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You've got to be Kidding: Empowering the JFACC with
Selected Ground Reconnaissance Forces

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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02 February 2003

ABSTRACT

In the last twenty years, airpower has become a decisive force in its own right beginning with Desert Storm followed by Operation Allied Force and most recently Operation Enduring Freedom. Two primary lessons were learned from these three conflicts concerning airpower. First, airpower cannot win wars by itself; it needs the synergistic effects of ground forces. Second, US Special Operating Forces (SOF) on the ground early dramatically increases the effectiveness of initial air operations. If these lessons are indeed true and can be applied in future conflicts, how can operational commanders make airpower more effective than current constructs? This paper seeks to demonstrate that airpower can become more effective when SOF or other conventional reconnaissance forces are placed under the control of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC) for initial rapid and decisive airpower operations. When the JFACC employs these reconnaissance forces, they become ground-targeting sensors for airpower. This allows airpower access to targets not normally available to JFACC especially if airspace control is contested. Based on current and near future strategic mobility constraints, it will be shown that this proposal is very feasible and efficient. Due to the shortage of SOF, this paper also advocates using other

reconnaissance forces within the Department of Defense (DOD) to accomplish target acquisition tasks as well as post-strike battle damage assessment (BDA). Joint doctrine is flexible enough to allow this proposal without a change to joint doctrine. Finally, this paper encourages the Army to look at other options to deploy with Air Expeditionary Forces (AEF) outside the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) force employment concepts.

You've got to be Kidding: Empowering the JFACC with Selected Ground Reconnaissance Forces

Introduction

On March 04, 2002, an Army Ranger platoon fought for their lives on top of a 10,000 foot mountain peak in Eastern Afghanistan while attempting to rescue a Navy SEAL Team. When the Ranger platoon attempted an insertion utilizing an Army special operations aircraft, the aircraft was ambushed and crashed on landing. Throughout the day, the Rangers fought off Al Qaeda elements with the help of Air Force F-15Es directed by USAF Combat Controllers (CCT) on the ground with the Rangers. Meanwhile, approximately five miles above, a Navy P-3 circled, surveying the desperate firefight below. On board were another Army Ranger and a Navy SEAL who assisted in providing force protection information to the embattled Ranger platoon leader below. Additionally, a Marine officer assigned to the special operation forces (SOF) joint operations center (JOC), calmly and effectively controlled the crowded radio nets coordinating close air support throughout the mission.¹ Unfortunately, seven Americans died on Takur Ghar that day.² This number would have been substantially more if it was not for the synergistic effects of a joint team who brought their individual strengths and specialties to the battle. It was indeed a truly joint operation throughout, although one might look beyond the readily apparent. First, SOF on the ground were sensors for airpower. Next, airpower in this operation became more

effective with SOF on the ground directing fires. Finally, the land forces component commander did not direct this operation. Remarkably, the Ranger mission was directed by an Air Force brigadier general who commanded a unit overseeing special operations.³ This is one example of a new and unusual relationship that occurred in Afghanistan.⁴ Perhaps this mission, and others like it, foreshadows changes that may occur in joint operations at the operational level of war.

In Afghanistan, SOF along with airpower delivered an unexpected and crushing defeat to Taliban and Al Qaeda forces while capturing the imagination of the President, Secretary of Defense and the entire nation. General Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM Commander, told Congress that Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was "far and away the greatest application of precision munitions in the history of our country."⁵ A Department of Defense (DOD) briefing titled, "Transforming the Military," stated that "US Special Forces on the ground early dramatically increase the effectiveness of the air campaign."⁶ Without a doubt, SOF in Afghanistan were in fact sensors for airpower and their precision guided munitions. This paper proposes that the best place for SOF sensors in the near future is subordinate to the joint forces air component commander (JFACC) until ground forces are prepared to conduct decisive operations. Integrating SOF into the JFACC organization allows a streamlined command and control structure that will lead to increased effectiveness, responsiveness, and

deconfliction of fires during initial airpower operations. This paper will demonstrate that this proposal will work within the constructs of current joint and special operations doctrine. It will also show that other reconnaissance forces could be used in lieu of SOF just as effectively by the combatant commander to assist airpower in striking theater-strategic and operational targets. Ultimately, the proposals offered in this paper will give the operational commander greater flexibility in employing a true joint air-ground construct during the "seize initiative" phase of a joint campaign.⁷

The New National Security Strategy

One year after the world-changing event of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush published a new National Security Strategy (NSS) for the United States. In this important document, the President directs the United States military specifically to "continue to transform our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results."⁸ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his Office of Transformation headed by Admiral Cembrowski (Retired) have made it their responsibility to carry out the President's initiative. In testimony to Congress, Secretary Rumsfeld stated:

We must have the capability to locate, track and attack-- both mobile and fixed targets-- any where, any time, at all ranges, and under all weather conditions, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year... It also requires development of new capabilities for long-range precision strike--including unmanned capabilities--as well as the ability to insert Special

Operations Forces into denied areas and allow them to network with our long-range precision-strike assets.

