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About the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned: The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) is part of the Training and Education Command (TECOM) of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), located at MCB Quantico, VA. The MCCLL mission is to collect, analyze, manage, and disseminate knowledge gained through operational experiences, exercises, and supporting activities in order to enable Marines to achieve higher levels of performance and to provide information and analysis on emerging issues and trends in support of operational commanders and the Commandant of the Marine Corps Title 10 responsibilities. MCCLL manages the Marine Corps Lessons Management System (LMS) and Consolidated Data Records (CDR) databases, and reports findings, trends and issues through verbal, written and electronic media.

Visit the MCCLL Website at: www.mccll.usmc.mil

Customer service support for the MCCLL Website and questions concerning this newsletter should be directed to: harry.t.johnson@usmc.mil or michael.jones@usmc.mil Telephone: 703.432.1279 DSN: 378.1279

You are also welcome to contact the Director of MCCLL with your comments:

Col Monte E. Dunard, USMCR, Director MCCLL.

monte.dunard@usmc.mil or dunardme@mccdc.usmc.smil.mil DSN: 378-1286

About the MCCLL Forums & Discussion Groups

The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned has added a Forums section (found on the MCCLL Website [home page](#)) as a means of soliciting "good ideas" from various communities of interest, sharing information among participants, and collaborating on common problems. Forums are also a venue for "good ideas" to reach the actionable stage much quicker than would otherwise be the case. Anyone who has registered on the MCCLL system may participate in the Forums, but like any tool, it must be used properly in order to achieve the most productive results. It is crucial that the posts to the MCCLL Forums be professional, since they go directly to the membership without the intervention of a moderator. Users must be respectful of the attitudes and sensibilities of all members. Personal and/or private messages should not be posted to the public forums. In addition, all discussions must be maintained at the unclassified level.

One of the Forums recently added to the Website addresses the crucial topic of [Military Advisor Support](#) provided to foreign military forces. This Forum is designed to provide an opportunity for Marines to share their experiences in training and providing other support to foreign military units, as well as to assist planners who are involved in developing training packages for Marine Corps advisors. In offering this Forum, MCCLL hopes to obtain personal accounts from military advisors on their successes in working with foreign units, as well as to surface problems that are common within the community. The personal account of a Gunnery Sergeant who served as an advisor to the 507th Iraqi National Guard ([later in this newsletter](#)) is an excellent example of the kind of discussion we hope to generate in these Forums. MCCLL is committed to following up on all discussion topics, particularly those that should be brought to the attention of planners and policy makers.



See a [discussion group to collect comments on a recent terrorist video](#)

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Discussion Group on a Recent Terrorist Video

A discussion group that has recently been established on the MCCLL website to solicit comments on a terrorist video is another example of the use of Forums to collect information and obtain feedback from the community. As noted by Col Philip Volpe, U.S. Army Assistant Surgeon General for Force Projection, the video ([located here](#)) was prepared as "part of the information operations campaign on a terrorist website for the recruitment of new members, motivation to current members, and instructions/education to operatives in the field on designing attacks." The video "may help to clarify the "decades" ahead we will face in the conflict against radical fundamentalist extremism."

Col Michael Shupp, Commanding Officer, 1st Marine Regiment, has pointed out to his commanders that the video offers a number of lessons to Marine units. Some of the unacceptable tactics highlighted in the video are: **a)** Travel on dirt trails, **b)** at predictable intervals, **c)** with no gun orientation during movement, **d)** no security cordon set, and **e)** no consideration for secondary attack."

In an effort to further exploit the lessons from this video LtGen James Mattis, Commanding General, MCCDC, has directed that comments be solicited on the video to be used in preparing an enhanced videotape production that inserts training suggestions and personal accounts into the original video. The objective would be to contrast what the enemy considers to be our weakness with what we consider to be a better way of doing business. As noted by LtGen Mattis, "We need to put our stamp on this when we put it out to our lads. Poorly trained and poorly rehearsed troops look the same the world over. Their lack of immediate action drills show a failure to anticipate or rehearse the unit's response/actions for a type of attack easily anticipated by all hands."

