

Company Level Intelligence Cells: A Key Enabler for
Understanding the 21st Century Operating Environment

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The ability of a commander -at any echelon- to gain timely and accurate situational understanding (SU) of their area of operations is critical to mission success.¹ Currently there is an ever-expanding dependence on small units, primarily company level and below, to operate in a distributed manner across much larger battle spaces. Higher commands are not fully meeting their intelligence requirements in a timely manner; nor at the level of detail necessary for company commanders to successfully operate in the contemporary operating environment. The Marine infantry company requires and organic capability to collect, process, and disseminate intelligence to increase their operational effectiveness in full spectrum conflict. Infantry units require company level intelligence cells (CLIC) specifically organized, trained, and equipped to address this capability gap.

Background

In June 2007, I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) held a Tactical Capabilities for Irregular Warfare Conference (TCIW) at Camp Pendleton, CA where they identified the requirement for an organic intelligence capability at the company level. As a result of the TCIW, the Marine Corps

Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL) initiated a limited objective experiment (LOE) under the aegis of the enhanced company operations (ECO) concept to examine CLICs. The primary objective of the project was to develop a "best practices" model that addresses the CLIC structure, manning, training, processes and equipment.²

The MCWL project began with a research phase to define the requirement and identify existing training efforts. The MCWL conducted interviews with units from each MEF that had recently returned from Iraq to discuss CLIC-related efforts and identify required intelligence capabilities.³ Concurrently, as part of the assessment plan, MCWL personnel also observed the Mojave Viper final exercises (FINEX) of five infantry battalions who receive various methods of CLIC training.⁴

The MCWL, in conjunction with Marine Corps Intelligence Schools (MCIS) and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Program Manager (PM) Intelligence, developed a 'best practices' model. The training and accompanying equipment was provided to Third Battalion, Fourth Marines during their Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP). The Lab observed their Mojave Viper FINEX at Marine Corps Air

Ground Combat Center (MAGCC), 29 Palms, CA from 27 January through 31 January 2008 to evaluate the training, model for organization, and equipment provided to the battalion.

Experimental Results

The MCWL, supported by Tactical Training Exercise Control Group (TTECG) formal assessments, clearly indicated that the battalion's performance was enhanced by the CLIC organization, training, and equipment.⁵ The CLICs improved the integration of intelligence processes -intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), targeting, and intelligence synchronization- into company level operations. Over-all, this capability enhanced the company commander and small unit leader's situational understanding and enabled informed decision making in a complex and fluid environment. This ultimately created superior tempo against their enemy.⁶

Organization

Battalion Level Intelligence Platoons

To replicate this capability, the infantry battalion should form intelligence platoons under the command and supervision of the Battalion S-2.⁷ The battalion level intelligence platoon (BLIP) should be formed with personnel selected from throughout the battalion based on their capability and availability. At a minimum, each company should identify and train six 03XX Marines.

When formed, the BLIP is divided into two echelons. The first echelon is a single section to support the battalion headquarters. It consists of one 0202 officer, one 0203 officer, one 0231 SNCO, and four 03XX enlisted men. The Second echelon reinforces the companies in a direct support fashion and is collocated with them. This is the CLIC, which consists of one 0231 intelligence analyst and five 03XX enlisted infantrymen.

