations. However, many of the operations in northern Helmand involved dismounted patrols.
- **Operations.** It was important to have a variety of supporting arms, with each being effective at certain times. The use of these varying approaches by 1/6 units presented dilemmas for the enemy, forcing them to reassess their strategies and sometimes withdraw.
 - The threat from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) varied from AO to AO. It was important for the battalion's Marines to become familiar with the different employment methods that they would likely encounter. This was especially important for 1/6 units, since they displaced a number of times.
 - The most effective counter-IED assets proved to be well-trained Marine teams that employed all available



Photo credit: Cpl James Clark

A group of local children from the Upper Sangin Valley (USV) line up at Patrol Base Florida to attend a hygiene class presented by Marines from Company A, 1/6.

resources and understood the adversary.

- Operations in the Kajaki District were challenging due to the "newness" of both the physical terrain and the human terrain.
- The local citizens became accustomed to approaching Marines, but the occurrence of kinetic incidents raised their concerns about the potential for escalation of force events.
- Squads on patrol that interacted effectively with the local populace and built relationships were an excellent source of intelligence.
- Intelligence analysts from the battalion, who were assigned to the company-level intelligence cells (CLICs), facilitated the flow of information up and down the chain of command.
- Intelligence-driven operations increased efficiency and led to more successful missions.
- **Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) Partnering.** Over the course of its deployment, the battalion operated with numerous ANSF units, either by partnering or by providing advisor teams.
 - The success of the partnering effort was based on relationships established with the Marines' counterparts, facilitated by living, patrolling and eating together and building the same kind of camaraderie that the Marines enjoyed among themselves.

“ The skills [learned in Combat Hunter training] were good, [including] training your eye to read right to left and scanning for anomalies in the baseline... I would not have known what to look for without having gone through the course. You utilized these techniques on a daily basis.

Squad Leader, Bravo Company, 1/6

FEATURED ARTICLES AND LESSONS:

Lessons from a Deployed Marine Logistics Group

FIRST 100 DAYS AFTER ACTION REPORT FROM 1ST MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP (FORWARD)

In mid-February 2012, 1st Marine Logistics Group (MLG) (Forward) conducted its transfer of authority (TOA) with 2d MLG (Forward) and assumed the role of logistics combat element (LCE) for Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)). In this role, the command provided direct support (DS) logistics for 1st Marine Division (Forward) (as Task Force Leatherneck) and general support (GS) logistics for RC (SW). The MLG also initiated partnering opportunities with logistics units of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to facilitate their capacity building in preparation for assuming lead security responsibility. At the time of TOA, the operational tempo was generally steady-state, so the transfer was relatively seamless. As the deployment progressed, internal and external operational requirements necessitated that the MLG re-evaluate its battle rhythm and processes. Periodic analyses of the battle rhythm, reporting requirements and processes were necessary in order to mitigate actions that would detract from mission accomplishment. These types of issues are amplified in the MLG's [First 100 Days After Action Report for OEF 12.1](#), which documents lessons learned by the staff sections beginning with the pre-deployment training period in October 2011 and extending through operations in May 2012.

In support of ANSF, the MLG sourced Marines to fill officer and staff NCO headquarters billets for the Regional Logistics Support Command (RLSC) Advisor Team. This enabled the Team to focus

“ The fielding of any Program of Record, particularly into a combat theater, requires comprehensive total force program office support and acute logistical planning and should minimize the burden to service members. Lead planners should be assigned and deployed by the program office well in advance. All personnel involved in fielding should have training and experience before deploying and being assigned this responsibility.

From the 1st MLG (Fwd) First 100 Days AAR

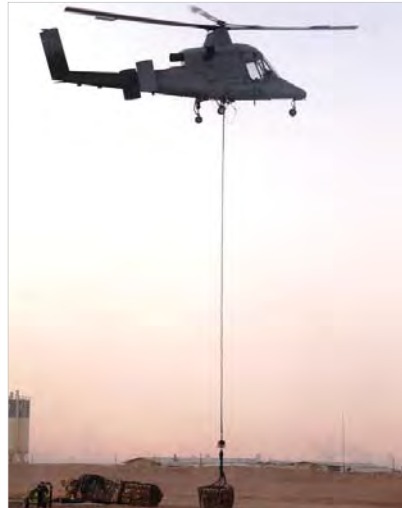


Photo credit:
Sgt Michele Watson

Combat Logistics Battalion 5 (CLB-5), 1st MLG (Fwd), employs the Kaman K1200 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to perform water deliveries to Combat Outpost Rankel, with delivery times reduced from five hours by convoy to ten minutes by UAV. This vehicle has become one of the preferred methods for delivery of small loads to outlying forward operating bases (FOBs) in southern Helmand Province.

on Afghan National Army (ANA) RLSC staff development and had a significant positive impact on the regional logistics capability of the RLSC, which, in turn, increased ANA trust in its own logistics system. The RLSC strategies were subsequently "borrowed" by the Afghan National Police (ANP) Regional Logistics Command (RLC). Overall, the efforts of the MLG resulted in regional ANSF logistics being able to support the ANA and ANP forces more effectively as they transitioned to lead security responsibilities. The MLG recommends that talented and experienced advisors continue to be sourced to support ANSF logistics units in order to continue critical ANSF logistics staff development efforts.

Readers are referred to the entire AAR for wide-ranging observations and recommendations on a diverse set of topics that includes: Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) instruction, in-theater military justice support, legal assistance services, personnel and administration, intelligence, current operations, Health Services Support Element (HSSE), engineering, air operations, Logistics Readiness Center (LRC) Unit Movement Control Center (UMCC), LRC fuels, LRC maintenance, personal retrieval and processing (PRP), logistics, communications, and landing support.