To achieve this, we must develop new data links for connecting ground forces with air support; new long-range precision strike capabilities; new, long-range, deep penetrating weapons that can reach our adversaries in the caves and hardened bunkers where they hide; and special munitions for underground attack.⁹

This statement had profound effects for the United States Air Force and America's SOF. It has already manifested itself at least in one way through the Defense Secretary's plans to give the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) seven billion dollars to buy aircraft and increase personnel by 4000.¹⁰

Admiral Cembrowski's Office of Transformation is fully committed to the Secretary of Defense's vision. In an interview, the former Naval War College President made an eye-opening statement: "In reality, what has happened is that a new air-ground system has come into existence, where you no longer talk in terms of one being supported and the other supporting. That would be like asking if the lungs are in support of the heart or if the heart is in the support of the lungs. It's a single system."¹¹ This statement challenges current authoritative joint and service doctrine that uses the terms supported and supporting to describe relationships of command, coordination, and operations.¹² In essence, the maximizing of the SOF mission of special reconnaissance in conjunction with airpower's ability to conduct long-range precision strike with various platforms would accomplish the President's goal of "rapid and precise operations

to achieve decisive results."¹³ Admiral Cembrowski's statement suggests that to speak in terms of supported and supporting relationships at the joint operational level of war is irrelevant in this new century.

The Stryker Brigades and Strategic Mobility

Joint Vision 2020 envisions "[a] joint force capable of dominant maneuver will possess unmatched speed and agility in positioning and repositioning tailored forces from widely dispersed locations to achieve operational objectives quickly and decisively."¹⁴ Unfortunately, DOD cannot yet conduct dominant maneuver with unmatched speed due to strategic mobility limitations. The Army wants to deploy one Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) anywhere in the world in 96 hours, a combat division in 120 hours and five divisions in 30 days. Concurrently, the Air Force plans to deploy an Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) into combat within 48 hours and five AEFs within 15 days.¹⁵ If the Air Force uses a large portion of its mobility assets to move AEFs overseas, then how does the Army expect to get a SBCT into theater in 96 hours? Furthermore, moving a SBCT would require around the clock C-17 (four C-17s an hour) operations for nearly four days.¹⁶ Overall, this is an unrealistic goal. A Rand study concludes that it would probably take two weeks to get a SBCT to theater. The two week figure is not only a matter of mobility, but also of the destination airfield infrastructure to include maximum aircraft on the ground (MOG).¹⁷ Unfortunately, the strategic deployment

goals of the Army maybe entirely misplaced since most security challenges have developed historically over months and years allowing for pre-positioning of equipment and flexible deterrent options that reduce the need for conventional rapid deployment from CONUS. May be the Army would be better served if it took a more realistic view of deploying a SBCT in two weeks while integrating SOF and other selected forces with airpower beforehand. One option is to assign selected SOF and other reconnaissance units trained in target acquisition and battle damage assessment (BDA) to deploy with crisis response AEFs to conduct operations in conjunction with airpower to achieve operational and strategic objectives quickly and effectively. Once in theater, these reconnaissance forces would operate under the JFACC for more efficient command and control to conduct initial "seize initiative" operations in conjunction with airpower provided by the AEF.¹⁸ This synergy of airpower and ground reconnaissance forces will give the operational commander time to fix or even defeat the enemy, before joint land forces arrive.

Empowering the JFACC

Currently, the JFACC has the capability to effectively command and control these forces through the joint air operations center (JAOC). The JAOC has direct access to robust command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) assets which include unmatched satellite bandwidth not found within other services deployable

forces. Other highlighted assets include high-resolution imagery, long-range unmanned aerial vehicles, and a host of reliable communications suites. There are also two powerful adjunct organizations that are available to JFACC to assist in utilizing SOF aircraft and targeting. The first organization is the Special Operations Liaison element (SOLE), assigned to the combatant commanders joint forces special operations command (JFSOCC).¹⁹ This standing organization was created specifically to provide advice and help integrate and coordinate special operation aircraft with the JFACC. Since the SOLE's mission is primarily liaison, the JFSOCC may have issue with assigning SOF to the JFACC. To alleviate this concern, it will be necessary to combine a special operations command and control element (SOCCE) with the SOLE. This will result in a functional joint SOF command and control element within the JFACC. Current joint doctrine reflects that SOCCEs are usually attached to land or maritime component headquarters when Army SOF are working in conjunction with conventional forces. Therefore, a minor change in joint doctrine is required to reflect that SOCCE's can work with air component headquarters as well. The other organization that is a powerful aid to the success of airpower is the Joint Warfare Analysis Center (JWAC). This organization made up of multidiscipline analysts, engineers, and scientists whose primary mission is to perform material-based systems analysis focused on generating and assessing physical and systemic effects against strategic and

operational targets.²⁰ This center is a critical component while conducting effects-based operations. Employing SOF and reconnaissance units as sensors before conventional forces arrive in theater increases the synergistic effects of airpower. Indeed, a creation of a powerful gestalt is exactly what the JFACC is trying to accomplish as demonstrated in figure 1-1.

