

Lieutenant General W. E. Boomer
Commanding General
I Marine Expeditionary Force, FMF
FPO San Francisco, Ca 96608-5400

Gerald H. Turley, Colonel, USMC (Ret)
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7 September 1990

Dear Gerry,

Thank you for all of the information you have sent me to date. I read it carefully and have found it useful as I try to formulate my thoughts concerning what we should be doing.

I believe that I have kept the boss very well informed. He has been an info addressee on all of my personal message traffic to FMFPac, plus I have sent him a long back-channel letter. I believe him to be well-pleased with the deployment, but I will certainly keep him informed.

Generally speaking, things are going very well. We did validate the MPF concept and it worked as advertised. We were off and running in ten days and required 259 air sorties, which was only nine more than advertised, but we flew in an extra battalion and they reduced our load by twelve percent because of the heat. There are many lessons to be learned as pertains to the TPFDD, and we are in the process of capturing them now. I have recently asked all commanders to provide me their first lessons learned by the 22nd of September.

Every deployment is different. The MPF concept presupposes that we will unload the ships and go to war. In our case we have unloaded the ships, employed for war but are still at peace. This creates problems in terms of infrastructure that a MEF is not designed to handle. We are adjusting, however, and will fair okay with the help of the FSSG and others. This is going to be a very austere deployment in terms of amenities. I believe our Marines understand that, however, and we will be better off in the long term if we do not bring in a lot of base-type infrastructure.

The desert has posed surprisingly few problems to us.

Twentynine Palms has been a lifesaver, as Marines have said to me over and over again. That does not mean that we aren't learning and will not continue to learn. I am simply saying that we were pretty well prepared for what we faced.

Today I took Congressman Jack Murtha and other members of his committee up to see the 7th Marines. At the end of the visit, they were ready to write me a check for a billion dollars. Our guys are motivated, pretty articulate and never fail to

impress any group I take to see them. The wind was blowing about 15 knots while we were up there, sand in everything, etc, and the Marines just grinned. They couldn't believe how well we were adapting.

As you well know, you can't fight this kind of war unless you're mobile. Confidentially, I think the CINC plans to send the 82nd home because they are too light and have no mobility. This must be a lesson learned for us at the highest level. In my opinion, we were lightening up too fast and too drastically. You need to make that point with the boss, as will I.

As I study the Iraqi soldier to the best of my ability, I believe that we have a rather hollow army facing us, despite the amount of equipment they possess. I never underestimate my enemy, Gerry, but these guys are not in our league except in total amount of equipment. My gut feeling is that they are very shaky also from a psychological point of view, and I believe we should be pouring it on in terms of psychological warfare. I do not have a good feeling about this, and I have mentioned it to the CINC; and I know he wants to do something in this regard, but I think this point could be made very well in "The Tank."

We are situated very well, having been assigned the area next to the coast, plus having a very potent amphibious capability afloat. When the Army brings its forces on line - and it's going to take at least another month - we're going to have a very potent capability here. The question then will be: "For what purpose?" I'm not certain that it's enough for Iraq to simply withdraw its forces from Kuwait, but I will leave those kind of decisions to the diplomats. Your joint training concept is a good one and if you have no objection, I think I will propose it to the CINC. The advantages are obvious.

That's all I have time for now, good friend. Please continue to keep me posted, and give Bunny my best.

Warmest regards,

Walt



8 October 1990

General Schwarzkopf,

Recently, the 4th MEB has been described in ways that do not reflect its true capability or combat power. I don't know what is behind such descriptions, but I am concerned that it might have to do with things other than how to best win this campaign; for example, amphib ship availability/rotation. For that reason, I have chosen to present my views to you privately.

Some have come to the erroneous conclusion that the 4th MEB does not constitute a force that can be of real significance in Operation Desert Shield. This misrepresentation of the MEB's capability could lead to wrong decisions. It has been said that because the MEB has only "2300 trigger pullers" it does not have sufficient power to accomplish difficult missions. This grossly understates the real combat power that can be brought to bear by a 10,603-man 4th MEB. To describe the MEB in such terms is like ascribing no power to the 197th Mechanized Infantry Brigade because it has only 375 infantrymen in the organization. Such a description, as I am sure you understand, reflects a lack of understanding of ground combat. The 4th MEB has 58 light armored vehicles, 59 assault amphibious vehicles and 56 TOW launchers; it possesses 17 tanks, a battalion of 155 artillery, not to mention other weapons systems that we tend to take for granted like 81mm mortars, etc, etc. In addition, it is supported by its own squadrons of 20 AV-8B's, 24 CH-46's, 16 CH-53's, and Cobras. Properly task organized, the brigade can employ four maneuver elements: a light armored infantry battalion, a helo-borne battalion, a mechanized infantry battalion and a mech/motorized battalion. The ground combat element alone consists of over 270 officers and 4600 enlisted Marines. This force is trained and equipped to conduct an amphibious assault against a defended beach. Their assault, of course, would be enhanced by Naval gunfire prep (one battleship, one cruiser, two destroyers and one fast frigate), B-52 interdiction, and close air support from the carrier strike force and the entire I MEF aviation combat element.

