NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
Monterey, California

THESIS

GROZNY & THE THIRD BLOCK
(LESSONS LEARNED FROM GROZNY AND THEIR APPLICATION TO MARINE CORPS' MOUT TRAINING)

by

M. W. Kelly

December 2000

Thesis Advisor:	M. Tsypkin
Second Reader:	R. Minott

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20010215 030

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE	Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE December 2000	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Grozny & The Third Block (Lessons Learned from Grozny & Their Application to Marine Corps' MOUT Training.)	**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Maj. Michael W. Kelly, USMC	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.	**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**

13. ABSTRACT ***(maximum 200 words)***

Since 1995 the United States Marine Corps has focused its attention on urban warfare. The Marine Corps conceptualizes a *Three-Block War*. Block One is humanitarian operations in a permissive environment. Block Two is security operations in a questionable environment. Block Three is high intensity combat. The Marine Corps' focus on urban operations is justifiable for two reasons. First, urbanization is increasing at an accelerating rate. Second, urban environments have traditionally acted as an equalizing effect between disparate military forces. The recent battles for the city of Grozny are the most recent examples.

The Marine Corps is presently capable of winning on the first two blocks. Current training methods and tactics, combined with living institutional knowledge, and the frequency of such operations has kept the Marine Corps primed. This is not the case for the third block. The infrequency of such battles, and lack of institutional knowledge, coupled with current training practices, has rendered the Marine Corps woefully deficient in this area.

Utilizing the battle for Grozny as a case study, this thesis will prove that current Marine Corps training policies and practices for urban warfare are actually degrading the Marines' capabilities to successfully prosecute high intensity urban combat, and recommend possible solutions.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Battle of Grozny & United States Marine Corps' Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) Training. Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP's). Urban Warfare.	**15. NUMBER OF PAGES**
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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GROZNY & THE THIRD BLOCK (LESSONS LEARNED FROM GROZNY AND THEIR APPLICATION TO MARINE CORPS' MOUT TRAINING)

Michael W. Kelly
Major, United States Marine Corps
B.A., University of Alabama-Birmingham, 1988

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2000

Author: Michael W. Kelly

Approved by: Mikhail Tsypkin, Thesis Advisor

Rodney Kennedy-Minnot, Second Reader

Fredrick Rocker, Chairman
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

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The Marine Corps is presently capable of winning the first two blocks. Current training methods and tactics, living institutional knowledge, and the frequency of such operations has kept the Marine Corps primed. This is not the case for the third block. The infrequency of such battles, and lack of institutional knowledge, coupled with current training practices, has rendered the Marine Corps woefully deficient in this area.

Utilizing the battle for Grozny as a case study, this thesis will prove that current Marine corps training policies and practices for urban combat are actually degrading the Marines capabilities to successfully prosecute high intensity urban conflict, and recommend possible solutions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

AGS 17 – Russian Automatic Grenade Launcher (similar to US MK-19)

AIT – Advanced Infantry Training

APC – Armored Personnel Carrier

AT-4 – US shoulder fired light anti-tank weapon (LAW)

AWS – Amphibious Warfare School, Quantico, Va. (senior company-grade school; primarily captains)

BLT – Battalion Landing Team (USMC- Reinforced, task-organized rifle battalion)

CAX – Combined Arms Exercise; 29 Palms, California

C&S – Command and Staff Course, Quantico, Va. (field-grade school; primarily majors)

CQB - Close Quarter Battle

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

FMF – Fleet Marine Force (MarFor [Marine Forces] or operational Marine forces)

FSK – Russian Internal Counterintelligence Service

GPS – Global Positioning System (satellite-aided hand-held navigation system)

IOC – Infantry Officer Course, Quantico, Va.

MCCRES – Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System

MCDP – Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication

MCWL – Marine Corps Warfighting Labratory

MCWP – Marine Corps Warfighting Publication

MEU(SOC) – Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)

MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MOD – Russian Ministry of Defense

MOOTW – Military Operations Other Than War

MOS – Military Occupation Specialty (USMC)

MOUT – Military Operations in Urban Terrain

MVD – Russian Internal Ministry troops

MWTC – USMC Mountain Warfare Training Center; Bridgeport, Ca.

NBC – Nuclear, Biological, Chemical warfare

NCO – Noncommissioned Officer (Corporal, Sergeant)

NKVD – Soviet People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs/secret police

NVA – North Vietnamese Army

NVG – Night Vision Goggles

OMFTS – Operational Maneuver From The Sea

OMON - Russian Interior Ministry special-forces

PGM – Precision Guided Munition

Project Metropolis (ProMet) – Urban warfare portion of MCWL experiment

ROE – Rules of Engagement

RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade (Russian anti-armor weapon)

RPO – Russian shoulder-launched Rocket Propelled Incendiary/Blast Projectile weapon

Spetsnatz – Russian Special Forces

SOBR – (Russian Special Rapid Reaction Force)

SOI – School of Infantry (USMC) initial MOS training for infantry Marines

SNCO – Staff Noncommissioned Officer (Staff-sergeant to Sergeant Major)

STOM – Ship to Objective Maneuver

SWAT – Special Weapons and Tactics (US police unit)

Task Force – Task Organized Military Unit – (temporary in nature, grouped under single commander, formed for specific mission; may be semi-permanent for continuing specific task)

TBS – The Basic School, Quantico, Va.

TEWT – Tactical Exercise Without Troops

TTP's – Techniques, Tactics & Procedures

UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (RPV –Remotely Piloted Vehicle)

USMC – United States Marine Corps

WP – "Willie Pete" White Phosphorous munitions

ZSU 34 – Russian four barreled, anti-aircraft gun; self-propelled

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank MajGen. Ray Smith, USMC (Ret.), Col. Gangle, USMC (Ret.) of the USMC Warfighting Laboratory, LtCol. T. W. Thomas, USA (Ret) of the Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, and Dr. Clete DiGiovanni for their assistance and input in this thesis.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to save lives. Current Marine Corps' training and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP's) for Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) do not adequately address the realities of high intensity combat inn urban environments. Many of the TTP's taught to Marines, while beneficial in certain low intensity environments, will prove fatal in high intensity operations. A recent example of the difficulties of fighting in an urban environment is the destruction of Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu. What must be considered an elite unit, Task Force Ranger was defeated by a Third World warlord's gang.

The close quarter battle (CQB) or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) tactics currently taught are applicable in most cases to the first two blocks of the Marine Corps' concept of a *Three-Block War.* In the Three-Block War, Block One is humanitarian operations in a permissive environment. Block Two is security operations in a questionable environment. Block Three is high intensity combat, such as was fought in Hue City, Republic of Vietnam, 1968. In such an environment, most of the law enforcement derived tactics will actually prove fatal for those executing such operations. Unfortunately it is those new, specialized TTP's that young Marines retain from their MOUT training.

While the concept of the Three-Block War makes sense, its is not reflected in doctrine, from which such TTP's should derive. The accelerating pace of urbanization, especially along the littorals, and the equalizing effect urban terrain can have upon

disparate military forces, means the Marine Corps will continue to fight in urban environments. Yet, MOUT training receives no special recognition. Marines routinely train in desert and mountainous environments, yet we seldom fight there. True, there are definite advantages these training evolutions offer, but more emphasis must be placed on MOUT. Nor can the Marine Corps become MOUT specialists at the expense of other areas. Elevating realistic MOUT training to the level and status of other training evolutions is necessary and attainable.

The battles for Grozny offer us the most recent examples of high intensity combat in an urban environment. Many of the lessons learned by the Russians are valuable and can be utilized to evaluate current Marine Corps' MOUT training. While detractors will correctly cite the fact that there are many differences between the Russian forces who fought in Grozny and today's Marines, the basis of the problem remains the same. The Marine Corps' institutional knowledge of high intensity urban combat is quickly fading, and we would be wise to study the mistakes of others to save the lives of those we have been entrusted with.

I. THE PROBLEM

"...the likelihood is that in the future, the National Command Authorities will again commit Marines to missions in urban areas."

A Concept for Future Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MCWP 3-35.3, p1-1)

The underlying purpose of this thesis is to save lives. Current Marine Corps' training and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) do not adequately address the realities of high intensity combat in urban environments. All combat is *high-intensity* when one is directly involved. For the purpose of this thesis, high-intensity MOUT would be battles such as Stalingrad, Seoul, and Hue City. Current MOUT training focuses on the lower end of the conflict spectrum, Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). The Marine Corps is highly proficient at such MOOTW operations, having continuously conducted such operations in the past decade. While the Corps' has a certain level of expertise in MOOTW operations, such institutional knowledge is rapidly fading from the Corps in regards to high-intensity MOUT. The last major urban battle the Marine Corps was involved with was Hue City in 1968, now some 32 years distant.

Today's Marines spend little time conducting MOUT training, and what training is conducted has a high probability of getting them killed.[1]

[1] LtCol. T.X. Hammes, "Preparing for Today's Battle." Marine Corps Gazette, (July, 1997), 57.

The most recent, high-intensity MOUT operations were conducted by the Russians in Grozny in 1994-96 and again in 1999. The lessons learned by the Russians are worthy of close study and will be used to help evaluate current Marine Corps MOUT training. Detractors may cite the fact that the Russian forces are a far cry from the Marine Corps of today, and that Grozny was an internal conflict that blended aspects of high-intensity MOUT and MOOTW. This is correct. As will be examined in chapter two the Russian forces were in a deplorable state in 1994-96. A question should be, what would the Corps look like after three to five years of intensive combat? Combat experienced, yes. Highly trained, experienced, well-disciplined Marines, questionable. Could today's Marine transition from a rural or jungle environment be made any easier than a Marine entering Seoul in 1950 or Hue City in 1968? The individual Russian soldier that fought in Chechnya wanted no more to die than any Marine past, present, or future. The high-intensity, MOOTW, domestic nature of the battle for Grozny actually makes it a more difficult battle to prosecute, and therefore more worthy of scrutiny and evaluation.

To study what can happen to a well lead, highly trained, professional force in today's MOUT environment, one should read *Black Hawk Down* by Mark Bowden.[2] Bowden relates the story of the defeat of Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia, on October 3,1993. What must be considered an elite force (TF Ranger was comprised of US Army Rangers, US Navy SEALs, and elements of DELTA force), was defeated by a Third World warlord's gang within the confines of Mogadishu.

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[2] Mark Bowden, Blackhawk Down. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999).

Early in his tenure as Commandant, General Krulak focused the Corps on the idea of the *Three Block War*. The first block would find Marines conducting humanitarian operations in a permissive environment. On the second block Marines would be executing security operations in a low intensity environment. The third block will be Marines fighting in high-intensity, conventional battle. Marines, due to their expeditionary and *jack of all trades* nature, must be able to escalate between each *block* instantaneously. The small size of the Corps, and possibility of world-wide commitment, does not allow the Corps to designate special MOUT units, nor should the Marines seek to become overly specialized in this one area. Yet, the Corps is correct in focusing more attention on MOUT as the world's population becomes increasingly urbanized.

It is estimated that 45% of the world's population lives in urban areas at the dawn of the 21st century.[3] By 2025 it is expected that 70% of the world's population will live in cities if the current trend continues. These cities will be the geo-strategic centers of gravity, containing all major vital functions such as government, commerce, communications and transportation.[4] By 1993, the world already had 286 cities with over 1 million inhabitants. This rate of rapid urbanization is even more pronounced in the Third World. In 1993, seventeen of the twenty-five most populated cities were located in the Third World.[5] As a means of comparison of recent urbanization, a survey of four cities illustrates this urban explosion over the past twenty years: Sao Paulo 66%,

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[3] Russell W. Glenn, Combat in Hell, A Consideration of Constrained Urban Warfare. (Santa Monica, Ca: Rand, 1996), 3.

[4] MajGen. R.H. Scales,Jr., USA, "The Indirect Approach." The Armed Forces Journal *International* (October, 1998), 71.

Seoul 71%, Bombay 120%.[6] This explosion in urbanization will require a re-examination of current MOUT thinking. Traditional MOUT doctrine calls for the encirclement of a city prior to commencing operations. Shanghai, China, has over 125 million people within the city and its immediate surroundings. The city covers 2,383 square miles, and the city's police force is almost the size of the entire U.S. Marine Corps.[7]

A cursory glance at a world map will show that much of this urbanization is taking place within the littoral regions of the world. As the nation's primary amphibious force, the Corps must be ready to meet this challenge. Geographic studies reveal that 60 percent of significant urban areas (excluding Europe and North America) are located along or within 25 miles of a coastline; 75 percent within 150 miles.[8] This emphasis on MOUT does not detract from Marine Corps' doctrine in regards to Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS), or Ship To Objective Maneuver (STOM), but is complimentary. These "geo-strategic centers of gravity" will often be the very objective the Marines are tasked to secure.

Cities will continue to represent what is politically, and operationally, important. As war, as Clausewitz pointed out, is a continuation of politics by other means, cities will often continue to be the political goals we seek to obtain. The success of Operation

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[5] Glenn, Combat in Hell 3.

[6] Russell W. Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker. (Santa Monica, Ca: Rand, 1998), 130.

[7] Dr. Jacob W. Kipp & Lester W. Grau. "Urban Combat: Confronting the Specter." Military Review, (July-August,1999), 5.

[8] MCWP 3-35.3, p1-1.

