

REVISITING *MODERN WARFARE*

THE 3RD HBCT, 3RD ID'S EXPERIENCE IN MADA'IN QADA, IRAQ

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Nearly half a century ago, French Army Colonel Roger Trinquier wrote *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counter-insurgency*. Intent on capturing what really works in a counterinsurgency, Trinquier drew on the vast experience he had amassed as one of Jean Larteguy's centurions — the hard-bitten French regulars who served as the backbone of the French Army during the tough post-World War II counterinsurgency campaigns in China, French Indochina, and Algeria. *Modern Warfare* became a best seller in France and was translated into English in 1964, complete with an excellent forward by Bernard Fall, the renowned journalist-historian.

In his book, Trinquier defined modern warfare as “an interlocking system of actions — political, economic, psychological, and military — that aims at the overthrow of the established authority in a country and a replacement by another regime.” Fittingly, Trinquier's easily read, practical guide to executing counterinsurgency operations has appeared on a variety of reading lists since the United States' entry into modern warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, since 2004, no author has examined Trinquier's theories to see if they remain applicable on the Iraqi battlefield.

During the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team (3rd HBCT), 3rd Infantry Division's (3rd ID) 14 months of combat in the Mada'in Qada, Iraq, the brigade faced many of the same challenges as Trinquier and his French counterparts did in French Indochina and Algeria. The brigade also implemented key tenets of Trinquier's *modern warfare* — control of the population, destruction of the guerrilla forces, and eradication of the guerrillas' influence on the population — and achieved a significant reduction in violence, the initial stages of reconciliation, and an increase in the capabilities of both the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the qada government. Based on the 3rd HBCT's experience, many of Trinquier's theories remain as relevant to the 21st century counterinsurgent as they did to his 20th century predecessors.

Background

The 3rd HBCT, also known as the Sledgehammer Brigade, deployed to Iraq in March 2007 as the third of five so-called surge brigades. It is a transformed brigade consisting of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment (1-15 IN); 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor (2-69 AR); 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment (3-1 CAV); 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment (1-10 FA); 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion (3-3 BSTB); and 203rd Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). However, during the deployment, 2-69 AR was detached to Multi-National Division-Baghdad and fought in the streets of eastern Baghdad.

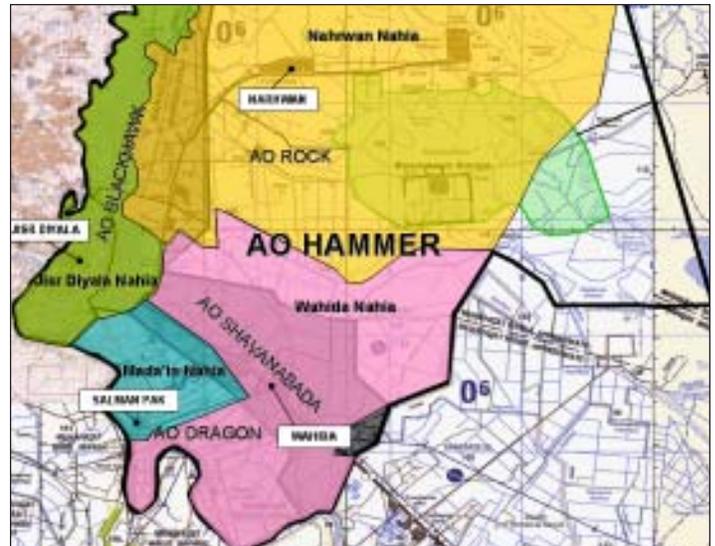


Figure 1 — 3rd HBCT, 3rd ID's AO with Nahia, Battalion Boundaries and Major Population Centers