Joint Doctrine Flexibility

Even though current joint doctrine reflects that SOF operations are normally directed by the theater special operations command (SOC), it also states that the combatant commander may also exercise COCOM of SOF through other subordinate commanders.²¹ This means it is doctrinal and feasible to allow the JFACC to control ground special reconnaissance in certain circumstances. At times in Afghanistan, SOF units did not work for the appointed JFSOCC, but for the combatant commander or joint forces land component commander (JFLCC) directly. This was true during Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan when Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-South (CJSOTF-S) worked directly for the JFLCC and not the JFSOCC.²² Some may argue that Air Force officers do not have the expertise or skill to command ground troops. However, this common service centric belief was already shattered in the introductory paragraph of this paper- not to mention our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an Air Force Officer.

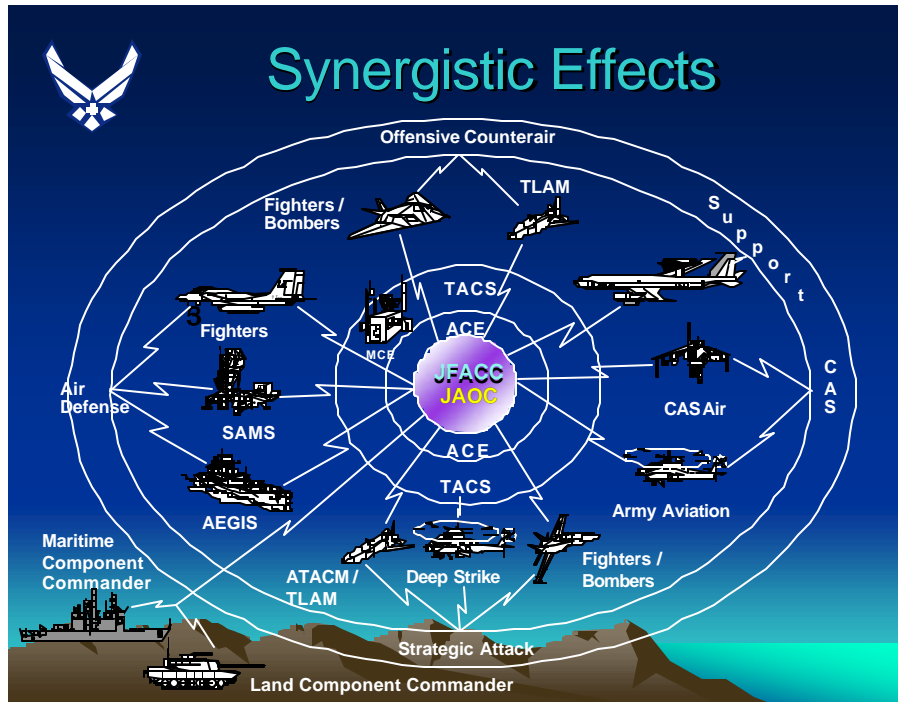


Figure 1: Synergistic Effect of the JFACC²³

The Historic Pendulum of Airpower

It seems with the military victories of Desert Storm, Allied Force, and Operation Enduring Freedom that airpower has become the greatest contributor to winning wars. It has Giulio Douhet's vision of airpower as the decisive service finally becoming reality, or does airpower still need some type ground force to reach its full potential?

Many airpower advocates felt that Desert Storm was the conflict where airpower's potential came to fruition. Even the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell came to recognize its potential power during the opening phases of the war when he declared that "air power has been the decisive arm so far, and I will expect it will be the decisive arm throughout the end

of the campaign, even if ground and amphibious forces are added to the equation."²⁴ Desert Storm was the first conflict where the JFACC controlled most of the aircraft in theater. The power of the JFACC was reinforced when General Horner said that "there were no Army targets, no Air Force targets, and no Marine targets, just Commander-in-chief targets."²⁵ In fact, it was the first time that fixed-wing aircraft accounted for at least 61 percent of all destroyed tanks, and most of which had been taken out before ground operations commenced.²⁶ Airpower had finally become a deciding force and not necessarily a supporting one. The Army had difficulty accepting this notion since it had been the senior service for the past 200 years. The problem for the Army was not the outstanding performance of airpower, but the Army's ability to control it.²⁷ Desert Storm showcased this struggle as it illustrated the conflict between the Army's doctrine of "Air-Land Battle" (ALB) and NATO's "Follow-on Forces Attack" (FOFA) doctrine. While not mutually exclusive doctrines, they did create friction in whether the focus of air operations was the corps fight (ALB), or the theater commander's theater wide air interdiction missions (FOFA).²⁸ As a result of the Desert Storm experience, the focus of JFACC operations seems most consistent with the doctrine of FOFA. However, other experiences and technology have caused it to mature even further.