An Infantry Battalion's Recent Experiences in Afghanistan

POST-DEPLOYMENT AFTER ACTION REPORT FROM 3D
BATTALION, 3D MARINES

From November 2011 to May 2012, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines (3/3) deployed as the battlespace owner of the Garmsir District in southern Helmand Province in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 11.2/12.1. This district is approaching its transition to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) lead security authority. As a result, much of the battalion's focus was on ensuring that the ANSF was placed in the lead on operations to the greatest extent feasible, as well as being encouraged to interact regularly with Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) officials and local powerbrokers so that these relationships could be strengthened. During the 3/3 deployment, the transition of both localities and areas of operation to the ANSF was the main effort. The battalion found that partnered patrols (with the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the lead for planning, execution and debriefing) was one area in which improvements could be made on a daily basis. Much of the focus of the [3/3 Post-Deployment After Action Report \(AAR\)](#) is on the approaches employed to ensure that this transition was as successful as possible.

Currently, Garmsir is one of the few districts that has fully integrated the Afghan Local Police (ALP) and the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) under the command of the District Chief of Police (DCoP). As a result, ALP police who have little training are able to work under the leadership of an AUP non-commissioned officer. This structure not only helps ensure that the ALP operates under competent leadership, but also provides the DCoP with a much larger force and helps unify the actions of the police force in the district.

3/3 recommends that elements of the Afghan National Police (ANP) be placed in the lead for all "green zone" security operations in the district. This concept was successfully tested during the Garmsir District elections in April 2012. The DCoP coordinated with the District Governor, the *Kandak* Commander, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) Director, and other elements of the ANSF in planning security for these elections. The resulting coordinated effort by the ANP, NDS, and the ANA demonstrated the overall strength of the ANSF to district residents. The AAR points out that the ANP are in the best position to interact effectively with local citizens in the green zone, while the ANA can more appropriately satisfy outer security requirements.



Photo credit: Cpl Reece Ludder

Marines from Kilo Company, 3/3, search a compound with the Afghan National Police (ANP) during Operation ZEMA PARMA SAR TERA ("Don't Tread on Me") in the Garmsir District of southern Helmand Province.

“ The radio-in-a box (RIAB) is the most effective means of disseminating information throughout the Garmsir District. The literacy rate is very low which reduces the effectiveness of handbills and pamphlets; however, by utilizing the... RIAB towers located throughout the district, local nationals [can]... receive news, religious readings, agricultural and medical lessons, and music... [3/3 assess that], the local populace would rather listen to a Garmsir District-specific radio station than a country-wide station, because it instills pride, provides relevant information, and [allows listeners] to call in and hear their voices on the radio. The... RIAB station has successfully maintained a consistent schedule and, through the facilitation of a linguist serving as a disc jockey, the people in the northern portion of the district benefit from the information disseminated... Future battalions... [should] provide capable linguists and Marines to man the stations on a regular basis... in order to provide the people of Garmsir with the most relevant information, instill pride in their district, and allow the battlespace owner to quickly inform the local populace

From the 3/3 Post-Deployment AAR

Lessons from a Deployed Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron

FIRST 100 DAYS AFTER ACTION REPORT FROM MARINE MEDIUM TILTROTOR SQUADRON 365

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365 (VMM-365) deployed in January 2012 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 12.1 to perform assault support missions in the Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)) area of operations (AO), as well as in the AOs of Regional Commands South and West. In addition, the VMM-365 Ospreys performed air-to-air refueling, air delivery, battlefield illumination and VIP lift missions. Support was provided initially to II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) (Forward) as RC (SW) and subsequently to I MEF (Fwd) in this capacity. Based on the first half of its deployment, the squadron has prepared a comprehensive [First 100 Days After Action Report for OEF 12.1](#) that focuses on topics that would assist in the preparation of other VMM squadrons, including the timely, systematic transfer of authority with re-deploying units.

The AAR points out that completing the pre-deployment training program (PTP) for the entire unit proved to be a challenging process. The squadron had returned from its previous deployment during OEF 10.2 in mid-January 2011, with approximately half of its

Photo credit: Sgt Christopher R. Rye

An MV-22B Osprey From VMM-365 prepares to land at the site of an inactive volcano in southern Afghanistan to allow civilian geologists to conduct a geological survey for the purpose of finding rare minerals that have the potential to boost the Afghanistan economy.



Photo credit: Cpl Marcus Kuiper

Marines from 3d Light Reconnaissance Battalion board an MV-22B Osprey from VMM-365 for insertion into southwestern Helmand Province and participation in Operation HALBERD, which was designed to disrupt the transportation of illicit narcotics in the area.

personnel subsequently turning over. The squadron then had only six months to prepare for Enhanced Mojave Viper (EMV), which took place in mid-July 2011. Additional preparation time prior to EMV would have been desirable, allowing for greater aircrew participation and more effective preparation for deployment. In an effort to reduce the impact on flight training and maintenance, the squadron sought to integrate PTP while maintaining its normal operational tempo. However, the squadron subsequently determined that scheduling a block of training time for PTP would have been more effective and efficient. In particular, coordination and scheduling for the completion of PTP during this block period would have simplified the scheduling of ranges and other venues.

During the first three-and-a-half months of its deployment, the squadron participated in scores of named operations, as well as numerous general support missions such as border VIP missions and leaflet drops. The number and size of the named operations represented a significant increase from previous deployment cycles. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, VMM-365 found that there was an inverse relationship between the number of named operations and the number of flight hours flown by the squadron's Ospreys. Named operations generally included large numbers of aircraft that tended to reduce the number of overall flight hours for each aircraft. During periods in which the squadron flew many missions in support of named operations, the average number of flight hours per day was significantly less than during periods with fewer named operations.

A Marine Wing Support Squadron's Experiences in Afghanistan

POST-DEPLOYMENT AFTER ACTION REPORT FROM MARINE WING SUPPORT SQUADRON 371

Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 (MWSS-371) deployed from September 2011 through March 2012 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 11.2 to provide aviation ground support at locations throughout the Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)) area of operations, as well as locations in Kandahar Province. In the first weeks after the transfer of authority (TOA), MWSS sought to build effective working relationships with other units, including Marine Corps Logistics Command (MCLC), the Combat Logistics Regiment (CLR), the MRAP Joint Program Office (JPO), and the SASSY Management Unit (SMU). These relationships proved to be critical in ensuring mission performance, especially in terms of acquiring a good understanding of the various services available.