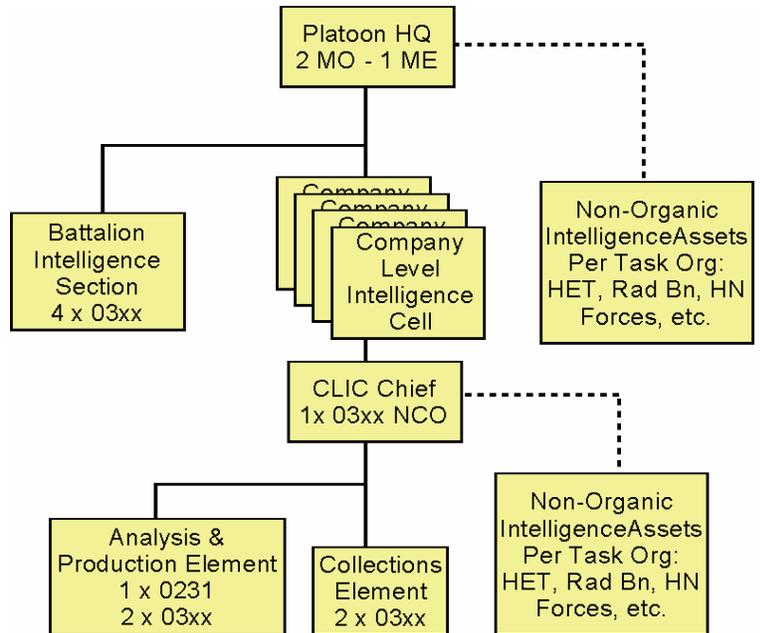


Figure 1 BLIP Organization

The formation of this platoon will facilitate initial and sustainment training by ensuring consistency throughout the battalion and eliminating additional training requirements for the companies. It will also ensure standardization in processes and reporting formats, and further promote lateral communication among the CLICs. The BLIP allows the battalion commander to weight his main effort with additional intelligence support as required. The CLICs in a direct support relationship to their respective companies ensure that its personnel remain devoted to the myriad of intelligence-related duties rather than being marginalized to working parties and collateral duties.

Company Level Intelligence Cells

The CLIC provides the company with an organic capability to collect and analyze information and to disseminate actionable intelligence in a timely manner. The goal is to synchronize and foster mutually supporting relationships among command and control (C2), intelligence, and operations at the lowest level.⁸ The cell is composed of two elements, collection, and, analysis and production,

with the senior Marine as the CLIC Chief under the direct supervision of the company commander. The CLIC will provide two Marines at all times as the intelligence watch (one from each element) in the company combat operations center. Figure 2 outlines roles and responsibilities.⁹

CLIC Roles and Responsibilities

<p>The CLIC Chief is the senior 03XX Marine assigned to the CLIC. He receives guidance and direction from the company commander and company executive officer. In daily operations, he assists the Watch Officer in building the Common Tactical Operation Picture. His primary tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Manage and supervise CLIC operations •Coordinate with higher, adjacent and supporting units on intelligence related information 	<p>The Intelligence Watch at the company COC will include two CLIC Marines on a rotating cycle from each CLIC Element. They receive guidance and direction from the COC Watch Officer. Their primary tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tracking of enemy activity •Updating pattern analysis products •Conducting briefs for all outgoing patrols, •Conducting debriefs of returning patrols •Maintaining the Intel Read Board in the COC
<p>This Analysis and Production Element includes three Marines, one of whom will be a 0231 intelligence analyst. It is responsible for link analysis focusing both on the reported targets and on the population at large, with specific attention paid to prominent local citizens and families. The primary task include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tracking High Value Individuals (HVIs) and persons of interest •Developing company-level Priority Intelligence requirements (PIRs) and Specific Information Requirements (SIRs) •Providing maps and imagery upon request •Conducting pattern analysis of enemy activity <p>They are responsible for the following products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Target packages •Link analysis and storyboard updates •Enemy activity templates 	<p>The Collections Element includes two 03XX Marines. It is responsible for information management and tracking of the company collection plan. The primary tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop the company collection plan •Facilitate intelligence gathering from detentions •Maintain the patrol debrief database •Coordinate site exploitation at target locations <p>They are responsible for the following products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Collection matrix •Detainee witness statements •Site exploitation reports •Intelligence Requirement (IR) status chart •Named Areas of Interest (NAI) overlays •Storyboard updates

Figure 2 CLIC Roles and Responsibilities

Although it may seem excessive to some, experimentation revealed the necessity to augment the CLIC with additional manpower to effectively operating in

continuous combat operations. If required, the CLICs now have the capacity to surge intelligence trained Marines to support operations such as cordon and searches and raids. Proper troop-to-task ratios support entry of information into a database; assistance to units conducting pre-combat mission analysis and preparation; and the conduct of detailed post-action debrief. Having trained 03XXs in the CLICs will allow the resident 0231 to focus his efforts on research and analysis. The addition of a 0231 also provides an individual authorized access to Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) level information.