Even though Operation Allied Force was a victory, it was a pyrrhic one. Airpower was used exclusively without a supporting

ground maneuver force. It was in this war where our national leadership realized airpower still needed ground forces. The press described Allied Force as "a one-dimensional war of attrition, consisting of aerial attacks of mounting intensity on selected targets of value throughout Serbia and on Serbian forces in and around Kosovo proved to be wholly inadequate."²⁹ Although Allied Force confirmed airpower advocates belief that ground forces do not necessarily need to be committed early in the conflict, it also reinforced the general feeling that "airpower often cannot perform to its potential without a credible ground component in the campaign strategy."³⁰ This thinking was reinforced by Admiral Leighton Smith, commander of NATO forces during Allied Force, when he remarked that the Kosovo campaign should be remembered as "possibly the worst way we employed our military forces in history."³¹ The CFACC found it very difficult to locate moving targets as well as discriminating between real targets from decoys.³² When the former Allied Force CFACC, Lieutenant General (LTG) Michael Short (Retired) was asked about the desirability of having SOF and reconnaissance forces on ground in Kosovo, he responded that they would have provided a much greater degree of success against the Serbians. Reflecting on how he could not find the Serbs with airpower alone, General Short added: "SOF forces would have found targets for airpower and we could have been much more effective."³³

Making airpower more effective by means of SOF targeting on the ground was certainly the case in Afghanistan, "Dominance in the air soon translated into dominance on the ground, as Special Forces worked with Northern Alliance troops to pinpoint and destroy Taliban areas of resistance."³⁴ But it was not only air and ground dominance in Afghanistan, there was information dominance as well. SOF on the ground improved the Combined Air Operation's Center's (CAOC) situational awareness, and thereby the JFACC's ability to track the immediate tactical requirement of the liaison officers operating within the Northern Alliance Forces.³⁵ Aim points of emerging targets such as Taliban troop concentrations, vehicles, and strong points developed by the CAOC were identified by SOF on the ground who then double checked the CAOC's target coordinates.³⁶ This coordination became standard operating procedure between the SOF on the ground and the JFACC through the CAOC. Enduring Freedom was a resounding success when it came to joint war fighting during all phases of the campaign. This view is supported by the Army Vice Chief of Staff, General Keane: "Those population centers toppled as the result of a combined arms team: US airpower and a combination of special forces and Afghan troops."³⁷ Its time to codify the lessons learned from Enduring Freedom so our nation will not have to revisit an operation like Allied Force ever again. It seems that after all our experiences of the past two decades, we are returning to a doctrine during World War II that rings just as

powerful and true now as it did then: "Land power and air power are co-equal and interdependent forces; neither is an auxiliary of the other."³⁸

The Stumbling Block of Service Culture

The Air Force has realized the power of SOF for a long time.

The JFACC Primer, a 1994 publication, described how SOF and their target acquisition capabilities could contribute to airpower:

SOF can work in a synergistic attack role with conventional air. SOF can designate targets visually, electronically, and optically. SOF can also locate perishable target that can be moved, disassembled and fortified. SOF can positively identify these targets and then designate them for conventional air to destroy.³⁹

In addition, retired Air Force LTG Michael Short, believes that having SOF and selected reconnaissance under JFACC control to find targets for airpower would streamline the (targeting) process and really place pressure on enemy ground forces without having conventional forces in the field.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, LTG Short also identified service centric concerns for survival as the primary friction point in assigning SOF and selected reconnaissance forces to the JFACC.⁴¹ Service culture has hamstrung many advances in the past. In fact, it was the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 that legally mandated "jointness" into statute. It was also Congress who mandated DOD to create USSOCOM. Therefore, it is predictable that service chiefs may resist a proposal of integrating SOF and airpower even more. Some current and former leaders are fighting hard against myopic service views that restrict obvious beneficial change. Retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni addressed service bias in a speech to the Air Force Association: "We can no longer afford joint force commanders or those in a joint force that think narrowly or think in terms of the uniform they bring in there."⁴² General Zinni went on to place service prejudice in simple terms and perspective. He sees the joint force commander as a carpenter with a large tool belt with many different tools. When the carpenter sees a job that

needs to be done, he tries and selects the best tool or tools to get the job done. The carpenter certainly does not want to pound a nail with pliers or take out a screw with a hammer. Some jobs require one tool and other jobs require a combination of tools.⁴³ One would hope that this common sense approach would prevail over inter-service rivalry. Even General Keane, the Army Vice Chief of Staff and the Army Chief of Staff designate, believes in common sense solutions and “out of the box thinking.”