Since the MWSS did not own battlespace, it was required to work closely with the battlespace owners on every mission outside the wire. The formal unit movement procedures worked well, but informal coordination with the regimental combat teams and the infantry battalions was also a key

Photo credit: LCpl Robert R. Carrasco

A Marine Corps AMK31 fuel truck from MWSS-371 provides fuel for a KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft at the Camp Bastion Airfield.



Photo credit: Cpl Brian Adam Jones

Marines from MWSS-371 test the communications equipment on a mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicle at Patrol Base Alcatraz. These particular Marines were members of "Task Force Nomad," which constructed and improved helicopter landing zones along the Helmand River in southwestern Afghanistan.

component in ensuring effective operations. The MWSS also had to work with combat logistics battalions (CLBs), engineer support battalions (ESBs), and other units during embedded movements. Again, the formal process worked well, but informal lateral coordination was necessary to ensure that all issues were addressed effectively.

During ground movements outside the wire, the MWSS found that the availability of interpreters added significant capacity to the unit and expedited interaction with the local populace. Even when not engaging local citizens directly, the squadron found that the interpreters provided a cultural context for situations and events that might have otherwise complicated a mission or placed Marines at risk. In particular, the interpreters helped to provide cultural background information during holiday periods and other celebrations.

Readers are referred to the complete [MWSS-371 After Action Report for OEF 11.2](#) for a comprehensive set of recommendations based on the squadron's experiences. Virtually all of these recommendations fall into one or more of the following major categories: (1) pre-deployment training, (2) command relationships, and (3) challenges associated with decentralized operations in non-contiguous rear areas.

Resources on Electrical Safety and Heat-Related Illnesses

LESSONS FROM THE CMC SAFETY DIVISION AND U.S. FORCES, AFGHANISTAN

Recent MCCLL newsletters have highlighted a number of available resources that document safety and medical best practices that have been promulgated by the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Safety Division, coalition forces in Afghanistan, and other organizations. The objective has been to help ensure Marines and their leaders are aware of some of the most prominent safety concerns and medical issues faced in both garrison and tactical environments. The June 2012 edition of the [Marine Corps Mishap Synopsis & Lessons Learned Safety Gram](#) addresses two of the most significant safety and medical concerns: electrical mishaps and heat-related illnesses.

This particular Safety Gram summarizes five electrical mishaps that resulted in Marine fatalities from late November 2011 to the present. All of these incidents occurred as a result of contact with (or close encounters with) power lines. Two occurred during mounted operations, two during dismounted operations, and one when a Marine was conducting generator maintenance inside a patrol base. (Note that the danger of overhead power lines in Afghanistan was also addressed in the [MCCLL June 2012 Newsletter](#).) It is critical that Marines realize: (1) *overhead power lines are usually not insulated*, (2) *arcing between power lines and metal objects can occur within three meters*, (3) *the top of an extended whip antenna on man-pack radios is often*



Photo credit: LCpl Kasey Peacock

A corpsman with Combat Logistics Regiment 36 (CLR-36) is covered in ice water during heat casualty training at the Kinser Group Aid Station aboard Camp Kisner, Okinawa.

high enough to possibly arc with overhead lines, and (4) vehicle commanders should ensure proper clearance at all times. The CMC Safety Division has also prepared a [video on electrical safety](#) that is available on its website. Another resource on this same topic has been prepared by the U.S. Forces, Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Joint Engineer Directorate, entitled [Guide to Electrical Safety](#), that focuses on the specific electrical dangers encountered in Afghanistan. This guide identifies the common symptoms of various levels of electrical shocks, summarizes general electrical safety tips and specific safety procedures when operating in an expeditionary environment, and provides an overview of recent incidents that have resulted in casualties.

Another topic addressed in the latest Safety Gram involves the extra precautions that must be taken to prevent heat related illnesses in hot weather. Under normal conditions, an individual's skin, blood vessels and perspiration level adjust adequately to higher temperatures. However, the body's natural cooling systems may fail when exposed to high temperatures and humidity for too long. The result can be heat-illnesses, ranging from heat cramps (that are confined to muscles) to heat exhaustion (involving nausea, headache, fainting, weakness and cold, clammy skin) to heatstroke (a life-threatening emergency condition that may involve confusion and can lead to brain damage, organ failure or even death). The precautions outlined in the Safety Gram include: *knowing the temperature, getting acclimated, knowing your own fitness level, drinking plenty of fluids, dressing appropriately, avoiding the midday sun, wearing sunscreen, having a backup plan, and understanding your own medical risks.*

Photo credit: Petty Officer 3rd Class Monique LaRouche

One of the 2012 electrocution deaths highlighted in the latest [Safety Gram](#) occurred while a Marine was performing generator maintenance inside a patrol base in Afghanistan. In this photo, Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers learn about generator safety (along with generator maintenance) during an eight-day course at the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest aboard Camp Leatherneck.



Handbooks from the Center for Army Lessons Learned:

- (1) CIVILIAN CASUALTY PREVENTION AND
(2) GUIDANCE ON TRANSITION PLANNING

Recent handbooks from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) have particular relevance for Marine Corps forces that continue to be heavily involved in coalition counterinsurgency and stability operations in Afghanistan, while, at the same time, are supporting the transition of lead security authority to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF):

Afghanistan Civilian Casualty Prevention. Since 2005, civilian casualties (CIVCAS) resulting from coalition force operations in Afghanistan have continued to be a significant operational issue. Despite efforts to reduce the incidence of such events, several high-profile incidents in 2008 and early 2009 elevated this issue again and reinforced the perception in the minds of many that coalition forces were unconcerned about the loss of civilian lives. However, increased emphasis and focus on this issue by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) since mid-2009 have resulted in significant progress, with CIVCAS being reduced in 2010 and 2011 by twenty percent from those reported in 2009. In these years, many more CIVCAS have been caused by

Photo credit: Cpl Timothy Solano

The Marine Corps Nimruz Province Coordinator briefs the latest plan for the second phase of the district's transition, clarifying the security, development and management provisions of the transition agreed to by the provincial leaders.



