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**Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief:
Are The National/International Coordinating Agencies
Capable Of Fulfilling The Mission?**

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Late Saturday night/Sunday morning, 0030 hours (hrs), 30 August 1992: I am just falling asleep and the phone rings. "Sir, this is 1LT Oliver, the Staff Duty Officer, calling to let you know we've just received a Red Line message and the Division has been alerted. We've been directed to initiate unit recall procedures. *Red Line Message follows. Line 1: Recall Division Ready Brigade 1 (DRB 1); Line 2: N-hour is 0001 hrs, 30 August 1992; Line 3: N+2 is scheduled for 0330 hrs, Division N+2 Room; Line 4: Units are directed to initiate area closure plans in accordance with 82nd Airborne Division Alert SOP.*"

As I hang up the phone, I think, "Oh, s_ _ _ , it never fails that these calls always come just after a week and a half in the field and an hour after we've returned home from a formal Division social function!" As I transition from a Mess Blues to BDU mentality, I try to guess to which crisis this alert is in response. The rumors around the Division are mixed lately over two potential hot spots, Somalia and Haiti. The TV media has been playing up the problems in Somalia extensively. Haiti is also getting a lot of coverage and is a politically hot issue. The Division has recently completed a major Command Post Exercise (CPX) on a small island scenario ... maybe that's it! I try to remember what else has been on the news. Hurricane Andrew has just devastated Southern Florida, but the National Guard and Red Cross can handle that. My best guess is Somalia or Haiti, and we're ready for it! Not bad. After all, it's just been over a year since the 82nd Airborne Division was the first to be alerted and deployed to Saudi Arabia, and the December before that the Division participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama.

As I mentally review the possibilities of the Brigade's potential missions in the operational areas of Somalia and Haiti, combat tasks immediately come to mind. Somalia could entail an Airborne or Airland Assault on the airfield at Mogadishu followed by Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) within that city, enabling NGO's to conduct Humanitarian Assistance operations (food distribution). The recent CPX of a small island operation presented a situation that would most likely entail an airborne assault /airfield seizure, followed by search and attack and a potential Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). Follow-on forces would relieve the 82nd to support security operations as the government attempts to restore control and authority within the country, virtually a peacekeeping/ peacemaking operation. My entire mental focus is devoted to possible combat missions and the fire support tasks required for each.

0200 hrs, 30 August 1992, 82nd Airborne Division N+2 Room: As the Division Commander and his staff enter the briefing room, expectations are running high among the assembled Brigade and Battalion commanders. The Division G-3 initiates the N+2 briefing. "In accordance with XVIIIth Airborne Corps directives, the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy the

DRB 1 to conduct Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations in Southern Florida as a result of Hurricane Andrew. Elements of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps and the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy under the operational control of Joint Task Force Andrew. Commanding General, Second Continental US Army, has been designated the JTF Commander." Needless to say, this is not the expected mission that the XVIIIth Airborne Corps, 82nd Airborne Division, or the troopers of DRB 1 have anticipated.

The focus of this paper, an examination of the range of possibilities and training considerations necessary for successful participation by the US military in non-combat roles, will underscore its role in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations. The inclusion of activities and events by the members of the Second Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division and other elements of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps will serve to illustrate events that are relevant to the examination of non-combat roles for the US military during its participation in JTF Andrew operations. My personal observations are based on my own involvement in these operations in two distinct roles: I acted as the Brigade Task Force S-5, initially responsible for civil-military interface with state and local governments and NGO's operating within South Dade County. As more units were deployed to the AOR, I also served as commander of a Battalion Task Force Relief Area (an area encompassing over 20 square miles and inhabited by over 28,000 people).

I also intend to present operational planning considerations and organizational problems that were experienced by the Brigade Task Force in its interface with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), various levels of state and local governments, and JTF Headquarters. Additionally, I will provide comments relevant to the Brigade Task Force's interaction with NGO's and Private Volunteer Organizations (PVO's) with which it had to work with and support in order to successfully accomplish its role in the relief effort.