There should be no difference, once we get our heads screwed on right, in terms of integrating our capability. We've got this nagging fear that somehow, if we turn over our organization to somebody in another uniform, that that organization is going to suffer as a result of that. And I just fundamentally disagree with that.⁴⁴

With this joint outlook by a future service chief, one can hope for a windfall of positive change for the Army as it finds ways to integrate closer with all the services to include airpower.

Using Sensors Other than Combat Control Teams and Army Special Forces

There is a specialty within the Air Force that has great influence on ground sensors and precision strike. These are the USAF combat control teams (CCT) who are trained and certified to perform the terminal attack control function within the SOF community. They are assigned to USSOCOM through the US Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). Assigned to AFSOC special tactics squadrons (STS), these CCT airmen called in 80 to 85 percent of the air strikes while assigned to US Army Special Forces Detachments in Afghanistan.⁴⁵ As stated in the introduction paragraph of this paper, it was CCT airmen who called in the air strikes for the Rangers trapped on Robert's Ridge in Afghanistan. Without them, there certainly would have been more casualties.

Interestingly enough, the CCT view the other members of the joint SOF team as security and ground maneuver experts.⁴⁶ This is the reason why CCT will not usually be inserted unilaterally into theater. The Air Force airpower sensors need the Army for protection and ground tactical expertise.

US Army Special Forces, the primary force used to conduct special reconnaissance (SR), are in high demand and limited in numbers just like the CCT. Cross trained and bi-lingual, Army Special Forces are tasked with other missions such as unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID) and direct action (DA). Some believe that SOF in general and specifically Special Forces Detachments are slowly being worn down with the global war on terrorism and not to mention the looming crisis in Iraq and North Korea.⁴⁷ This shortage of Special Forces troops begs the question whether conventional reconnaissance forces can conduct special reconnaissance? Looking at the difference between conventional reconnaissance and SR definitions, one will find that SR includes the tasks of target acquisition, area assessment, and post-strike reconnaissance. These tasks are well within the capabilities of other DOD forces. These forces, if allowed, could greatly supplement Special Forces and their mission of SR to ensure that the operational commander has enough sensors to place under the JFACC's control to make airpower more effective. The Marine Corps has force reconnaissance companies, air and naval gunfire liaison companies (ANGLICO's), and special

purpose marine air-ground task forces (SPMAGTAF's) who are able to conduct special reconnaissance and target acquisition missions. In the Army, there are seven long-range surveillance (LRS) units that have the capability to conduct SR as well. As this paper looks closer at these organizations, one will see the suitability and feasibility of integrating these organizations into the JFACC for greater flexibility during the "seize initiative" phase of the campaign.

The Marines Corps recognized relatively quickly that USSOCOM is experiencing a shortage in SOF units who can conduct special reconnaissance and specifically the sub-tasks of target acquisition and post-strike reconnaissance. As a result, the Marine Corps is currently integrating a new 75 man "proof of concept" detachment into USSOCOM. This detachment will consist primarily of force reconnaissance marines who will conduct SR and DA missions for combatant commanders.⁴⁸ Additionally, the Marine Corps realized they made a mistake deactivating most of their ANGLICOs during the post Cold War drawdown. The Corps is now reactivating two of these companies in order to capitalize on the rebirth of air-ground cooperation demonstrated in Afghanistan by SOF and airpower.⁴⁹ Some of these ANGLICO marines will be integrated into the SOCOM detachment mentioned above. These two organizations are just the beginning for the Marine Corps. In 1997, the Marine Corps conducted an experiment called Hunter Warrior. The experiment had three objectives, two of which are

germane to this paper. The first objective covered tactical operations on a dispersed and noncontiguous battlefield. How small units perform against a numerically superior force on a battlefield that has no boundaries was a key component to this objective. The second objective consisted of enhancing fire support and improving targeting. The Marines deemed it necessary to demonstrate that they could dominate the broad, dispersed battlefield of the future with effective and efficient use of all indirect fires to include close air support. In order to conduct the Hunter Warrior experiment, the Marines assembled a SPMAGTAF of about 2,000 marines and employed them in a large-scale, force-on-force field exercise that lasted for 12 days. The SPMAGTAF mission was to locate important enemy targets (large concentrations of troops and equipment) and engage them with long-range, precision fires in order to shape the battlefield for the introduction of heavier, follow-on forces. This was accomplished with marine squads organized into long-range contact patrols (LRCPs). Once the squads reported a significant enemy target, the SPMAGTAF air component commander (ACC) provided CAS and airborne coordination of air and ground fire support assets. Essentially, the Marines hoped that the massing of effects on the objective vice the massing of forces could be achieved through precision weapons and combining the effects of fires.⁵⁰ The results of the 12-day experiment were impressive. Out of the 28 squads placed on the battlefield, only one was detected and attacked by the OPFOR.