Photo credit: Cpl Timothy Lenzo

An M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank from the 1st Tank Battalion moves into position during a firefight in Zamindawar, Kajaki District, in support of 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) during Operation JAWS. The Marines eliminated over 50 insurgents during the operation with no civilian casualties.

insurgents than by coalition forces. Although these trends demonstrate the effectiveness of ISAF initiatives, continued vigilance is necessary in order to ensure that every effort is made to reduce and mitigate these types of incidents (consistent with the need for service members to protect themselves). This new CALL handbook outlines the general principles involved in CIVCAS prevention, provides concrete steps that service members can take during operations, and furnishes a blueprint on proper responses when a CIVCAS incident occurs.

Senior Leader's Guide to Transition Planning. This CALL handbook defines the term "transition" to be the transfer of functions from U.S. military forces to a host nation government, U.S. civilian agencies, or non-governmental agencies. This follows efforts to help a severely stressed government avoid failure and build a new domestic order after facing internal collapse, natural disaster, or defeat in war. Although the handbook naturally incorporates many of the lessons learned during the U.S. military transition in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND), the intent is to ensure that the guidance provides sufficient flexibility to be employed in transition planning of any size or scope. The guide focuses on the **Stabilize** and **Enable Civil Authority** phases of the transition, which can often be the most difficult. Marine planners involved in Afghanistan transition planning should find the handbook to be a particularly useful reference. In addition to explaining the planning process and emphasizing the need to engage all of the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational players during the planning process, the handbook includes sample checklists to help ensure that all critical factors are taken into account.

The Afghanistan Drug Economy

A FIVE-PART SERIES ON COUNTER-NARCOTICS EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Although the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Afghanistan Opium Survey 2011* determined that there has been a decrease in the amount of opium produced in Afghanistan since 2007 (which can be attributed to successful counter-narcotics efforts in parts of the country, as well as severe droughts and other unfavorable weather conditions), the country continues to be a major contributor to the global drug supply. About 90% of the world's supply of opium originates in the fields of Afghanistan, most of which is processed into heroin. The country is also a major producer of hashish.

In an effort to compile available open-source information on the production of illicit drugs in Afghanistan and determine the impact of counter-narcotics efforts on this production, the Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC) of the NATO Allied Command Transformation has prepared a five-part series of reports on this topic. The objective is to identify recent trends concerning the level of opium production and document



Photo credit: LCpl Ismael E. Ortega

Marines from Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5), patrol through a poppy field on their way to a patrol base in northern Helmand Province.

what is known about the successes and failures of various counter-narcotics efforts. The five reports address the following specific topics:

- [Illicit Drugs & Afghanistan: Key Trends.](#) The first report in the series provides an overview of trends in illicit drug production, the drug market and narcotics trafficking.
- [Opium Poppies & the Afghan Economy.](#) The second report reviews the ways in which poppy cultivation and illicit drugs contribute to, and detract from, the Afghan economy.
- [Afghan Opiates: A Regional Di-](#)

[lemma.](#) The third report provides an overview of open-source information on the means used to traffic Afghan drugs throughout the region and identifies the regional counter-narcotics efforts that are currently in place.

- [Opium Poppies & Security in Afghanistan.](#) The fourth report reviews ways in which poppy cultivation and the narcotics trade undermine security in the country and documents how the Afghan security forces are responding.
- [The Decision to Plant Poppies: Irrigation, Profits & Alternative Crops in Afghanistan.](#) The final report documents the impact that such factors as the availability of irrigation water and the profit-ability of crops has on a farmer's decision to cultivate licit crops rather than opium poppies. The report points out that improvements in infrastructure, water management, farming practices and other areas are needed to ensure that water is used efficiently and is available for licit crops.

“...every approach to counter-narcotics has a significant economic impact given that — regardless of its illegality — poppies and drugs are major components of the Afghan economy. Each of these economic impacts has further implications for security, governance and politics... That is, ridding an area of poppies quickly may deny insurgents a portion of their funding, but may also result in spiralling poverty rates, increased unemployment and underemployment and a more attractive recruitment environment for insurgent elements. Understanding poppy cultivation and narcotics trafficking as an economic issue also helps to broaden their relationship to stabilization efforts...”

From Opium Poppies & the Afghan Economy

Lessons from a Marine Expeditionary Unit's Western Pacific Deployment

AFTER ACTION REPORTS FROM 11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT AND ITS MARITIME RAID FORCE

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) deployed as part of the MAKIN ISLAND Amphibious Ready Group (MAKIARG) from November 2011 to June 2012 in the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), including the areas of responsibility (AORs) of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and U.S. African Command (AFRICOM). The MEU was composited in May 2011 and conducted a comprehensive pre-deployment training package that included shore-based and at-sea exercises, including an at-sea certification exercise that resulted in the MEU being assessed as "exceeding all standards." The ground combat element (GCE) of the MEU was Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3d Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1); the aviation combat element (ACE) was Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (HMM-268); and the logistics combat element (LCE) was Combat Logistics Battalion 11 (CLB-11). During its deployment,

Photo credit: Seaman Dominique Pineiro

Marines from the 11th MEU Maritime Raid Force (MRF) and Sailors from the USS New Orleans (LPD 18) conduct a practice mission embarked on a rigid-hull inflatable boat during the MEU's WESTPAC deployment.



Photo credit: Cpl Tommy Huynh

Marines from Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3d Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1), 11th MEU, and members of the Jordanian Armed Forces participate in weapons training during a theater security cooperation (TSC) exercise.

the MEU conducted theater security cooperation (TSC) exercises with Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Djibouti. Three of the TSC events were unscheduled and assigned to the MEU while at sea. The MEU also conducted several interoperability training exercises with different agencies. During the final eastern transit through PACOM, the MEU conducted bilateral training with Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines, as well as completing community relations projects in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines.

