



ARMY

**Headquarters  
1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Brigade  
OPERATION TELIC 4**

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DCOS/G1/02

See Distribution

4 Jul 04

**LEARNING ACCOUNT INTO THE RNTT BORDER INCIDENT - SHATT AL ARAB  
WATERWAY 21 JUNE 2004 - SUPPLEMENTARY**

References:

- A. 1 Mech Bde Learning Account DCOS/G1/02 dated 29 Jun 04.
- B. E Mail PJHQ-J3-DACOS-A-GS1 [REDACTED] dated 1 Jul 04.

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Ref A was a Learning Account submitted as a formal record of recommendations following the RNTT border incident on 21 Jun 04. Ref B included a request for clarification on a number of points. It should be noted that no further questions have been asked of the 8 individuals involved; 3 have now left theatre, one medically evacuated under the care of the CPN, the other 2 at the end of their tour of duty.

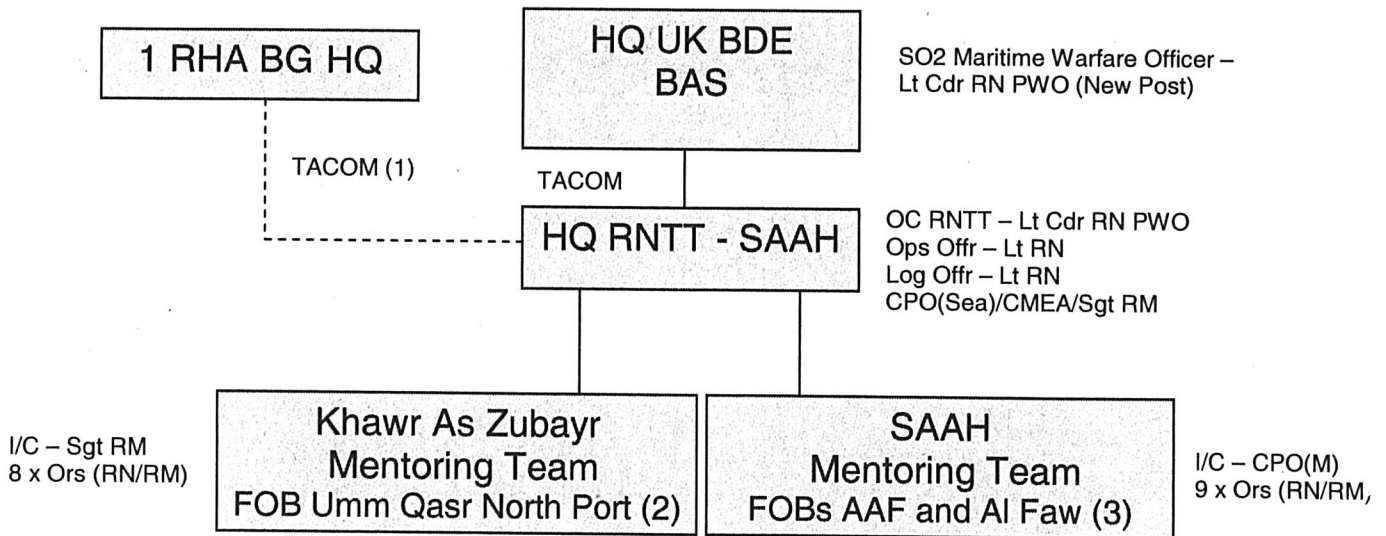
**SUPPLEMENTARY POINTS OF CLARITY**

- 2. Overview. See 1 Mech Bde SOI 223 Littoral Operations on SAA dated 2 Jul 04.
- 3. Ref A Para 2: Command and Control.
  - a. When 1 Mech Bde took over as the UK Bde on Op TELIC 4 there was no formal command relationship with the RNTT. Comd 1 Mech Bde insisted that the RNTT become TACOM and he deliberately brought the new OC RNTT into the Bde HQ in order to give the guidance and direction that allowed him to write SOIs. The command status of the RNTT to 1 Mech Bde remains TACOM, with MND(SE) retaining OPCON. The command relationships are right and allow Comd 1 Mech Bde to assign tasks to the RNTT as Bde Tps in support of the lines of operation. The RNTT have also been placed TACOM to 1 RHA in support of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and so come under the auspices of the CO and the 1 RHA Battle Group. This arrangement confers the full benefits of G1/G4 affiliation.
  - b. HQ 1 Mech Bde and associated elements relocated from Basra Palace (BP) to the Basra Air Station (BAS) on 20 Jun 04. Prior to the move the RNTT operated with 2 x mentoring teams in BP and 1 x mentoring team in Umm Qasr (UQ), the command element was embedded in HQ 1 Mech Bde. This arrangement was mutually beneficial as it allowed

