



**MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND**

***EQUIPPING THE WARFIGHTER TO WIN***

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And/Or PG Logo***

***Tactical Iraqi Language and Culture  
Training Systems  
Lessons Learned from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup>  
Marines 2007***

***LtCol Walt Yates  
A/PM Range Training Aids, Devices,  
and Simulators***

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***PMTRASYS***



- **By 2007 US Forces had been fighting in Iraq for four years**
- **Dominance in combat against the insurgency had not been sufficient to win against the enemy**
- **Outmatched in combat the insurgents had become experts at oblique attacks using IEDs and snipers**
- **Security of the Iraqi populace was tenuous in many places and insurgents moved easily through the populace**



- **US forces tasked to provide security for the local populace, train Iraqi security forces, and pursue insurgents lacked the ability to communicate verbally with Arabic speaking Iraqis**
- **The numbers of trained Arabic linguists and local interpreters had been insufficient to meet the needs of daily operations.**
- **Marines in Al Anbar province at the squad level needed to converse directly with Iraqis**



- **In preparation for the unit's fourth deployment to Iraq since 2003, 3/7 sought to develop a small number of proficient Arabic speakers in each squad**
- **Resident schools were unavailable**
- **SME Linguist availability was limited**
- **Tactical Iraqi Language and Culture Training System was identified as a potentially suitable tool**



- **Select two Marines from every squad**
- **Train them using TILTS at the MAGTFTC Battle Simulation Center for two hour blocks every Monday and Friday**
- **Training commences three months prior to Mojave Viper (capstone pre-deployment training exercise)**



- **3/7 deployed to FOB Hurricane Point in Ar Ramadi in 2007, the same FOB from which they operated in 2005**
- **In 2005 the environment in Ar Ramadi was “highly kinetic” with almost daily combat**
- **Upon completing the deployment in November 2007 3/7 had the distinction of being the first Marine infantry battalion to return from an OIF deployment not to lose a single Marine**



- **Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) conducted a quick-look study in which the Marines of 3/7 who trained with TILTS were surveyed about their training and its effectiveness**
- **In addition to surveying the trainees, the officers of 3/7 were interviewed in a group and asked to assess the impact of the TILTS training and its contribution toward the success of their mission**



- ⇒ 10% have used TILTS on a personally owned computer.
- ⇒ 46% agree that TILTS prepared them for the language requirements of the mission.
- ⇒ 50% indicated that skills acquired with TILTS impacted the success of the mission.
- ⇒ 53% had other Iraqi Arabic language training prior to deployment.
- ⇒ 54% believe they acquired a meaningful proficiency or familiarity in spoken Arabic.
- ⇒ 57% agree that TILTS provided an effective learning experience.
- ⇒ 65% had a chance to listen and understand Iraqi Arabic **daily** during deployment.
- ⇒ 68% believe they acquired a meaningful proficiency or familiarity in Arabic customs.
- ⇒ 75% agree that TILTS is a useful training tool.





- **We had a meal with a native local and held a small conversation that was both in English and Arabic.**
- **I worked on a military transition team (MiTT) team, so I used Arabic everyday trying to communicate with the Iraqi soldiers.**
- **I was able to direct traffic...with simple directional commands.**
- **Everyday, either on patrol or working with Iraqi Police.**

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- **On patrols I would engage locals in conversation about the area they lived in and any problems going on. I also stood a post where Iraqis would go through to get into the station, and I would have to ask them who they were and why they were there.**
- **I was working with the IA and IP everyday, so what I learned with this program helped for the first month until I learned more from the Iraqis.**



- **I worked in the COC and an observation post (OP) and used my Arabic to communicate with and teach the IP/IA posted there with me.**
- **I would interact with IP station chiefs. I would request a working party or IP for a patrol. I would also communicate with the rest of the officers as well as enlisted Iraqi nationals. On patrol 60% of the time I did not use interpreters when talking with Civilians.**



- **If you put TILTS and a teacher together the outcome would be much better.**
- **Prior to deploying, I took a week long class given by an Arabic interpreter. I thought it was very effective, probably more so than TILTS because he was able to explain stuff that a computer couldn't, but it helped a lot having used both programs.**



- **Learning by direct interaction with another person would improve the speed of learning.**
- **TILTS should be given more time to train. I think Marines would go and learn better if there was a curriculum, like finish this amount and take this test by the end of the week.**



- **More time should be given to Marines during the week to learn Arabic.**
- **I think that you should add more hours to the class. It was a good class, but I don't think I had enough hours in the class to use it right.**
- **I recommend using TILTS daily. I feel that daily use will better help Marines retain the knowledge gained.**



- **Overall the system is good, but I think that to be the most effective Marines must use the course every day.**
- **I would just ask for more allotted time for TILTS.**
- **I would change the course to have it at least three times per week.**



- **The Iraqi Arabic I learned, coupled with Arabic learned in country, allowed me to work with IP/IAs more efficiently, both in teaching/planning and on patrol. It also allowed me to create a stronger bond with the people, by communicating with them directly as opposed to through a translator while observing their culture and customs, which I believe caused the Iraqi people to open up to us more. When this occurred our area was more stable and the people began to aid us in our mission.**





- **The skills I learned in the class played a major roll in the success of Iraq and 3/7.**
- **As a mechanic, I had to interact with IP and the IA; it was useful to have a grasp of Arabic for my job.**
- **It helped out very much in being able to communicate with Iraqis and Iraqi police without an interpreter.**



- **TILTS impacted my success as well as 3/7. Iraqis saw that we were different from other Marines. I still have friends from Iraq calling me on the cell phone to keep in touch.**
- **The skill and language I learned helped me talk with Iraqi locals so that I could figure out what their neighborhoods needed (power, water, trash clean-up, etc.).**



**“We had one fixed that did not have an interpreter... we brought out the Phrase-a-lator and the Iraqis did not like the idea of us trying to communicate through a box. They would rather pantomime. They would literally push it away and this happened several times. (Then it occurred to me that) it’s more about the connection they’re looking for. They would rather have the connection and try to work it out than have some piece of technology translate it for you”**

**- Weapons Company Commander 3/7**



**“Some of the Lance Corporals really did have a strategic impact out there...these guys, though not formally trained Arabic speakers, through their normal conversations really helped us out of big jams...looking for missing person out there in the city Marines with this (TILTS) training were able to locate people with the knowledge (of their whereabouts) and vector us in on them...they were able to locate some *high value individuals* for us just by talking to neighbors”**

**– 3/7 Rifle Company Commander**



**“It did greatly enhance our operational capability. At one of my (Joint Security Stations)...we had a 100 man (Iraqi Police)... We only had one interpreter who was (frequently) going out on patrol...Having these Marines with the ability to communicate in the COC increased our tempo, it increased our understanding, it increased most of all our relationship with (the Iraqis) because they understood that we came in with a basic set of (Arabic) knowledge and were willing to learn...”**

**-India Company Commander 3/7**



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