From March 2007 to May 2008, the 3rd HBCT controlled the Mada'in Qada, the southeastern portion of Baghdad province. A qada is a subordinate government structure in an Iraqi province. The Baghdad province has six qadas and nine security districts. Bounded by the Diyala River on the west and the Tigris River on the south, the Mada'in Qada comprised more than 2,500 square kilometers of mostly irrigated farmland and almost 1.2 million Iraqis. A nahia is a subordinate government structure in a qada. The Mada'in Qada has four nahias: Narhwan, Jisr Diyala, Wahida and Salman Pak. An ethnic fault line ran through the Qada with more than 840,000 Shia living in the Narhwan, Jisr Diyala, and Wahida Nahias and 360,000 Sunni citizens clustered around the Salman Pak enclave. During 2006 and early 2007, ethnic cleansing occurred along the boundary between the sects — resulting in a 2006 average of 53 murders per month in the qada. Key terrain included two bridges into Baghdad, the Baghdad-Al Kut Highway, the former Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Facility, and the Arch of Ctesiphon in Salman Pak.

Upon arrival in Iraq, the Sledgehammer Brigade focused on securing the population. Approximately 2,500 Soldiers served as part of the brigade combat team, with over 40 percent deployed in and amongst the population. The brigade constructed and operated from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hammer; Combat Outposts (COPs) Cahill, Carver, Cashe, Cleary, and Salie; and Patrol Base Assassin. On the ground, 1-15 IN operated in Salman Pak, 3-1 CAV

controlled Jisr Diyala, and 1-10 FA patrolled Wahida. In February 2008, the 13th Georgian Light Infantry Battalion (13th GG IN BN) joined the Hammer team and occupied Wahida. In addition to 3rd HBCT, more than 900 Iraqi Police, 500 members of the Wassit Emergency Response Unit, and more than 2,000 National Policemen helped to control the qada. Collectively, the Iraqi Security Forces manned 129 checkpoints.

Just as Colonel Trinquier experienced in French Indochina and Algeria, 3rd HBCT fought “armed elements acting clandestinely within a population manipulated by a special organization.” Due to the presence of two ethnic groups in the qada, the brigade fought two insurgencies — a Shia insurgency centered on the Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM) political organization and the JAM Special Groups (or direct action cells) and a Sunni insurgency composed of members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

The Shia insurgency attempted to control the population in the Jisr Diyala, Narhwan, and Wahida Nahias through the domination of the Iraqi Police, tacit control of the nahia governments, and management of the health care clinics. In addition, the Shia insurgency solicited donations at the mosques and from local businesses to fund their operations. Tactically, the Shia insurgency defended its areas from sectarian attacks; attrited coalition forces with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), and rocket attacks; and disrupted coalition operations with small arms fire. The Shia Special Groups, or direct action cells, in the 3rd HBCT area of operations consisted of more than 10 groups in and around Jisr Diyala, Narhwan, and Wahida that attacked coalition forces with 107mm rockets and EFP IEDs. In the summer of 2007, several 107mm rocket cells operated in the northern and western parts of the qada and attacked FOB Rustamiyah, FOB Hammer, and PB Assassin with deadly accuracy. Throughout the time in the qada, there were several EFP cells that conducted more than a score of attacks against 3rd HBCT forces along major routes. The 3-1 CAV, 1-10 FA, and the 13th (GG) IN BN primarily conducted operations against the Shia insurgency.

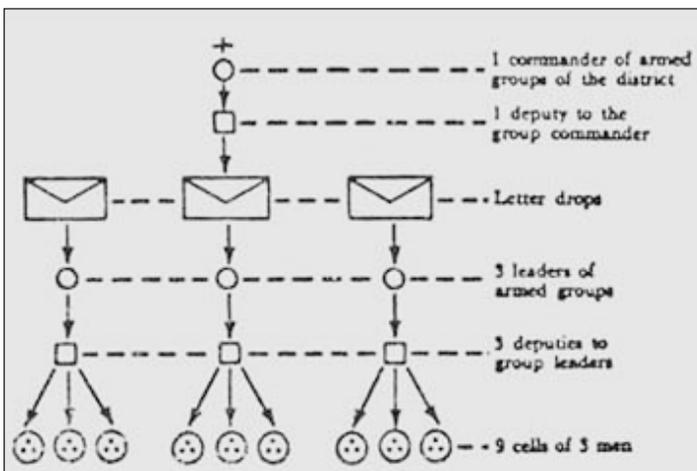
Interestingly, the Shia insurgency organized itself in brigades, battalions, companies, and platoons. Although each of the formations was smaller than its American counterpart, the 3rd HBCT S-2 shop developed an order of battle chart that helped track the enemy’s composition. Their organization mirrored a military

structure and replicated the configuration Trinquier fought in Algeria in the late 1950s (See Figure 2). The order of battle chart proved to be a valuable tool as the brigade attempted to neutralize the insurgency in the qada.