For much of the deployment, the MAKIARG/11th MEU operated as a split amphibious readiness group (ARG), with Marines deployed on the USS Makin Island (LHD 8), USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52), and USS New Orleans (LPD 18). The MEU Maritime Raid Force (MRF) was embarked on the latter ship for the majority of the deployment in order to take advantage of its rigid hull inflatable boats. The split ARG type of deployment presents unique challenges, so the MEU adopted a number of specific measures in order to maintain its high degree of readiness.

Following completion of the MAKIARG deployment, 11th MEU prepared two after action reports (AARs) that furnish observations and recommendations based on the experiences of the participants during their seven-months at sea: the [11th MEU AAR for WESTPAC 11-2](#) and the [11th MEU MRF AAR for WESTPAC 11-2](#). These AARs provide a wealth of observations and recommendations that should be invaluable in planning subsequent MEU deployments, particularly those involving split ARG operations.

REGULAR FEATURES:

The Most Popular Downloads

FROM THE MCCLL WEBSITE

Many of the documents highlighted in MCCLL monthly newsletters and weekly new data rollups are downloaded every month from the MCCLL NIPR and SIPR websites. These include MCCLL reports, Marine Corps unit after action reports (AARs), recent doctrinal publications, briefings on a wide range of topics, and many other source documents with valuable lessons learned. In an effort to inform readers concerning the products that other Marines, civilian Marines, and contractors have found of interest, we include in each monthly newsletter a list of documents that have been accessed and downloaded most often during the previous month.

During July 2012, the documents listed in the table to the right were most frequently accessed. This diverse

collection of documents includes three MCCLL reports (including a recent trends report), recent AARs from five Marine Corps units, an official, publicly-releasable briefing from Headquarters, Marine Corps, and two short reports from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) on specific issues that have been encountered in theater.

These documents were downloaded most often by officers in grades from O-2 to O-5, NCOs/SNCOs in grades from E-5 to E-8, DoD civilians in grades from GS-11 to GS-13, and DoD contractors.

There continue to be a significant number of new registrations on the MCCLL website each month, with 612 new registrants signing up in July, compared with 576 in June.

TOP TEN DOWNLOADS FROM THE MCCLL WEBSITE, JULY 2012

1. [Amphibious Operations: Exercise BOLD ALLIGATOR 2012 \(MCCLL\)](#)
2. [USMC: America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness \(HQMC\)](#)
3. [Regimental Combat Team 6 \(RCT-6\) First 100 Days After Action Report \(AAR\)](#)
4. [Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force \(SPMAGTF\) 12.1 \(MCCLL\)](#)
5. [Trends in Ground Combat Element Lessons and Observations \(MCCLL\)](#)
6. [3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade AAR for SSANG YONG 2012](#)
7. [2d Marine Aircraft Wing \(Forward\) AAR for OEF 11.1/11.2](#)
8. [3d Reconnaissance Battalion AAR for OEF 11.1](#)
9. [11th Marine Expeditionary Unit Maritime Raid Force AAR for Western Pacific 11-2](#)
10. [Injuries Incurred during the Operation of MRAP/M-ATV Doors \(CALL\)](#)
10. [Tactical Recovery of a Husky \(CALL\)](#)



Photo credit: SSgt Brian Buckwalter
Col John R. Shafer, Commanding Officer, Regimental Combat Team 6 (RCT-6), meets with the Operations Officer, 4th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, at Combat Outpost Fiddlers Green to discuss the way forward as Afghan forces assume greater security responsibility in the region.

◆ Briefly ◆

"UNLEARNED LESSONS" FROM A DECADE OF OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), a non-profit, policy research organization, located in Kabul, Afghanistan, has collected twenty-five articles from twenty-four analysts and practitioners who share their experiences and insights into the decade-long intervention in the country by coalition forces. All of the authors have long histories in the country, were closely involved in the programs they describe, and have based their observations on long-term efforts to contribute to a safe and stable Afghanistan. The entire report, entitled [Snapshots of an Intervention: The Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance \(2001 - 2011\)](#), is readily available on-line as a free, e-book, while the content has been discussed in many forums, including those of the [Small War's Journal](#). Although many of the observations and recommendations of the authors are likely to be controversial, the entire document should be able to serve as a credible basis for informed discussions of the many issues that are expected to be relevant in the **Global War on Terror** for many years to come.

Many of the articles address Afghanistan political

Photo credit: LCpl Stephen A. Wagner

A Marine from 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) observes an Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier from the 2nd Tolai, 3rd Kandak, 215th Corps, during sniper training at the Musa Qal'eh District Center in northern Helmand Province.



institutions and issues; however, the articles that are likely to be of greatest relevance for military forces address operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and efforts to train the Afghan National Army (ANA) and other elements of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). An article on the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is particularly interesting. As pointed out in the Foreword to the report: *"Years of following the international efforts left us with an increasingly strong sense of déjà vu; another conference to demonstrate momentum, another strategy to surpass the ones before, another project that would come and go and be forgotten the moment its progress was no longer being reported on, only to resurface in a new guise a little later. In many cases, it was all very understandable... the pressures to spend and deliver and to come up with project-sized solutions for complex problems, the tendency to design programs by brainstorm, the lack of institutional memory -- it all meant that ideas often lacked the benefit of previous experience or solid understanding of the context..."*

HELPING TO PREPARE FOR THE COUNTER-IED FIGHT

The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) recently published the eleventh in a series of bulletins on counter-improvised explosive device (CIED) topics; each of the bulletins has included many excellent articles designed to assist military service members in responding to the IED threat in Afghanistan and elsewhere and contribute to the overall success of U.S., coalition and allied counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. The [July 2012 Edition of the CIED Bulletin](#) includes eight articles on the following topics:

- **Soldier Awareness of Home-Made Explosives (HME)** provides information and resources to facilitate a better understanding of HME and the employment of these explosives in IEDs.
- **Tactical Implementation of Handheld Mine Detectors** provides information on the employment of mine detectors in dismounted operations.
- **Ground Sign Awareness** highlights the signs and indicators that should be taught and reinforced at every IED training venue.
- **How to Perform Counter-IED Operations with the**

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) addresses some of the aspects of embedded partnering that should be taken into account in working to improve the CIED capabilities of the ANSF.