The MCCLL discussion group on this terrorist video is [located here](#). Comments are actively solicited on the circumstances portrayed in the video. In particular, we encourage the submission of lessons learned as a result of similar insurgent attacks, as well as proposals for enhanced TTPs that would have resulted in a significantly better outcome.

Iraqi Elections Support: In anticipation of the constitutional referendum and elections held on 15 October 2005, the MCCLL published a report in early October summarizing observations and lessons from the earlier Iraqi elections that were held in January 2005 for the purpose of establishing a constitutional assembly.

The MCCLL report documents the aggressive security posture of Coalition Forces (CF) in support of the Iraqi Security Force (ISF), resulting in the denial of the anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) the opportunity to target polling centers effectively on election day. The outcome was an election that was generally regarded as free and fair with significantly fewer disruptions and casualties than anticipated. The MCCLL report highlights election lessons and observations in the areas of communications and coordination, security, logistics, and information operations and public affairs. The complete report is available at [Elections Support](#).

Some key lessons in the area of Iraqi election support are: [Use of Standing Metal Detectors During Phases III thru V of the Iraqi Elections Jan 05](#), [Protection of Communications Links During Phases I thru V of the Iraqi Elections](#), and [Biometric Automated Toolset \(BAT\) Scanning of Personnel During Phases I thru V](#).

Please visit the MCCLL website for additional lessons and after action reports related to the Iraqi elections.



Marine from the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing holds up a sign for workers from the Independent Electoral Commission Iraq (IECI). The wing provided aerial transport of election materials and workers.

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About the Submission of After Action Reports

The lessons available in the Lessons Management System (LMS) are only as good as the input provided by "those who have gone before." Many of the lessons currently resident in the LMS have been extracted from after action reports submitted by units returning from theater. Two examples are:

1. MCCLL recently received an [after action report](#) from the Second Air Naval Liaison Company (2d ANGLICO) that had been prepared after completion of the company's mission to provide MAGTF Commanders with a liaison capability and foreign area expertise for the purpose of planning, coordinating, employing, and conducting terminal control of fires in support of joint, allied, and coalition forces. The AAR from the 2d ANGLICO provides lessons learned beginning with its re-activation in July 2003, through pre-deployment planning, to completion of its OIF 04-06 combat deployment. Some examples of noteworthy lessons provided by 2d ANGLICO are: [Training Ranges](#), [Firepower Control Team \(FCT\) Size](#), [Laser/GPS Guided Precision Weapons](#), [UAV Airspace Deconfliction](#), and [TAR/HR Net/Joint Air Request Net](#).
2. The recent [after action report](#) provided by Company F, 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, offers a rifle company perspective on combat operations in OIF 04-06 (in this case in the rural environment of the Yusufiyah zone in Iraq). The company provided a number of substantive lessons including: [Distributed Operations and an Ambush Mentality](#) and [Mobile Strike Team Employment](#).

Marine units are encouraged to submit AARs, SOPs, and other documents to MCCLL either through organizational channels or directly to: [Send AARs/SOPs](#). (The submission method depends on the procedures established by your chain of command.)

The experiences of OIF 04-06 units will be invaluable to those deploying next to the theater; however, maximum benefit can only be achieved if these experiences are readily accessible to the newly deploying units. Submitting unit AARs to MCCLL is one of the best means to provide this ready access.



Marines from the 2d ANGLICO direct an aircraft on potential targets during an armed reconnaissance mission in Haditha, Iraq.



Marine from F Company, 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, provides security at a weapons cache site near Yusufiyah, Iraq.

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NCO Lessons Learned Conference: On 9-10 August 2005, MCCLL sponsored the second in a series of conferences designed to capture the operational experiences of deployed Marines in a systematic manner from across the MAGTF. The purpose of this particular conference was to gather lessons learned from front line small unit combat leaders in the operating forces, particularly as they relate to training. The conference was attended by 14 Sergeants and 2 Corporals from across the MAGTF. The complete report of the conference results is at: [NCO Lessons Learned Conference Report](#)



NCOs from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, break a lock on a building in Ramadi in order to conduct a search.