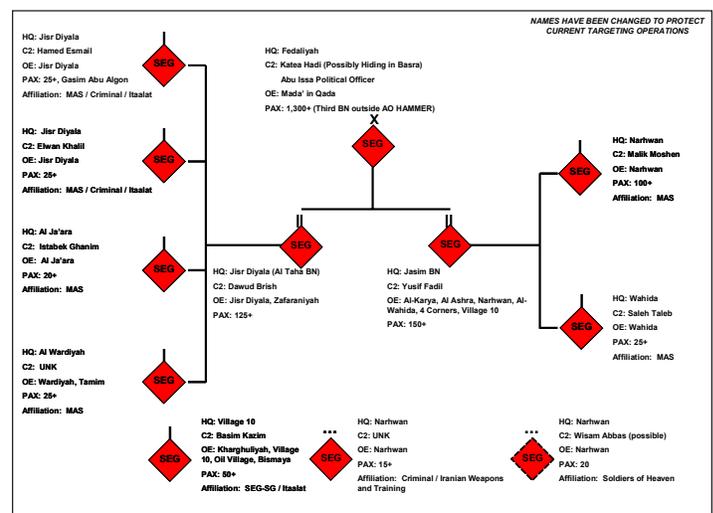
The Sunni insurgency 3rd HBCT fought was an AQI umbrella organization. It consisted of several IED cells, two vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) cells, a suicide vest (SVEST) cell, multiple extra-judicial killing (EJK) cells, a foreign fighter facilitator network, a command and control infrastructure, and a logistics group that provided safe houses, vehicles, and moved fighters. Working out of the numerous villages around Salman Pak, AQI attempted to control the nahia’s population; defend the Sunni areas against sectarian aggression; attrit coalition forces with IEDs, mortar attacks, and small arms fire; and disrupt National Police and Iraqi Police operations with IEDs and sniping. During 2007 and 2008, AQI conducted seven VBIED attacks and seven SVEST attacks across the qada. One attack occurred on May 11, 2007, when the insurgents detonated two VBIEDs simultaneously on the Baghdad-Al Kut Highway Bridge and the Old Jisr Diyala Bridge. Until repairs were complete five days later, the insurgents succeeded in blocking traffic into Baghdad from the east side of the Tigris. AQI also waged a conventional IED campaign along the Jisr Diyala-Salman Pak highway. In just over a year, 79 IEDs were found or detonated along the route; fortunately, only five attacks caused casualties. AQI dominated Salman Pak until early 2008, when a combination of several coalition-Sons of Iraq (SoI) operations cleared them from the villages of Ja’ara and Bawi. Finally, a Special Operations Forces (SOF) raid in early February 2008 killed a key AQI leader, captured 30 other fighters, and forced remaining AQI to the sanctuary around Salman Pak. During the rest of its tour, 3rd HBCT hunted the remnants of AQI and worked with the SoI to keep them from returning to the area.

Although Iraq in 2007-2008 is not Algeria or French Indochina in the 1950s, the insurgencies and the counterinsurgencies shared enough similarities in the areas of population control, destruction of the guerilla force, and the eradication of the insurgent’s influence that reexamining Trinquier’s *Modern Warfare* is a valid proposition. Indeed, a careful look at the two experiences — their successes and their challenges — will serve as a practical tool in the future conduct of modern warfare.

Figure 2 — Algerian Cell Structure (left) and Hammer Shia Extremist Order of Battle (right)



Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency
 (<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/trinquier/trinquier.asp>)



Control of the population

In his book Colonel Trinquier argued that “control of the masses through tight organization, often through several parallel organizations, is the master weapon of modern warfare.” The 3rd HBCT and the Iraqi Security Forces developed multiple means to control the qada’s 1.2 million inhabitants. Three methods in particular — human terrain mapping and biometric data collection, the establishment of the Sons of Iraq, and the

empowerment of the Iraqi Police to enforce the law in their neighborhoods — proved effective in establishing and maintaining control of the population.