Desert Storm was not in the taking of vast tracks of desert, but in the liberation of Kuwait City.[9] Enemy forces will defend these centers of gravity, and use the urban terrain to negate the U.S.'s military strengths. Seeking the protection of the city, the enemy can prolong the fight, and wear out US resolve. While not seeking to force a decisive victory, an enemy can at least avoid defeat by seeking the protection offered by cities.[10] Traditionally, city fighting has resulted in high casualty rates, especially for the attacker. Future enemies will be aware of the U.S.'s reluctance to suffer high casualty numbers, and capitalize on the advantages the urban terrain offers. Technology offers limited solutions. MajGen. Robert H. Scales', Jr., Commandant of the US Army War College, idea of employing an indirect approach, using time to our advantage, and allow the city to collapse on itself, is unrealistic.[11] Patience is not an American virtue.

In his treatise *On War*, Carl Von Clausewitz wrote that well entrenched enemy positions must be considered "an impregnable point," that attacks against fortress must "be considered a necessary evil," and attacking such meant "the attack had reached its culminating point." Sun Tzu was even more emphatic: "the worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative."[12]

An 1998 MIT study of urban warfare suggested that the US military not concern itself with "sustained urban combat" as the US had not fought such a battle in the past

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[9] Williamson Murray, "Thinking About Cities and War." Marine Corps Gazette,. (July, 2000), 40.

[10] Scales, 71.

[11] Ibid., 74.

[12] Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Samuel B. Griffith (trans.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 78.

thirty years, "and it is difficult to imagine future scenarios that would justify the substantial costs that these missions entail."[13] With all due reverence to MIT, we must follow Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. While MOUT is a "necessary evil" there may not be "an alternative." The Marine Corps must be prepared for such an inevitability.

This thesis can be divided into two parts. Chapters II and III deal with the two battles for Grozny, while Chapters IV and V deal with current Marine Corps MOUT training and recommendations to correct noted deficiencies. Chapter II is a battle study of the first battle for Grozny in 1994-1996. This chapter can be a *stand- alone document* that provides enough information to place the battle for Grozny in context, and can be used as the basis for a battle study at battalion level and below. There is a brief history of the Russian-Chechen conflict, and a section on the Chechen fighters, their culture and tactics. Next the state of the Russian forces on the eve of the battle is described. Before studying the tactical aspects of the battle, an overview of the strategic and operational setting is provided. The closing section is an itemized list of tactical lessons learned. Chapter III is a brief summary of the ongoing second Chechen campaign. The focus is on the improvements that the Russians were able to effect for the second battle of Grozny. Again the focus is primarily on the tactical level.

Chapter IV examines current trends in the Corps MOUT training. Surveys from Marine officers aboard the Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, units within the 1st Marine Division, school-house student handouts, and Marine Corps orders and doctrinal

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[13] Daryl G. Press, "Urban Warfare: Options, Problems, and the Future." Marine Corps Gazette. (July, 2000), 18.

publications form the basis of the analysis. A comparison of current training methods and lessons learned from the Russian' experiences in Grozny will be examined. Finally the efforts of the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), specifically Project Metropolis (ProMet), will be highlighted.

Chapter V offers a recommendation, based largely on the work of the Warfighting Lab, for the establishment of a legitimate MOUT training facility, and a month-long training exercise, similar to a Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) at 29 Palms, Ca., or to Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) Bridgeport, Ca., that will address deficiencies in the current MOUT training.

Figure 1. Map of Russia.

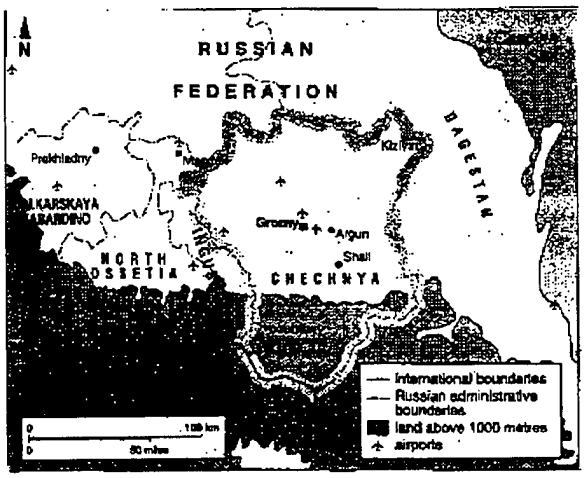

Figure 2. Map of Chechnya.

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II. BATTLE FOR GROZNY – PART I

> **"The experience of the operation remains unstudied. The mistakes of the first campaigns were not only repeated, but intensified...Since we have learned nothing from the past, we repeat the previous mistakes, and again have no decisive successes, allowing the bandits to get away unpunished, thereby undermining the authority of the ...Army."[14]**

(The above quote refers to the Red Army campaigns of 1922 and 1930 as the Soviets attempted to pacify a rebellious Chechen population.)

There are many explanations for the disastrous showing by the Russian military in the 1994-1996 campaign in Chechnya. While political, economic, and societal factors all had an impact, the Army's deficiencies were the critical factor. The poor condition and level of training of the Russian Army, coupled with the lack of planning and preparation immediately prior to the campaign, culminated in the humiliation of the Russian Army during the battle for Grozny.

A. THE ROAD TO DEFEAT

The path to the defeat at Grozny must include a brief historical journey to explain what brought these forces together in December of 1994. A short description of the Chechen fighters, their culture, their character, weapons and tactics will also be necessary to explain how they were able to defeat the once mighty Russian Army. The state of the Russian forces employed in the campaign will also be examined. The final step in the journey to Grozny will be a quick review of the strategic and operational level

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[14] Valery Tishkov, The Mind Aflame – Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict In and After The Soviet Union. (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 191.

background that set the stage for what was to occur in Grozny. The emphasis of the paper will be not on what went wrong in Grozny, but what lessons can be learnt. While the Russians apparently did not learn from their experiences against the Chechens in the first half of the nineteenth century, it appears they did learn valuable lessons from their 1994-96 campaign as they again battle the Chechen forces at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

B. RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT

The origins of the Russian-Chechen conflict have their roots in the sixteenth century. In 1586, the Orthodox Christians of Georgia, surrounded by strong Muslim neighbors requested aid from the rising Orthodox power to their north. The Czar responded by sending three ill-fated military expeditions that all ended in defeat in the Caucasus. Russian activity in the Caucasus was then suspended until Peter the Great ascended the throne. Peter's southward expansion and drive to open a route to India brought renewed conflict between the Russians and Chechens. While the Russians were able to control the northern littorals of the Caspian Sea, they were prevented from penetrating into the interior by the Chechen resistance.[15] In their effort to link Russia with Georgia, which had become a Russian protectorate under the Treaty of Georgievsk in 1783, the Russians colonized the North Caucasus region. The subjugation of the populace of this region took the Russians eighty years.[16]

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[15] Moshe Grammer, Muslim Resistance to the Tzar. ((Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), 1-3.

[16] Christopher Panico, Conflict in the Caucasus – Russia's War in Chechnya. (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1995) 2-3.

In 1816, the Russian Caucasian commander, General Yermolov, believed fear would provide greater security than a series of fortifications in the Caucasus. He treated the Chechens with extreme cruelty and launched a scorched earth policy in the region. Showing a clear lack of understanding towards the subjugated peoples, in 1949 the Soviet Union erected a statue to General Yermolov in Grozny. The inscription read: "There is no people under the sun more vile and deceitful than this one."[17] This monument would act as a constant reminder of their long suffering at the hands of the Russians when the Chechens were finally to return from exile.

Shortly after turning the tide against the German invaders with the victory at Stalingrad in late 1943, the Soviet Union once again searched for internal enemies, real or imagined. In February 1944, the people's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) undertook the deportation of the Chechen and Ingush population at the direction of the State Committee for Defense. In little over a month almost the entire population of the Chechens and Ingush were resettled in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Region) established in 1936, was formally abolished, its territory being divided by the surrounding provinces. As justification for their actions, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in 1946 published in *Izvestiia* that the Chechens and Crimean Tartars had been deported because of their support of the German invaders while others Soviets courageously defended the motherland. In regards to Chechnya, the German advance never penetrated Chechnya proper but only reached as far as Malgobek, in the northwest corner of Checheno-Ingushetia. All aspects of the

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[17] Timothy Thomas, "The Battle for Grozny: Deadly Classroom for Urban Combat." Parameters

deportation, abolishing the region, and resettlement were carried out in a legalized fashion. All actions were preceded by decrees issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. The head of the NKVD, Lavrentii Beriia, personally supervised the operation, and Beriia kept Stalin informed almost on a daily basis, illustrating the importance of the operation.[18] In keeping with their combative tradition the Chechens did not go easily but were duped into attending town meetings where men were arrested, separated, and immediately placed aboard waiting trains for movement. The women and children were allowed a day or so to pack and then muster for deportation. People of Chechen background outside the region were also rounded up and deported, although in a more congenial manner. Senior members of the party were given preferential treatment, but deported all the same. Even those Chechens who were fighting in the Red Army were withdrawn from their units and deported. The official accounts documented the entire process while not recording the atrocities described by eyewitnesses. Eyewitnesses claim that the old and weak who could not walk to the railheads were executed. In one town, 650 "untransportables" were gathered in a barn and the barn set ablaze.[19] In one such incident the commander of the detachment that liquidated some 700 inhabitants of one village was decorated and promoted for his efforts. As these deportations and atrocities continued, many Chechens formed rebel bands and attacked the Soviet forces. Not only were the methods of rounding up the Chechens brutal, the transit to Central Asia also

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(Summer, 1999), 4.

[18] Ben Fowls, Russia and Chechnya: The Permanent Crisis. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), 65-71.

[19] Ibid., 72-74.

took its toll. Of the approximately 478, 500 Chechens and Ingush who were deported, 78,000 died enroute or immediately upon arrival in Central Asia.[20] The prospects on arrival were no better.

Reports from the NKVD noted the deplorable conditions under which the Chechens had to live. Diseases such as malaria, typhus, and dystrophy were widespread. Many perished from starvation and accommodations were lacking. The local population was equally non-receptive of the deportees. Things were so bad that Beriia even wrote to Stalin complaining about the situation. Beriia's concern was the effect that the conditions were a having on the work capacity of the Chechens. Lack of amenities, even shoes, was crippling a potential workforce. Conditions were so bad that for the first five years of their captivity the death rate exceeded the birth rate. The future for the Chechens appeared even more bleak when in 1948 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree that all those deported during the Great Patriotic war were exiled for life.[21]

The deportation for life was to be rescinded after Stalin's death in 1953. In 1956 when Khrushchev rehabilitated all those deported, save the Volga Germans and Crimean Tartars, the Chechens were allowed to return to their native lands. It was not until the Gorbachev era, when in 1989 the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union passed a declaration recognizing the deportations as illegal and criminal, and reinstating the rights of all those deported.[22] While these official actions were certainly correct, they did little

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[20]Anatol Lieven, Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 319.

[21] Fowls, 78-82.

[22] Ibid., 76.

to mend Chechen-Russian relations. Most of today's older Chechens lived through the deportations and exile. Many of the present middle-aged Chechens and the leaders of the rebels were either deported as children or born in captivity. Once back in their native homeland it took time for the Chechens to reclaim positions of authority in the local government and party.[23] It is this long history of repression and subjugation, much of it in living memory, that has formed the character of the Chechen fighters and made them such a formidable adversary. It is almost inconceivable that the Russian intelligence forces could have overlooked these facts and expected the Chechens to react to the Russian intervention of 1994 in the same manner the Czechoslovaks had quietly acquiesced during the Prague Spring of 1968.

C. THE ENEMY

During the Chechen War of 1994-6, the Chechens proved themselves to be the same warrior breed that their forefathers had been. This trait is inextricably linked to their culture. Chechen society evolved around kin-based relations and an instinctive willingness to take up arms against the infidel as prescribed by their Islamic culture.[24] Chechen clan structure centered on the *teip* and the *adat*. *Adat* is an ancient code of retribution, a revenge system that believed in "an eye for an eye." The *teip* or tribe is a large extended family tied to ancestral lands. The *teip* is lead by a council of elders whom the younger men look to for leadership and to instill in them the warrior spirit.[25]

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[23] Lieven, 321 &331.

[24] John Arquilla & Theodore Karasik, "Chechnya: A Glimpse of Future Conflict." Conflict and Terrorism Vol. 22, No. 3 (July-September, 1999), 210.

[25] Thomas. "Deadly Classroom", 3.

This concept of the teip should have been briefed to the Russian forces, as it is the foundation for the small-unit cohesion for the Chechens. The Chechens benefited by the fact that the fighters were almost always fighting along side their kinsmen, not some other barely-known conscript or unit from another military district. A *teip* would consist of approximately 600 men who would be broken down into units of 150 and further subdivided into squads of about 20 fighters. Members of the *Teips* would exchange valuable information on how to combat the Russians. The close-knit family nature of the *teips* was also an impetus for acts of bravery amongst the Chechens. The Chechens were able to cross-attach members from different *teips* when the need arose, without any loss of combat power. This cross-attachment actually helped the spread of information and ideas amongst the Chechens.[26] Another trait of the Chechens that would assist them in battle was their pride and egalitarianism coupled with contempt for almost all non-Chechens. Groups of Chechen fighters cut off, with little to no formal military training, outgunned and under intense fire, always fought on. In keeping with what is often considered military elite forces, the Chechens fought on for three reasons: the close-knit family solidarity founded upon mutual reliance, an absolute belief in their cause and a conviction of their own superiority, "one Chechen is worth ten Russian tanks or a hundred Russian soldiers."[27] Although overstated, it was this type of attitude, seldom displayed by Russian forces, which greatly aided the Chechen victory.