Selected Recommendations and Observations from the NCOLL Conference:

• Training

- Entry-level training is on track; boot camp training should emphasize discipline, aggressiveness, teamwork, and physical and mental toughness.
- Pre-deployment training is excellent, but late fills and many individual augments can result in "catch up" training that reduces combat effectiveness and unit cohesion.
- Increased emphasis is needed on small unit (squad and platoon) training
- Video recording of training exercises can significantly increase learning
- MOUT facilities should be varied to reflect a wide range of geographic areas
- Convoy operations training is good, but should include non-combat arms
- Increased use of M16/M4 9mm AA12 and AA21 training rounds is recommended
- More training ammunition is needed across the MAGTF
- A "playbook" with options should be used as opposed to a rigid SOP

• Manning

- 120-day stabilization is needed to ensure training for all hands
- Unit pre-deployment training is critical for unit cohesion
- DepTempo varies from unit to unit with infantry and helo medium assault support being tasked the most
- 7-month deployment cycle is "doable" for now, but if Marines are deployed for more than three tours, morale and retention problems will likely increase

• Equipping:

- Emphasis should be placed on individual fit, modular, simple equipment with less weight
- NCOs estimate that each Marine spends approximately \$400 out of pocket for personal equipment
- "Needs" list includes: fire resistant face/neck protection, better grenade carriage/storage, battery commonality, good gloves, better entrenching tool, squad notebook computer/PDA

• Other

- A 2-week decompression/cool down period outside Iraq is essential; unit cohesion is one of the main keys to success; chaplain and psychiatrist briefings are viewed negatively unless the briefer has actually participated in combat operations
- There is a need to increased suicide awareness training at the small unit level
- Sergeants and O369s returning to the fleet should receive infantry refresher training prior to reporting to their units
- If properly trained and equipped, NCOs can accomplish distributed operations missions.

Please refer to the complete report at [NCO Lessons Learned Conference Report](#) for additional issues, observations and recommendations.

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CSSE Commander's Conference: The third conference sponsored by MCCLL was conducted on 15-17 August to gather lessons from commanders experienced in logistics operations. The purpose was to gather lessons learned and observations from front line CSSE Commanders, particularly as they relate to training. Discussion topics included convoys, rear area security, logistics missions, gaps in support, contractor support, assault support, and support in joint, combined OGA, NGO, and Iraqi environments. The conference was attended by two colonels and three lieutenant colonels with aviation ground support (MWSS, MWSG) or logistics (CSSB, CLB, ESB, MSSG) command experience in OIF I and/or OIF II. The complete report of the conference results is at [CSSE Commander's Conference Report](#).



Bulk fuel Marines from the Combat Logistics Battalion 2 in Al Asad roll a new fuel line to replace an older one.

Selected Recommendations from the CSSE Commander's Conference:

• Organizing

- The shift from a functional organization mission (e.g., Supply Bn, Maintenance Bn) to a multi-function one (e.g., CSSB, CLB) has proven to be significant. A core multi-functional capability is needed in standing units around which "plug and play" capabilities can be task organized.
- Integration of globally sourced units and augments has been complicated by the flux in FSSG organizations; standard organizations are needed.
- The consolidation of Military Police was not supported by the conference participants; CSS and AGS units need to retain a core capability for convoy support and area security

• Training

- Partnering with local colleges for vocational training in SASO-related areas was recommended (e.g., electrical skills needed for infrastructure rebuilding)
- Reservists have provided valuable skill sets in both OIF I and OIF II (e.g., journeyman level electricians, law enforcement officers, lawyers)
- Marine ethos and training as riflemen is essential to CSSE combat success
- CSS needs to be integrated into GCE-centric pre-deployment training
- Although every convoy should be treated as a combat operation, CSS missions also need to be considered in planning immediate action drills, TTPs, etc.