One powerful technique that 3rd HBCT used to control the population was human terrain mapping. This technique involved a systematic collection of information about the populace of the Mada’in Qada. At the grass roots level, 3rd HBCT combat patrols kept meticulous records of their everyday

contacts, especially demographic information such as full names, residence location, tribal affiliation, employment information, and photographs.

The case of A Troop, 3-1 CAV highlights the importance of human terrain mapping. CPT Troy Thomas, the troop commander, identified Al Bataa village as a location used as a staging area for AQI as they moved from the southern belt to Baquba, north of Baghdad. To separate the insurgents from



the rest of the population, CPT Thomas conducted what Trinquier called “a careful census of the entire population” of the village by collecting data and photographs of each male resident from age 16 to 40. He then placed the cards into a binder and had a local sheik and a Sons of Iraq leader vet the information. The 3-1 CAV used that information during subsequent operations to identify and tactically question Iraqis who were new to the area and whose information was not in the binder.

The 3rd HBCT also employed another aspect of human terrain mapping by using the Handheld Inter-agency Identification Detection Equipment (HIIDE) system. This system allowed the

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment search for enemy personnel, weapons caches and IEDs during a joint clearing operation with Concerned Local Citizens January 17 in Ja'ara, Iraq.

Sergeant Timothy Kingston



Sledgehammer Brigade to gather biometric data on people, including their pictures, fingerprints, and retinal scans. Our human collection teams (HCTs) would further refine the map through their sources. The brigade also leveraged our Iraqi Advisory Task Force (IQATF) personnel to collect atmospheric and economics data on each of the nahias. In short, the perception of being constantly monitored by intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets and the fact that coalition forces possessed precise personal data influenced the actions (or inactions) of would-be insurgents.

Across the country, SoI has made a remarkable contribution to security, and economic and political progress. Sons of Iraq, which is also known as Concerned Local Citizens (CLCs) or the Awakening, began in the Mada'in Qada in July 2007, almost a year after their inception in Anbar Province. Growing quickly, the brigade recruited almost 6,500 Sunni and Shia SoI between July 2007 and April 2008, and these brave Iraqis helped achieve what Trinquier referred to as the goal of modern warfare: “control of the populace.” In June 2007, prior to the formation of any SoI groups, daily attacks averaged 2.6 in the qada. In April 2008, with the addition of 6,500 SoIs, the daily attack average declined to 1.7 per day.

The inaugural SoI group in AO Hammer was established in the small village of al Arafia. Earning \$8 per day, the SoIs manned checkpoints, guarded neighborhoods, identified IEDs, turned-in caches, and interdicted the movement of weapons and insurgents. Over 10 months, SoIs provided the brigade with over 200 tips, manned 334 checkpoints, turned in 126 weapons caches, and located 45 IEDs. They increased security in the neighborhoods, decreased freedom of movement for insurgents, and removed IEDs and caches, thereby dramatically increasing security across the qada, slowly cutting off the insurgent from the population, and ultimately helping to break the back of AQI in the Mada'in Qada.

Over the next 10 months, 3rd HBCT used the Arafia model to develop 50 different SoI groups to improve security and degrade insurgent influence over the local population. Trinquier noted that the “total dependence on terrain and population is also the guerrilla’s weak point.” Through the Sons of Iraq, 3rd HBCT exploited insurgents’ dependence on the population, took the terrain and their support from them, and significantly diminished their control of the Mada'in citizens. Additionally, the local economies in SoI-controlled areas blossomed overnight due to the direct stimulus of over \$1 million in salaries each month.

To improve the Mada'in Qada’s 900-strong Iraqi Police force, the Sledgehammer Brigade assigned E Company, 1/125th Infantry and then the 59th Military Police Company as their police transition teams (PTT). “Broad police operations will be performed by the regular police,” Trinquier asserted, “if they are adequate and capable.” Inadequate and incapable of leaving the IP station, the qada’s IP were cowed by the insurgency in April 2007. The IP, under the guidance of the PTT, slowly brought law enforcement back to the qada.