At present, the loss of the four 0231s from the battalion intelligence section to man the CLICs will have repercussions on its ability to conduct required functions. This places significant value on the selection and assignment of reliable 03XXs, who are self-starters and quick learners, to man the battalion intelligence section. The deficit of the Intelligence Analyst at the battalion intelligence section will be resolved in the following years with the addition of four 0231s to the infantry battalion's table of organization.¹⁰

Platoon & Squad Intelligence Representatives

To complete the capability desired, each platoon and squad should designate a Marine to serve as their unit's intelligence representative, a collateral duty, to assist in the collection effort. This will provide the unit with trained subject matter experts on intelligence related tasks and provide a vital link to the CLIC. These representatives will lead their unit's effort in tactical questioning, sensitive site exploitation, and detainee operations. The majority of this training currently exists within Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP).¹¹

Selection Criteria

The importance of the company leadership's direct involvement in the CLIC screening and selection process cannot be overstated. Selection of CLIC Marines should occur as early as possible in the PTP cycle. Marines with platoon-level operational experience are preferable -they possess the ability to providing relevant analysis at the small unit level.¹² At a minimum, CLIC Marines should be eligible for a Secret Clearance and scheduled to attend the subsequent deployment with the battalion.¹³

Training

Infantry battalions should use the existing MCIS Mobile Training Teams (MTT) to train their CLICs. Based on MCWL's observations, units trained by the MTT performed better during Mojave Viper than those self-taught units. CLICs should receive training early within their unit's Phase II PTP cycle to facilitate their integration into future collective training evolutions. The initial training should make full use of intelligence systems and programs currently used in-theater; viz., Intelligence Operations Workstation, MarineLink, and Analyst Notebook. When possible, the training should use of real-world historical data from the unit's designated in-theater Area of Operation (AO) to allow the Marines to master the associated learning objective while concurrently building an understanding of their future battlespace.

The MCWL proto-type training package exclusively used real-world data -significant event tracks, census data, patrol debriefs, and link diagrams- downloaded from the MarineLink and Tactical Fusion Center data bases and augment with material from the battalion's pre-deployment

site survey team. The training culminated with each CLIC providing an AO brief to the battalion and company commanders. All briefs provided detailed information on the unit's anticipated AO that included link analysis charts of actual targets, improvised explosive device (IED) and small arms fire attack situation templates (SIT TEMPs), and pattern analysis graphs from as recent as a two weeks prior to the training.

Under the cognizance of the battalion intelligence officer, CLIC sustainment training should continue to utilize the IOW and MarineLink to conduct Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) and track events within their anticipated AO.¹⁴ Throughout the PTP, CLICs should provide the company with regular briefs to increase their situational awareness. In turn, the company should begin to process request for information (RFI) for future briefs -ultimately building a process and a rapport between the CLIC and small unit leaders prior to deployment. If executed properly, this effort will reduce the time required to begin effective operations in-theater.