• Manning

- Early coordination between mobilized reserve units and the gaining force command is essential in disseminating expectations and timelines and ensuring training coordination
- More standardized training for logisticians, as well as standardized systems, processes, and organizational constructs for units, are needed.
- Contact teams and small PEB are needed for every convoy

• Equipping

- The number one shortfall is over-the-horizon (OTH)/on-the-move (OTM) communications
- An issue for the USMCR was the training allowance versus Table of Equipment delta
- "Needs" list includes: off-road refueler, M870 trailer and LVS replacements, more crew served weapons, ring mounts and NVGs, and IR lens caps as SL-3 items for vehicles
- Gaps and seams in joint support should be anticipated; consider certain high demand/low density capabilities such as HET and additional MHE and reefer trucks
- Include GCE supplies that will likely be required on every convoy (e.g., ammo, MREs, water)

Please refer to the complete report at [CSSE Commander's Conference Report](#) for additional issues, observations and recommendations.

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Significant Trends:

Recent lessons collected by the MCCLL have highlighted the following trends in enemy TTPs:

• Pressure-Detonated Improvised Explosive Devices

- The persistently high rate of Marine Corps and coalition casualties resulting from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remains an area of great concern. Until recently, most roadside explosives have been remotely triggered using a cell phone, doorbell or other wireless device. Although pressure-detonated IEDs have been used by insurgents as far back as the Fall of 2003, most insurgents had abandoned their use after U.S. and Iraqi forces began discovering the devices before they could be detonated.
- The re-emergence of pressure-activated bombs has come as insurgents have acquired greater expertise in their manufacture and placement. For insurgents, the advantage of a pressure switch is that one of the insurgents does not have to risk capture by remaining nearby to trigger the explosion. The major disadvantage is that the timing of the bomb blast cannot be controlled, since any vehicle that is heavy enough (including civilian cars and trucks) can trigger the blast. Coalition forces are once again increasing their vigilance against the pressure-detonated devices.

• Concealed Improvised Explosive Devices in Roadway Debris

- Whenever there is significant debris alongside roadways, a "golden" opportunity is presented to insurgents for the hurried concealment of IEDs in anticipation of convoy movements. The most effective means of addressing the problem involves the "sanitation" of routes regularly used by convoys and other military vehicles. Clearing debris from the sides of roads can limit the ability of insurgents to be able to emplace IEDs hastily in response to coalition movements. Although some routes have already been "sanitized", many more still require significant cleanup efforts.
- Options for performing roadway cleanup include the use of engineer units to perform the clearing operations or the employment of civil affairs units to arrange for participation by the local populace in the cleanup.

Recent experiences of in-country Marine Corps units continue to highlight the following major area of concern:

• Long-Range Communications

- Long-range communications (LRC) continue to be an area of concern for units deployed to OIF 04-06 as evidenced by numerous recent after action reports from across the spectrum of Marine Corps units. Ground forces are continually being required to operate at ranges that are neither traditional nor doctrinal, with current tables of equipment (TOE) inadequate to support the distances involved. In addition, the LRC resources of many aircraft such as the CH-46 and CH-53 (principally, HF radio equipment) are either obsolete or have been removed from the aircraft in order to save weight.
- Options for alleviating these deficiencies include the employment of additional long-range tactical satellite (TACSAT) communications assets or the use of improved HF radios such as the PRC-150/VRC-102 series. These newer HF radios have demonstrated significant improvements from previous generations in the areas of signal-to-noise ratio, voice quality, and data capability, although they still do not achieve the quality of TACSAT transmissions.
- On the other hand, the attraction of advanced technologies to satisfy long-range requirements must be tempered by consideration of the complexity of a particular technology and its ease of use. The recent experiences of 2d MARDIV in field testing the advanced Command and Control On-The-Move Network Digital Over-the-Horizon Relay (CONDOR) system highlight the kinds of difficulties that are sometimes encountered in the employment of advanced technology systems ([see CONDOR Information Paper](#)).

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Other Recent Products

The MCCLL Lesson Management System (LMS) contains over 15,000 records including topical papers, lessons learned, after action reports, interviews, photographs, etc. One recent product (featured in the October issue of this newsletter) documented the results of a focused collection effort to identify **3d Battalion, 4th Marines Pre-Deployment Training Lessons and Observations**. A complete list of the most recent products produced by MCCLL is located at: [Recent Products List](#)

Helpful Hints for Using the MCCLL Website

1. Authorized Users can Download Documents from the MCCLL Homepage

Authorized users (with either a .mil or .gov address) can download any of the topical papers located on [the MCCLL homepage](#) simply by right-clicking on the picture/icon, selecting "Save Target As...", and providing the location where you want to save the document.