The first element of analysis is the existing organizational structure and training necessary for the interaction of military forces in disaster relief and humanitarian relief operations. At the time of Hurricane Andrew, neither the XVIIIth Airborne Corps, 82nd Airborne Division, nor the troopers of DRB 1 had developed OPLANS or training plans for participation in these types of operations. At the operational and tactical levels of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps and 82nd Airborne Division, this did not present a problem nor did it delay or hinder their deployment to the area of operations. The first elements of the Second Brigade, consisting of over 650 troopers, were airborne eight and one half hours from the time of notification and deployed by C-130 to Homestead Air Force Base, which had been at the eye of the storm and formed the center of destruction. These initial forces, deployed in accordance with the Division's SOP for unit response time, were task-organized

around the airborne infantry battalion structure and included elements of engineer, medical, communications, and fire support personnel. Within the next 24 hours, more than 2,600 troopers were on the ground as part of the Brigade Task Force and began performing assistance operations.

The ability to respond quickly is inherent in the mission of the 82nd Airborne Division and other elements of the contingency corps. Crisis action and crisis response is integrated into the daily training environment of the division from a multi-echelon perspective, incorporating both individual and collective tasks from squad to division staff level. As stated in the Division Commander's 1992 Annual Training Guidance, "On any given day, we are only 18 hours away from deployment and subsequent combat. Therefore, we must train with an intensity and dedication that will ensure success. For us, there is no 'train up' period in which to get ready. We are in our 'train up' period every day!"¹ What this equates to for military staffs and units is the ability to respond quickly by having prepared the framework for developing operational plans concurrently at multiple organizational levels and conducting training that tests the capability of troopers to execute the plans in the time required.

Supporting this concept are comments made in 1992 by General Galvin when addressing non-traditional roles for the military.

"Non-traditional roles are really crisis response roles. The role is always taken in a crisis when one is responding. It is fine to call a role non-traditional, but one also ought to talk about crisis response. The military is taught to respond to crisis, to make decisions when all the facts aren't there. So in many ways the military is already prepared, no matter what organization -- Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard. Some additional training may be needed, but one shouldn't get hung up on the idea that somehow a whole new force is needed to do these things. The military should be prepared to do the whole spectrum. That's what it's been trained to do anyway."²

General Galvin's comments are truly applicable and right on target, based on my own experiences and observations during Hurricane Andrew Relief efforts. What General Galvin left unstated, are the required traits of leadership, soldier training, and discipline, these are of equally critical import as part of the formula for the effectiveness of military forces in non-traditional roles. Leader and soldier training programs focused on equipping the two groups with the prerequisite warfighting skills can provide the expertise necessary to effectively accomplish the non-traditional roles of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, thus negating the need for developing and providing specific training dedicated to a particular mission.

Certain key elements of leadership must be present at every level, from squad to Division/Corps level. The leadership I refer to issues from those within the immediate chain of command that can affect the quality of soldier training and unit cohesion. The characteristics of good leadership critical to accomplishing the unknown on the fly are responsibility, imagination, flexibility, adaptability, and decision making. These attributes of leadership are a mixture of both skill and art, and leaders must be taught in these terms. This can be done at all levels within the chain of command by using challenging training techniques that force leaders at every level to develop and practice these traits. Leader training programs that focus on cultivating these qualities will contribute to the successful fulfillment of non-traditional missions.

Leadership that challenges the individual soldier through realistic training and discipline that fosters cohesion at every level are also critical for success. With proper motivation, discipline, and effective training, soldiers will become proficient in their art. Such proficiency is crucial for the unit to be successful. With their mastery of battlefield skills, soldiers will gain the confidence to use their initiative, properly assess rapidly changing situations, and respond accordingly.

The qualities discussed above allowed the Brigade Task Force's units to routinely operate at platoon and squad levels throughout the entire disaster relief effort with amazing success. The training accomplished by leaders and individual troopers of the Brigade prior to deployment, although focused on battle related skills, was critical to their success in performing the disaster relief and humanitarian assistance mission. With the Division's mission of 18-hour deployability from alert to wheels-up, a leader must look for every edge to mentally prepare his troopers for any contingency. That edge is attained through rigorous training fixed on the accomplishment of warfighting tasks at every level of operations and practice, and a clear chain of command/responsibility.

The next area that requires examination concerns the levels of effort and effectiveness on the part of various agencies of FEMA, state and local governments, and the National Guard prior to the Brigade Task Force's arrival in the AOR. The most obvious failure on the part of state government was its negligence in properly assessing the needs of the people within the affected area versus its capabilities to provide the required levels of response and assistance. It was apparent that Florida's Office of Emergency Services (OES) responded poorly to the disaster. It is my contention that this was due to a lack of realistic planning and the unavailability of adequately trained quick response assessment teams to thoroughly survey the affected areas and evaluate what was necessary for a fast, well-grounded response. This failure in the execution of its mission by the OES delayed timely relief efforts.

