

Warfighter's Perspective

Question & Answer session with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force

A rmy Space Support Teams worked side-by-side with the warfighters in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Teams deployed with V Corps and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

LTG William Wallace, distant relative of the William Wallace freedom fighter of Scottish and “Braveheart” fame, was V Corps commander and commander of all Army forces during OIF until mid-June. Wallace is positive about the technologies that assisted in the most recent conflict. He commented to reporters in late summer that “today’s leaders are very very comfortable with technologies... prevalent in our society; they in fact thrive in that environment.”

However, “despite the vast technology available to the U.S. military,” Wallace said, “lessons learned from the war in Iraq include a need for officers to understand the challenges of communications and command and control over long distances.” (ARNEWS, Sept. 2)

ASJ will interview LTG Wallace for a closer look at Space support to V Corps for a future issue.

On the Marine side of the story ... ARRST 5 deployed in support of the 1st MEF. The team practiced split-based Space support operations, half with the forward command element of combat fame and half with the rear detachment headquartered in Kuwait. The team leader, MAJ Daniel Cockerham, moved with the forward element as it fought its way to Baghdad. Both contingents of the ARRST were integrated thoroughly with their Marine brethren, and experienced the same hardships and fears as did any grunt, be he Army or Marine. Theater Ballistic Missiles threatened, artillery shook the ground, and combat swirled around the lead element in a definitely non-linear on-going battle. Space-based products and abilities assisted the Marines in their critical mission.

ASJ’s MAJ Laura Kenney talked with MAJ Michael Scheiern, an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance officer in the G2 section of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. Scheiern worked first hand with ARRST 5 during

Operation Iraqi Freedom and answered the following questions regarding Space contributions.

Q: 1st MEF received the support of an Army Space Support Team during OIF. How did 1st MEF integrate these resources into its operations and did these Space experts contribute to your success?

A: Well, there was the division into forward and rear detachments, then, individual people were settled either with our Intelligence Operations, or working TBM warning with our Operations office.

I’d have to say the biggest contribution overall was their serving as a bridge of interoperability between V Corps and ourselves.

Our guys and the Army infantry were approaching Baghdad taking two different routes. Of course we needed to know what the Iraqi forces along those boundaries were doing. The Space support ensured that our two forces could synchronize a common operating picture of enemy activity, as well as communications. This helped us shape our forces so that the enemy couldn’t flank either of us.

Q: OIF was conducted at a pace and over distances that we have not seen before. What is your assessment of the SATCOM support available to operational and tactical commanders?

A: Wideband comms was a vast improvement over what was available to us in Operation Desert Storm. The equipment your guys brought with them was invaluable, as there was great competition for communications resources. The ARRST came well equipped, a real boon for the gaining command.

Narrow band comms — insufficient to satisfy user demand. I believe finally someone very high up the chain had to allocate those resources.

Q: How did Space-based systems contribute to



U.S. Marine Corps Photo

Left, Senior leaders of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF); below, members of Army Space Support Team 5, who provided Space support to the I MEF.



U.S. Army Photo

the 1st MEF targeting process?

A: Terrain analysis and Space-based imagery were definitely helpful.

Q: Situational awareness is enhanced through an accurate Common Operational Picture or Common Tactical Picture, how would you characterize the role of Space systems in maintaining situation awareness?

A: Blue Force Tracking was terrific. Not only did it save lives, but it allowed for an instant messaging capability that was leveraged extensively. It enhanced our communication abilities, making time sensitive communications, such as synchronization of air and ground supporting fires, possible. When you can ‘talk’ to someone without a time lapse, it increased situational awareness exponentially.

Q: Much has been said about OIF being the first conflict in which Space systems played a key role. What do you foresee as the role or relationship between Space-based systems and tactical operations in the future?

A: I completely and strongly disagree that OIF is the first key Space conflict. Space played a very large role in ODS. It’s a question of quality versus quantity. The piece that Space played in ODS — national imagery and targeting — was not readily visible to the tactical force. That doesn’t mean it didn’t have value, it did, immensely.

We are where we are today in considerable part due to what was learned in Desert Storm. Space is an incremental ability, learned over time and through investment in training and technology. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

That said, the role of Space for the future of the warfight? Limitless, especially when it’s being used, as it was so well in this conflict, by the tactical commanders. I’d say

that’s the greatest advance, that Space is out of its stovepipe of just targeting for air campaigns, and now covers expansive distances, usable through integrating Space and ongoing ground tactical operations.

Q: We like to believe that Space helped save lives and win battles. Do you know of any particular event that supports that concept?