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[26] Arquilla, 211.

[27] Lieven, 22 & 325.

Another tradition the Chechens had in common with highly professional forces was the battlefield recovery of wounded comrades and dead bodies. This was due to respect for the families, the close-knit unity of the group, and the tradition of being buried in one's ancestral village. This is one reason why the deportation to Central Asia was so devastating to the Chechens. Those who had died in captivity had handfuls of earth from their graves returned to Chechnya for ceremonial burials. The desecration of their ancestral graves by the NKVD upon their deportation only added fuel to the Chechens' hatred towards the Russians.[28]

The stamina of the Chechens under the strains of close-quarter battle and constant bombardment was generally impressive. As long as they were able to fight, the Chechens appeared to maintain their discipline, but inactivity could be a problem. Discipline would break down when Chechens, assigned to a temporarily quiet sector, would abandon their posts to charge off to *move to the sound of the guns.* Seldom would the fighters inform their commander they were leaving their positions unoccupied. Some groups refused to take part in any organized defense but roamed the city looking for a fight.[29] In this manner the Chechens' predisposition for fighting could be a liability. Generally though, these same attributes were definitely an asset for the Chechens.

This looseness or lack of control can be both an advantage and a hindrance. Early in the war, groups of fighters, the *teips,* traveled the country deciding on their own where to fight. While this ethos brought fighters into the defense of Grozny, not until better

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[28] Ibid., 346.

command and control was developed by Aslan Maskhadov, Deputy Chief of the Chechen Forces, was it possible to organize proper defenses for the city. Each group usually elected a leader, if one was not self-evident. This usually resulted in the best leadership, and unity within groups. Former Soviet or Russian Army experience was an added advantage in being selected to positions of leadership. This internal leadership or command structure meant units loosing a leader in battle could simply elect the next most qualified individual and continue the fight.

The ability to recover from the losses has been a long established tradition within the Chechens. Throughout their long history of confrontation with Russian forces the Chechens have suffered numerous battlefield reverses. In each case the Chechens were quick to get back into the fight.[30] This has been repeated in the fighting in Grozny. After the Russians "secured" the city on March 6, the Chechens counterattacked into the city a month later, on May 1st.

While the Russian intelligence services, policy makers, and military hierarchy must have dismissed much of this information, obviously available, there is no excuse for not knowing what weapons the Russian forces were to face upon their invasion of Chechnya.

Even during Soviet times the Chechens were known to have maintained a large number of personal weapons. As the Soviet Union collapsed most of the newly

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[29] Carlotta Gall & Thomas di Waai, Chechnya – Calamity in the Caucasus. (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 213.

[30] Lieven, 308.

independent republics retained the military's arsenals. Many of these weapons later became available on the thriving black market. While almost impossible to track all of these weapons, the Russians should have known what the Chechens possessed from the events of 1992. In June 1992 Chechen President, General Dzhokhar Dudaev, demanded that Russia withdraw all of its forces from Chechnya and leave all their military equipment.[31] The Russian Defense Minister, Pavel Grachev , concluded a deal that in return for safe passage of all Russian troops from Chechnya, the Russians would turn over their arms as demanded. Earlier in the year several Russian garrisons had been overrun and their weapons confiscated. In a report to the Duma after the war it was noted that the Chechens were given or seized 42 tanks, 56 armored personnel carriers (APCs), 139 artillery systems, and almost 25,000 automatic weapons.[32] As evidenced by the events of 1994-1996, the Chechens certainly knew how to employ these weapons.

In their defense of Grozny the Chechens employed a "defenseless defense." The Chechens would strongpoint few positions, preferring to remain mobile and elusive. Those positions that were strongpointed would only be occupied for short durations. By the time the Russians brought the necessary firepower forward to reduce the strongpoint, the Chechens would have already abandoned the position, further frustrating the Russians.[33] The Russians' view of the Chechen defense was markedly different, and in keeping with traditional defensive procedures. General Grachev, the Russian Defense Minister, reported the Chechens had created a defense in depth, consisting of three layers,

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[31] Fowls, 171.

[32] Lieven, 65.

centered around the Presidential Palace, complete with strongpoints and prepared positions.[34] This is obviously the Russians imposing their doctrine upon their enemy, often referred to as mirror imaging, a common fault among the professional military. General Garchev also reported that the Chechens employed 'human shields' while firing from hospitals, schools and apartments.[35] This seems highly likely when considering the later Chechen tactic of taking over Russian hospitals for leverage in negotiations. There was a large Russian population in Grozny and these people may have been purposely selected as the 'human shields' described by General Grachev. Using structures such as hospitals as shields could also serve other purposes. As the Russians brought their firepower to bear and destroyed these buildings, it reinforced the Chechen civilian populaces' resistance to the Russian 'invaders'.[36] Such scenes would also have an impact on Russian and world opinion when broadcast by the media.

The effectiveness of the "defenseless defense" was increased by the tactics and techniques employed by the Chechens and by their knowledge of the city. The Chechens reliance on hand held cellular communications, civilian vehicles for transportation within the city, and hit and run tactics all augmented the concept of the "defenseless defense."

The Chechens preferred method of attack was the ambush. The Russians' initial tendency to remain embarked in their APCs enhanced the effectiveness of this Chechen

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[33] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom," 8.

[34] Timothy Thomas, "The Caucasus Conflict and Russian Security: Russian Armed Forces Confront Chechnya III. The Battle for Grozny, 1-26 January 1995." The Journal of Slavic Military Studies. Vol. 10, No. 1. (March 1997), 56.

[35] Ibid., 58.

[36] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom," 8.

tactic. The Chechens, employing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) would engage the lead and rear vehicle of the Russian column. Once immobilized the remaining APCs could be quickly picked off, destroying the vehicle and killing the soldiers inside. The tendency to engage the vehicles from the roof-tops meant the Russians could not elevate their vehicles' weapons to engage the Chechens. Also by firing from the roof-tops the Chechens were engaging the targets from the lightly armored tops of the vehicles. The slaughter of elements of the Russian 131st Brigade is a gruesome but clear illustration of these tactics. The Russian unit drove directly into the center of the city to seize the train station. The infantry did dismount but moved directly into the train station. The Chechens destroyed the lead and rear vehicle from the roof-tops and basements (below the level the vehicles could depress their weapons), and then systematically destroyed the remaining vehicles. During the 48 hours the Russians waited for reinforcements the unit was effectively annihilated.[37]

The nature of the city and the tactics employed by the Chechens did much to offset whatever advantages the Russians initially enjoyed. As the North Vietnamese had done against the US forces in Vietnam, the Chechens employed *belt-buckle* tactics -- Chechens units would often close with Russian units to counter the Russians advantage in fire support. By the Chechens remaining close to the Russians, the Russians could not call in supporting arms without fear of inflicting fratricide on themselves. The Chechens were not above hiding amongst the local population to achieve this same effect. To ensure the Russian armor would enter the ambush sites, Chechen soldiers, posing as

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[37] Ibid., 8-9.

civilians, would act as guides, leading the Russians into prearranged kill zones. Chechen snipers would attempt to do the same with individual soldiers. Snipers would wound their initial victim to draw other soldiers into exposed positions as they attempted to rescue their wounded comrade.

Booby-traps also inflicted a number of casualties on the Russians. The Chechens became very adept at booby-trapping dead and wounded soldiers, discarded equipment, and entrance-ways into subways, buildings, sewers, and potential breaching points.[38]

Once the Russians had gained the relative 'safety' of inside a building, the Chechens developed tactics to inflict further casualties with little danger to themselves. In what became termed "vertical pincers" Chechen forces would infiltrate a floor that had Russian soldiers directly above and below them. The Chechen fighters would fire through the floor or ceiling and immediately vacate the area. The Russian forces would then commence firing through the floors and ceilings, firing upon their own unit above or below them. Entire firefights would be conducted without visual contact between units.[39]

Although usually operating in small 20 man cells, further broken down into 3 or 4 man teams (armed with RPG, sniper rifle, and assault rifle), the Chechens were capable of operating in company sized elements of up to 200 men. One of the more famous Chechen units (for their terrorist operations inside Russia during the war) was Shamil Basayev's. Basayev's men were battle experienced from operations in Abkhazia during

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[38] Ibid., 6-8.

[39] Arquilla, 215.

1992-93. Operating in groups of 200, Basayev's force could rapidly concentrate against Russian units and turn the tide of a battle.[40]

While the Chechens proved to be a superior force to the Russians, a professional military would have been able to overcome the Chechens' advantages and defeat them. The Russian Army of 1994 was not such a professional force.

D. STATE OF THE RUSSIAN FORCES

One of the few persons who believed the Russian forces were capable and prepared for the campaign against Chechnya was the Defense Minister, General Grachev. On 27 November, Gen. Grachev had boasted that one parachute regiment would solve the Chechen problem within hours. This was an abrupt about face from his statement before the Duma 37 days previously when he reported on the total demoralization of the armed forces.[41] While Gen. Grachev must have been aware of the condition of the armed forces, he did spend much of his time maneuvering in political circles in Moscow rather than out inspecting forces. Tasked with reforming and downsizing the once mighty Soviet forces to the Russian military he was not a popular figure with other military officials. Grachev's quick rise to power, political connection to President Yeltsin, and airborne background did little to endear him to fellow senior officers. Rather than present an accurate picture of the armed forces, Grachev offered Yeltsin, his political patron, inflated assessments of their readiness and capability.[42]

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[40] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom", 8.

[41] Fowls, 173-174.

[42] Major R. Finch III, Why the Russian Military Failed in Chechnya." Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft. Leavenworth, KS. Available on line at : http://call.army.mill/call/fsmo/

The Russian Army had reservations over the pending operation in Chechnya. Eleven generals appeared before the Duma stating the military was not ready. The army had not conducted a single division level exercise since 1992, more than one third of the Army's helicopters could not fly, and stocks of emergency supplies had already been consumed just to maintain the Army.[43] Since the break-up of the Soviet Union on 26 December 1991, the Russian economy, and by default the military as well, had collapsed.

The military was not immune to corruption and is one of the underlying reasons for the military's dismal performance in Chechnya. While the budget was declining due to economic factors, if all the appropriated funds were properly managed the military's plight would have not have been so severe. Much of the monies handed over by the government were simply being siphoned off at every level of bureaucracy and command. The Russian proverb "A fish rots from the head" describes the condition of the military on the eve of the Chechnya campaign. [44]

In the short period since the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian military had not been able to carry out any real reforms and it had inherited all the vices of its Soviet predecessor.

Dyedovshchina, the abuse of young soldiers was one such carry-over from Soviet times. So too was the lack of a professional noncommissioned officer corps (NCO's) that could combat such abuses. As it was, these seasoned contract soldiers preyed upon the

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[43] Timothy Thomas, The Russian Armed Forces Confront Chechnya: I Military-Political Aspects, 11-31 December 1994. Journal of Slavic Military Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 1995), 262.

[44] Lieven, 283.

weaker, younger conscripts.[45] As a result of this *dyedovshchina,* lack of NCO's and prevalent corruption high levels of suicides, crime, desertions, and alcoholism were the norm. These are all indicators of a military in decay.

The lack of funds, due to budget constraints and corruption, resulted in a decline in training and readiness. This was felt in all services and even in elite units. Equipment was not maintained. By the end of the Chechen war only 53% of the Russian Air Forces' aircraft were combat capable. Pay to the forces was in arrears and most officers had to find additional employment to supplement their incomes. Corrupt commanders, for their own personal profit, leased their troops out as cheap labor. Weapons were routinely sold on the black-market, a trend that continued even during the fighting in Chechnya.[46]

The armed forces also suffered a shortage of man-power as they had to compete with various powerful ministries, such as the Interior Ministry, that needed troops for the Border Guards, Interior Ministry special forces (OMON, and SOBR), and Presidential Guards. Many of those conscripted managed to bribe their way out of their obligation, further exacerbating the problem.[47]

The military was not only physically and monetarily unprepared for the war in Chechnya, but mentally as well. The focus had always been firmly directed at defeating NATO. All doctrine and plans had been developed with the defeat of NATO in mind.

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[45] Ibid., 290.

[46] Lieven, 277 & 284.

[47] Ibid., 287.

The large-scaled combined arms battles envisioned for the plains of Western Europe were inadequate preparation for battling an insurgency within its own borders.[48]

While many at the highest echelons were in a state of denial over the lack of preparedness of the armed forces, those who would do the fighting were not. The Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces, General Eduard Vorobyev, refused command of the operation based on the poor condition of the military. He was subsequently dismissed. Deputy Defense Ministers Gen. Borris Gromov and Gen. Valery Mironov, and Generals Alexander Lebed and Georgy Kondratiev also came out against the war and all four were forced to retire. In all, approximately 557 officers of all ranks were either relieved or separated over their protest of the war or their refusal to fight. In January 1995 the commander and entire senior staff of the North Caucasus Military District, in whose area of responsibility Chechnya fell, were relieved after the disastrous 31 December attack on Grozny.[49] In some instances, units, such as the elite 106th Guards Airborne Division, simply refused orders to deploy to Chechnya. Once in theater units would often refuse orders, while other units withdrew from the area on their own accord. One such instance was the Ministry of Interior special-forces, the OMON, who refused to carry out their tasking unless written orders were forthcoming. When written orders did not appear, they simply left the region.[50]

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[48] Ibid., 274-276.

[49] Ibid., 106.

[50] Thomas, "Russian Security", 18.