- **Weapons Technical Intelligence** provides an introduction to site exploitation and sensitive site exploitation, explaining how information gathered is used to produce intelligence and support military decision making.
- **Prosecution Support and the Rule of Law** addresses the formal and informal justice systems in Afghanistan and recommends practices to follow and approaches to avoid in seeking to strengthen the rule of law in the country.
- **Training Battlefield Basics of Biometrics** identifies training resources that are designed to assist units in their incorporation of biometrics in COIN environments, in particular, approaches for helping to ensure that critical evidence is preserved.
- **U.S. Forces Command CIED Integration Cell** highlights the capabilities of this cell, which is available to senior commanders in direct support of progressive readiness requirements.

MEDICAL LESSONS LEARNED FOR MARINES AND SAILORS

The MCCLL database includes many lessons on medical and health-related topics that are relevant for Marines and Sailors (many of which have been promulgated in after action reports (AARs) from the operating forces or in articles and other source documents from medical professionals). However, among the best sources for these types of lessons are the repositories of the Naval Operational Medical Lessons Learned Center (NOMLLC). As a result, we have highlighted many of the previous editions of the NOMLLC quarterly newsletters that included numerous articles on medical topics that are of particular interest to Marines.

The most recent edition of the NOMLLC newsletter is no exception, with a wealth of information for individual Marines, as well as for medical professionals. Among the articles included in the [July 2012 Navy Medical Lessons Learned Newsletter](#) are:

- **Post-Training Analysis Information Paper** provides feedback and analysis on a recent training evolution

conducted at the Naval Expeditionary Medical Training Institute (NEMTI) aboard Camp Pendleton.

- **Trauma Lessons Learned in the Combat Zone** highlights the second edition of *First to Cut*, an essential guide to combat trauma surgery and critical care.
- **Frontline Medicine** is a British documentary on the medical lessons learned as a result of the treatment of military personnel during the decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **The Army Teleconsultation Program** is available to all military service personnel, compiling an excellent record in recent years on response times for queries.
- **Marine Corps After Action Reports (AARs)** highlights three AARs that address medical topics (all of which have been featured in previous MCCLL newsletters): (1) 2d Supply Battalion (Forward), (2) 1st Marine Division (Forward) Force Preservation Council, and (3) 2d Battalion, 11th Marines (-) (REIN).
- **Updates to the Joint Theater Trauma System (JTTS) Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs)** provides links to each update, highlighting significant or substantial changes to the guidelines.
- **Armed Forces Medical Examiner** feedback from the field addresses two specific issues of relevance for deployed personnel.
- **Innovative Readiness Training Exercises** highlights results from the Tropic Care 2012 and Alabama Care 2012 training exercises.
- **Bold Alligator 2012** summarizes medical issues that were identified by the Fleet Surgical Team following its participation in this major amphibious exercise.
- **USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) Medical Department Carrier Cruise Report** provides information on the medical observations and lessons identified during this recent deployment.
- **Army Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) Handbook** is a new edition of the handbook that identifies changes in equipment and training designed to improve the performance of the Army's Health Care System.
- **USMC TCCC and Combat Lifesavers Program Guidance** provides updated guidelines and direction for the skills training offered at Field Medical Training Battalions.
- **Mefloquine Protocols** highlights a recent Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs memo that requests all the military services review their policies for the use of Mefloquine.

Reading Lists and Book Reviews

In July 2011, the [Commandant's Professional Reading List](#) was revised by a review panel established by General James F. Amos to ensure that the list continues to be relevant and provides Marines with a variety of resources to broaden their perspectives and help ensure that they benefit from the experiences of others. The list continues to highlight ***First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*** by LtGen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret), as the Commandant's "choice book" to be read by all Marines. In addition, Marines are tasked to read a minimum of one book from the list for their grade each year. The CMC list, as well as other reading lists (such as those prepared by I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and the Director of Intelligence), are highlighted on the [Marine Corps University \(MCU\) website](#), along with discussion guides and other resources.

This month we feature three books:

- **Wired for War** by Peter W. Singer, on the Commandant's list for Major and Chief Warrant Officer 5,
- **The Accidental Guerilla** by David Kilcullen, on the Commandant's list for Master Sergeant, First Sergeant, and Lieutenant Colonel and
- **No Way Out** by Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer, a recently published account of the Battle of Shok Valley that took place in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan in 2008.

WIRED FOR WAR: THE ROBOTICS REVOLUTION AND CONFLICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

PETER W. SINGER (PENGUIN PRESS, 2009)

Brookings Institute Senior Fellow Peter W. Singer's latest book, ***Wired for War***, is a survey of recent thinking and developments in robotics aimed at giving the reader a picture of what the author claims is "the most important weapons development since the atomic bomb." The point that the change is vast, deep and ongoing apart, there is no attempt to persuade readers of a given set of arguments, let alone construct elaborate pictures of probable futures (as robotics experts Hans Moravec and Ray Kurzweil have done in their books), the book instead focused on explaining what the issues are.

To that end, the discussion is divided into two parts. Part

One, ***The Change We Are Creating***, concerns the technology itself, providing basic concepts and essential history (including the answer to the question of "What is a robot?"), and a round-up of recent projects of note, with chapters devoted to the idea of a "technological singularity," the impact of science fiction on the field, and a survey of the careers and views of a number of prominent roboticists.



Part Two, ***What Change is Creating For Us***, concerns the implications, possibilities and consequences, as far as these can be guessed at. Accordingly, it discusses the related matter of the Revolution in Military Affairs, some of the impacts the "robotics revolution" may have on international competition and wars large and small, as well as national leadership, the culture and traditions

of soldiering, and the perception of war by civilians.

Unlike Singer's first two books, ***Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Private Military Industry*** and ***Children at War***, Singer has written ***Wired*** for a popular audience. Indeed, not only does it seem to be written to be accessible to a general audience, but also to entertain it, so that the book is packed with personal anecdotes, reminiscences, pop cultural references and personal sketches of the authorities cited (actually described on the book's dust jacket as its "cast of characters"). As the author himself says in that introductory note, ***Wired for War*** is "as far as I know, the first book to come out of a think tank with a recommended music playlist, designed to get into the vibe of the research results," as well as a contest giving an award to the reader who submits a complete list of all of the book's cultural references.