In addition to training on basic police techniques and daily mentoring, the brigade initially focused on increasing the Iraqi Police’s capabilities by helping them track their own crime statistics. Under the coaching of the PTT, each month the Iraqi Police tracked and reported their own crime data. Through this data, 3rd HBCT watched the crime rate decline from 28 murders in February 2007 to only five murders in February 2008. The 2007 murder rate in the Mada'in Qada fell to a rate comparable to Detroit, Michigan in 2006. Once the crime statistics program was in place, the brigade

encouraged the Iraqi Police to begin enforcing laws and executing warrants issued by judges. In February 2008, the Iraqi Police took the next step and enforced five arrest warrants.

To effectively control the people, Trinquier instructed forces to “cut off the guerilla from the population that sustains him; render the guerilla zones untenable; and coordinate these actions over a wide area.” The 3rd HBCT’s human terrain mapping and biometric data collection process identified and developed data on the population to better isolate the insurgent from his support; the Sons of Iraq groups made former insurgent strongholds dangerous to operate in; and the Iraqi Police began to restore the rule of law in the qada by enforcing laws and executing warrants. Together these techniques helped 3rd HBCT to drain the sea that the qada’s insurgents swam in for so long.

Destruction of the guerrilla forces

Colonel Trinquier states that the goal of modern warfare for the counterinsurgent is to “eliminate from the midst of the population the entire enemy organization.” From March 2007 to April 2008, 3rd HBCT and the Iraqi Security Forces used this as their mantra; the brigade killed more than 160 insurgents and captured 560 more. Although the kinetic operations removed the insurgents off the street, 3rd HBCT used other means to eliminate the insurgents. For example, the brigade engaged in an aggressive campaign to track and interdict the enemy’s finances and developed the skills to produce a solid evidence packet, which could result in a conviction at the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI). Taken together, these endeavors helped to remove the insurgency from the Mada’in Qada.

The 3rd HBCT understood the need to relentlessly pursue the insurgents both inside the Mada’in Qada and outside it. Over the course of the deployment, 3rd HBCT killed or captured more than 30 brigade or division high value individuals (HVIs). Remarkably, almost half of these HVIs were captured outside of the Mada’in Qada — in places like Baghdad, Tikrit, Samarra, and Abu Ghraib. Typically, just as Trinquier described nearly a half century ago, a coalition operation by one of the battalions would “compel the guerillas (insurgents)...to leave their comfortable hiding places” in the qada and seek refuge outside of the area. Once removed, the insurgent would usually adopt easily targetable habits since they assumed that they were safe. The brigade tracked one target for nearly six months before he was finally captured in Baghdad. This success was due in part to the diligent work of building detailed target packets on the HVIs that could be easily passed to other brigades and the Special Operations community. Relentless pursuit had a tangible effect on the enemy — after detaining two previous Narhwan JAM battalion commanders, the brigade received an intelligence report that no one wanted to assume that role since they realized that they would also be detained by American forces.

Just like the National Liberation Front (FLN) that the French fought in Algeria, 3rd HBCT was confronted by extremist organizations with what Trinquier described as a “financial committee (which) gathered funds from the population at large ...and directly from big companies, banks, leading merchants, etc.” The Narhwan JAM battalion funded their operations through intimidation and harassment of the local population and owners of the brick factory, Narhwan’s largest industry. The extremists extorted nearly 5 million Iraqi Dinar (approximately \$4,200 U.S.) from the owners each week, as the owners understood that refusal to

pay the Shia extremists meant that their factory would be shut down or they might be kidnapped. Through a combination of engagements with local leaders and interrogations of captured extremists, 3rd HBCT intelligence analysts were able to outline the financial network, the process of collecting the funds, and the key players involved in the extortion in and around Narhwan. The brigade then conducted operations that specifically targeted these individuals. In one operation, 3-1 CAV detained seven extortionists immediately after they collected their weekly payment from the brick factory owners. Another operation captured the Shia extremist’s ledgers. With the idea that capturing \$300 (which was the amount the Narhwan Shia extremist group paid a member in monthly salaries) removed another extremist off the street, 3rd HBCT “followed the money” and severely disrupted the Shia extremist group around Narhwan and thus crippled their ability to conduct attacks.