E. STRATEGIC SETTING

On 1 November1991, Chechnya declared itself independent of the Russian Federation (the Soviet Union did not officially ceased to exist until 26 December 1991). The Russian Duma (Parliament) did not recognize the Chechen declaration of independence. President Yeltsin responded by imposing martial law on Chechnya, which the Duma revoked three days later on November 10th. Hoping to influence or intimidate the Chechens, the Russians deployed the 12th Motorized Rifle (Training) Division to Chechnya. (This unit was later withdrawn at Dudaev's insistence, with all its weapons being turned over to the Chechens.)[51]

Negotiations between Russia and the breakaway republic continued off and on from 1992 until the end of 1994. There was both reason and hope behind the Russian political approach to the problem. General Dudaev, while capturing 85 per cent of the Chechen vote, also had several opposition groups arrayed against him. The first coup attempt occurred six months after the elections, on 31 March 1992.[52] The Russian government supported these anti-Dudaev factions, initially with weapons and later with direct military support.

The Russians had already peacefully settled a separatist issue with another rebellious Russian republic, Tatarstan. Two years of negotiations had resulted in Tatarstan remaining in the Russian Federation with increased economic and political

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[51] Fowls, 170-172.

[52] Ibid., 171.

rights. What the Russians lacked in Chechnya was patience.[53] The internal political situation and oil were the two main reasons for the desire for a speedy resolution to the Chechen problem.

Although the presidential elections were still almost two years away, the December 1993 Duma elections witnessed a large shift to the right. The ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky had won the largest share of the parliamentary elections and could challenge Yeltsin for the presidency in 1995. Yeltsin could not appear soft on Chechnya.

A major oil pipeline between the Caspian Sea oil-fields and ports on the Black Sea ran through Chechnya. An international oil consortium was preparing to sign a multi-billion dollar deal. So besides for purely nationalistic reasons to eradicate separatist movements, there was also a financial incentive to bring peace to the region.[54]

The Russians, while negotiating with Dudaev, supplied arms to the three major opposition groups in Chechnya. The lack of results lead the Internal Counterintelligence Service (FSK) to recruit active duty service members to participate in an unsuccessful armored attack on Grozny to topple Dudaev in November 1994. Although the Russian government continued to deny any involvement in the coup, the Dudaev forces displayed their Russian captives for all to see. These soldiers became the top media story and appeared on the front page of the respected *Izvestiya* newspaper.[55] Such denials by the government, and Yeltsin's statements in August and September 1994 that there would be

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[53] Gall, 143.

[54] Ibid., 144.

[55] Panico, 10-14.

no military intervention in Chechnya, did little to win public support for the upcoming war. All negotiations broke off after the Russian government attempted to assassinate Dudaev with a car bomb as he traveled to meet the Russian delegation for further talks.[56]

While failing to properly prepare the Russian public for the upcoming war in Chechnya, the Russians could make a legal case for the intervention. The Russian constitution of 1991 contained three clauses that gave Yeltsin and Russia legal justification for their actions. Article 80 called for the president to undertake all necessary measures to preserve the sovereignty, independence and integrity of the country. Article 65 states that Chechnya was a member of the Russian Federation. Chechnya was in violation of Article 71 that forbade the creation of armed units, weapons sales, drug running, etc. all of which was occurring within Chechnya. Existing laws reinforced the constitution in that the state had the legal obligation to protect its citizens and its territory. The national military doctrine states that preventing activities such as drug running, weapons sales, separatist movements, all fell within the purview of the military. In keeping with attempts at legality a state of emergency was never declared in Chechnya. During a state of emergency only Internal Ministry troops (MVD) can be used. As the MVD was not trained or equipped to tackle the Chechens, the military would be required, and therefor no state of emergency was declared.[57] The scenes of civilian casualties and the indiscriminant shelling of cities and towns evaporated any sense of legality amongst the Russian populace.

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[56] Gall & di Waai, 146.

[57] Yu Nikolaev, The Chechen Tragedy. (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1996), 79-81.

Despite the attempts to legitimize the war, no real attempt was made by the Russian government made to cultivate popular support for the war. No attempt was made to constrain the free media within Russia. It is possible that this facet of the operation was simply overlooked as previous Soviet or Russian military operations were not open to public or media scrutiny. Government releases did not reflect reality and were contradictory to what was reported by the media, including Russia's own NTV (independent television). Russia quickly lost the propaganda war to Chechnya, both domestically and internationally.

Internationally the war was viewed as an internal security problem. It was not until abuses of human rights became an issue that the international community displayed any concerns over the developments in Chechnya. Russia remained the world's second largest nuclear power and therefor retained a certain amount of respect. The international community was equally concerned by Chechen threats to engage in nuclear or chemical terrorism to achieve its independence.[58]

F. OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

As originally planned the Chechen operation had four phases:

- Phase I: 28 November to 6 December- formation of four task forces composed of Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Interior Ministry (MVD) forces
- Phase II: 7-9 December- Advance along three axes and establish an interior and exterior cordon. The inner cordon would encircle the capital city of Grozny. The exterior cordon would seal the borders of the republic

[58] Thomas, "Military-Political Aspects," 252.

- Phase III: 10-13 December- advancing on three axes the task forces would seize key installations within Grozny. These included the Presidential Palace, TV and radio stations, and government buildings

- Phase IV: 5-10 days- Army forces would stabilize the situation and turn over responsibility to the MVD forces[59]

Only Phase I was accomplished to any degree. Forces were brought together but no coordination or joint training was conducted.

Phase II was never attempted with the forces converging on Grozny without any attempt to seal off the region or the city itself. This allowed the Chechen forces to reinforce Grozny and bring in supplies and reinforcements from outside the region.

Briefly, what actually occurred was quite different from the above plans. Forces were assembled in Russia, Ingushetia, and Dagestan. On 11 December 1994 the Russian forces crossed the Chechen border and converged on Grozny. No attempt was made to seal the republic's borders or encircle Grozny. All three axes were met with Chechen resistance and it was not until 20 December the outskirts of Grozny were reached. From the 21st until the end of December the Russian forces pushed further into the city. On the 31st an unsuccessful attempt to seize the city center and Presidential Palace was mounted. It took until 3 January for the Russian forces to extract themselves from the city center and regroup. Once regrouped, it took from early January until mid-February for the Russian forces to methodically clear the city. By 6 March the Russians were able to declare the city secure. With Grozny secured, the Russians then proceeded to clear the other towns of Chechen forces. In June and August 1995, Chechen forces under the

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59 Major G. Celestan, "Wounded Bear: The Ongoing Russian Military Operation in Chechnya." Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft Leavenworth, KS. Available online at: http://call.army.mil/ca//fsmo/

command of Shamil Basaev, conducted raids in neighboring Budenovsk and Dagestan, effectively taking the war to Russia. In both instances, civilians were kidnapped and later released in exchange for safe passage and concessions from the Russians. In the first raid a hospital and 1,000 patients were taken. In the second raid, 3,000 civilians were held hostage. In both cases Russian troops and Chechen engaged in gun-battles that resulted in civilian and combatant casualties, and the eventual withdrawal of Chechen forces back into Chechnya.[60]

Back in Chechnya, the Chechen forces conducted several counterattacks on Grozny, beginning on 1 May. By August the Chechens had retaken the city from the Russian forces. The Russians were unable to dislodge the Chechens and on 31 August 1996 the Khasavyurt Agreement was signed, calling for the withdrawal of all Russian forces from Chechnya and establishment of a joint committee to deal with the relationship between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic.[61]

G. BATTLE OF GROZNY

1. Preparation For Battle

One of the major failures was of command and control. In the Chechen campaign there was a lack of centralized planning and no established clear chain of command. The Russian General Staff and the North Caucasus Military District Headquarters were not included in the planning of the operation and were bypassed by Grachev.

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[60] For terrorist operations in Chechnya see: Capt. D.L. Sumner's thesis, "Success of Terrorism in War: The Case of Chechnya." NPS thesis, 1998. Available from National Technical Information Service.

[61] Fowls, 176-182.

This lack of unity was evident at all levels. While President Yeltsin was announcing cease-fires and peace proposals in Moscow, the Generals were conducting offensive operations against the Chechens. At the lower levels, wounded Army troops were turned away from MVD aid stations.[62] MVD troops, not equipped or organized for large-scale combat were tasked to fight alongside Army and naval infantry units. No coordination or joint training was conducted prior to the campaign, and each eyed the other with suspicion.[63] FSK troops were also added to the mix.

The campaign was also a major intelligence failure. The known tradition of Russian-Chechen animosity was never considered or briefed to the Russian forces. The intelligence services knew what major weapon systems the Chechens possessed – the 12th Motorized Rifle Division had given the Chechens all their heavy weapon systems – but this information was not passed to the units entering Grozny. Tactical maps of Grozny and Chechnya were in short supply creating numerous problems from navigation to calling for supporting arms. The Russian forces were given almost no information about the current conditions within Grozny, or the type of resistance they should expect to meet. No prior reconnaissance was conducted. Nor were any targets identified prior to the assault. None of the Russian previous experiences in support of the several coup attempts appeared to be taken into consideration, even though they would have provided up to date information on conditions the Russian troops were about to face.[64]

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[62] Finch, 8.

[63] Celestan, 3.

[64] Lester Grau, "Changing Russian Urban Tactics: The Aftermath of the Battle for Grozny." Strategic Forum, No. 38, (July, 1995) 5.

The two main areas of intelligence responsibility, knowledge of the enemy and intelligence preparation of the battlefield were never seriously conducted and directly contributed to the 31 December fiasco and the failure of the entire operation.

Even had the Russian units known what they were about to face their lack of training was to be a major drawback. Only the naval infantry units had conducted any urban warfare training. Not only were the forces deficient in MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) many were lacking in their primary job skills (MOS-Military Occupational Skills). Commanders of tank and artillery units complained that as many as half their troops had never fired their tank cannon or artillery pieces. One Russian officer noted that no training for attacking a built-up area had been conducted in the past 25 years.[65]

Added to the problem of insufficient training was the ad-hoc nature of the units committed. Many units were 'fleshed out' just prior to deploying to Chechnya. Many units were composite units that were assembled immediately prior to entering the city. This lack of training and ad-hoc nature of units resulted in high rates of fratricide and plummeting morale within the Russian forces. One example was a six-hour battle between a Russian tank unit and a motorized rifle unit in early January.[66] The Russian command had made the wrong assumptions thinking that forces could be quickly thrown together immediately prior to undertaking such a complex operation such as fighting in a city against a determined enemy. (Appendix A provides a timeline of how and which forces were introduced to the campaign.)

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[65] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom", 3.

The Russians operated under three assumptions that proved to be wrong in the battle for Grozny. These assumptions were based upon their experiences in the Great Patriotic War (WWII). First, was that the city would be empty of the bulk of the civilian population. Second, the enemy they would fight would be a conventional force, and therefor would fight in a particular fashion. Third, there would be a period of combat prior to entering the cities that would allow them to establish combat procedures and identify problems before entering into one of the more difficult combat operations – fighting in an urban environment.[67] All of these assumptions proved wrong in the battle for Grozny and cost the Russians dearly.

So on the eve of entering Grozny there exited no unity of command, or realistic knowledge of the enemy. Ad-hoc forces were poorly trained and often unaware of the mission before them and even who, where, and why they were fighting.[68] These Russian forces were being sent to their death.

2. The City

In 1994 Grozny had a population of 490,000. The city itself was a mixture of multi-storied buildings and industrial installations that covered approximately 100 square miles.[69] The city center was concrete Soviet-style construction with large basements,

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[66] Celestan, 11.

[67] Lester Grau & Timothy Thomas, "Soft Log and Concrete Canyons: Russian Urban Combat Logistics in Grozny." Marine Corps Gazette, (October, 1999), 67.

[68] Grau, "Changing Tactics," 4.

[69] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom," 2.

bomb shelters, and underground passageways, and surrounded by suburbs of small wooden family dwellings.[70]

3. THE FIGHTING

The battle of Grozny can be broken down into three separate phases. The first was the disastrous attempt on 31 December to capture the key installations that resulted in the withdrawal of Russian forces from the city center by 3 January. The second phase was the methodical clearing in zone that resulted in the capture of the Presidential Palace on 19 January and withdrawal of Chechen forces that continued until early February. The third phase was a series of counterattacks by Chechen forces to retake the city beginning on 1 May (May Day!). By 6 August Chechen forces had retaken control of the city and Russian attempts to dislodge them failed. Phases one and two of the battle will be studied here.

The initial assault into Grozny began 20 December by four armored columns advancing over three axes from the north, west and east of the city. Only the northern axis, with two columns moving in trace of each other, continued to advance after encountering Chechen resistance. The other two columns halted, allowing the Chechens to concentrate on the threat from the northern column. The commanders of the other two columns sent false progress reports after meeting Chechen forces. Both were relieved for cowardice and for failure to support the one advancing brigade. Both claimed to have halted due to lack of support, to include close air support.[71] The Russians continued to

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[70] Andrei Raevsky, "Russian Military Performance in Chechnya: an initial evaluation." Journal of Slavic Military Studies, Vol. 8, No. 4, (December, 1995), 689.

[71] Grau, "Changing Tactics", 5.

secure the northern section of the city until the end of the month. With the northern section of the city nominally in the hands of the Russians, a bid to seize the Presidential Palace and city center was planned for New Years Eve.

