AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Quiet Professionals

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM LESSONS LEARNED

Colonel Bruce Burda
AFSOC/DO
FORCES SUMMARY
AS OF 1 FEB 03

- MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II
- MC-130P COMBAT SHADOW
- AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS
- MH-53 PAVE LOW HELICOPTER
- EC-130 COMMANDO SOLO
- 720th SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP
MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II

TYPE MISSIONS:

INFIL / EXFIL, RESUPPLY, AIRDROP, AIRLAND, BLU-82, HAR, PSYOP, HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

SORTIES FLOWN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC-130E</td>
<td>1,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC-130H</td>
<td>1,106</td>
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HOURS FLOWN:

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC-130E</td>
<td>4,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC-130H</td>
<td>5,172</td>
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</tbody>
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MC-130P
COMBAT SHADOW

TYPE MISSIONS:
HELO AIR REFUELING, SEARCH
AND RESCUE, INFIL/ EXFIL,
AIRDROP, AIRLAND

SORTIES FLOWN:  1,082
HOURS FLOWN:   3,481
AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS

TYPE MISSIONS:
CAS, ARMED RECCE, ARMED INTERDICTION, C2 RELAY

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,238
AC-130H: 621
AC-130U: 617

HOURS FLOWN: 8,124
AC-130H: 3,093
AC-130U: 5,031
MH-53
PAVE LOW HELICOPTER

TYPE MISSIONS:
INFIL/EXFIL, CSAR

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,053

HOURS FLOWN: 2,431
EC-130
COMMANDO SOLO

TYPE MISSION:
PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS
BROADCASTS

SORTIES FLOWN: 373

HOURS FLOWN: 2,888
AFSOC
SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP

TYPE MISSION:
SR/DA/SSE/UW

AUSTERE AIRFIELD OPS:
CONT’L 8,100 SORTIES

TERMINAL ATTACK CTRL:
630 TERMINAL AIR STRIKES
C2 OF UAV’S
2.2 MIL LBS OF BOMBS

PERSONNEL RECOVERY:
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS/
INCIDENTS
C2ISR

- LIMITED C2ISR ASSETS (AWACS, JSTARS, RIVET JOINT, PREDATOR) AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SOF.
  - SOF OPERATIONS NOT FULLY COORDINATED WITH C2ISR ASSETS DUE TO:
    - STOVEPIPED FUNCTIONS
    - OVER CLASSIFICATION
    - ATO REQUIREMENTS FOR SOF GROUND/AIRBORNE ALERTS

- SOLUTION: FULLY INTEGRATE SOLE IN ALL FUNCTIONS

- SOF LACKED KNOWLEDGE OF CAF C2ISR AND EW CAPABILITIES/EMPLOYMENT LIMITATIONS
  - SOF’S DESIRE TO BE “CLANDESTINE”
  - LACK OF COORDINATION/COMMUNICATION WITH CFACC

- SOLUTION: “SPREAD THE WORD” & INTEGRATED SOLE
UAV’s

- UAV INTEGRATION GREATLY INCREASED AC-130 EFFECTIVENESS
  - ACQUIRED ABILITY TO INTEGRATE UAV’S INTO TERMINAL ATTACK CONTROL OPERATIONS

- SUCCESS OF TACTICAL UAV’S
  - ROUTE RECON
  - FORCE PROTECTION
  - VIEWING AVENUES OF APPROACH
  - POSITIVE TARGET ID
LESSONS LEARNED

INTEGRATION/DECONFLICTION

- AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES DID NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE DECONFLICTION SYSTEMS (BLUE FORCE TRACKING, SADL, LINK-16)
  - LACK OF TRAINING/EDUCATION AND CONOPS
  - FILTERING OF BFT SIGNALS

- SOLUTION: GET COP TO THE FIELD; TRAINING AT SOF UNIVERSITY
FIRES

- Targets were fragged inside known restricted fire areas/no fire areas established in the AOC. Target deconfliction defaulted to the sole Fratricide.

- Fratricide
  - C2ISR and CAF were provided limited information on SOF team operations/location – several close calls
  - Navigational procedures-awareness – one fratricide incident

- There was no fire support cell in the CJTF to deconflict operations with the ground force commander

- Solution: Located an ACCE with CJTF
AFSOC

LESSONS LEARNED

SYSTEMS INTEROPERABILITY

- LACK OF COMMONALITY (DATUM AND FORMAT) AMONG THE SERVICES (WGS 72 VS 84)...COORDINATION IMPACTED
  - LED TO DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING HLZ, DZ, FRIENDLY AND ENEMY TARGET LOCATIONS

- AIR UNITS DID NOT ALWAYS UTILIZE SAME COORDINATE SYSTEM AS GROUND UNITS (LAT/LONG VS. GRID)
  - SOLUTIONS: EXCHANGE OF LNO’S; EDUCATE NEW UNITS AS THEY ARRIVE, CONTINUED JOINT EXERCISES/TRAINING
PSYOPS CAMPAIGN

- LIMITED FEEDBACK TO COMMANDO SOLO ON QUALITY/PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS OF BROADCAST
“EXTREME” OPERATIONS

- AIRCRAFT OPERATED ON THE MARGINS
  - HIGH GROSS WEIGHTS/PRESSURE ALTITUDES/ TEMPERATURES
  - HELO A/R OPERATIONS CONDUCTED AT 10,000 FT.
  - LOW LEVEL OPERATIONS 10-15,000 FT.
  - AIRDROP PROFILES (HIGH ALT MASS CDS AIRDROPS)
  - IMPOSING ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES LIKE “TALCUM POWDER” DUST AND “LOW VISIBILITY CONTRAST RIDGELINES”

- SOLUTION: LIMIT THOSE MISSIONS IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS; MANAGE RISK OF THOSE MISSIONS THAT ARE “MUST DO”; EDUCATE INCOMING CREWS WITH LESSONS LEARNED; VALUE OF KIRTLAND TRAINING

- AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE INADEQUATE FOR LONG DURATION HIGH ALTITUDE OPERATIONS

- SOLUTION: SHORT TERM: ADDITIONAL CLOTHING
  - LONG TERM: AIRCRAFT MODIFICATION
AFSOC SPECIAL TACTICS
LESSONS LEARNED

SPECIAL TACTICS

- AIRMEN ON THE GROUND GREATLY ENHANCED AIRPOWER EFFECTS
- HANDOFF OF ST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TO CONVENTIONAL FORCES DELAYED FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS
- TERMINAL CONTROL IS NOT MERELY CAS BUT MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS BATTLEFIELD AIR OPERATIONS (BAO)
- TACTICAL UAV’S – FORCE MULTIPLIER!
AFSOC
LESSONS LEARNED

FINAL THOUGHTS

- OEF WAS A SPECIAL OPERATIONS WAR
- THERE WERE MANY “LESSONS LEARNED”
- HAVE TAKEN CORRECTIVE ACTIONS
- NEXT CONFLICT, DEPENDING ON TIMING, COULD BE FOUGHT BY SAME WARRIORS – WON’T HAVE TO RE-LEARN LESSONS!