Once an insurgent was detained, 3rd HBCT worked diligently to ensure his conviction through CCCI. The brigade stressed to its units that to be successful at gaining conviction, the units needed to take a law enforcement approach to the insurgency. Toward that end, 3rd HBCT conducted tactical site exploitation (TSE) on each objective to collect, document, and organize evidence for exploitation. Units, with help from the Law Enforcement Professionals (LEP), an MPRI program that coupled experienced law enforcement agents with battalions and brigades, constructed a criminal case file of all unclassified evidence including fingerprints, photographs of caches, videos of attacks, sworn statements from Soldiers and Iraqis, and confessions. The thousands of Iraqi biometric records enrolled in BATS/HIIDE system proved valuable in matching fingerprints found at attack sites. As a result of this meticulous evidence collection (including biometric evidence), the Sledgehammer Brigade directly linked a dozen insurgents to specific IED and IDF attacks by matching fingerprints taken during TSE. Additionally, the weapons intelligence teams (WITs) examined all evidence related to IEDs and EFPs in 3rd HBCT’s AO to identify bomb-making signatures, which allowed the brigade to track numerous IED cells and their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). As a result of detailed TSE, organized criminal case files, and fingerprint matches to specific IED or EFP attacks, the brigade sent 315 insurgents to the theater internment facility (TIF). In addition, 24 insurgents have been convicted or are pending a conviction at the CCCI.

To destroy an insurgency, Trinquier advises in his book that a counterinsurgent force must methodically pursue it “until the enemy organization is entirely annihilated.” The 3rd HBCT attempted to destroy both Shia and Sunni insurgencies through relentless pursuit of the enemies’ leaders, a focused effort to eliminate the insurgencies funding, and a law enforcement approach to countering the guerrilla. Together, these efforts significantly reduced attacks, emboldened Iraqi Security Forces to enforce the law, and allowed SoI to retake control of their communities. Although the insurgencies in the Mada’in have not been completely annihilated, they have been neutralized to such an extent that by April 2008, laws, the elected political leaders, and local Iraqis had begun to control the future of the qada.

Eradication of the guerrilla’s influence on the population

The goal for both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent in Iraq — as it was for Trinquier — is to control the population. While the



Figure 3 — With the assistance of the Sons of Iraq, the 3rd HBCT conducted market revitalization projects. The photos above show the Salman Pak Market before (left) and after (right) Operation Market Garden.

Sunni and Shia insurgents resorted to assassinations, murders, spectacular VBIED and SVEST attacks, and extortion of legitimate businesses to dominate the people, the 3rd HBCT utilized all six lines of operation — security, transition, governance, rule of law, economics, and communications — to manage the people of the Mada'in Qada to purge the insurgency and to tacitly support both coalition forces and the government of Iraq. Some of the more successful policies the 3rd HBCT employed were the reconstruction of the irrigation infrastructure, the rehabilitation of the Narhwan Brick Factory, the direct economic stimulus provided by the Sons of Iraq, and the establishment of the Voice of Mada'in radio station. Collectively, these initiatives, as Trinquier described, worked towards the “eradication of their (the insurgent’s) influence on the population.”