The assault launched on 31 December 1994 was undertaken by units of the 2d Motorized Rifle Division and MVD troops, neither of which had any urban warfare training. The forces allocated to the assault only numbered 6,000 of the 23,800 troops initially deployed to Chechnya. Russian figures put the Chechen defenders in the city at approximately 10,000. These Chechen had about 40 tanks, 40 APCs, 100 artillery pieces, and numerous anti-tank weapons at their disposal. This equates to a force ratio of 0.6 to 1 in favor of the Chechen defenders. Russian MOUT doctrine calls for a 6:1 attacker to defender ratio when conducting offensive operations in a city. It was during this hastily planned, and poorly conceived attack that the Russians suffered 90 per cent of the losses they would sustain in Grozny.[72]

The 31 December attack followed traditional Soviet MOUT doctrine. Fast moving, multi-directional mounted attacks attempted to seize key positions in the city. The Presidential Palace and Railway Station were the two key objectives for the initial assault. The Russian assault into the city consisted of four armored columns attacking from the north, east and west of the city. These assaults were to collapse the enemy's defenses and will to resist. No attempt was made to clear the enemy, but to by-pass them as they seized the key positions.[73] These tactics played right into the hands of the

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[72] Raevsky, 682.

[73] Marine Corps Intelligence Activity product; provided during a brief on Chechnya to 1st Marine Division units.

Chechen defenders. As described above, the Chechen combination of defenseless defense and mobility, allowed the Chechens to concentrate against the Russian columns that were unable to provide mutual support to each other. (See Figure 3)

The decision to begin the campaign in winter negated the air supremacy the Russians enjoyed. What little Chechen Air Force existed was destroyed on the ground on the first day of the war. The thick cloud cover over Grozny meant that Russian helicopters were not able to provide fire support to the isolated armor columns in the city. The difficult flying conditions only exacerbated the poor quality of the pilots who had limited training due to financial restrictions.[74]

The experience of the 131st Motorized Rifle Brigade was typical of the Russian forces that participated in the initial assault. Of the 120 vehicles that entered, the city only 18 escaped destruction. Most of the Brigade's officers were killed. One surviving officer recounted being surrounded, fired on from all sides, and that all requests for fire support, reinforcements or resupply went unanswered.[75] By 3 January, the 1st Battalion of this brigade lost 800 of its 1000 men, 20 of its 26 tanks, and 102 of its 120 APCs.[76]

The Russian forces compounded their mistakes by transmitting their communications in the clear. Chechens, who spoke Russian, could therefor make decisions based on Russian intentions, a tremendous advantage in combat. The vertical obstacle that the tall buildings posed reduced the Russians' ability to call for any type of support, and to effectively command, coordinate, and control their forces or fires. Radio

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[74] Celestan, 9.

[75] Ibid., 4.

[76] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom," 2.

operators became favorite targets for Chechen snipers.[77] Chechens would use captured radios to issue orders to Russian units, usually directing the unit to withdraw, or move into exposed positions where they could be easily engaged by Chechen ambushes.[78]

A major tactical failure of the Russians was the employment of tanks in the initial fighting. Tanks would lead the assaults with infantry remaining mounted inside the perceived safety of their APCs. The Russian tanks became easy targets for hidden Chechen hunter-killer teams. With the tanks destroyed or neutralized, the Chechens would then engage the trailing APCs, destroying both the vehicle and embarked troops. Had the infantry been dismounted and working in close coordination with the tanks each would have been able to provide security for the other. By not exploiting the strengths of the other or covering the weakness of each other, the Russian tank and motorized infantry forces made the Chechens' task much easier.[79]

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[77] Ibid., 9.

[78] Gall, 206.

[79] Grau, "Changing Tactics," 2.

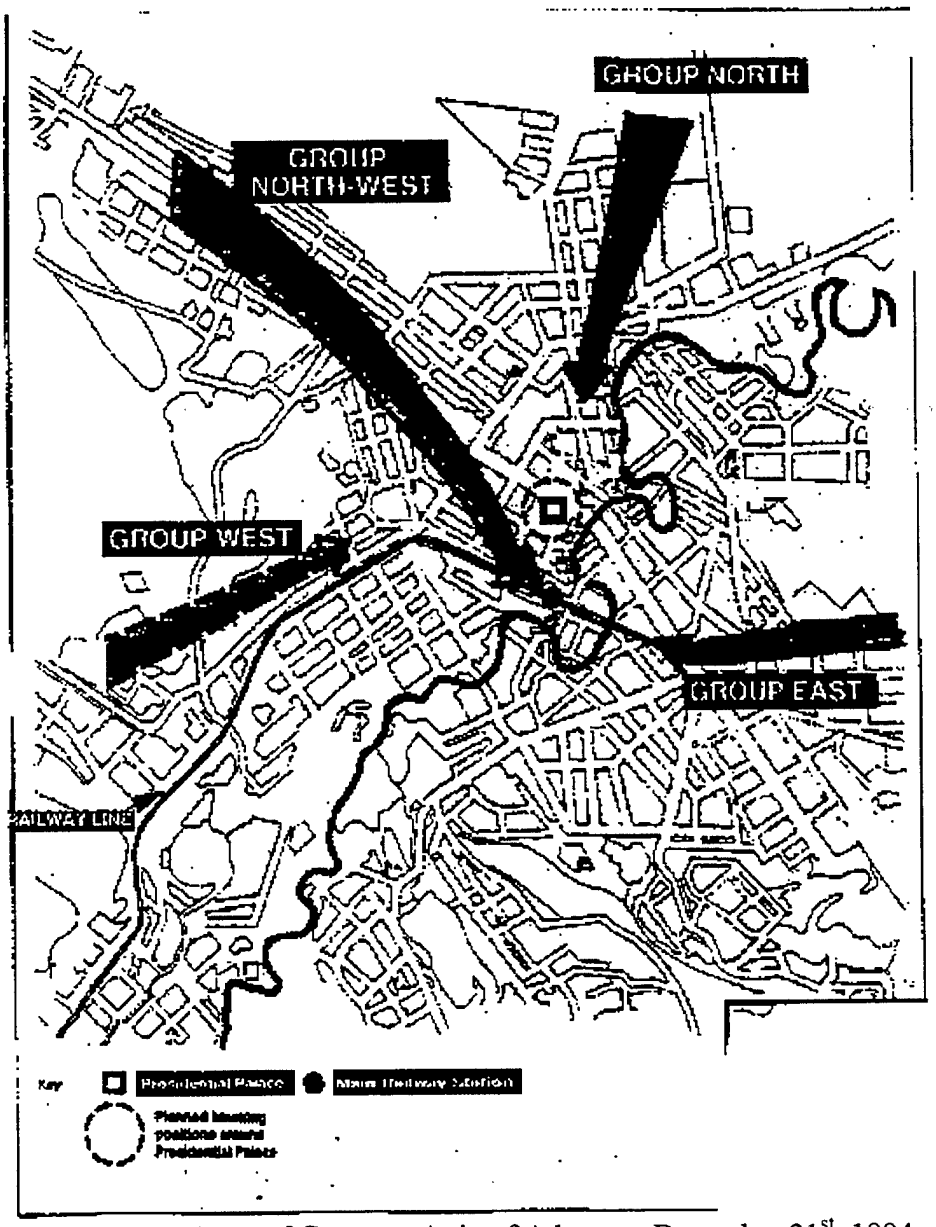

Figure 3. Map of Grozny: Axis of Advance, December 31st, 1994.

The Russians were quick to identify their past mistakes and take remedial action. First they brought reinforcements into the fight. The initial deployment was 28, 500 troops (23,800 MOD & 4,700 MVD), supported by 80 tanks, 208 APCs and 182 artillery tubes. By March these totals had grown to 53,000 troops (38,000 MOD & 15,000 MVD) backed up by 230 tanks, 454 APCs, and 388 artillery tubes. Not only was the quantity

increased, so too was the quality of the force. Naval infantry (marine), 12 airborne battalions and Spetsnatz forces were included in the force structure.[80]

No longer were the Russians content to pour untrained troops into the fray. New forces underwent urban training in Mozdok before being deployed to Chechnya. Once deployed into theater, these new forces conducted patrols in designated areas on the periphery of Grozny, before being eased into the combat zones in the central city. Greater attention was paid to the psychological preparation of the troops for urban fighting. Classes on local traditions and customs were also included in preparing the troops before engaging Chechen forces.[81] Changes were also made in the organization of forces and the tactics employed.

For the second phase of the battle of Grozny the Russians task-organized their forces into storm groups or detachments. Storm groups were based around a motorized rifle company, with tank platoon, artillery battery, mortar platoon, automatic grenade launcher (AGS-17) platoon, engineer platoon and chemical detachment. The storm detachment was the next echelon above the storm group. The storm detachment was comprised of a motorized battalion, tank company, artillery battalion, engineer company, anti-air defense platoon, flame-thrower squad, and smoke generator detachment.[82] A major advantage of this task organization was the immediate access to direct fire support provided by the attached artillery. Local commanders could now immediately employ

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[80] Thomas, "Russian Security," 35.

[81] Ibid., 7.

[82] Grau, "Changing Tactics," 3.

artillery fires without the time-consuming coordination and clearance from higher headquarters.

While these task-organized units provided many benefits to the Russians, the change in tactics, coupled with better-trained troops, and combat experience they were gaining, proved more beneficial. Yet, problems still existed.

As the Russians renewed their efforts to secure Grozny, and capture the Presidential Palace and city center, they began to systematically clear in zone as the advanced.[83] This facilitated resupply of forward units, made movement behind the front-lines safer, and provided somewhat of a safe area troops could be withdrawn to and rested and refitted before returning to battle.

No longer did the Russians advance through the restrictive city streets with tanks leading and unsupported by infantry. The tanks were now used to seal off and isolate an area, repel counterattacks and provide covering fire. Tanks assumed covered firing positions, or areas secured by infantry, to frustrate Chechen anti-tank fires. Dismounted infantry would precede the tanks during the advance. Tanks would follow at a safe distance but would be able provide immediate direct fire support for the infantry. Tanks constructed field expedient devices to enhance their survivability. Chicken wire was used to create stand-off against Chechen anti-tank munitions. Empty ammunition cans, filled with stones, were placed on the tanks to replace missing reactive armor, to cause premature detonation of incoming rockets and missiles.[84]

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[83] Thomas, "Deadly Classroom," 9.

[84] Ibid., 9-10.

Further protection was provided by employing anti-aircraft weapons (ZSU-23-4 & 2S6) to engage targets on the upper floors of taller buildings. Tanks main guns could not elevate sufficiently to engage these targets. Helicopters were used to clear rooftops of snipers and ambush teams as units advanced. The helicopters would mask their movement by staying behind tall buildings, then "pop up" to engage targets, and resume cover behind the building to frustrate Chechen fires.

Prepatory fires now preceded assaults on buildings. As the infantry moved forward, cover fire was provided by numerous weapons: direct fire artillery, tanks, RPGs, machine-guns, AGS-17s. These covering fires kept the Chechen defenders pinned down, seeking cover, as the infantry advanced covered by smoke. Once inside the buildings, 3 man teams systematically cleared rooms, utilizing grenades before entering the room. To gain access to buildings combat engineers created entrance-ways by breaching the walls with explosives.

To counter the Chechen tactic of vehicle ambush, the Russians would place their own ambush teams on all approach routes into an area. Then armored vehicles would quickly move into an area as bait. When the Chechen forces moved into position around the kill zone they would be ambushed by waiting Russian troops.

During night fighting the Russians would use tank-mounted searchlights to defeat Chechen night optics. This tactic also had a psychological effect on the Chechen fighters and help prevent fratricide among the Russians.[85]

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[85] Grau, "Changing Tactics," 3-5.

Greater use was made of remotely piloted vehicles/unmanned aircraft (RPVs & UAVs) to conduct reconnaissance of route and areas prior to moving forces in. These flights could also provide targeting information before an attack commenced. Although in the Russian inventory, limited use was made of precision guided munitions (PGMs) during this campaign. The Russians claimed they were reluctant to 'waste' such technical weapons on the Chechens.[86] One noted usage of a PGM was the death of General Dudaev. The Russians were able to use a PGM that homed in on the Chechen President's satellite phone transmission on 21 April 1996.[87]

After their initial defeat over the New Year period the Russian military was able to take corrective action to defeat the Chechen forces within Grozny. Changes in force structure, task-organization, tactics, limited decentralization of control, coupled with the Chechens' inability to logistically sustain their forces in Grozny, all contributed to the Russian military success in taking the city. On 26 January 1995 the responsibility for control of the city was passed from the Russian Army to the MVD troops. With the Russian Army concentrating on wresting other Chechen towns away from the rebels, and pursuing them into the mountainous regions to the south, the MVD forces would lose control of Grozny back to the Chechens.

The initial failure in Grozny can be laid firmly at the feet of the Russian military. While there are extenuating circumstances, such as the economy, corruption, societal changes, it was the same Russian Army that was initially embarrassed before struggling back to achieve a limited victory. Had the Russian military leadership sent the necessary

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[86] Thomas, "Russian Security," 14.

forces, prepared them for the fight they realistically should have anticipated, established a unity of effort for their endeavors and adhered to their original plan, success may have been far less costly, in both reputation and, more importantly, lives. The key is not to criticize the Russian failure, but to learn from those mistakes.

H. TACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED

- Training- Training, even in austere times, must be conducted. Imagination and leadership can surmount many of these difficulties. Basic training and soldiering skills must be taught and maintained. Specialized training such as MOUT is essential prior to conducting such operations. One recommendation was to assign selected units as city fighting units. Training must be conducted even during war. The Russians began training programs after the initial abortive assault on 31 December. In city fighting the Russian troops were found highly deficient in snap shooting, hitting moving targets, and lacked sufficient rules of engagement (ROE's) to deal with the civilian-combatant mix they confronted in Grozny. It is essential all members be made aware of the nature of the mission and enemy forces. Too little attention was paid to the psychological preparation of the force and this resulted in a high number of psychiatric casualties.

- Ad Hoc units- it is better to take a homogeneous unit and attach units, preferably with one that has already developed relationship established, rather than 'flesh out' units prior to combat. These ad hoc units experienced higher casualties and had a higher rate of fratricide than other units. The standard table of organization and equipment, (T/O & T/E) were not suitable for urban combat, necessitating the development of the storm groups and detachments. While these units were an improvement, the lack of routine working relationships hindered their full maximization.

- Fratricide- units needed a method to quickly identify each other in close quarter combat. Any such identification needed to be easily removable, and changed, otherwise the enemy would adopt identical methods and infiltrate friendly units.

- Visual markings-Russian vehicles would paint the personnel hatches of their vehicles white to help identify them to Russian helicopter gun-ships. These white circles became targets for the Chechen RPG gunners. The

[87] Celestan, 14.

white targets helped the Chechens engage vulnerable points on the vehicle.

- Marking unit boundaries to prevent Chechen infiltration or exploitation was difficult. The Russians developed a system of pagers and global positioning system (GPS) to aid in marking boundaries.

- Night operations- these proved the most difficult task of the Russian forces. Lack of night vision goggles (NVGs) and insufficient night training were sited as the two major factors.

- Communications

    - All transmissions must be encoded. Russian initially transmitted in the clear allowing the Chechens to monitor their radio communications. Using coordinates supplied by the Russian units, the Chechens were able to accurately call for fires upon those units. The Chechens were able to make their decisions based upon known Russian intentions.

    - Radio operators became favorite targets for Chechen snipers. The Russians had to use field expedient methods to camouflage their antennas.

    - Military communication equipment had difficulty within the city due to the tall buildings. Commercial and cellular communication systems, such as the MVD troops had proved better for unit to unit communication but experienced difficulty in communicating with higher echelons or with different systems.

    - Russian standard operating procedure of operating with the APC meant dismounted infantry were separated from vehicle-mounted radios.

- Weapons & Munitions

    - The most highly acclaimed weapon amongst the Russians was the Rocket Propelled Incendiary/Blast Projectile Launcher (RPO) Shmel, more commonly referred to as a flame-thrower. (Similar in design appearance to the US LAW, AT-4) A thermobaric incendiary round, with the same characteristics as a fuel-air explosive, was able to clear rooms and small buildings.

    - Snipers, effective for both sides, but the Russians lacked enough trained snipers. Chechen snipers routinely fired from deep within buildings making counter-sniper operations more difficult. The

above-mentioned RPO Shmel proved effective in clearing snipers from difficult positions.

- Anti-aircraft weapons, such as the ZSU 23-4, proved beneficial when having to engage high angle targets, such as Chechens on the higher floors of tall buildings.

- Artillery firing in the direct fire mode was extremely important in reducing prepared positions. While this produced rubble, tracked vehicles could still operate in the city.

- Tanks and tracked vehicles were able to negotiate a rubbled city better than wheeled vehicles. Tanks and APCs were highly vulnerable unless supported by dismounted infantry. Current turret design does not allow tanks to engage close-in high or low angle targets. Methods for defeating chemical shaped munitions, such as reactive armor are essential to vehicle survivability. The Russians were forced to utilize field expedient methods, such as chicken wire and earth-filled metal containers.

- Helicopters, while essential to help clear roof-tops and land troops on tops of buildings, were too vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire, to include RPGs, in an urban environment.

- RPV's and UAV's- proved invaluable for reconnaissance missions being able to transmit real-time imagery. They could also be employed for targeting and local electronic jamming.

- White phosphorous- WP artillery rounds were used in traditional roles for marking, screening movement and also provided a toxic chemical effect on the Chechens. As it is not banned by any treaty dealing with NBC (Nuclear, Chemical, Biological) agents, WP could be used to clear areas. Tear gas was also successfully employed to clear buildings of Chechen fighters.

- Tracer ammunition- Early in the fighting the Russians attempted to use tracer ammunition to help prevent fratricide, but discovered the Chechens could use it to easily locate the Russian troops and all tracer ammunition was removed. The hoped for psychological impact tracer ammunition would have on the Chechen forces never materialized.

- Reconnaissance- Proved to be too difficult to conduct traditional reconnaissance missions within the city. Reconnaissance units were often wasted in spearheading conventional assaults, and not reserved for information gathering. UAV's and RPV's helped fill this void. The

Russians identified the requirement for specialized engineer reconnaissance units to perform route reconnaissance.

- Combat Armored Engineering Vehicle – essential for vehicle recovery and obstacle clearing operations within the city. The Russian Army recommended having one minefield-breaching vehicle with rocket propelled line charge and two obstacle-clearing vehicles for each storm group.

- Enemy Identification- (primarily relevant to MOOTW/military operations other than war) Russian forces were able to identify Chechen fighters who attempted to hide amongst the civilian population with the following techniques: singed hair from weapon firing; burn marks on fore-arms from hot cartridges, shoulder bruising from weapon firing; smell of cordite on clothing; fibers from ammunition packaging on clothing.

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III. BATTLE FOR GROZNY – PART II

We should not be too quick to criticize the Russians in Grozny...All of these lessons discussed...were experienced in Hue.

LtGen. R. Christmas, (USMC, ret.) recipient of the Navy Cross for actions in Hue City [88]

While the final outcome of Russia's current attempt to subdue the rebellious Chechen Republic remains uncertain, the Russian seizure of the Chechen capital city, Grozny was certainly not a repeat of the 1995 New Years Eve debacle. "In spite of the pessimistic appraisals of most western analysts, a comprehensive review of the Russian MOUT in 2000 demonstrated that Russia's commanders learned and applied many lessons from the first battle of Grozny. If the Russians received an 'F' for their first fight in Grozny, they earned a 'C' for Grozny 2000."[89] This improvement by the Russian forces in a four-year period is worthy of our attention.

In the wake of their defeat in 1996 the Russian military hierarchy identified five areas that needed immediate improvement. These were, command and control, the manning and mobilization system, general training, equipment, and finally, the information war. While fiscal restraints have limited the introduction of new weapons, the four remaining areas identified have witnessed a marked improvement over 1994-96.

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[88] Russell W. Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker. (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, 1998), 25.

[89] Timothy Thomas, LtCol, USA (Ret.) & Lester W. Grau, USA, (Ret.), "Russian Lessons Learned From the Battles For Grozny." Marine Corps Gazette, (April, 2000), 45.

Operationally, the second Chechen campaign can be broken down into five phases from August 1999 through February 2000. The first phase was operations in neighboring Dagestan to prevent further Chechen incursions. The second phase was the isolation of Chechnya and establishment of a security zone. The third phase was the encirclement of Grozny. The fourth phase was the battle for Grozny from 25 December 1999 to 6 February 2000. The fifth phase was aimed at clearing the remaining Chechen strongholds in the southern mountains.[90] In the first Chechen campaign no isolation of Chechnya was effected, no security zone established, and Grozny was not encircled until almost a month after the initial assault on the city commenced. The success that the Russians achieved at the operational level was duplicated at the strategic and unit/tactical level.

At the strategic level the Russians won the information war. Unlike 1994-96, the Russians had a coordinated media policy, and also benefited from the Chechens taking several reporters hostage. The bombings of residential areas in Russian and Chechen incursions into Dagestan provided justification for the Russian action.[91] (There remains a question to who was actually responsible for the bombings of the apartment buildings!) The belief that they were fighting for a legitimate cause must have had a positive effect on the Russian troops, who often had no concept of who, or why, they were fighting in the first campaign.

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[90] Michael Orr, "Second Time Lucky?" Jane's Defense Weekly, (March 8, 2000), 32-36.

[91] Ibid., 36.

At the unit level, the forces committed in 1999 were not hastily assembled as they had been in 1994-96. Units had been training together for some time and often received mission specific training.[92] The task organization of many of these formations closely resemble the Battalion Landing Teams (BLTs) used by the Corps.

The Russians trained units on the outskirts of Grozny before their assignment to the frontlines deeper in the city during the first Chechen campaign. This was an adjustment made after the New Years Eve fiasco of 1995. During the second Chechen campaign MOUT training was conducted in occupied towns in the security zone north of the Terek River. This operational pause for training during the war allowed the Russian troops to conduct refresher-training prior to being committed into Grozny.[93] Still, the Russian forces were still largely a conscript army and the Russian commanders realized their soldiers' limitations against the Chechen fighters. To overcome these deficiencies, the Russians relied heavily on supporting arms to limit close quarter battle with the Chechens.[94] As a result the Russians attempted far fewer frontal assaults and employed their reconnaissance assets to locate Chechen pockets of resistance. Once located, supporting arms were called in on these objectives prior to the Russian infantry advance.[95]

During the second Chechen campaign Russia deployed over 100,000 troops as opposed to their initial deployment of only 23,800 in November 1994. Fifty thousand

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[92] Ibid., 35.

[93] Maj. T. Lyons, USMC, brief on 2nd Chechnya campaign; Stratfor website source for information.

[94] Orr, 35.

were allocated to surround and take Grozny in contrast to the 6,000 that undertook the New Years Eve assault. This increase in numbers enabled the Russians to systematically clear the city as opposed to their attempt at a coup de main in 1995. It also allowed the Russians to maintain a large enough reserve so that they could rest units, recognizing the stress MOUT fighting places on the individual soldier. A survey of 1,300 troops after the first battle for Grozny revealed 72 per cent of those interviewed had suffered some type of psychological disorder.

Despite the efforts the Russians made to improve morale and psychologically prepare their forces for the second campaign, returning Russian troops suffer from what has become known as the "Chechnya Syndrome." Returning veterans complain about nightmares, an inability to communicate, and problems readjusting back into society. They felt isolated and sought the company of other veterans of the fighting in Chechnya. Returning to a depressed economy, veterans found it difficult to secure jobs and many turn to a life of crime. The government has realized the extent of the problem and has established rehabilitation centers to help the veterans. Psychologists worry that successive wars (to include Afghanistan) have created consecutive generations of psychologically wounded men.[96]

In an effort to prevent a recurrence of the psychological casualties sustained in the first campaign, the Russian military hierarchy took precautionary steps to ensure the troops entered battle with higher morale and were more psychologically prepared. A

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[95] Thomas & Grau, "Russian Lessons Learned."

[96] http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A39456-2000Aug4.html

greater emphasis on fire support and fewer frontal assaults gave the soldiers more confidence in their leadership, and a feeling that lives were not needlessly wasted. Improvements in logistical, medical, and postal support enhanced morale. Greater attention was paid to ensuring the troops understood the reason and legality of the war. Tighter discipline, expediting issuance of awards, quicker recognition of changing Chechen tactics, and the exchange of successful TTP's against the enemy, all contributed to the increased psychological wellbeing. Guidelines issued by military psychologists on the rotation of forces for rest and relaxation, were generally adhered to. In the first campaign many units fought to exhaustion and became totally combat ineffective. An exception to this was the naval infantry that remained in combat past recommended guidelines. Surprisingly, naval infantry units reported over 80 per cent of their troops adjusted well to combat.[97] Naval infantry units, often better trained and lead, have a historical connection to MOUT (in the defense of Sevastopol during World War II), and were one of the few Russian units that focused on MOUT.

Training was not confined to the lower tactical units. The streamlined command and staff elements conducted several map exercises prior to commencing the second Chechen campaign. Command and control was further enhanced by the Russians employing secure communications and conducting their own electronic warfare against the Chechens.

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97 "Chemu uchit voyna," Morskoi sbornik, (April 2000), 558 & Yu. Varganov, "Aktual'nost' problemy rastet," same journal, 58-60. Translated by Prof. M. Tsypkin.

As already noted, fiscal restraints limited the introduction of many newer weapons into the second campaign. The Russians did capitalize on the success of the RPO Shmel (Butterfly), a flame weapon similar to a fuel-air explosive, and ensured an adequate supply was available during the second campaign. One new flame weapon was introduced was the TOS-1, a tank mounted flame-thrower, capable of shooting thermobaric rounds.[98]

So while the outcome of the entire campaign remains uncertain, the Russian performance in Grozny was a marked improvement over 1994-96. The Russian military, while economically deprived, was able to identify and correct four of five areas of concern. There still remains much room for improvement in the Russian armed forces, but their execution of the first four phases of the second Chechen campaign illustrates their ability to learn from their mistakes. We should do the same.

[98] Ibid., 46-48.

IV. GROUND EYE VIEW OF CURRENT MARINE CORPS MOUT TRAINING

"...so our training was not completely efficient in that area, because we do training in that area, but our experience at that time [Hue] was absolutely zero. Initially as we went in we did not have any real concept of how we were supposed to fight."

Company Commander, Hue City[99]

A. THE REALITY

In the October1999 issue of the Marine Corps Gazette, LtCol Hammes wrote a letter entitled "Tactical Competence?" In the letter LtCol Hammes is highlighting the way MOUT training is currently being conducted as an example of the erosion of the Corps' tactical skills. In the photograph he uses to illustrate his point, there are nine Marines huddled together in a modified *stack* apparently preparing to make entry into the building. One RPG or mortar round, even a hand grenade, or well-aimed burst of automatic weapons fire would effectively take out the nine Marines. (See Figure 4) Those that escaped serious injury would be temporarily lost to the fight as they evacuated their wounded and killed comrades.