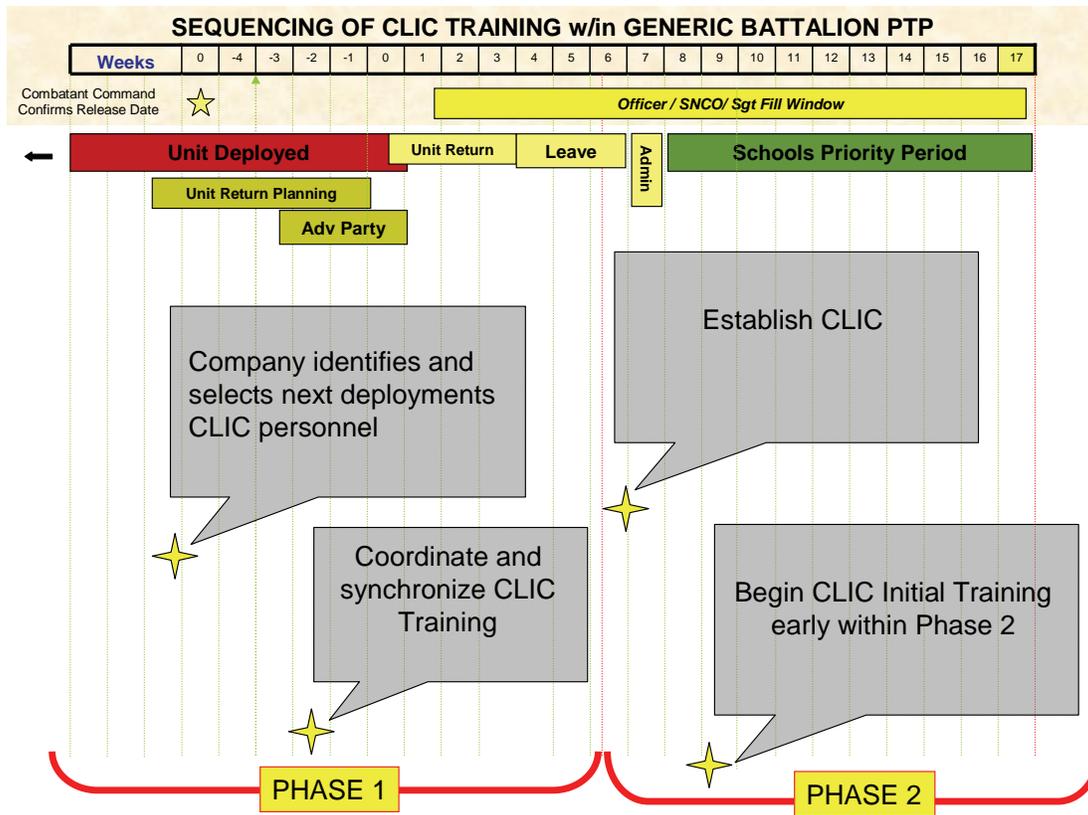


Figure 3 Sequencing of CLIC Training

Equipment

Key equipment to facilitate CLIC operations is the Intelligence Operations Workstation (IOW) with the MarineLink and Analyst Notebook applications. MarineLink is essential at the company level to successfully manage and process information. It also enables the CLICs to quickly generate charts and graphs from databases that precede their time in-theater –key requirements for pattern analysis and identification of indicators and warnings of enemy action. Based on the situation, CLICs may also require printers, scanners, and external hard-drives. To facilitate collections, the company should

possess biometrics equipment, ground sensors, cameras, and micro-unmanned aerial vehicles.

Opposition

Two key counterarguments exist in institutionalizing CLICs. First, some argue that the manpower requirements are draining the rifle company's combat power -the riflemen. It is true that the current table of organization (T/O) for the "Rifle Company Headquarters Element"-two Marine officers and four Marine enlisted- does not meet the operational demands of current and anticipated combat environments. The headquarters section is too small to operate effectively in garrison and while deployed. Although not on the T/O, most companies in garrison designate two to three armory custodians, an administrative clerk, and a training NCO without giving proper consideration for their role in combat. Until the rifle company T/O is reexamined, these Marines that perform garrison functions provide the numbers for a deployed intelligence capability.

Second, some believe that the CLIC concept possesses little utility beyond Iraq or counterinsurgency operations. This argument largely ignores that accurate, relevant, and

timely intelligence is critical in any operation. It also discounts that conflicts are increasingly "characterized by a hybrid blend of traditional and irregular tactics, decentralized planning and execution, and non-state actors using both simple and sophisticated technologies in innovative ways."¹⁵ The Marine Corps' Strategic Vision Group believes that we will increasingly experience enemies who employ all forms of war and tactics, possibly simultaneously.¹⁶ The blurring of modes of war, who fights them, and what technologies are brought to bear, produce a wide range of variety and complexity that requires organic intelligence at the lowest level. The analytical capability provided by the CLICs enable the company commander to have AO specific intelligence at his disposal at all times.