The squads did this while carrying 100-pound packs and remaining on the battlefield for three to five days at a time. This experiment proved that small units with stealth tactics can survive on a dispersed noncontiguous battlefield and act independently.⁵¹ The Marine Corps clearly demonstrate that they are forward thinkers that provide even more options for the operational commander.

The Army also has workable alternatives for the use of SOF. The long-range surveillance (LRS) units of the United States Army are not SOF, but their doctrine, tactics, equipment, and techniques are similar to SOF. In fact, LRS units conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition, and battle damage assessment at the tactical level of war in front of battalion reconnaissance teams but behind SOF teams at the tactical and operational level. These units are located at selected corps and at airborne, light, and air-assault infantry divisions. The LRS units found at a corps consist of eighteen surveillance teams of six soldiers each, while the division level LRS units have six surveillance teams with six soldiers apiece. Some of the LRS teams are military free fall qualified and all are static parachute qualified. If one totals all the active duty LRS teams available for use by the operational commander and JFACC, it equals 66 reconnaissance teams. The Army should seriously consider reactivating some of the 136 LRS units it has inactivated

since 1992, and integrate them into AEFs for deployment and use by the operational commander through the JFACC.⁵²

Conclusion

Realizing that CCT and Army Special Forces detachments are in short supply and high demand, US Army LRS, and USMC SPMAGTAFs structured to conduct operations similar to or such as the experiment Hunter Warrior can make up the shortage of CCT personnel and US Army Special Forces Detachments as a result of the global war on terrorism. It seems that at least USSOCOM is receptive to assistance in this area as proven by the Marine Corps "proof of concept" organization now assigned to the command. Unfortunately, the Army lacks this dynamic flexibility. The Army limits itself by insisting that the ground force commander must control every Army asset on the battlefield. If this type of thinking continues, the Air Force, through AFSOC, may just train their own ground troops to provide security and ground tactical expertise for their combat control teams. This is certainly an option but does not rely on the inherent strengths each service brings to joint operations. Although the conclusions of this paper are focused on SOF and other reconnaissance forces, the conventional U.S. Army interim forces are considering integrating closer with airpower. In fact, a DOD official raised the possibility of an Army Stryker Brigade Combat Team being linked or associated with an Air Force Expeditionary Force (AEF).⁵³ If the Air Force accepts this notion of a Stryker Brigade as part of it

crisis AEF, then a true joint air-ground team will actually exist.

This begs the question: Will the JFACC in theater eventually have the ability to control an AEF Stryker Brigade in conjunction with special reconnaissance and airpower in order to conduct operations to seize the initiative? Is this idea so far-fetched? As far back as 1991, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Price Bingham suggested that ground forces could be used to "fix" the enemy while airpower destroyed the enemy as well as sever its lines of communication.⁵⁴

From a philosophical standpoint, the Army should have no reason to protest the notion of fixing ground forces while precision and laser-guided munitions destroy most of the enemy on the battlefield. At least this was the case during the large scale Army "Prairie Warrior" computer exercises that occurred in 1995 and 1996. These exercises showed that a division size force called the Mobile Strike Force (MSF) equipped with advance aviation and artillery could utterly destroy an enemy army corps with various types of precision and smart munitions. In fact, this MSF was able to fire 28,000 precision submunitions in an hour. After 80% of the enemy forces were destroyed by Army artillery and aviation, infantry and armor forces were left to mop up the remaining 20% of the enemy.⁵⁵ Although the MSF was never developed primarily due to resource constraints for large scale production of very expensive precision weapon delivery platforms, the Army did learn that precision weapons were essential to future victories on the battlefield. From an operational commander's

perspective, it does not matter whether a PGM is delivered by an artillery piece or an aircraft as long as it destroys the right target. The joint force commander is essentially looking for the quickest and most precise effects. Presently and in the foreseeable future, airpower has the preponderance of smart munitions and the platforms to deliver them. This one point alone should be proof that airpower should be the supported arm in some instances. Perhaps service culture and bias has finally subsided enough now at the beginning of the 21st Century to where the ground force, the historical and traditional ruler of the battlefield, will give up its position of assumed superiority in order to be part of an effective combination or another tool in the toolbox. With leaders like Rumsfeld, Cembrowski, Meyers, and Keane, there is a distinct possibility of this happening. Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the ground component commander must realize that he will not always be the supported commander, especially in the "seize initiative" phase of a campaign. If the ground force commander can accept the notion of being the supporting commander at times, then he can focus on ways and means to best support the JFACC when it is the supported command. This could mean making an Apache or ATACM battalion TACON to the JFACC for counterland operations. This may also mean assigning counter-battery radars and Army SIGINT assets to the JFACC to assist in the air interdiction battle. And as this paper proposes, it could mean the JFSOCC or the JFLCC attaches SOF and conventional

reconnaissance units to the JFACC under TACON, OPCON, or as assigned forces to make air power more efficient and effective. One thing is for certain, the Army will always be needed. There is no threat of this historical institution of being marginalized.