Whether or not you choose to commit this force to an amphibious landing, it is an enormous combat multiplier. The threat posed by this MEB, which has not yet even entered the Arabian Gulf, has effectively tied down four Iraqi infantry and one mechanized divisions along the coast of Kuwait. We should continue to reinforce this fear by threatening his eastern flank.

In summary, the 4th MEB is more than capable of fulfilling its doctrinal mission of limited amphibious operations and/or serving as the amphibious reserve, thereby preventing the enemy from concentrating his defenses, and capitalizing on his fear of this thrust from the sea. My recommendation is that the 4th MEB or a like-sized amphibious force be retained on station as long as you require it to support your campaign plan and our scheme of maneuver ashore.

Warmest regards and respectfully,

Walt



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Major General H. C. Stackpole III
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8 October 1990

Dear Hank,

Thank you very much for your letter of 24 September 1990. I sincerely appreciate the tremendous support you have provided I MEF. The performance of your Marines has been just as you predicted - outstanding.

We are doing very well. The MPF concept was certainly validated and we have made believers out of everyone, including our Army friends. They are very envious of our logistical capability, as it becomes readily apparent to them that the Army made serious mistakes in the structuring of its forces. Even at this point in the campaign they are struggling to support themselves. Quite frankly, my heart goes out to them because their soldiers deserve better.

As I'm sure you have surmised, this is not a place for light infantry. Unless you are mechanized, you can't play in this ball game. Thank God we had not lightened up to the point where we would have been of no utility to the CINC. This deployment has convinced me even more that we must walk the middle ground between being heavy and light. I am afraid that we were drifting too far towards the latter and hope that this campaign will put us back on course.

Our equipment is holding up pretty well. The sand is very abrasive, extra maintenance is required. My rule of thumb is that it takes about three times normal maintenance. It appears that helicopters will be our biggest problem - primarily rotor blades and engines. The new blade with the titanium leading edge is holding up very well. The older blades on the CH-53D's and Hueys are wearing much faster. The tech reps have been out and we have an interim fix of epoxy and tape. I hope it works.

The morale of the troops remains high and we are doing all we can for them within the bounds of an austere theater (I think it should remain austere). I believe we could and should stay longer than six months, but I do not believe that view will prevail in Washington. I think the Commandant's view is the same as mine, but tremendous pressure is going to be exerted by the Congress, the Army and the Navy to keep the rotation to six months. I hope it does not turn out to be a strategic flaw in our prosecution of the campaign. If it occurs, it certainly will happen at a very inopportune time, if my view of things are correct. I suppose we will just have to wait and see.

Again, thanks very much for your support and best wishes for continued good health and happiness.

Warm regards,

Walt



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22 October 1990

Dear Gerry,

Thank you for continuing to write. I have been meaning to respond, but today is the first opportunity I have had in several weeks. Things continue to go well; we have no serious problems. At this point we are probably the best-trained Force in the world. The Division, Wing and FSSG are doing innovative and creative training under a trio of superb commanders. The young Marines, as you might expect, are the backbone of the MEF and are continuing to perform superbly. One of the many benefits of this deployment is that lieutenants and captains are learning that corporals and sergeants can do the job if they are turned loose and allowed to operate. In this environment we have no choice but to do that, as you and I well understand, but it is good for our young officers to learn too. I do not want to see another generation of lieutenant colonels with a "zero defects" mentality. Desert Shield will go a long way towards preventing that from happening again.