the OC RNTT to act as a principal LO to the Bde HQ and yet still command the bulk of RNTT mentoring teams from BP as it was located alongside the Shatt Al Arab (SAA) waterway.

c. HQ 1 Mech Bde has now relocated to BAS, the resultant move caused a dislocation of the RNTT command element. The OC RNTT currently remains embedded in the Bde HQ and is a core member of the Comd Group and Targeting Group, he also provides a key staff function as the Comd's maritime and littoral advisor. However, the 2 x mentoring teams had to relocate from BP to the Shatt Al Arab Hotel (SAAH) in BASRA City to ensure accessibility to the SAA waterway. The geographical spread of responsibility for the RNTT has increased and thus requires a re-examination of its C2 arrangements.

d. Whilst the RNTT mentoring teams live and operate from the SAAH and UQ, they are required to mentor the IRPS from the FOB at Abu Al Fulus (AAF) and will soon be required to undertake the same function when the FOB and radar station opens at Al Faw. Given the site dispersion and distances involved there now needs to be a clear delineation between command of the RNTT and the requirement for a staff officer in HQ 1 Mech Bde. The recommendation therefore is for an additional RN officer to be appointed as the SO2 Maritime Staff Warfare Officer to HQ 1 Mech Bde, a job specification is attached at Enclosure 1. This will release the OC RNTT to command the detachment and provide the appropriate level of supervision to the mentoring function. The proposed C2 structure for the RNTT is shown below. PJHQ is requested to endorse this proposal.



- Notes:** (1) For SSR Only. Ensures consistent SSR policy, guidance and provision of SSR resources including equipment sourced from MNC I.  
(2) Co-located with A Sqn QRL  
(3) Co-located with 1 CHESHIRE BG.

e. The current experience and qualifications of the personnel within the RNTT Det are appropriate and include:

- (1) Lt Cdr OC RNTT – Comd qualified PWO with recent command experience, 2.5 years amphibious experience and 18 months experience of small boat operations in NI.
- (2) Specialist officers include a LT RN Ops Offr and LT RN Logistics and G1.

- (3) CPO(M) Military training and board and search qualified.
- (4) CPO(Sea) Coxswain instructor.
- (5) RM Sgt – Amphibious boat ops.
- (6) 6 x RM JNCO/Mnes from the FPGRM.
- (7) 17 x mentors from 1 AGRM and RNR.
- (8) Additionally 1 x Tp from 40 Cdo RM to be assigned to the RNTT on arrival in theatre from 15 Jul 04.

4. Telephone Brief. The operation planned for 21 Jun 04 was a routine administrative move in which standard operating instructions applied. A telephone brief was sufficient and necessary for the AAF RNTT Det, whilst the UQ RNTT Det were able to receive a personal brief by the RNTT Ops Offr. The distances between the RNTT mentoring teams and FOBs often necessitate this type of briefing medium as there are no secure data transfer comms such as I Net. To brief in person involves a 1.5 hr journey each way, 2 x vehicles and 7 personnel as escorts<sup>1</sup> and so is not always practicable.