My discussions with leaders of South Dade County, the area devastated by the hurricane, indicated they were immediately aware that the state government and its National Guard were overwhelmed. South Dade County Commissioner Hawkins, Assistant Commissioner Clemente, and Public Works Director A.J. West, all indicated that federal assistance should have been requested no later than 24 August 1992, the first full day after the hurricane. The time between the end of the hurricane in the early morning hours of 23-24 August 1992 through Governor Chiles' request for federal assistance and FEMA's direct involvement three days later was characterized as a period of shock and disorientation by local officials and residents living in the devastated area. They indicated that they had seen little evidence of the outside response they had anticipated and needed. Their expected levels of response ranged from on-scene assessments of damage to an influx of relief supplies and support personnel.

The intervening three day period following the hurricane's end, and preceding Governor Chiles' request to the Federal government and FEMA, was felt to be excessive in terms of meeting the critical needs of the inhabitants of the affected areas. "In Florida, this was done three days after the hurricane hit. A review of the hurricane relief efforts in Florida reveals that FEMA responded about as fast as it possibly could. The great catastrophe in waiting to see what kind of damage assessment they could get, was that they couldn't get in by ground, and the air assessment didn't reveal all of the infrastructure losses. Perhaps the Governor should have requested Federal help when he flew over the area with the President, but, even from the air, the damage didn't seem as bad as it was."³

FEMA's role in Hurricane Andrew disaster relief efforts was also lacking from my perspective. While the above quote states that " ... FEMA responded about as fast as it possibly could ... ," it fails to say what the response was, nor does it offer any comment on the effectiveness of FEMA's response. FEMA has been criticized frequently in the past for its poor organization, unpreparedness to respond, and ineffectiveness.⁴ Such criticism has not been unwarranted. Emergency response results from Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina reflected poorly on FEMA. So too did FEMA receive miserable reviews for its handling of emergency relief efforts following Hurricane Andrew. This inferior record of performance continued to haunt FEMA in the follow-on relief effort it attempted to provide in Hawaii after Hurricane Iniki hit there in September 1992.

FEMA is tasked with the primary responsibility for information and planning as part of the emergency support functions within the Federal Response Plan. Hurricane Andrew was not a surprise bolt from the blue. The hurricane was forecasted and tracked for three to five days prior

to its striking Florida. The magnitude of the hurricane was measured by the US Weather Service and the Air Force, leaving little surprise about the force with which it would strike or its direction of travel. Specifically, Air Force WC-130 Storm Tracker aircraft from the 815th Weather Flight Squadron flew 17 different sorties into Hurricane Andrew, one just 30 minutes prior to the hurricane's striking land in Homestead.⁵ What did FEMA do during this period before the hurricane struck land to prepare itself for action? There is no evidence of FEMA deploying personnel to the area before the disaster. In fact, President Bush bypassed FEMA Director Wallace Strickney (a political appointee), and directed that the Secretary of Transportation, Andrew Card, would handle the task of coordinating the relief effort.⁶

There was little evidence of the existence of disaster relief plans at the local level of government in South Dade County, nor was there any indication of their coordination of disaster relief plans with other state or Federal agencies immediately after the hurricane struck. Again, local county officials stated the lack of any on-scene representative from either Florida's OES or FEMA in the first days after the hurricane was disconcerting. Local officials were caught between the need for accomplishing their government function and responsibilities, and caring for their own family needs as well. This placed many local government officials in an untenable situation!

The greatest failure by FEMA immediately after the hurricane was in its assessment process and its inability to provide adequate assessment to the Director of Military Support. Because a viable assessment identifying the necessary support requirements to conduct relief efforts in the area was unavailable, military forces were committed to the area without a plan of action from which to successfully operate. Also lacking was even a rudimentary plan for establishing a coordinated relief effort in predesignated areas based on demographic considerations and infrastructure support capabilities. The required assessment process was accomplished by the leaders of the Brigade Task Force, in concert with local government officials. This process was accomplished within one and one half days after the Brigade Task Force's arrival and included state and local government personnel such as the County Public Works Director, the County Architect (a structural engineer), local fire and police representatives, and a representative from the Dade County Public Schools.* The coordination of relief sites and the use of strategically located facilities as part of the relief effort was a bottom-up process, directly opposite to what it should have been. FEMA did not get involved until well after sites had been selected, occupied, and operating.

* A major immediate concern for the local officials was the close proximity of the beginning of the school year and the need to have the schools structurally available to accept students.