2. The MCCLL User Guide Has Now Been Posted on the Homepage

A guide has now been developed for authorized users of the system; it is available on [the MCCLL homepage](#). The guide provides a handy reference to assist users in navigating the Website and performing many standard operations.

3. Additional Criteria Have Been Added for Searching "Lessons Learned"

Several additional criteria have been added to the [lessons' searches](#). These include searches on: (1) ranges of Lesson ID numbers, (2) security classifications, (3) War Fighting functions, and (4) DOTMLPF categories.

4. Any MCCLL Website User Can Participate in a MCCLL Forum "Anonymously"

Instructions for participating "anonymously" in a discussion group of a forum are located [here](#).

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The Bomb-Blowing Heroes of Iraq

By Michael Fumento
September 29, 2005

In a war in which most coalition casualties are caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), no unit is more important than Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). What I saw with an EOD team when I was embedded at Camp Fallujah, Iraq is extraordinary.

Commanded by Navy Lt. Cameron Chen, the 8th Engineer Support Battalion EOD comprises ten Marines and five sailors. Like all EOD personnel, they trained at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Marines get seven months of instruction, with sailors an additional two to disable underwater devices. Our first call came from a patrolling Recon team. EOD gets plenty of false alarms, but this was real. The duty EOD response team grabbed me and we quickly set off in a Humvee.

The enemy favors using artillery shells as IEDs, although anything can conceal a homemade bomb including even animal carcasses. Cars and trucks either used in suicide attacks or left by the side of the road are called vehicle-borne IEDs. (VBIEDs.) In our case, a 130-millimeter shell packed with P4 plastic explosive had been buried just to the side of a major highway. Terrorists favor this location, since it's difficult to bury and conceal a bomb in asphalt.



See more of this article at [Tech Central Station](#)

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Marine Corps to Use Lightweight Israeli Armor for Military Vehicles

By David Brinn
October 09, 2005

A kibbutz on the West Bank is not the most likely of places to find a research and development center which has developed a revolutionary light armor for military vehicles.

Then again, maybe it is.

With years of suicide bombings and roadside attacks providing 'real life' experience, the Light Improved Ballistic Armor (LIBA) invented by Dr. Michael Cohen at his company Mofet Etzion, has been proven to be highly effective at saving lives. So much so that the company has recently been awarded a contract to provide the armor for over 1000 US Marine Expeditionary Fighting Vehicles (EFV) - the army's main form of transportation in hot spots like Iraq and Afghanistan.



See more of this article at [ISRAEL21c](#)

Marines Activate Foreign Training Unit

US Marine Corps, Oct. 7, 2005

Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. -- The Marine Corps will activate a new unit here Tuesday, in front of Building H-1. The Foreign Military Training Unit, part of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism) will be the first of its kind in the Marine Corps.

The mission of the FMTU is to provide tailored basic-military-combat-skills training and advisor support for identified foreign military forces in order to enhance the tactical capability of coalition forces in support of the Commander, United States Special Operations Command and the Geographic Combatant Commanders' Theater Security Cooperation Plans. "Basically, we train foreign military [personnel] in support of SOCOM," said Col. Peter Petronzio, commanding officer of FMTU.

But even a unit with one basic concept has many moving parts. "Some of the challenges we've faced, like any new organization, is getting equipment, manning our unit, synchronizing time tables of manning with equipment, and just getting people to understand who we are and what we do," said Petronzio. "We're eager to get our message out [to the public], and that's probably our biggest challenge. There are a lot of folks out there that either don't understand us or have a very old perception of us. We just hope they will be able to understand our purpose."



See more of this article at: [Marine Corps News](#)

Dragon Eye Flies High to Maximize Surveillance

U.S. Marine Corps, Sept. 30, 2005

Jalabad, Afghanistan --- Marines and Sailors from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, use the Marine Corps Dragon Eye, the smallest functioning unmanned aerial vehicle, in an effort to minimize friendly casualties and maximize surveillance during missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

"The Dragon Eye is a good tool, if used properly. It's excellent for short-range recon and can easily be taken on a patrol to further increase a squads abilities," explained Sgt. Henry M. White Jr., infantryman, from Grady, Ark. "It's great for taking pictures of supposed improvised explosive devices found on roads."