...Given this particular subject matter, there is something to be said for such an approach, especially when the direct influence science fiction (often written by authors actually accomplished in the sciences) has had on the thinking of those actually doing the practical work of transforming these ideas into reality is considered. Additionally, there is no denying that culture shapes the broader context in which these new technologies develop, proliferate and enter use, and that this is well worth paying attention to—especially when the technology brings as much cultural baggage with it as robotics does. There is also nothing wrong with an author trying to be as interesting as possible.

To his credit, Singer does not lose his focus on his subject in the course of all this, his more colorful touches never

weighing down the book so as to cost it clarity or readability (though some readers will understandably wish he had used the space more efficiently). Those who have followed the field closely for any length of time are likely to come away feeling that they have seen most of this before, and many times at that, but as his forty-four pages of endnotes testify, Singer's research is adequate for his purposes. Indeed, he does a particularly good job setting forth the relevant historical background and explanations of basic concepts, and surveying the technological state-of-the-art...

He also makes clear the important point that scientists' predictions have tended to overstate the positive, by which he refers to the positive social implications of the technologies under discussion. Tellingly, however, he fails to note that the overstatement of the positive can also take the form of an overselling of the feasibility of their pet ideas and projects, since the book does not stay as grounded as one might expect from these cautions. In fact, the weaknesses of *Wired for War* tend to be in the more speculative chapters, and in particular the author's easy acceptance of many of the most radical claims made for what these technologies may achieve in the near future where a more critical eye was warranted. Singer is quick to point to the pessimistic predictions that proved wrong, but he also ignores the optimistic ones that proved incorrect. The fizzling of the household robotics market and "fifth generation" computing in the 1980s, are both noteworthy instances deserving of mention, as is the fact that the most optimistic experts, like Kurzweil (who is discussed at length in the book), have repeatedly erred in their guesses about how much would be achieved, how quickly.

That is not to say that grounds are lacking for a broadly "optimistic" position. The reality is that robotics is an area seeing rapid development, with some practical consequences, particularly in military service. According to Singer, the number of robots serving with U.S. forces in Iraq went from zero in 2003 to 12,000 in 2008, in a wide variety of capacities, combat included. Indeed, the 174th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard is converting from manned F-16s to remotely piloted MQ-9 "Reapers." However, it is worth noting that truly autonomous systems (rather than remote-controlled ones like the RQ-1 Predator and Reaper), which Singer correctly recognizes are key to the revolution he describes, have yet to enter service on a significant scale...

Nonetheless, as it is, *Wired for War* is a robust introduction to a fascinating and worthwhile subject. Newcomers will find it worth their while for that reason, while those with a greater

familiarity with military robotics will still find it worth a look because of its impressive breadth, and the impact that this heavily publicized book seems likely to have on the dialogue about the issue in the years to come.

READ THE COMPLETE REVIEW BY

NADER ELHEFNAWY

**STRATEGIC INSIGHTS, CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY
CONFLICT, NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**THE ACCIDENTAL GUERRILLA: FIGHTING
SMALL WARS IN THE MIDST OF A BIG ONE**

DAVID KILCULLEN (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011)

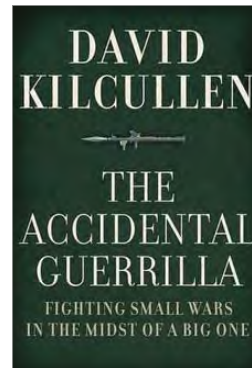
David Kilcullen is a former officer in the Australian Army, a strategist and a scholar. He is also an expert on counterinsurgency, or how to combat a rebellion, and one of the few brave souls who had the ear of people in the Bush White House and advised against the invasion of Iraq.

"It's going to take a lot more than you seem to be willing to commit," he told the Americans. No one listened. After the invasion, Kilcullen watched the growing mayhem with outrage and dismay. This time people listened.

David Galula, a French writer on military affairs who was known for his theories on counterinsurgency, particularly during France's Algerian war, must have influenced Kilcullen while he was doing his Ph.D. in political anthropology. Galula's thesis is that one aim of war is to support the local population rather than control the territory. Part of Kilcullen's academic research involved living and working alongside villagers in West Java, trying to absorb the culture of Darul Islam, a guerrilla movement hatched in the late 1940s (and later identified by some as an Indonesian clone and ally of Al Qaeda).

What Kilcullen wanted to do was to observe the movement the way the locals did — not from the "official version I could find in books." So he lived in villages and conversed with his curious neighbors about blue jeans and the Internet, until they trusted him enough to share information.

"You should talk to old Mrs. N, her husband was an imam who worked with the movement," was the kind of lead Kilcullen would get after a time. And with patience and cunning, he



built up the knowledge he needed. Later, Kilcullen went on to advise Condoleezza Rice and helped Gen. David Petraeus implement the 2007 surge — which, up to a point, he believes has been successful, largely because of his friend Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

His work in Iraq and Afghanistan involved much on-the-ground fact-gathering — meeting with the people rather than locking himself in the Green Zone. His ideas were linked to the research he did 10 years earlier in the Javanese jungle: the theory that the war on terror has essentially two contrasting aspects.

One is the larger international movement: the "Long War," as the Pentagon calls it, against Al Qaeda. The other, though largely ignored, is equally crucial: the uprisings of local networks and fighters. These are small insurgencies seeking autonomy that align themselves intentionally (or sometimes not) with the larger movement.

These "accidental guerrillas" are the kind of individuals Kilcullen met in Java, like Mrs. N's husband, the local *imam*. Or the villagers in Uruzgan, Afghanistan, who joined the Taliban in a 2006 offensive against an American patrol simply for the joy of fighting.

"When the battle was right there in front of them, how could they not join in?" Kilcullen writes. "This was the most exciting thing that had happened in their valley in years. It would have shamed them to stand by and wait it out, they said."