5. Mechanical Problems. The CSBs are primarily designed for use as tugs for pontoon bridge work and are not ideally suited to the long distance patrolling tasks they are required to complete in Iraq and so there have been some mechanical issues. The RNTT had 5 CSBs issued direct from the Corps of Engrs depot at Chatham, whilst 22 Engr Regt hold 3. Availability has been variable; the Engrs typically have between 1-3 boats available on any one day (not least because one was damaged by a grenade attack in May). The RNTT routinely operate with approx 3-4 CSBs available on any one day. Two further CSBs are due to arrive in theatre on 18 Jul 04, one of which will replace the battle damaged boat.

a. Equipment Support. The Engr CSBs are supported by course trained and 'familiarised' REME tradesmen. The RNTT have a RN Artificer CPO to cover their fleet, who has also received 'familiarisation' training. The level of ES in theatre provides ample support and is therefore not an issue.

b. Design, Servicing and Routine Maintenance. The CSBs are fitted with Toyota Landcruiser engines which are genuinely reliable. The boats need to receive monthly inspections for sea-worthiness (fire safety, lifesaving eqpt, hull integrity etc) which are completed by the RN Artificer. The Hamilton Ramjet propulsion system is less reliable

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Mech Bde has raised a RN Equipment Failure Reports to the IPT, they have acknowledged that this is a known problem which is under investigation. Materiel provision is dealt with direct to the IPT who have met the supply response timelines. It is believed that the CSB used by the Umm Oasar RNTT Det on 21 Jun 04 probably suffered from overheating [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

<sup>1</sup> See later point on equipment concerns.

6. VHF Channel 16. The RNTT Det has 2 x Clansman HF Radio sets, this capability took 8 weeks to arrive in theatre with the OC RNTT having to liaise directly with the FLEET Comms Officer. On the 21 Jun 04 the HF Set in UQ was broken and so was not deployed, whilst the AAF Det had the other set. All radios are now operational and are deployed in accordance with SOI 223, the back up remains Iridium satellite phones. The maritime VHF radios are multi channel but range limited, channel 16 is the international distress frequency. DESRON 50 on behalf of HQ 1 Mech Bde attempted to contact the UQ RNTT Det on channel 16 once it became known that they were overdue at the RV, but without success.

7. 2 Metre Contour Line. Following a 2 metre contour line is not subject to an SOP. It was followed on this occasion because the CSB and BW operate in depths below 1m, therefore the 2m contour was assessed by the RNTT Det Comd as a safe depth to operate in and use as a navigational aid as on this occasion it kept them 200m from the Iranian border, thereby ensure they stayed within Iraqi waters .

8. Equipment. The OC RNTT has been regularly submitting weekly ASSESSREPs with key issues of concern to PJHQ and FLEET. The ASSESSREPs highlights any RNTT equipment and personnel deficiencies, the RNTT relies on the support of its affiliated BG for military vehicles, ECM and PMR. Whilst it remains TACOM to 1 Mech Bde it will continue to receive the support it requires, however dedicated vehicles remain an area of concern because vehicles are in short supply throughout the Bde, FLEET are requested to supply the RNTT with 4 x LR FFR/Wolf.

9. Deep Water Channel. As stated the reference used by the RNTT for the border between the Iraq and Iran is Admiralty Chart No 3842 Edn 2 dated 28 Nov 2002.

10. Potential Threat. The entrance to the Shatt Al Arab (SAA) is the gateway for piracy and the smuggling of oil, drugs and weapons and more recently recently a fast boat suicide attack. Threat is a matter of perception, it was the belief of the UQ RNTT Det that a fast boat acting suspiciously was worthy of investigation. The Comd strongly supports the team's decision and their chosen course of action under the prevailing circumstances.

11. Recommendations.

a. Para 16.b Al Faw FOB. A completed CERP request for funding was passed to MND(SE) on 29 May. After consultation with OST, the project was accepted in principle. It was not possible to obtain funding prior to the 30 Jun cut off. The project will come in front of the Project Review Board on 07 Jul. It is very likely to be accepted, and work on a \$100,000 project could start almost immediately. There is little more that can be done to hasten this work.

b. Para 16.c Funds for Radar. The funding for this project has not been released because the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) contracts office has recommended that the project go to tender, as opposed to accepting the recommended supplier. A phone call to General Petreaus might help to speed up this process. This is a CERP application, and there is no other funding line available.

c. Para 16.d Safety Margin. A safety buffer zone of 200m from the Iran/Iraq border wherever practicable. Clearly this is not possible when conducting riverine ops on parts of the SAA that are 250-350m wide.