There are several reasons for what LtCol Hammes and hopefully others saw in that photo. The necessity to avoid excessive damage to a city's infrastructure and any civilians that remain have meant that infantry tactics have become modified to replicate

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[99] Maclear, Michael, The Ten Thousand Day War – Vietnam: 1945-1975. New York: Avon Books, 1981, 211.

tactics employed by special operation and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) forces.[100] Another is the tendency for infantry units to utilize the close quarter battle (CQB) techniques that Marines assigned to security forces bring with them when they return to the Fleet Marine Force (FMF), or "grunts." As these techniques are different, or "high- speed" in Marine parlance, they are what the Marines remember. It is not

Figure 4. Stack: Marine Corps Gazette Photogrpah.

Marines at MOUT Instructors Course are taught the stack technique for entering a building.

Figure 5. Instruction: MCG Photograph.

[100] Glenn, Combat in Hell, 11.

uncommon to witness Marines who have recently undergone MOUT training continue to mimic such techniques when they return to regular fire and movement in open terrain.

The objective of this chapter is to study how Marines train for MOUT and compare this with the lessons learned in Grozny. In the first campaign, the Russian forces were generally untrained prior to the New Years Eve assault but still learnt valuable lessons that they were able to utilize in seizing the city months later. Marines are generally well trained in most areas, and have repeatedly shown their ability to adapt to almost any task. This chapter, though, will illustrate how little time is actually devoted to MOUT and what is being taught is not preparing the Marines for the next Hue City. While there are numerous lessons we can learn from the Russian experience in Grozny, the focus here will be on training, psychological preparation, and briefly, marksmanship.

B. THE TALE OF THREE BATTALIONS

Three battalions, one from each regiment within the 1st Marine Division, were randomly chosen to conduct a survey on the units' MOUT training. The units were asked how much MOUT training would be conducted within a life-cycle (deployment to deployment, usually 18 months) of the battalion, and what type of training was conducted.

While there does exist great variations in the response to the survey, there are trends that are similar to those found in a survey discussed in the following section.

Battalion A conducted a significant amount of valuable MOUT training. Each company spent over 50 days at the MOUT facility in Camp Pendleton (CamPen) or training aboard their home base in 29 Palms. The battalion headquarters would spend an

entire month at the CamPen facility while companies rotated through on a seven to ten day training package. Training consisted of Professional Military Education (PME), such as readings and discussions, TTP drills, force-on-force and live fire training. While close quarter battle (CQB) & SWAT tactics were taught, great emphasis was placed on distinguishing when each was applicable. Back aboard 29 Palms the battalion conducted some unique training. The battalion would transition from rural to urban and from low to high intensity combat. The battalion would begin in a low intensity, Block One type situation utilizing the built up portions of the base. From there they would transition to Block Two as they moved out of the urban environment and conducted security operations against role players. The culminating point was a combined arms, live fire attack on the range 400 series.

This training represents a substantial amount of effort on the part of the leadership of the battalion, and is the most comprehensive MOUT training discovered. This represents one end on the MOUT training spectrum, and a strength and weakness within the Corps' training philosophy. Fortunately, unlike other services, the Corps allows commanders tremendous leeway in the way they train their Marines. Battalion A had a commander who served in Beirut, had witnessed student officers grapple with the complexities of MOUT at TBS, and has been part of the Warfighting Lab experimentation process, and therefore placed a greater emphasis on MOUT. The battalion, not being part of the MEU(SOC) program, had a greater amount of freedom to dictate its own training plan.

At the other end of the MOUT training spectrum is Battalion B, a MEU(SOC) battalion. This battalion conducted no MOUT training during its stateside training.

Companies were not directed by battalion to conduct any MOUT training. Company X did manage to work in three and a half days of high intensity MOUT training. The commander of Company X noted that the first 24 hours of the units' training was "spent trying to beat the CQB bull___ out of the company." These TTPs were taught by Marines in the company who had undergone instruction at the Division Schools MOUT Instructor Course. While Division Schools are a tremendous asset, taken *out of hide* from Division units, MOUT instruction is possibly its weakest area, and a reflection on MOUT training within the Corps.

Battalion C is another UDP, or non MEU(SOC), battalion. This battalion was part of the advanced Warfighting Experiment of Urban Warrior. During the five months devoted to the experiment the focus was on technologies to be incorporated into MOUT operations. The remaining time was spent on "dog and pony" shows for the media. The training was geared towards MOOTW rather than the higher end of the conflict spectrum. During this period the battalion staff did not fight the battalion, but was involved in orchestrating the experiment. Each company was focused on one block of the three block war, but unfortunately the actions on each block were totally unrelated to the adjacent blocks. (It should be remembered that this was the first such battalion experiment with MOUT operations by the Warfighting Lab.) The following deployment work-up cycle for this battalion had no significant MOUT training scheduled.

A 2d Marine Division battalion operations officer who voluntarily responded to the survey noted that his battalion did less than a week of MOUT training. This, it appears, was largely due to the difficulty of non-MEU units to schedule the MOUT facility at Camp Lejeune to conduct training.

By comparison, British Army units generally trained for three months for a six-month deployment to Northern Ireland.[101] Marine units do not have the luxury of knowing where or who, or under what conditions, they will fight. While little time is devoted to MOUT training, of the last 250 Marine deployments overseas, 237 have involved urban operations of some kind.[102]

C. AND THE SURVEY SAYS

A survey of ninety Marine officers, from 1st Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Colonel, representing a cross-section of Military Occupation Specialties (MOS's) was conducted aboard the Naval Post-Graduate School in April 2000. The results of the survey were as follows.

- Forty-five (50 per cent) stated they had no MOUT of any kind since The Basic School. A number of pilots had conducted Tactical Reconnaissance in Urban Environment (TRUE) training as part of their MEU(SOC) work-up program, or had participated in real-world Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO's), thereby increasing the number of positive responses. This presents a distorted picture in regards to the status of MOUT training in the Corps.

- Nineteen infantry officers responded to the survey. There was an average of 11.7 years in service, ranging from four to eighteen years on active duty. Excluding time spent conducting CQB tactics, for those assigned to Marine security forces or direct action platoons in the Force Reconnaissance community, the average time spent in MOUT training was approximately a month and a half, out of 11.7 years. Trends that appeared were Marines from security forces heavily influenced MOUT training, only two units had conducted night live fire MOUT training, battalion level training was seldom conducted, and the Marines had a difficult time differentiating when to use which TTP's. Only one mentioned MOUT training being conducted as part of a Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System (MCCRES). Two responses

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[101] Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker, 16.

[102] Russell W. Glenn, Marching Under Darkening Skies, (Santa Monica, Ca: Rand, 1998), 3.

indicated that previous MOUT, with adaptations, had proved effective in Somalia. An officer who had participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama noted his previous MOUT training proved ineffective.

D. THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Officers (the trainers of the trainers), at The Basic School (TBS), Quantico, Va., all undergo 22.5 hours of MOUT instruction during their six months (1963 hours of instruction total) of initial training. This instruction is given to all officers, regardless of future MOS. Each officer receives 2.5 hours of classroom instruction. This is followed by 20 hours of practical application during field exercises. Six hours are spent on individual actions, TTP's for securing a building. Six hours are devoted to a force-on-force exercise on squad-size assaults. This is followed by an additional three hours of night MOUT training. The following day platoons execute a platoon assault in a force-on-force exercise, followed by a defensive Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT). Together these two evolutions take the remaining five hours. The initial TTP portion of the training introduces the SWAT-type tactics to the lieutenants.[103] As a comparison, student lieutenants receive 14 hours of sword manual!

The patrolling package at TBS has introduced an urban patrolling package that utilizes the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Hogan's Alley training facility. Here the lieutenants are exposed to the special operations/SWAT tactics for use in urban environments. The focus of the urban patrolling is MOOTW and therefore these techniques are generally applicable. Urban patrolling receives 3.5 hours of classroom instruction, followed by 8 hours of practical application during field exercises. Those

[103]. Information provided by the primary instructor for MOUT at TBS. (25 May 2000).

officers that will be primarily responsible for conducting combat in the city receive additional instruction during their ten weeks at the Infantry Officer Course (IOC).

IOC devotes four days totally to MOUT out of ten weeks of instruction. The training these future infantry officers receive is focused exclusively on the high intensity end of the spectrum. Day 1 begins with a three-hour class, followed four hours of station training (TTP's). That evening a discussion of the book Black Hawk Down and a guest lecturer rounds out the day. Day 2 is divided between force-on-force, and live fire training. That night individual and small unit TTP's are continued. Day 3 the lieutenants execute two platoon-size attacks. Day 4 is a Training Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) conducted in downtown Fredericksburg. The lieutenants fill billets from battalion operations officer down to squad leaders. With this background the future platoon commanders head to the operational forces.

The future company commanders and operations officers receive the following MOUT instruction at Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) at Quantico, Va. All students receive a ninety-minute class, followed by two ninety-minute seminars on MOUT. One is a student presentation on the battle of Grozny, followed by a group discussion. The second session is a faculty led discussion on considerations for MOUT. Those officers with combat arms military occupation specialties (MOS's) conduct additional training. This includes a Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) conducted at the Washington Navy Shipyard, and a session on TTP's with the integration of assets such as engineers,

armor, supporting arms in MOUT. The discussions cover the entire spectrum from low intensity conflict to high intensity operations.[104]

Command and Staff College, where future battalion commanders undertake further education, does not teach MOUT as a separate subject. Individual case studies, such as Somalia, do discuss MOUT as part large operations.[105]

At the School of Infantry (SOI-West) at Camp Pendleton where new infantry Marines learn their trade, the amount of MOUT training has actually decreased from 75 hours to 54 hours presently. In fairness, the entire course was dramatically reduced by 18 days, so MOUT training was not the only subject area affected. MOUT training covers both ends of the intensity spectrum with Marines receiving instruction on individual and vehicle check-points to building-clearing and live-fire training. As with more seasoned Marines in the fleet, these young Marines are often confused as to when and where to apply the appropriate TTP's. While this is something that can be addressed by the operational forces, our current MOUT instructional methods may well be retarding our Marines from the outset.[106]

Those who will lead these young Marines are receiving increased amounts of MOUT training. The squad-leaders course at Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) is increasing MOUT instruction from 24 hours to 4 days of instruction. MOOTW is considered separate training. Unfortunately the "focus of keeping to the basics" for

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[104] Phone conversation with AWS faculty, 001018.

[105] Email interview with LtCol. Barile, C&S faculty, 001017.

[106] Information proved by Capt. A. Echeverria, a company commander at SOI West, August 21, 2000.

squad-leader MOUT training is focused on CQB techniques and tactics. The platoon sergeants course is also currently increasing its MOUT package. This course focuses on the employment of the platoon in MOUT, and incorporates a TEWT, orders preparation, practical application and a battle study.[107]

Once outside the formal instruction of the schoolhouse, Marines will receive MOUT training at the caprice of their commanders. There now exists no formal standardization within the operating forces for addressing the *Three-Block War.* The emphasis on, retention of, and confusion over CQB/SWAT tactics is contrary to what is preached: "Streets are kill zones." "Stay out of the streets." We have learnt this in Seoul, and Hue City, just as the Russians learnt it in Grozny. The stack technique places the Marines in exposed positions outside buildings far too long. It reinforces entry through doorways and windows, again contrary to what is verbally taught, but discarded once training commences. (Restrictions imposed by the training facilities will be addressed in Chapter V.) Not that the interior of the building offers total protection, as the Russians found out at the hands of the Chechens' "vertical pincer" tactic, but once inside the Marines are less exposed to multidirectional threats when compared to exposed, canalized canyons of the streets.

The stack, and wall-body-weapon technique, both place Marines at greater risk for several reasons. First it limits their ability or options for maneuver in an already constricted area. Many structures do not offer the ballistic protection Marines believe they do. Ricochet projectiles usually travel 4 to 8 inches parallel to the surface they have

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[107] Information provided by Capt. P. Gomez at AIT, CamPen., 28 August, 2000.

just impacted on, placing the Marines directly along the ricochets trajectory.[108] MCWP3-35.3, once, on page A-31, directs Marines to stay one step away from the wall. There is no explanation offered for this worthwhile advice. Many illustrations in the publication actually reinforce the notion of wall-body-weapon.

E. THE HUMAN ELEMENT

> **"Local combat situations can change with bewildering speed. Atrocity is close-up and commonplace, whether intentional or incidental. The stresses on the soldier are incalculable. The urban environment is, above all, disintegrative."[109]**

Warfighting, (MCDP 1), the cornerstone USMC doctrinal publication states, "the human dimension is central in war." Yet little attention is paid to the mental preparation for battle. Great leadership, *esprit de corps,* history and traditions, and the warrior ethos only go so far. Like much of our training, the psychological preparation of Marines for what they will experience in battle is left up to the individual commanders. While conducting research for this thesis, there was ample literature on the psychological effects of urban combat, and our attention to psychological attacks against the enemy, but there was no mention of any specific attention to the psychological preparation of our forces. The need to prepare friendly forces to counter the enemy's employment of psychological operations is a lesson to be learnt from the Russian experience against the Chechens.[110] Our lack of attention in this area has, and will continue to, cost us in many different ways.

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[108] Hammes, "Preparing for Today's Battlefield." Marine Corps Gazette. (July, 1997), 59.

[109] Ralph Peters, "Our Soldiers, Their Cities." Parameters. (Spring, 1996), 45.