A: Well, again, Blue Force Tracking is an obvious example, helping to prevent fratricide. But a more specific example would be... We were given the mission, after seizing the eastern half of Baghdad, of advancing on both Tikrit and Kirkuk. That had not been part of the original mission planning. As such, we didn’t have information on the routes to either, as we’d been focused on enemy ops in Baghdad. That’s where the Space assets kicked in. Between your ARRST team, and the Tactical Event System-Forward (TES-Forward) section, within 24 hours of receiving that new mission, we had the best imagery possible to execute analysis. The information was detailed and complete, and what we learned from it was enough, in fact, to negate the need for movement towards Kirkuk. The information gave us the flexibility to shape the battlespace — we wouldn’t have had that without SATCOM and TES-Forward. Those two systems worked together, enabling us to best decide how and when to put Marines in harm’s way.

With our ongoing ops in Baghdad, it would have been difficult to build situational awareness of another area simultaneously with combat operations. But with Space support, we had the data when we needed it.

Q: Could you name one specific aspect of what Space brought to the Warfight as either the most innovative or most useful?

(Warfighter’s Perspective, page 67)

questions & answers

During OIF, the SORC delivered hundreds of imagery based spectral products, including those used for identification of terrain hazards, drop zone analysis, and route reconnaissance. Interviews with officers who served during OIF cited multiple instances where spectral products supported OPOD briefs, hung in the tactical operations centers as standard maps, and were referred to in planning counterattacks. SORC-provided spectral products also enabled production of imagery maps for a unit before they arrived in-theater to facilitate in their operational planning.

Spectral products furnished Warfighters invaluable change detection information on water levels to assist them in navigating otherwise impassable terrain. As the Coalition forces consolidated their positions after the end of major hostilities, spectral products provided the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), later renamed the Office of the Coalition Provisional Authority (OCPA), locations of mass graves of men, women, and children killed during Saddam Hussein's repressive

and brutal regime. ARSST 13, still deployed in Baghdad, continues to provide a wide range of image and mapping products.

Integration of Space into all Phases of Joint Warfighting

To an extent never seen before, Operation Iraqi Freedom is serving as a clear example of the vital role that Space contributes to all phases of Joint operations. SMDC, providing Joint support in everything that we do, has been fully integrated with land, sea, and air-based capabilities to provide the information demanded by the Joint warfighters.

The SORC, crewed by Army and Air Force personnel, processed and delivered unclassified commercial imagery used for USCENTCOM press briefings. Joint Army-Navy teams, staffing the RSSCs at USCENTCOM and elsewhere, were instrumental in providing direct support for Joint warfighters. JTAGS, supported by Army and Navy personnel, provided 24/7 theater ballistic missile (TBM) early warning to our forces. This system, linked directly to the TBM architecture, was vital to providing protection

from enemy TBMs. The Army Tactical Exploitation System (TES), combining all the functionality of the previous Tactical Exploitation of National Capabilities (TENCAP) systems into one baseline, significantly increased interoperability for ISR and targeting. Army TES successfully demonstrated its capability to send real-time targeting and intelligence information directly to Air Force assets. Moreover, throughout this time, the ARSSTs were seamlessly integrated on-the-ground with Joint Forces, supplying responsive Space products and services.

Conclusion

As you read this issue of the Army Space Journal, I hope that you will reflect on the experiences, observations, and emerging lessons that are provided...and prepare yourself for the future. In the words of General Peter J. Schoomaker, the new Chief of Staff, "Leadership is dealing with change. You can't manage change. You have to lead it." Clearly, there is only one constant, and that constant is change. To be prepared for that change you have to be relevant and ready. Secure the High Ground!

Warfighter's Perspective ... from Page 17

A: Army Space Program Office came through for us on the equipment side, with low cost receivers, providing a way to transfer large files of data through a trusted agent to mobile forces. Being able to transfer images and geospatial products to your forward elements is huge. A huge benefit, that is, the actual equipment was only the size of a small card table.

Q: Did you see any evidence that the Iraqis employed Space assets or attempted to counter our usage?

A: No command complained of degradation of Space assets due to either enemy action or the weather.

Q: In line with your earlier response defending Desert Storm as a conflict using Space extensively, it has often been called the first Space war. You said you'd served as a targeting officer during that conflict. Can you comment further as to the differences between what Space supplied then, and its contributions to Operation Iraqi Freedom?

A: You might expect me to say the equipment, but, although there are of course vast improvements in what there is to offer, I'd have to come down on the side of the integration of Space assets with the tactical ground maneuver forces. Giving ground forces a deep look at what

they're getting into, and being able to synchronize space operations in advance of fast moving ground forces enables a layered approach. The investments in money and training are paying off.

Q: Any comments on ARSST 5 specifically?

A: Maj. Cockerham was a good choice to send as team leader. He was extremely professional and insightful and always ready to offer help with Space-based abilities. His team provided a valuable service to us, ensuring we had communications and data with which to perform analysis. We were glad to have them.