If anything, placing SOF and reconnaissance forces under control of the JFACC will empower the Army. It will place Army elements truly on the tip of the joint spear along with the first air strikes by an AEF against integrated air defense systems (IADS), and even weapons of mass destruction (WMD) targets. Additionally, early ground reconnaissance forces will be able to provide invaluable intelligence to follow-on joint ground forces as they flow into theater. Once the JFLCC takes control of the battlefield, SOF and other reconnaissance forces would then task organize under the command and control of the JFLCC or JSOTF commander. At that time, they would continue to provide their invaluable contributions to the operational commander and the joint fight.

GLOSSARY¹

Air expeditionary force. AEF. (DOD) Deployed US Air Force wings, groups, and squadrons committed to a joint operation.

¹ All joint definitions are approved and contained in Joint Publication 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms" as amended through 14 August 2002. <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/index.html>>

Battle damage assessment. BDA. (DOD) The timely and accurate estimate of damage resulting from the application of military force, either lethal or non-lethal, against a predetermined objective. Battle damage assessment can be applied to the employment of all types of weapon systems (air, ground, naval, and special forces weapon systems) throughout the range of military operations. Battle damage assessment is primarily an intelligence responsibility with required inputs and coordination from the operators. Battle damage assessment is composed of physical damage assessment, functional damage assessment, and target system assessment.

Command and control. C2. (DOD) The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission.

Command, control, communications, and computer systems. C4 systems. (DOD) Integrated systems of doctrine, procedures, organizational structures, personnel, equipment, facilities, and communications designed to support a commander's exercise of command and control across the range of military operations.

Direct action. DA. (DOD) Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions by special operations forces or special operations-capable units to seize, destroy, capture, recover, or inflict damage on designated personnel or materiel. In the conduct of these operations, special operations forces or special operations-capable units may employ raid, ambush, or direct assault tactics; emplace mines and other munitions; conduct standoff attacks by fire from air, ground, or maritime platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision-guided munitions; conduct independent sabotage; and conduct anti-ship operations.

Foreign internal defense. FID. (DOD) Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.

Joint air operations center. JAOC. (DOD) A jointly staffed facility established for planning, directing, and executing joint air operations in support of the joint force commander's operation or campaign objectives.

Joint force air component commander JFACC. (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking air forces; planning and coordinating air operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. The joint force air component commander is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander.

Joint force land component commander. JFLCC. (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking land forces; planning and coordinating land operations; or accomplishing such operational

missions as may be assigned. The joint force land component commander is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander.

Joint force maritime component commander. JFMCC. (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking maritime forces and assets; planning and coordinating maritime operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. The joint force maritime component commander is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander.

Joint force special operations component commander. JFSOCC. (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking special operations forces and assets; planning and coordinating special operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. The joint force special operations component commander is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander.

Joint operations center. JOC. (DOD) A jointly manned facility of a joint force commander's headquarters established for planning, monitoring, and guiding the execution of the commander's decisions.

Joint special operations task force. JSOTF. (DOD) A joint task force composed of special operations units from more than one Service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The joint special operations task force may have conventional non-special operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions.

Reconnaissance. RECON. (DOD, NATO) A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area.

Sea-air-land team. SEAL team. (DOD) A naval force specially organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations in maritime, littoral, and riverine environments.

Signals intelligence. SIGINT. (DOD) 1. A category of intelligence comprising either individually or in combination all communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, however transmitted. 2. Intelligence derived from communications, electronic, and foreign instrumentation signals.

Special operations command. SOC. (DOD) A subordinate unified or other joint command established by a joint force commander to plan, coordinate, conduct, and support joint special operations within the joint force commander's assigned operational area.

Special operations forces. SOF. (DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations.

Special operations liaison element. SOLE. (DOD) A special operations liaison team provided by the joint force special operations component commander to the joint force air component commander (if designated) to coordinate, deconflict, and integrate special operations air and surface operations with conventional air operations.

Special purpose Marine air-ground task force. SPMAGTF. (DOD) A Marine air-ground task force organized, trained, and equipped with narrowly focused capabilities. It is designed to accomplish a specific mission, often of limited scope and duration. It may be any size, but normally it is a relatively small force--the size of a Marine expeditionary unit or smaller.

Special reconnaissance. SR. (DOD) Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted by special operations forces to obtain or verify, by visual observation or other collection methods, information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of an actual or potential enemy or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. It includes target acquisition, area assessment, and post-strike reconnaissance.