A second major FEMA failure was in its initial coordination with other Federal agencies and in its plan for how and where these agencies would interact in the response and relief effort. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) established the headquarters for their Emergency Support Team at the South Dade County Government Center in Cutler Ridge. The site was chosen by Ellery Gray, in coordination with South Dade County officials, not through FEMA. Captain Gray selected the location prior to FEMA even attempting to gain operational planning or control over other Federal agencies. HHS had selected an effective site based on an assessment made by their own people, and proceeded with their assistance plan. HHS was organized and effective from the time they arrived and remained so throughout the Brigade Task Force's stay in the AOR.

The Veterans Administration (VA) sent four of its five mobile hospital units to Florida. Mr. Peter DiMori, the VA on-site coordinator, allowed the senior medical team leader of each mobile unit to "select" the location where they would provide medical assistance each day. The initial locations chosen did not support the greatest areas of need, nor were they collocated where other relief functions were operating. This resulted in hurricane victims going to one place for medical assistance, a different place for meals, and a third place for clothes and relief supplies. Mr. DiMori stated that he had tried to get guidance from FEMA, but was unable to get an answer on where his mobile units would be most effective. After his units had been operating for more than three days, FEMA finally gave him guidance -- they wanted him to travel to their headquarters in Miami Beach on a daily basis so they could discuss where he should deploy his units, a trip of over one hour travel distance outside the northern-most edge of the affected area! The adage of the mountain coming to Mohammed instead of Mohammed going to the mountain typified FEMA's "modus operandi."

Many NGO's and PVO's participated in the disaster relief effort. What is most interesting is the level of organization and efficiency displayed by organizations such as the Salvation Army and the Southern Baptist Mission. These organizations had their own command, control, communications, and logistics systems that put FEMA to shame. Their immediate effectiveness and efficiency can be attributed to the planning and training they had performed prior to other relief operations and the application of lessons learned from previous ones in which they had participated. Both of these organizations deserve mention because of the wide range of their activities within the US in relief support efforts during other disasters. FEMA should seriously consider using these organizations' relief efforts as a case study in how to prepare for and execute an effective disaster response and assistance.

Although the National Guard was mobilized and deployed concurrently with the hurricane's passing, they were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task within the first 24 hours. The damage was so severe that it was difficult for soldiers to enter the damaged areas because roads were blocked with debris and at times impassable. The immediate mission for local Guard units located within the damage area was the performance of duties under the 18th US Code, Section 1385, Posse Comitatus Act (i.e., law enforcement). This remained their primary role throughout the relief effort. An additional major support function the National Guard and Reserve forces performed was in the Combat Service Support functions. These units were very effective in establishing and running a logistics support area comparable to a Division's DISCOM.

Joint Task Force Andrew also experienced a rough start. The Commanding General, Second Continental US Army, was designated the JTF Commander. It was three days from the end of the hurricane until Governor Chiles made the decision to request federal aid in the form of troops to perform disaster assistance operations. What actually transpired during this initial period was that elements of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps were deploying or had arrived in the actual disaster areas simultaneously with the JTF Headquarters' arriving and becoming operational at Miami International Airport. From the time of the 82nd Airborne Division's DRB 1 alert notification through the first four to five days of the deployment, there was no real coordination with the JTF. The reason for this major problem was the fact that the Second Army TDA did not include the tactical communications assets to exert effective command and control over military relief forces already operating in the disaster areas. The necessary military communication assets were later deployed into the stricken area, provided by XVIII Airborne Corps Signal Brigade, consistent with their doctrinal mission and training.

The Brigade Task Force Commander's estimate of the situation, made within the first 24 hours on the ground, indicated that many more troops were necessary based on the size of its AOR. This assessment was made in consultation with local government officials. The information was then communicated directly back to the 82nd Airborne Division Headquarters at Fort Bragg, not through the JTF, because the Brigade Task Force had SATCOM to the 82nd, but no communication links with JTF Headquarters. In this way, the Brigade Task Force Commander requested the deployment of additional troops, engineering equipment, and medical units from Fort Bragg. The end result of the assessment process was the eventual deployment of the division TAC CP under the operational control of the Division ADCO, BG Ernst.

As the total Army force requirements grew based on the size of the AOR, the XVIIIth Airborne Corps deployed its TAC CP to collocate with the JTF Headquarters. This link established operational command and control of XVIIIth Airborne Corps units already deployed in the AOR with the JTF Headquarters. Ultimately, XVIIIth Airborne Corps deployed the DRB 1 from the 82nd Airborne Division, a Brigade Task Force from the 10th Mountain Division, elements of the Corps Support Command, and hospital companies from the 44th Medical Brigade.