The Dragon Eye, basically, is a small remote-controlled airplane that carries two real-time video cameras. With the Dragon Eye, Marines and Sailors have a tool that allows them to see farther over rough terrain, fits in a backpack, and can be taken with them and used anywhere. Marines and Sailors in enemy territory may face danger approaching from unexpected directions. With the Dragon Eye, they can easily launch a system that will give them up-to-date reconnaissance that encompasses a vast area, giving them a distinct advantage.



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The Emerging Iraqi Army: A Gunnery Sergeant's Personal Account

"I worked with a company (REIN) of Iraqi National Guard (ING) troops in the northern area of Babil province and I can tell you that when my unit redeployed home, those Iraqi troops were about as independent as I think one could expect or hope for. The ING conducted their own patrols, stood their own 24-hour checkpoints and conducted their own raids often without direct US support. All we did was provide a QRF in case things got out of hand. If detainees were taken, they were tactically interrogated for value and either then turned over to local police forces for prosecution, or to us if they posed a threat to coalition forces. The senior officer in the area was even attempting to establish something similar to military law and was working with the provincial capital to get an Iraqi judge assigned to his unit so that he could be involved in the legal system of his country. He viewed the local police as inept and wanted to make positive changes to help bring legitimate order to the area. This officer also instituted a 'tip-line' where concerned locals could call into the ING and report threat information anonymously. Sheiks from opposing tribes were brought together to gain understanding and support for the overall effort. All this was done by the ING with minimal US support.

This was a Shia/Sunni unit that worked well with each other despite some serious rifts along tribal lines. There were informers in the unit, no doubt, but measures were taken to control their effect on missions and troops. The ING would not be briefed on a mission until the last minute to prevent leaks. This was a measure wholly endorsed by the ING's senior officer who knew the reality of the threat and wanted all precautions taken. The local area where this unit operated was similarly split between Shia and Sunni personalities. This made conducting operations a sensitive subject as men would have to overlook tribal loyalties in order to complete a mission. It was never an easy decision, but nor was their hesitancy as these men knew they were working toward something better."



See more of [this personal account](#)

Personal account from GySgt Paul Contreras on the support provided to the 507th Iraqi National Guard from June 2004 to Jan 2005

Book Review

No True Glory, by Bing West

Reviewed by Maj Gen Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., USMC (Ret)

Bing West has written a powerful, somewhat controversial book that zeroes in on the causes, effects, and results of the battle of Fallujah. He makes the case that Fallujah was an outgrowth of unclear strategies, poor planning regarding Iraqi security forces, and a dual chain of command between the civilians in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the military under Central Command, that was driven initially by the Department of Defense (DoD). The confused or lack of communications between the CPA and the established joint task force in Baghdad, the emotional reaction to the murders of the four Blackwater contractors in April 2004, and the appalling ignorance of the Iraqi society, culture, and pressure points on behalf of the leadership, both in Washington and Baghdad, all contributed to the vacillation regarding decisions necessary for an attack into Fallujah.

On the insurgent side, the author goes into detail regarding the extreme difficulty encountered in dealing with the vicious, hardcore killers; the excitable Iraqi youth gangs that supported the insurgents; and the local Sunni clerics who wrapped themselves in their religion while lusting for power through intimidation and graft. He also deals with the absence of an effective Iraqi security organization as a result of L. Paul Bremer's disbanding of the Iraqi Army, coupled with the CPA's inability and lack of funding to create one that was not even marginally effective at the beginning of the fight for Fallujah. Add all of that together with the Byzantine nature of what was left of the Iraqi political system and you have the conditions our troops had to face as the situation deteriorated in that city.

West does a masterful job of weaving together strategic issues, plans at the tactical and policy levels, and the numerous consultations between tactical commanders and local Iraqi religious leaders and bunko artists.



See [more of this book review](#)

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