The 3rd HBCT funded over \$37 million in projects during its 14 months in the Mada'in Qada. Several multi-echelon projects played an instrumental role in reducing the insurgency’s influence, as they have an initial impact and they create longer-term, sustainable employment. Two examples stand out. In 2006, insurgents destroyed the huge pumps at the Nine Nissan pump station and the Al Bawi pump station. These pumps fed canals that moved water dozens of kilometers away from the Tigris River so farmers could grow crops. Working with key leaders in the nahias and the qada government, the brigade coordinated and funded the repair of the pump stations over a nine-month period. The difference between the 2007 and the 2008 growing seasons was remarkable — fields that had lain fallow for several years produced crops. Another project with a multi-echelon impact was the Narhwan Brick Factory Complex. In 2007, over half the factories were dormant due to inadequate access to heavy fuel oil (HFO), a by-product from refineries. Once again, the brigade worked with officials from the Baghdad Province and local leaders to ensure that HFO and electricity were available to power the kilns to dry the bricks. After several months of negotiations, the GoI began to move HFO from the Bayji refinery, north of Baghdad, to the brick factories. Dozens of factories reopened and the complex went from providing 750,000 bricks to 3.7 million bricks per day. The increase in HFO also increased employment six fold, from 2,000 workers to 12,000 employees.

As discussed earlier, the Sons of Iraq had a powerful influence on decreasing violence in the Mada'in Qada. They also had a powerful influence on revitalizing the economy. The \$8 paid daily to each SoI member resulted in \$1.7 million in salaries being directly inserted into the local economy, providing an immediate and needed economic stimulus. This stimulus, coupled with the marked increase in security, translated into revitalized neighborhoods. No longer intimidated by extremists and no longer afraid to conduct daily transactions, business owners reopened markets with the help of microgrants. In early 2008, 3rd HBCT conducted a market revitalization project in Salman Pak that cleaned up the market and doubled profits for the store owners since the SoI had money to spend. In areas where 3rd HBCT did not form SoI groups, the economic recovery was much less noticeable.

In early 2007, extremist groups were winning the information war in the Mada'in Qada. Without a constant CF presence and given limited sources of outside information and an abundance of extremist propaganda, the insurgency controlled what local Iraqis saw and heard. They were able to portray CF operations as what Trinquier described as “brutalities in the eyes of the public.” The 3rd HBCT attacked the insurgents’ message through an effective information campaign that used leaflet drops, loudspeaker broadcasts, and face-to-face engagements. IQATF and Tactical PSYOP Teams (TPT) gathered atmospherics following these IO attacks. Using FOB Rustamiyah’s Peace 106 as a model, 3rd HBCT established the qada’s first radio station, FM 107.1. Opened in January 2008 as a joint GoI and CF project, the “Voice of the Mada'in” provided an outlet for Iraqis to express their questions, concerns, and sometimes anger towards their local, tribal and CF leaders. Since most Iraqis receive their information from radio and television, the radio station’s potential impact on extremist information warfare is unlimited. The Voice of the Mada'in radio station gave 3rd HBCT another means with which to thwart extremist messages and spread our message about the bright future for Iraq.

The 3rd HBCT, 3rd ID attacked the Shia and Sunni insurgencies in the Mada'in Qada across all lines of operation. The completion of multi-echelon projects increased crop production and

productivity and employment at the Narhwan Brick Factory Complex. Employment of the SoI provided unemployed males jobs, stimulated the local economy, and led to the reopening of many stores. Finally, the “Voice of the Mada’in” radio station opened lines of communication between ordinary Iraqis and 3rd HBCT and the Qada government. More importantly, these endeavors played an important role in eliminating the insurgents’ control and influence over the Mada’in citizenry.

Torture

Unfortunately, *Modern Warfare* gained notoriety because of Colonel Trinquier’s advocacy of torture as an acceptable means of defeating an insurgency. He believed that the fear of torture is the only deterrent for the guerilla since “he cannot be treated as an ordinary criminal, nor like a prisoner taken on the battlefield.” The 3rd HBCT’s experience demonstrated the effectiveness of other measures that both deterred insurgents and allowed the brigade to maintain the standards expected of an American unit in the post-Abu Ghraib environment. Many of these measures have already been discussed, such as population control measures, including biometric data collection on adult males, and the relentless pursuit of the enemy.

During its 14 months in Iraq, the brigade captured more than 560 suspected insurgents. In the same time period, military intelligence interrogators in the division holding area-annex (DHAA) conducted more than 1,500 interrogations with each detainee receiving an average of 2.8 interrogations. The system produced 345 intelligence reports, without once resorting to any form of torture. These reports led to numerous operations, both in and outside of the brigade’s area of operations that targeted extremists. More importantly it contradicted Trinquier’s assertion that torture is the only way to develop intelligence on an insurgency and deter the insurgent.