Conclusion

In our current fight, intelligence flow is more bottom-up than top-down. The formation of the CLIC is critical to the effective management, analysis and dissemination of information that will increase both the company and battalion's operational effectiveness. Companies must screen and select high-quality Marines to serve within the CLIC. Early organization and training will

allow for their integration into collective training and foster a synergistic relationship between the CLIC and small unit leaders. CLIC sustainment training should focus on research and IPB of their unit's anticipated AO. They should conduct regularly scheduled briefs to the Marines they support to build an understanding of what the CLIC can provide and an understanding of the battlespace prior to the deployment. Doctor David Kilcullen in *The Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency*, stresses the importance of forming intelligence cells at the company level stating: "You will have one less rifle squad: but the intelligence section will pay for itself in lives and effort saved."¹⁷

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Notes

¹ Situational Understanding is defined by FM 6-0 Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces as the product of applying analysis and judgment to the common operation picture (COP) to determine the relationships among the factors of METT-T. It facilitates decision making by identifying opportunities for mission accomplishment, threats to mission accomplishment and the force, and gaps in information.

² CMC Congressional Memorandum, Subject Company Level Intelligence Cells, prepared by Capt G.L. Diana and Reviewed by Col P.S. Penn. 18 Sept 07. The CLIC project also had two additional objectives. The secondary objective was to determine infantry intelligence capability requirements to assist in a broader doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) assessment by Intelligence Integration Division (IID), Marine Corps Combat Development Command and Plans, Policies and Operations (PP&O). In addition, MCWL will identify Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) / CLIC requirements for future Distributed Operations experimentation.

³ From July to September, 2007 my team, consisting of three support contractors and one Marine—Mr. Fred McConnell, James Talley, Shawn Viklund and SSgt Eduardo Nagy—conducted interviews with selected units that had recently returned from Iraq. We interviewed battalion and company staffs and Marines who performed intelligence related functions, focusing on *“how the unit organized, trained, and employed CLICs and what modifications they would make.”* The feedback listed below summarizes the key aspects of the collection effort. In general terms, everyone commented on the importance of conducting a screening and interview process to select the right Marines for the CLIC. The recommended criteria included: General Technical (GT) score; college attendance; computer skills; language aptitude; high levels of individual initiative; and combat experience. Most agreed that having a 0231 resident in the CLIC is critical to generating intelligence-driven operations. In addition, those 03XX assigned to the CLIC must be eligible for interim secret clearances, and should possess a desire to conduct intelligence related work. Marines assigned to the CLIC wanted more pre-deployment training on intelligence-related systems and web-based applications. Most commonly mentioned use of the Intelligence Operations Workstation (IOW), MarineLink, and Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) search engines such as the Tactical Fusion Center (TFC) Web-page, Query-tree, and the Joint Intelligence Operations Capability-Iraq (JIOC-I). Most did not receive training on how to read draft intelligence information reports, intelligence summaries, and SPOT reports. All requested more pre-deployment time for practical application on those tasks to be performed in theater, and less time spent on intelligence theory. Most interviewees stated that equipment and systems used in Iraq are not available in all cases or in adequate numbers for training during early stages of the Pre-deployment Training Package (PTP) to include Mojave Viper. In theater, CLIC equipment and functions presented unique challenges in the administration and accountability of communications material security (CMS/COMSEC). Almost everyone emphasized the importance of bandwidth allocation and SIPRNET access at company firm bases to conduct necessary research for intelligence-driven operations.

⁴ The two predominate methods included a Mobile Training Team (MTT) and self-taught by the unit following a train-the-trainer package (T3)—both methods provided by the Marine Corps Intelligence Schools (MCIS). Units observed in Mojave Viper with CLIC training source method was 3rd Bn 5th Marines—training by a Mobile Training Team (MTT); 2nd Bn 8th Marines—self-taught based on train-the-trainer (T3) approach; 3rd Bn 2nd Marines—self-taught based on T3 approach; 2nd Bn 3rd Marines—training by MTT

⁵ The previous five infantry battalions observed during their Mojave Viper FINEX provided the baseline to compare 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines’ performance against. Close cooperation with TTECG allowed for a broader sampling.

⁶ Capt G.L. Diana, Memorandum: Observations from 3rd Bn 4th Mar Mojave Viper FINEX to Col V.J. Goulding, Director, Experiment Division, MCWL, 31 January, 2008. “Our assessment [of the CLICs] is based on the following bullets. Of note, we have not seen this level of performance in the previous five MV FINEXs observed.”

