

Successes from the



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LTC Jim Meisinger prepares for a mission during his deployment as the 3rd Infantry Division Space Element Chief.

e Field:

OIF V



ive Division Space Elements participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom V – the 25th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division, and 4th Infantry Division. This article is a collaboration between the five Division Space

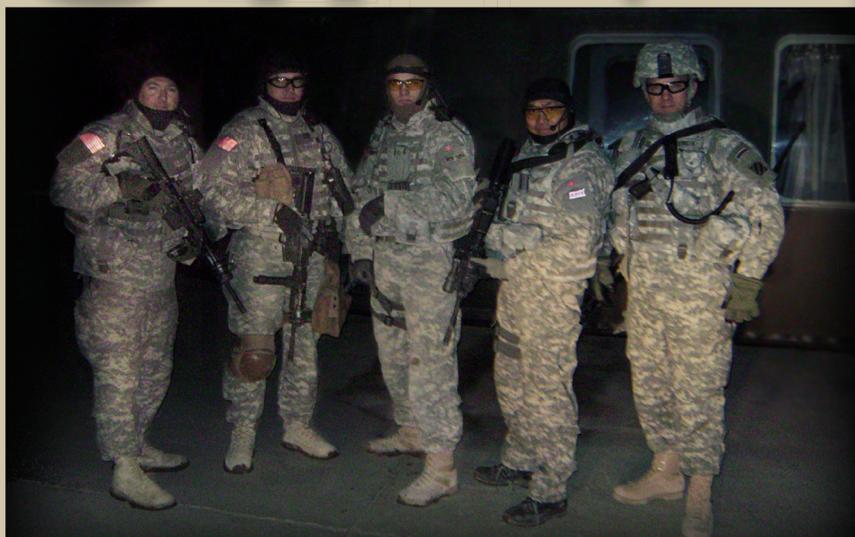
The Division Space Element in OIF V

Element Chiefs (LTC Dan Cockerham, LTC Rick Dow, LTC Jim Meisinger, LTC Scott Parks and LTC Scott Gensler) who worked together during the operation, generally spanning late 2006 to late 2008. We are not going to discuss the Corps Space Element or the Division Space Element in a garrison environment. We do not imply our experience applies universally to Space Elements in other fights, although much of it does.

Traditional Space force enhancement has matured greatly on the Division staff, freeing up the Space Element to pursue other capabilities. Four of the five Division Elements mentioned above have taken the lead for their Divisions in Special Technical Operations and Alternate Compensatory Control Measures. These classified capabilities have little to do with Space but the Space operations officers' familiarity with special technical operations made them a logical fit to take the lead on the Division staff.

Division Space Elements have also either worked directly with or been closely associated with Information Operations. Two of the Space Element Chiefs were actually slated as the Division G-7. One served as officer in charge of information operations, special technical operations, Alternate Compensatory Control Measures, and reconciliation. Two of the Element chiefs worked heavily on personnel recovery issues. Two of the Element chiefs served as G-3 principles — Chief of Operations in one case, and Deputy G-3 in another. All of the Element chiefs kept “senior Space operations officer” as a task throughout the deployment, although always as a secondary position.

The Space Element Majors have been able to focus more closely on special technical operations and Alternate Compensatory Control Measures in addition to handling the occasional Space issue. Only three were removed completely from their jobs. One was placed in the rear



Photos courtesy 25th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division and 4th Infantry Division Space Elements.



TOP LEFT:

A Space Element Chief and an ad hoc team of Soldiers prepare for an Alternate Compensatory Control Measures mission.

TOP RIGHT:

LTC Dan Cockerham, left, and COL Tom Kula get together for lunch at Camp Speicher Iraq.

BOTTOM RIGHT:

LTC Rick Dow looks ready to rumble after being caught on camera.

BOTTOM LEFT:

A Space Element MAJ flies to a Brigade Combat Team headquarter to train the staff.



detachment, one worked as a Fragmentary Order writer and then in the public affairs office, and one was placed in charge of the Division's "reconciliation cell." Their contributions to the fight were considerable and valued, but not for their Space expertise.

Unlike the Division Space Element at home station, the Space Element in a combat zone must deliver capabilities to the current fight that work NOW. At home station, the Element has time to examine potential capabilities and determine how to integrate them into plans and operations. The time for this task disappears once deployed and faced with the relentless demand to have an impact on the enemy every day.

The rank structure of the Space Element added to the vulnerability of plucking for non-Space responsibilities. A Lieutenant Colonel on a Division staff is expected to contribute on a level commensurate with his rank. While he must be a specialist in his field, he must also supervise others and coordinate activities across multiple disciplines. Other career field Lieutenant Colonels on the Division staff include the comptroller, who has significant and very well-defined responsibility; Information Operations, who has broad responsibility as coordinating staff as well as super-

COL Tom Kula and
LTC Dan Cockerham
at the 25th Infantry
Division Headquarters
in Camp Speicher Iraq.



vision of a Psychological Operations company; and Public Affairs, who also has significant responsibility and oversight of a public affairs detachment.

