Global Operations Brief for the Defense Health Board

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UNCLASSIFIED
Mortality rates drop from past to present

Improved body armor, medical care cited

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WASHINGTON -- On average, two American troops die every day in Iraq and almost 25 are wounded.

The war's 7-1 ratio of injuries to deaths is much higher than in past U.S. combat experience, where it ranged from 2-1 in the earliest conflicts to better than 1-1 in Korea and Vietnam.

Experts attribute the lower mortality rates to several factors, including the nature of the threat, the stronger body armor being worn by U.S. forces and improved battlefield medical care.

In 18 months of conflict, 1,106 U.S. personnel have died in Iraq from combat action or accidents and 8,150 Americans have been injured, according to Pentagon statistics as of Friday.

During the intense first six weeks of the allied ground advance in March and April 2003, the ratio of wounded to killed was at traditional levels of 5-1 and 3-1.

After major combat operations were declared over on May 1, the ratio shifted to the current level of roughly 7-1. About 4,500 of all U.S. casualties have occurred since then and shrapnel from explosives has been the primary cause.

The deadly effect of those crude but powerful weapons on "the better body armor," said Navy Capt. Steven Yowell, the Bureau of Navy Medicine.

Because of the protection afforded by the bulky "flak suit" they wear, "the serious chest-and abdominal-wounds percent," Yowell said. While there can be "significant bleeding" from the unprotected groin and arm pits, "it's not as immediately threatening as wounds to the chest."

The next major factor in the survival rate is improved medical care: "The medical evacuation system has come a long way since Vietnam," Yowell said. "We're better at resuscitating those who have died on the battlefield."

Just as important, evacuation times to hospitals in the region have fallen from an average of 72 hours to about 8. Medical personnel also are better trained to combat shock and bleeding.
A World of Challenges and Interrelationships

NORTHCOM
- CCMRF
- Disaster response
- Counter drug ops / Mexico
- Threats to CONUS

EUCOM
- Managing a “Resurgent Russia”
- NATO missions:
  - Support to ISAF
  - Future of KFOR
- Israel
  - Patriots
- Future of KFOR
- V Corps
- USAEUR Set (4 vs. 2 BCTs)

CENTCOM
- Afghanistan
  - 68K Force level
  - COMISAF initial assessment
  - 5/2 SBCT & 4/82 IBCT
  - NATO Intermediate 3-Star HQ
- Pakistan: Border Coordination; GOP Military Efforts
- Iraq: Coalition withdrawal; progress
- PLANORDS

PACOM
- Korean peninsula:
  - Required U.S. troop levels
  - Counter-proliferation
  - DPRK instability
- Growing Chinese regional/global influence
- Regional impact from Indian-Pakistani turmoil
- Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines
- Seasonal HA/DR Assistance/Missions

SOUTHCOM
- Guantanamo Bay
- Transnational terrorism and organized crime
- Endemic illicit drug, arms, and human trafficking
- Mass Migration/Disaster response

GLOBAL/TOPICAL
- Economic challenges
- Pandemic/H1N1
- Cyber vulnerability
- Transnational Terrorism

AFRICOM
- Sudan instability
- Somalia instability
- Trans Sahara: Ungoverned spaces
- CJTF-HOA

A complex blend of challenges facing all COCOMS, Services, and regional partners to source requirements with limited resources.
Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
• ~128K US Forces
• 50K by next summer (Aug ’10)
USS Jason Dunham

USS JASON DUNHAM (DDG 109)

Semper Fidelis. Semper Fortis
Afghanistan... way-a-head

**Counterinsurgency**

- Engaging the enemy
- First Aid training
- Election preparations

Security ↔ Governance
MISSION
Deploy USNS COMFORT (T-AH-20) to AOF to conduct HA training for U.S. Forces

Train with international military medical personnel, U.S. government agencies, regional health ministries, NGOs and U.S. academic institutions in preparation for HA/DR operations

Send a strong message of continued U.S. support and commitment

Countries visited: 7 (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Antigua & Barbuda, Panama, Colombia, El Salvador and Nicaragua)

Encounters for Deployment: 410,284
Patients for Deployment: 98,061

NGO participation: Food for the Poor, International Aid, Latter Day Saints Ministries, Operation Smile and Project Hope, representatives from the Univ of California-San Diego Pre-Dental Society, Univ of Miami, and other in-country groups (medical student translators)


Partner nation support: Antigua, Canada, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Panama, the Netherlands, and Nicaragua
China’s PLA(N) sent 3 medical personnel to observe operations in Tumaco, Colombia.
Chairman’s Key Interest Items- Near Term

• Iraq and Afghanistan........Strategic Balance
• Pakistan and India........and Nuclear Weapons
• Israel, Palestine, Gaza........and external actors
• Iran and Israel..............Major Regional Conflict
• Threats to the Homeland..........and ungoverned spaces
• North Korea’s Erratic Behavior........and Nuclear Weapons
• Piracy, Narcotics, Global Criminality.......links to Terrorism
Chairman’s Key Interest Items - Long Term

- Strategic Balance…….training, modernization, readiness
- Cyber…….limited capacity and uncertain vulnerabilities
- Terrorism…….Growing number of ungoverned spaces
- Iran and Israel………….Major Regional Conflict
- Strategy and Policy…………Middle East, Russia, China
- Global Economic crisis…….uncertain future and impacts
Transformation...

All good things come to an end...
...or start a new beginning
Closing Thought…

It’s a team effort....