Kilcullen's later observations in Iraq led to his conclusion that America has not responded wisely to global terrorism. Washington was focused on the big picture — Al Qaeda. It had ignored the separate, interlocking struggles.

In ***The Accidental Guerrilla***, Kilcullen draws on his vast experience not only as a dedicated field researcher, but also as a soldier — he commanded an infantry company in counterinsurgency operations in East Timor in 1999. The most extensive sections of his book concentrate, naturally, on Iraq and Afghanistan (which he still sees as "winnable" with a long-term commitment), but his analysis leads him as well to smaller movements in such places as Chechnya, Thailand, Indonesia and the Horn of Africa.

Discussing the tribal areas of Pakistan, Kilcullen shows how Al Qaeda moved in by taking over communities—establishing bonds by marrying local women, operating businesses, eventually recruiting the villagers as fighters. To see Kilcullen's theory at work, you need only to look at the Swat region of northern Pakistan.

How does the initiation process of the accidental guerrilla

happen? Kilcullen likens it to a disease. Al Qaeda establishes its presence in a remote area of conflict, then penetrates the population the same way influenza infects a weakened immune system...

READ THE COMPLETE REVIEW BY

JANINE DI GIOVANNI

THE NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE

NO WAY OUT: A STORY OF VALOR IN THE MOUNTAINS OF AFGHANISTAN

MITCH WEISS AND KEVIN MAURER (BERKLEY/PENGUIN, 2012)

Written and researched with evident care, ***No Way Out*** is a fine example of contemporary war reporting that reveals much about the war in Afghanistan by focusing on one particular battle.

Operation Commando Wrath (or the Battle of Shok Valley) took place April 6, 2008, in the Nuristan Province of Afghanistan. A joint operation between Afghan army commandos and U.S. Special Forces, many of whom were based out of Fort Bragg, the objective was to kill or capture a notorious insurgent commander whose career dates back to the Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

Everything went wrong, though, as the joint attack team was almost instantly ambushed in the treacherous Shok Valley, terrain so perilous that historical invaders like Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great are said to have avoided it. Pinned down on a small rock ledge by machine-gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire from hundreds of enemy combatants, the soldiers fought for more than seven hours before making a narrow escape.

No Way Out begins by profiling nine U.S. soldiers in the hours before the mission. These beginning chapters acquaint us with these soldiers as individuals and offer a terrible sense of foreboding. The team leaders, we discover, had deep reservations about the planning of the mission and the quality of the intelligence used to justify it.



The book's middle chapters detail the battle itself, with startling detail and graphic descriptions. Several U.S. soldiers were gravely wounded, and many Afghan commandos died. The battlefield narrative is taut and dramatic. In one harrowing snapshot, the team's lone medic tends to multiple wounded team members, packing blood coagulant into one soldier's open abdominal wound as bullets ping off the medic's helmet.

Because we are already acquainted with these soldiers, their families and even early childhoods, the battle scenes have an awful weight to them. When one scout takes a bullet in the pelvis, it's not just another Special Operations soldier. It is Staff Sergeant Dillon Behr from Chapter Six, the Bible college dropout who wanted to become an actor.

The authors, both veteran war correspondents, reconstruct the battle with frightening clarity. It is apparent, by the end, that a massacre was averted by the narrowest of margins and by the most courageous of individual actions. Eleven soldiers would be awarded Silver Stars, the most given to any one unit since Vietnam.

The book's final section, ***Aftermath***, may be its most compelling. Here we learn the fates of the various soldiers - many of whom were interviewed in person after their return to Fort Bragg to receive Silver Stars for their valor. We also get a glimpse into the machination of the military PR machine.

Soldiers knew going in that the planning of Operation Commando Wrath was deeply flawed. It is interesting to read what Weiss (a former business editor at the ***Observer***) and Maurer discover about the official U.S. Army record of the incident. The military historian assigned to write the official report concludes that the operation was a tactical disaster from its inception, carelessly planned and based on dubious intelligence. He tells his boss that the mission had the potential to "*have the entire chain of command relieved.*"

The official report has never been released to the public. The authors interviewed more than 60 people and reviewed hundreds of pages of documents, but their request for the official report was denied - apparently, the document is "still in draft form." The insurgent leader targeted by the raid remains at large and is one of the major players in the Afghan war, now in its 11th year.

The authors conclude with the book's sole instance of direct editorializing, calling the Battle of Shok Valley a cautionary tale: "*Be careful what you ask soldiers to do, because they will die trying to accomplish their mission.*"

READ THE COMPLETE REVIEW BY

GLENN MCDONALD

THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER ONLINE

MCCLL Products "in the Pipeline"

The results of a number of recently completed, ongoing and planned collection efforts are scheduled to be documented in MCCLL reports within the next few months. "Stay tuned" for these MCCLL products:

- **Operations of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)**
- **Exercise SSANG YONG: Amphibious Operations**
- **Biometric Efforts in Afghanistan**
- **Harvest Hawk Operations in Afghanistan**
- **Expeditionary Energy Operations**
- **Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012**
- **Air Operations in Support of Logistics**
- **Results from the Regimental Combat Team 5 (RCT-5) Lessons Learned Conference**

The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) newsletter provides "initial impressions" summaries that identify key observations and potential lessons from collection efforts. These observations highlight potential shortfalls, risks or issues experienced by units that may suggest a need for change. The observations are not service level decisions. In addition, some information in this newsletter has been compiled from publicly available sources and is not official USMC policy. Although the information has been gathered from reliable sources, the currency and completeness of the information is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed.

Contact Information for MCCLL Program Analysts

Contact information for Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) representatives at major Marine Corps and joint commands and organizations is provided below. In many cases, both commercial telephone numbers and Defense Switched Network (DSN) numbers are provided.

Individuals from commands and organizations that do not have a MCCLL representative may contact the MCCLL Operations Officer at (703) 432-1284.

Questions or comments (or requests to be added to the MCCLL newsletter distribution list) can be directed to: [Mr. Harry T. Johnson, Editor](#): (703) 432-1279 | DSN: 378-1279.

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