When a Division commander or chief of staff looks at his slate of Lieutenant Colonels for “slack,” he won’t touch those officers whose loss will really hurt. When the Space operations officer explains his responsibilities according to doctrine, the thought process of the senior leader is “So, if I give you an additional responsibility I only pay an incremental cost to the G-2, G-5, G-6, G-7, SWO, etc., but I gain a competent Lieutenant Colonel to tackle a significant problem for me? Here’s your new job.” The authors of this paper aren’t saying this is right, we are just observing what actually happened with five Division Commanders during OIF V.

The upside is significant depth built into the bench of former Division Space Element chiefs who have a great deal of experience across the warfighting functions.

The two man Space Elements felt this pressure more acutely than the larger Space Elements. It’s a simple matter of staff “critical mass,” and “less people accomplish less.” When a two-man Element loses an officer for a period of time, or loses half of that officer’s time to another task, it severely cripples the Element. There isn’t a reserve to fall back on or shift tasks to. The worst case example of the five examined was 3rd Infantry Division as Multi-National Division-Center. For most of the deployment, the deputy was wholly committed to another task and the chief rotated through three other jobs with the Space Element as an additional duty.

Fortunately, the Divisions were able to draw considerable direct support from the III Corps and XVIII Airborne Corps Space Elements, the Corps Army Space Support Team as well as the Alternate Compensatory Control Measures support provided by Task Force Troy. The Space Elements also drew support from across their respective Division staffs, which was

more forthcoming as each deployment progressed. The life cycle of a deployed headquarters has three phases: settle in and find a workable battle rhythm, then about 10 months of stability with ever-increasing efficiency, and finally a month or so getting ready to redeploy and transition to the next unit. As efficiency increases, the rest of the staff becomes more willing to donate labor to non-doctrinal tasks.

Some have argued that the Division Space Elements have a long way to go in “integrating Space into plans and operations.” When pressed for examples, the answers invariably include such things as countering Global Positioning System Electromagnetic Interference, getting more types of imagery from different sources, Overhead Non-Imaging Infrared, and blue-force tracking, to name a few. Such statements reveal a lack of understanding of what’s happening in Iraq right now, the level of expertise in our tactical Army across the board, and what a Division staff does vice a Corps or Army level staff.

The Space Elements did examine a variety of other possible Space-related capabilities, including those mentioned above. These included AUTONOMIC (a classified counter-Improvised Explosive Device capability), some Measurements and Signal Intelligence capabilities, and electronic warfare options, just to name a few. The challenge facing a deployed Space Element as opposed to a Space Element in garrison, is that if a capability isn’t ready for employment right now, the Element does not have the time or resources to complete it’s development. The capability provider must complete this work before presenting it to the end-user. This problem isn’t unique to Space related capabilities.

The Space Element’s current equipment set consists of two powerful laptop computers with external hard-drives and in four of the five examples a SATURN left over from the old Modified Table of Organization and Equipment. The

Multi-National Division Baghdad Space Elements used their SATURN to support Alternate Compensatory Control Measures and to support their G-6 with the unfiltered commercial access. The Multi-National Division-North Space Elements used their SATURN to support Alternate Compensatory Counter Measures, Information Operations initiatives, and command group internet. The Multi-National Division-Center Space Element did not have a SATURN. None of the teams used it for imagery download, and none of the teams did imagery manipulation with the laptop computers. The Space work that the boxes were used for could easily have been accomplished by regular laptops.

The authors collectively make several recommendations to future Division Space Elements heading to Iraq. First, get smart on Special Technical Operations and Alternate Compensatory Counter Measures, as you will inherit roles in these missions from your predecessors. If you become a one-man Space Element, that will be all you can handle. Work aggressively to integrate them into plans and operations and in support of the subordinate elements. Second, leverage the Corps Space Element and supporting Army Space Support Team. They will provide daily products and information on theater-wide Space issues and will assist with Requests for Information and reachback. Third, don't worry too much about the Space Support Element Toolset-Light. It is not useful in this fight at the Division level. Finally, expect opportunities to do other things and do your best at them. 

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

LTC Dan Cockerham served as the 25th Infantry Division SSE Chief. 25ID deployed as Multi-National Division-North from August 2006 to October 2007

LTC Scott Parks serves as the 1st Armored Division SSE Chief. 1AD deployed as Multi-National Division-North in October 2007 and returns home December 2008.

LTC Scott Gensler serves as the 4th Infantry Division SSE Chief. 4ID deployed as Multi-National Division-Baghdad in December 2007 and returns home February 2009.

LTC Jim Meisinger served as the 3rd Infantry Division SSE Chief. 3ID deployed as Multi-National Division-Center from March 2007 to June 2008.

LTC Rick Dow served as the 1st Cavalry Division SSE Chief. 1CD deployed as Multi-National Division-Baghdad from November 2006 to December 2007.

The life cycle of a deployed headquarters has three phases: settle in and find a workable battle rhythm, then about 10 months of stability with ever-increasing efficiency, and finally a month or so getting ready to redeploy and transition to the next unit.