Challenges

From his experience, Trinquier documented several “errors in fighting the guerilla.” Likewise, 3rd HBCT made several similar missteps in fighting the insurgency in the Mada’in Qada. The ill placement of outposts, the lack of a standardized national ID card, and 3rd HBCT’s initial large sweep operations all presented challenges that the

brigade worked to overcome throughout its tour.

The 3rd HBCT built several outposts in locations where the Soldiers did not contribute as much to controlling the population as they could have. Two of 3rd HBCT’s outposts — Patrol Base Assassin and COP Salie — were perfectly placed in the midst of a town with Iraqi Police or National Police within arms reach. However, the other five — FOB Hammer, COP Cashe, COP Cahill, COP Cleary, and COP Carver — were separated from the population, the ISF, or both. FOB Hammer, although next to an Iraqi Army training compound, FOB Besamiya, was 25 kilometers from any major population center. As a result, the zone of security around the FOB benefited only the few sheep herders who lived in a couple of villages south of the FOB. In retrospect, better positioning of the COPs could have helped the brigade to institute greater control over the 1.2 million citizens of the Mada’in Qada.

The lack of a national identification card also made population control challenging. For 25,000 Iraqi Dinar (about \$13 U.S.) any adult Iraqi could get a Jensia card, as long as two Iraqis vouched for their identification. The 3rd HBCT improvised several solutions to overcome the lack of an ID card, like A Troop, 3-1 CAV’s binder on Al Baata Village, or B Company, 1-15 IN’s Sons of Iraq ID card, but a tough to forge, accurate, and rigorously enforced system of national identification would have made controlling the population less of a challenge.

Prior to the fall of 2007, 3rd HBCT engaged in several large unit sweeps, like Operations Blore Heath I and II, Beach Yellow, and Bull Run. Each of these operations achieved short-term tactical successes — several insurgents killed or captured, multiple caches seized, and a handful of IEDs removed. But each of these operations failed to achieve the destruction of the insurgency since they didn’t emplace a permanent US, ISF, or SoI presence in the villages to keep the insurgent from returning after the operation. In the fall of 2007, the 3rd HBCT commander, COL Grigsby, mandated that all major operations would incorporate SoI to hold the terrain, man checkpoints, and keep the insurgency from returning. Subsequent operations — Tuwaitha Sunrise I and II, Ja’ara Sunrise, Bawi Sunrise, and Durai’ya Sunrise — achieved similar tactical successes, but also

emplaced SoI checkpoints to prevent the insurgents return.

Conclusion

Five years of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq have taught a generation of American Soldiers some of the best practices to use in counterguerilla conflicts. In fact, soon, some American Soldiers may boast more COIN experience than their centurion predecessors. Until a 21st century centurion writes *Modern Warfare II: An American View of Counterinsurgency*, Colonel Trinquier’s work will remain a useful guide for leaders conducting modern warfare in Iraq.

Despite the advent of precision-guided munitions, the Internet, unmanned aerial vehicles, Mine Resistant Ambush Protectant (MRAP) vehicles, IEDs and EFPs, the 3rd HBCT’s 14 months of continuous combat in the Mada’in Qada echoed the French experience in French Indochina and Algeria 50 years prior. Together, the principles of controlling the population, destroying the guerilla forces, and eradicating the guerilla’s influence helped the brigade neutralize both a Sunni and a Shia insurgency, initiate the reconciliation process for disenfranchised Sunnis, embolden and enhance the ISF, and improve the Qada government, without forcing the brigade to resort to torture to meet its objectives.

Trinquier’s principles and 14 months of tough counterinsurgency operations have brought significant improvements in the Mada’in Qada. Like the French, the brigade made some mistakes along the way. But by reading *Modern Warfare* and heeding the lessons gained by the American military over the last five years, future American centurions operating in places like Iraq and Afghanistan will be able to build upon the hard-won experience of both Trinquier and the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division to conduct effective COIN operations.

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