- Conducted predictive analysis at the company level
 - drove successful mission planning

-
- countered enemy tactics, techniques, and procedures
 - Produced higher quality intelligence briefs
 - increased situational awareness and enabled improved operational planning
 - Conducted regular pre-mission briefs
 - improved threat and atmospheric awareness
 - focused Every Marine a Collector on Specific Information Requirements (SIR)
 - Conducted regular and effective debriefs of all patrols
 - improved collection and processing of digital information
 - answered SIRs
 - Produced daily intelligence reports for submission to supported and supporting units
 - generated a company Intelligence Summary (INTSUM) that TTECG will use as an example in the future
 - Timely updated local area maps and imagery
 - accurately defining tribal boundaries
 - increased cultural awareness that led to more effective leadership engagement

⁷ 2d Battalion, 7th Marines formed a battalion level intelligence platoon lead by the S-2 in 2005-7. Company level intelligence cells were subsequently co-located with their respective companies in a Direct Support command relationship. Also see Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) Report. "Intelligence Section Enhancements, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines" Quantico, VA.: 5 Oct 2006.

⁸ Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory X-File 2-1.2. "Enhanced Company Operations Limited Objective One: Company Level Intelligence Cells" Quantico, VA.: April 2008. pp 1-2.

⁹ The billet description and responsibilities is a product of rigorous task analysis conduct by the MCWL CLIC development team. These tasks were presented to the Intelligence Integration Divisions, MCCDC on 12 February 2008 at a CLIC IPT. The objectives of the conference included: assess long-term CLIC requirements; identify shortfalls in capability; identify potential non-materiel and materiel solutions; determine DOTMLPF implications; develop a way ahead for incorporation of CLIC into USMC doctrine and operations.

¹⁰ The addition of four 0231s to the infantry battalion's Table of organization is outlined in FY 08 Authorized Strength Report.

¹¹ As Project Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Enterprise matures, platoon and squad intelligence representatives should receive the estimated three week Tactical Debriefing training package that would enable squads to conduct the deliberate, planned debriefing of cooperating sources.

¹² Based on observations, company commanders should look for a Marine with combat experience –a guy who understands what a squad leader or vehicle leader needs to know. Within the experiment 3/4's WPNS Company had all combat veterans and they by far produced the best results. I attribute this to their understanding of what information is relevant to the rifleman, squad leader, and platoon commander. They knew what information the company commander required to make decisions. When it came time to conducting IPB, they intuitively knew what to focus their research on.

¹³ Company leadership should avoid designating an entire unit, such as the mortar section, to conduct CLIC duties because the unit is currently not employing a particular capability in support of operations. This reduces the combat power of the company and not the intent of forming CLICs. The Enhanced Company Operations, Limited Objective One X-File Company Level Intelligence Cells (CLIC) provides the following recommendations as a guide for selection of Marines for CLIC duties:

- GT Score of 110 or higher
- Scheduled to deploy with the unit
- Eligible for a Secret Clearance
- Possesses strong computer skills
- Able to conduct focused research
- Able to apply analytical thought processes

-
- Able to multi-task in stressful environments
 - A high level of initiative
 - Proven organizational skills and attention to detail
 - Solid understanding of company, platoon, and squad operations
 - Ability to conduct computer or web-based research
 - Ability to write cohesive tactical reports
 - Understanding of probability and statistics
 - College experience
 - Not color blind
 - Type at 25 wpm
 - Understanding of tactical map reading and associated symbology
 - Ability to use standard tactical radios
 - Demonstrated aptitude to learn and a willingness to seek out training and knowledge
 - Good writing skills, in both form and content
 - Foreign language aptitude

¹⁴ It is important to note that both I and II MEF possess 53 IOWs to specifically support CLIC PTP training. Downloading recent AO specific data for MarineLink is a relatively easy process that can be coordinated through the TSOF site manager at the TFC in Iraq.

¹⁵ General James T. Conway, USMC, Admiral Gary Roughed, USN, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, USCG, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Washington, D.C., October 2007.

¹⁶United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025*, Washington DC: HQMC, 2008.

¹⁷ David.Kilcullen. "Twenty-Eight Articles': Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* 86, 3 (May-Jun 2006), 103-108.