Tactical control. TACON. (DOD) Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Tactical control is inherent in operational control. Tactical control may be delegated to, and exercised at any level at or below the level of combatant command. When forces are transferred between combatant commands, the command relationship the gaining commander will exercise (and the losing commander will relinquish) over these forces must be specified by the Secretary of Defense. Tactical control provides sufficient authority for controlling and directing the application of force or tactical use of combat support assets within the assigned mission or task.

Unconventional warfare. UW. (DOD) A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape.

Weapons of mass destruction. WMD. (DOD) Weapons that are capable of a high order of destruction and/or of being used in such a manner as to destroy large numbers of people. Weapons of mass destruction can be high explosives or nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological weapons, but exclude the means of transporting or propelling the weapon where such means is a separable and divisible part of the weapon.

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NOTES

¹ The author of this paper was on board the P-3.

² This mountain was later renamed Roberts Ridge in honor of Navy Petty Officer First Class Neil C. Roberts who was the first American to die on that fateful day.

³ Bradley Graham, "Bravery and Breakdowns in a Ridgetop Battle," The Washington Post, 24 May 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

⁴ Similarly, Combined Joint Special Forces Task Force-South (CJSOTF-S), assigned to conduct special operations in southern Afghanistan was commanded by a Navy SEAL, Commodore Robert Harward. He led special operations fighters from the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and seven allied nations to include Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Norway and Turkey along with U.S. conventional troops. Commodore Harward's executive officer was Colonel Bob Holmes, an Air Force Special Tactics Squadron (STS) officer while the Director of Operations was a Navy SEAL Commander and the Director of Intelligence was an Air Force intelligence officer. From a military perspective, this seemed quite unusual considering that the other JSOTF (JSOTF-North) in theater was commanded and consisted primarily of Army Special Forces; James W. Crowley, "War against terror led by U.S. special forces;" Copley News Service, September 20, 2002, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2002/020920-sof1.htm>> [18 January 2003] ; Johann Price, "Operation Enduring Freedom Chain of Command," Terrorism Project, June 26, 2002, <<http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/oefcommand.cfm>> [18 January 2003] ; "New Commander Takes the Lead at Special Tactics Group," Night Flyer News Service, July 23, 2002, <<http://www.afsoc.af.mil/nightflyer/current/105.doc>> [10 January 2003] ; Kerry M. Metz, "Testimony," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Reform, Commander Kerry M. Metz, USNR, Director for Operations, Joint Special Operations Task Force-South, Hearing before the Committee on Government Reform, May 16, 2002, <<http://reform.house.gov/metz.htm>> [10 January 2003] ; Preston Medenhall, "The war behind the lines," <<http://www.msnbc.com/news/712018.asp>> [10 January 2003].

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⁸ U.S. President, "The National Security Strategy of the United States," September 2002, 16.

⁹ Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Testimony," U.S. Congress, House, House Armed Services Committee, Testimony of the of U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, Prepared for the House Armed Services Committee, 2003 Defense Budget Request, 06 February 2002, <http://www.senate.gov/~armed_services/statemnt/2002/Rumsfeld.pdf> [18 January 2003], 17-18.

¹⁰ Rowan Scarborough, "Rumsfeld Bolsters Special Forces," Washington Times, 06 January 2003, 1.

¹¹ Amy Svitak, "Force of the Future," Army Times, 25 November 2002, 22.

¹² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington D.C: 10 September 2001) II-9, II-10.

¹³ U.S. President, 16.

¹⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2020, (Washington DC: GPO, 2000), 26.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Air Force, America's Air Force Vision 2020, <<http://www.af.mil/vision/vision.pdf>> [25 January 2003]; U.S. Department of the Army, Army Vision, October 1999, <<http://www.army.mil/vision/Documents/The%20Army%20Vision.PDF>> [25 January 2003].

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¹⁷ Alan Vick and others, The Stryker Brigade Combat Team: Rethinking Strategic Responsiveness and Assessing Deployment Options (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), 8-9, 20-21.

¹⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, III-20, 21.

¹⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, Joint Publication (JP) 3-05 (Washington D.C: 17 April 1998), III-4, Figure III-2.

²⁰ T.W. Beagle Jr., "Effects Based Targeting: Another Empty Promise?" (Unpublished Research Paper, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: 2001), 95.

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²⁷ Ibid. 135.

²⁸ Ibid. 85-91.

²⁹ Larry Pitts, "Joint Doctrine in a combined Operations World: The JFACC," (Unpublished Research Paper, National War College, Fort McNair, D.C: 2000), 6.

³⁰ Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Lessons from the War in Kosovo," Joint Forces Quarterly, (Spring 2002), 17.

³¹ Leighton Smith, quoted in "Reporters' Notebook," Defense Week, 19 (July 1999) 47.

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