I think the Commandant's visit went well, although he and Milligan came away with some misconceptions. The first seems to be that because I am dual-hatted as MARCENT/I MEF, that more attention is being paid to MARCENT business than I MEF business. The only reason I can discern that would have caused this kind of thinking is that we are currently located in a building instead of in tents. The other reason may be that we did not focus very thoroughly on tactics, because there simply wasn't time. If you're going to expose CMC to the maximum number of Marines in a day and a half, that's all you're going to do. The truth is that most of my time is devoted to I MEF business and the headquarters is focused on war fighting. We are able to do MARCENT things on the side. With Jed Pearson in Riyadh supervising a small MARCENT Rear, we have the best of all worlds. We do not need separate MARCENT and MEF staffs. It would be ludicrous. Additionally, I don't think the CINC would agree to it. He is as happy with the current arrangement, as I am. The bottom line is this: The I MEF staff is going to stay in place and units are going to rotate underneath it. Please help on this issue if you can.

I have done several things to keep the MEF focused on MEF business. My Jump CP is functional and has been tested, and we are going to conduct our own war game the last of the month with the assistance of MCCDC. The team arrives on the 23rd. We are going to do a full scale CPX the first week in November. All of our tactical communications lines are working well, including air command and control. For some reason there was concern expressed about this by the Commandant, even though he had no opportunity to really look at it. It may be that Milligan had some perceptions that he passed on to the Boss.

The idea of replacing MEF for MEF is probably okay, as long as it's done carefully. The CINC is extremely sensitive, as he should be, to anything which denigrates his combat power. In his message to the JCS on unit rotation, he spelled this out very clearly. In a recent "Personal" to the Commandant, he again reiterated that he would not countenance a change in Corps/MEF level headquarters. One of the things I have been trying to tell Marines is that there is a CINC in Southwest Asia who is in charge. Service plans must be in sync with the CINC's desires. Too many Marines and Sailors are forgetting this. General Schwarzkopf is becoming increasingly upset with the U.S. Navy over intransigence regarding six-month rotation. In my view, six months rotation is going to come back to haunt us in the years to come. With all the money we have poured into defense over the last decade, our country should be able to expect us to deploy and stay for as long as necessary. The whole six-month deal is part media creation and part short-sightedness on the part of some of our sister services. That being said, we can't have our own rotation policy, and eventually there will have to be a JCS decision on the issue.

The Commandant, in his request to visit Saudi Arabia, asked the CINC for permission to see some Army and Air Force units. This was politely denied. Yesterday the CINC flatly rejected Carl Mundy's request for a visit. If Carl had asked to come in with one or two people, my guess is that it would have been approved. Instead, there was a list of about ten, including all his principal staff officers. I think it simply hit General Schwarzkopf at the wrong time. The point is, however, the Marine Corps must be sensitive to his problems and his concerns. You may be able to quietly help in this regard.

We are doing so much better in Saudi Arabia than anyone else because we walked the middle ground between being too heavy and too light. We must continue that philosophy. If we had ~~lightened up to the point that some seem to want, we would have~~ been totally ineffective in this environment. This deployment, in my view, has validated our organization for combat and our table of equipment. Such things as PLRS, RPVs, etc, are really being given a workout. A team from MCCDC is visiting us now to

gather information on what is working and what is not working. From our lessons learned, I think we are going to be able to structure an even better Marine Corps for the future. We are capturing those lessons. Every six weeks or so, MSCs send them into me and the MEF staff is putting them in the right format and getting them to the right people. You should begin to see some in the not too distant future.

Obviously, I have shared several sensitive things with you in this letter. I do so knowing they will go no further, and in the hopes that you can continue to help the Corps achieve its goals. I appreciate your continuing to write and keeping me updated. As always, my love to Bunny.

Warmest regards,

Walt

P.S.

Appreciate yr. views
on Sec Nav visit!



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General N. Schwarzkopf
Commanding General
United States Central Command
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3 November 1990

Dear General Schwarzkopf,

Today, for the first time, I saw imagery that will be of value at the Division and below level. The sad thing is that it was provided to us by the British, who were exploiting imagery out of the JARIC in the United Kingdom, sourced from our national assets. It is two weeks old, but better than nothing. In my view, the lack of responsive, tactical intelligence and imagery is one of the greatest failings of the campaign to date. This is not the fault of your J-2 or mine. They are a dedicated bunch of pros. It appears to be the fault of our intelligence architecture. We have put all our eggs "in the satellite basket". For example, the Marine Corps has no tactical recce since the RF-4B was sent to the graveyard this summer. Remote Piloted Vehicles are still rudimentary. The SR-71 is apparently a dead issue. Human intelligence is practically non existent. The "bottom line" is that our troops on the ground, once again, are getting very little intelligence that will help them fight and win. (Aviation is admittedly faring slightly better.) I find this depressing and incredulous after a decade of rather liberal funding of intel "technology".