The 82nd Airborne Division routinely deploys as part of JTF's, and thinking in joint terms and operating in a joint environment is second nature to leaders within the Division. Joint exercises are routinely conducted with JTF commanders designated from the other services. The 82nd Airborne Division is jointly staffed with Air Force personnel from both Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command, and is habitually augmented with Marine and Navy personnel from the 2nd ANGLICO at Camp Lejeune, NC, for operational and training purposes. Integrated CONOPS training with Special Operations Forces (both Army Special Forces and Navy SEALs) are routinely conducted, at a minimum, as part of each Brigade's annual Combat Training Center rotation. Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs teams are attached to each Brigade for training and deployment purposes.*

2nd Brigade deployed with personnel and equipment from the active 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and teams from the 4th Psychological Operations Group. These troopers performed missions commensurate with their wartime mission and were effective. Special Forces' A teams were deployed and conducted operations in remote areas of the Everglades that were only accessible by helicopter. Here, many native Indians live in small enclaves and were in need of medical care and other assistance such as the Special Forces teams are trained to perform. Because the Brigade had routinely trained with these types of attached/OPCON assets before, it was second nature to employ them immediately and gain maximum effectiveness from their unique capabilities.

In the final analysis, it was evident that the Second US Army had not trained to perform as a JTF Headquarters in this type of mission. The key lesson learned is that in selecting the JTF Headquarters, the CINC must insure that it is trained and equipped to perform the mission. The widely acclaimed success of all the military services and units that participated in this non-

*These personnel mostly come from Reserve units and most often arrive later if the Brigade is alerted and deployed on a normal 18-hour sequence.

traditional mission can be directly attributed to the training they had accomplished prior to their deployment to perform this humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Leadership and training geared towards performing wartime, battle-focused tasks is the key to success. Deviation from combat task training to prepare for possible participation in this type of mission is a zero sum gain.

What is required when a predicted natural disaster is imminent is the activation of a coordinated response prior to actual strike. Activation of a predetermined crisis response cell and deployment of disaster response teams to staging areas is recommended. It was evident during the Hurricane Andrew relief effort that FEMA did not routinely conduct situational training exercises for its crisis response staffs or deployment training for its assessment teams at any time prior to this natural disaster. Pre-disaster coordination and training should include representatives from all the Federal agencies either mandated with responsibility for or habitually assigned support roles in these type of operations. It would be extremely beneficial to encourage the NGO's and PVO's that traditionally provide assistance in such situations to participate in these training events. The ability to establish ground rules for operations and deconflict methods of operations would reduce or eliminate the working at cross purposes that was evident after Hurricane Andrew. Synchronization of effort was sorely lacking during this time, and yet it is an area that is easily overcome with prior training.

This final quote reflects the sentiments of the people we assisted after Hurricane Andrew, as well as a challenge to those agencies who are tasked with the lead in planning and preparing for the future. It is also a statement of the confidence many expressed in the capabilities of our armed forces: "Neither the locals nor FEMA [have] the capacity to deal with a major catastrophe like Andrew ... A major disaster is a war. And the people who are in that business are the US military. When is the lesson going to be learned?"⁷

¹ 82d Airborne Division Commander's FY93 Training Guidance, dtd 21 Jan. 1992 para. 3, General.

² Galvin, John R., "Final Thoughts: Non-traditional Roles for the U.S. Military" Non-Combat Roles for the U.S. Military in the Post-Cold War Era. Edited by James R. Graham. August 1993, pg. 117

³ Addendum, Comments from Senior Officials, Non-Combat Roles for the U.S. Military in the Post-Cold War Era. Edited by James R. Graham. August 1993, pg. 125

⁴ Booth, Cathy. "Catastrophe 101." TIME. 14 September 1992, 42-43.
 OPEd. "FEMA's Testing Time." Nature. 3 September 1992, vol 359, 1-2.
 Ridgeway, James. "Cape Fear." VOICE. 15 September 1992, 25-26.

⁵ "Storm Cripples South U.S. Airline, Military Facilities." Aviation Week & Space Technology. 31 August 1992.

⁶ OPED. "FEMA's Testing Time." Nature. 3 September 1992, vol 359, 1-2.

⁷ Booth, Cathy. "Catastrophe 101." TIME. 14 September 1992, 43.