I am told that there simply are not enough satellites or production facilities to do the massive job required by Desert Shield. Imagery from last week's "blitz" of Kuwait has still not reached us. What is provided is small comfort for the company commander who must lead his unit into battle.

My recommendation is that we mince no words with Washington. CINCCENT 301030Z Oct 90 (review of MIB agenda) did not capture the urgency of our need and is too optimistic about the future. We don't need any more studies or seminars. We need action on the part of the "national intelligence community", whatever that is, to provide us the support we need. I am certain the intel bureaucrats will regard my view as narrow and uninformed. I will

change it the day I can have a battalion commander sent
battlefield intelligence that will help him plan his op order for
the next day's attack.

Respectfully,

Walt



21 December 1990

Dear Mike,

Despite the fact that this is typed, it will only be seen by the Gunny, who is my trusted agent and has handled all of my sensitive correspondence with the Commandant.

It is very disturbing to me that you found the staff briefings of 19 December offensive; in fact, that offends me. With less than 24 hours notice, I required the staff to present what information they could on the coastal course of action. I realize that some of them were less than satisfactory, but they were working under a severe time constraint. The G-3 and I are well aware of some of the weaknesses and are taking steps to correct them. The point is, however, that it was a genuine attempt to present you with as much information as I could under the circumstances. I did not tell them that I favored one course of action over the other prior to their briefing. If I had not been required to brief the Secretary of Defense the next day, a much more thorough job could have been done; but to infer that the entire thing was some sort of scam is unprofessional. Yes, a great deal of work needs to be done and a great deal more analysis needs to be done, but under the circumstances we did the best we could.

I find it equally disturbing that you and Tom appear to be overly concerned about being criticized heavily for taking the "head knocking" approach (I find other courses equally dangerous). Those of us in Saudi Arabia are the ones who must make the decisions. We know what the circumstances are and we have to make the choices. The important thing is to make the choices that we believe are morally and professionally correct, and not worry about those who are in the rear second-guessing our decisions. I am certain you realize that no matter which decision we make, it will be the wrong one for some people.

Concerning the coastal course of action, I found the reaction of the CINC and General Powell very interesting. It was the first time that either of them had been briefed on this concept. General Powell's comment was that he was pleased to see that we had chosen that course of action, since he had been studying it for some weeks and thought it made the most sense for us. The CINC, in essence, said the same thing and reiterated that he was satisfied that it accomplished the mission he had envisioned for us. ~~The CINC also stated again that he expected us to seek every way possible to minimize casualties and under no circumstances did he wish to expect Marines to be thrown into a casualty producing meat grinder.~~ I have shared that conviction from day-1, and our planning will ensure it doesn't happen.

Despite my earlier guidance, you still seem to be overly concerned by every comment that John Hopkins makes. I do not try to muzzle John any more than I try to muzzle you. At times, what he says really doesn't reflect what is in his heart, it just comes out. You need to understand that and continue to march. What he was attempting to say when he remarked about discussing our courses of action with the Commandant, was that we all should be singing from the same sheet of music and be planning to carry out the chosen course of action. I have no desire for any of my general officers to hold back anything from the Commandant, and will provide the opportunity for lengthy and open discussions with him. You should be aware that I have kept him apprised of every nuance of this campaign and my best assessment of Army thinking and maneuvering. The Commandant will have a very clear understanding of why we have chosen any particular course of action.

Around the 1st of January, I MEF Main moves to the field somewhere in the vicinity of Safaniya. It will stay in the field until the conflict is over, and I intend to move with it. I MEF Rear will continue to focus on providing the MSCs the base type support they need and deserve. Quite frankly, I think they get little credit from you for what they have done in behalf of 1st Marine Division. Those who move with the Main CP will have nothing to deal with but operational matters. I think that will satisfy your desire and mine to ensure that warfighting tasks are done correctly and receive the attention they deserve. At this point I do not oppose putting a three-star in Riyadh, but if you think that is going to keep CENTCOM from continuing to do incredibly dumb things, you are wrong. Nevertheless, it will make some people happy, and as you said, I have more important things to be concerned about. The Commandant intends to discuss it during his visit.

You felt the need, through your letter, to get some things off your chest. My letter serves the same purpose. It changes nothing in our relationship. I am pleased with the 1st Marine Division. Keep charging.

Sincerely,.