[110] Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker, 13.

During World War II the US armed forces lost 504,000 men to psychiatric causes, enough men to fill fifty divisions. The probability of becoming a psychological casualty exceeded the chance of being killed by enemy action.[111] Depending on the source used, between 400,000 to 1.5 million Vietnam veterans (18 to 54 per cent of the 2.8 million who served in Southeast Asia) suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)[112]. Marine psychological casualties from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, where ground combat lasted only four days, were negligible. A survey conducted by the Rand corporation into psychological casualties in Operation Desert Shield/Storm did not cover the period after Marines left theater.[113] The Office of the Senior Naval Medical Officer to the Marine Corps did not keep such records (highlighting the low concern of such casualties?). There are currently no figures to assess the psychological effects suffered by Marines in Desert Shield/Storm.

Not only are these individuals lost from their units, immediately diminishing combat power, their ability to return as a functioning member of society is questionable. Many will require years, if not a lifetime, of care and support to overcome their injuries. Many of the measures taken by the Russians to increase morale and lessen psychological casualties in the second Chechen campaign as noted in Chapter 3, are taken for granted in the US armed services, yet we still suffer high numbers of psychological casualties.

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[111] LtCol Dave Grossman, On Killing – The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 43.

[112] Ibid., 344.

[113] Information supplied by Mr. D. Voss; http://www.gulflink.osd.mil.

While every individual will react differently to stress and combat, greater emphasis should be placed on this neglected area of our training.

The author of On Killing – The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society, noted the lack of such training. On the subject of men not firing their weapons in combat, this Army Lieutenant-Colonel had never heard the subject mentioned, even with the advantage of having attended nine formal leadership schools.[114] The author of this thesis, with 15 years of active duty, has received one hour of instruction on the effects of sleep deprivation on combat decision making capabilities. This lecture was given by Dr. Clete DiGiovanni to the students attending Amphibious Warfare School (AWS), Quantico, Va. Students at the Infantry Officer Course now receive approximately three hours of what is labeled *human factors in combat.* One hour of instruction is given by a resident faculty member, the remaining two hours are given by Dr. DiGiovanni. The close combat program and field exercise critiques are also used to discuss human factors during IOC. Greater emphasis must be placed upon this type of training to better prepare our Marines for battle, and life thereafter.

Battle experienced Marines who fought in Hue City found that the intensity of sound and sights of battle were more troubling within the confines of the city.[115] Urban combat is extremely fatiguing both mentally and physically. The close nature of the terrain and multidirectional nature of the threat requires constant vigilance. The demands

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[114] Grosman, 334.

[115] Eric Hammel, Fire in the Streets: The Battle for Hue, Tet 1968. (New York: Dell, 1991), 105.

of such high level of alertness are exacerbated by the physical exhaustion urban fighting imposes upon the combatants, especially the attacking force.[116]

The inclusion of non-lethal weapons in high intensity MOUT may help alleviate the amount of psychological casualties. When excessive force is the only option available, psychologies change and atrocities may follow. Non-lethal munitions may help diminish the psychological impact of close combat if units can temporarily disable the enemy, secure them and then continue their advance.[117] Obvious disadvantages to using non-lethal methods in high intensity situations are the number of Marines required to secure enemy prisoners of war (EPW's), and the use of such non-lethal weapons may embolden the enemy forces.

MCWP 3-35.3, MOUT, the Corps' doctrinal publication on MOUT, addresses the psychological aspects of combat twice. Under "Health Service Support," page 1-19, it states "Leaders, at all levels, should be attuned to the symptoms associated with psychological casualties in order to get affected individuals prompt treatment so that they be returned to their units." Sound advice, but where does the leader get such training? Psychological considerations are again addressed in discussing subterranean combat, on page E-5.

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[116] Glenn, Combat in Hell, 21.

[117] Paul C. Hutton III, "Weapons of Restraint." Armed Forces Journal, *International.* (May, 2000), 53.

Combat has and will always produce psychological casualties. While great advances have been made conditioning soldiers and Marines to fire their weapons in combat, little has been done to prepare them mentally for what they will experience.

F. DOCTRINE

While much current doctrine recommends avoidance of urban operations, the Marine's MOUT publication, MCWP 3-35.3, recognizes that the National Command Authority will again commit Marines to missions in urban environments in its opening lines.

The Rand Corporation, contracted by the J8 Urban Working Group to study the need for a joint MOUT doctrine, concluded the Marine's MCWP 3-35.3 should be adopted as the initial foundation for future joint MOUT doctrine. While the Marine's doctrine is considerably more current than the Army's counterpart, it similarly lacks MOUT operations that do not entail combat, and lacks guidance for the operational level of war.[118] In response the first criticism, the separation of MOUT and MOOTW, that may take place within an urban environment, is justified. From doctrine derives training, technology development, and organizational design. As with TTP's blurring the lines between the two will only add to the confusion; which already exists.

A review of Individual Training Standards (ITS's), the basis of an individual Marine's training, there is no area dedicated to MOUT. Those TTP's associated with MOUT fall under the heading of MOOTW. While in many cases these two may be the same, they may also be diametrically opposed. As the *Three Block War* envisions,

Marines must be able to escalate, or moderate, between the different levels but they must recognize the difference. If MOUT is to incorporate all military operations conducted within urban environments, to include MOOTW, a distinction needs to be made between city combat and operations within cities that fall short of open warfare.

The Rand's study found only two areas of the MCWP 3-35.3 that should receive a good ("considerable discussion, adequate or nearly adequate") grading. These were combined arms, and weapons effects.[119] This grading is interesting and calls into question the grading criteria employed. In Appendix B, Employment and Effects of Weapons, some very questionable guidance is offered. The information on pages B-17 through B-21 concerning the antitank weapon, Dragon, is contradictory to what the systems manufacturer's representative to the Marine Corps passed. Mr. C.B. Strausberger, in a course to Marine 0351's/Assaultmen, when shown Marine Corps' information on firing the weapon system indoors, Mr. Strausberger informed the Marines present that the Marine firing the system in such a manner would be either killed or seriously wounded. The firing of the weapon on a downward trajectory as described on page B-21, actually significantly decreased the probability of a hit, not increases it as stated in the manual. A phone call interview with the action officer in charge of this publication could not provide information on the source of such weapon testing. The officer had only recently taken the position.

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[118] Russell W. Glenn, Marching Under Darkening Skies. (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, 1998), viii.

[119] Glenn, We Band of Brothers. (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, 1999), 9.

G. PROJECT METROPLOIS

Urban Warrior is the second phase of the Marine Corps' Warfighting Laboratory's experimentation plan. *Urban Warrior,* as the name implies, concentrates on urban warfare. Its predecessor, *Hunter Warrior*, experimented with dispersed operations by Marine forces. A study by the Warfighting Lab on urban combat revealed four common features. First, an attempt to surrounded and isolate the city occurred. Second, the linear tactics resulted in high casualties for all sides. Third, there was a tremendously high consumption rate of small arms and grenades. Fourth, urban combat was both mentally and physically exhausting. These factors had changed little since World War II, did not incorporate the Marine Corps' Maneuver Warfare doctrine, nor capitalize on emerging technologies.[120]

Observing two "experiments" during 1999, the first at Ft. Ord, and then at the closed George Air Force Base, the strides forward made by the staff of Project Metropolis (ProMet, as the experiment has been dubbed), were immediately obvious. There were no time-consuming stacks, or a SWAT type tactic being taught or utilized. Marines were exposing themselves for the briefest possible time when moving from one covered position to the next. It was a complete reversal of the training normally being conducted in the Marine operating forces, and school-houses.

The staff of ProMet, is lead by a retired Marine colonel. He is assisted full-time by another retired officer, two active duty captains, and a staff-sergeant. During the field

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[120] Col. R. Gangle, USMC (Ret), "The Foundation for Urban Warrior." Marine Corps Gazette, (July, 1998), 52.

experiments this small crew is augmented by a number of other officers and staff-noncommissioned officers from the Corps, other services, and foreign militaries. This facilitates a cross-pollination of ideas and allows for close supervision and critiques after each evolution. The inclusion of members of 1st Marine Division Schools MOUT instructors course, and The Basic School at Quantico, Va., means both enlisted and junior officers are being exposed to the new concepts, even as the existing TTP's are still being taught.

The two experiments that were observed were focused on the tactical level, and at the high end of the conflict-intensity spectrum. The infantry was reinforced with tanks, light armored fighting vehicles (LAV's), and Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV's) or "Amtracs." A small combat service support element was experimenting with logistical support and medical evacuation procedures (Medevacs). New technologies were being incorporated, but not to the determent of the training; basics first, technology enhancements second.

The use of simulated munitions (Simunitions), or paintballs greatly enhanced the training and is a marked improvement over the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES). The benefits of using a closed military bases' housing area were numerous. Most facilities are comprised of 20 to 30 buildings. Georges' housing area provided over 200 single and double-storied family dwellings of various configurations. The environment was not the sterile conditions found in manufactured MOUT sites. Here Marines were faced with window glass, locked doors, appliances within buildings. Simple things one would encounter in urban fighting, but absent from other training sites.

The following chapter goes into greater detail on the benefits of such a desirable training facility.

Retired General Ray Smith, USMC, was on hand at the George warfighting experiment in May 2000. The General can be considered a subject matter expert on the topic of MOUT. He served as Commanding Officer, Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines during the fighting for Hue City in February 1968. Later he served as an advisor with the Vietnamese Marine Corps in 1972, during which time he participated in the battle to recapture Quang Tri City from the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). As the Commanding Officer, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/8, 22d Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) he lead his Marines in the invasion of Grenada and later in Beirut, Lebanon. After observing the Marines training at George using the new TTP's, the General told the assembled Marines that they were better prepared than anyone in his battalion at the beginning of the fight for Hue City. One criticism the General did make was the speed at which the Marines assaulted. The General then related a story of how his company had battled for 14 hours to clear NVA forces from the Joan of Arc School, from a similar structure that the Marines had cleared in about 14 minutes. The experimental *Swarm* technique, which emphasizes speed during the assault, was contrary to the lessons about control the General learnt from his MOUT experience. In an interview the General passed along the following lessons. Supporting arms, while important, must be utilized to counter the enemy's tactics and not hinder our own procedures. Destroying a building with supporting arms may have little physical effect on the enemy. The NVA often defended from fortified positions they established outside the buildings. In Beirut, the Druze militia fighters would establish fortified positions deep within buildings, albeit

with limited fields of fire. Shelling the structure would collapse the building over the fortified position, adding to the protection of the enemy, and increasing his field of fire. At Quang Tri City, the South Vietnamese shelled the city so heavily that they impeded their own advance. Buildings and other features used to help orient or navigate were destroyed, adding to the attackers' difficulties. Features, such a roads, often employed as control measures, were unusable and added to coordination difficulties. Rubble, as always, hindered the attackers movement. The Russians noted the same problems after their destruction of Grozny and recommended an increase in the number of combat armored engineering vehicles. Bottom line, tailor your weaponeering procedures to your enemy and situation. In many cases today, US forces would not be allowed to *destroy a city in order to save it,* such as the Russians did in Grozny.

The General spoke highly of the use of flame weapons for clearing enemy from structures; the Russians' favorite weapon in the fight for Grozny was the RPO (flame weapon) *Shmel.* Munitions for the Mk153 83mm SMAW, M203, and rifle-propelled grenades could be manufactured to give Marine this needed capability. Marines need to understand the effects of their and the enemy weapons on structures and each other in MOUT. The General was favorable to the idea of a MOUT training program similar to the current CAX and MWTC program. Of critical importance to the Marines, the General closed with, was to make themselves difficult targets; move in short bounds, to a predetermined point, to one that offered cover. Don't make yourself an easy target!

1. Marksmanship in MOUT

Marksmanship in MOUT offers some unique challenges. The Marine staff-sergeant on the ProMet staff has developed a designated marksmanship program that

would be a combat-multiplier if adopted. In the lessons learned from Grozny, the lack of trained snipers was sorely felt by the Russians. While the term "sniper" is over used, and carries a certain connotation with it, the psychological impact on combatants of the term is disproportionate to the snipers' actual combat power. To counter this sniper threat, a designated marksman would be an answer. It would also free Marine snipers from their counter-sniper role and allow them to perform more offensive taskings.

In the Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 3-11.11A, "Commander's Tactical Handbook," in the MOUT section, commanders are told to "Designate marksmen and use them." (page 35) Tasking a Marine with such duties during battle, with no prior training, is not the best option. For the cost of a two-week course and a 3.5/4 power telescopic sight, a staff-sergeant has provided us with such a combat multiplier. The course could be taught at Division Schools, would not require an MOS or proficiency pay, but would place an invaluable tool in the hands of platoon and company commanders. Snipers, who undergo an extensive training program and utilize special weapons, are battalion level assets. A designated marksman is not limited to a counter-sniper role in high intensity MOUT. In a MOOTW operation, the ability to selectively take out certain individuals without inflicting casualties amongst the civilian population would be a tremendous asset. Designated marksman would be an asset outside of MOUT type situations as well.

Marines have a justified pride in their marksmanship ability, and recent changes in rifle range qualification reflect the focus on combat shooting. The Russians noted an inability to successfully engage fleeting targets in Grozny. In MOUT only 5 percent of targets appear at ranges beyond 100 meters; 90 percent appear within 50 meters. In most

cases the enemy are generally acquired at 35 meters or less. The enemy, often only partially exposed, is only visible for a few seconds.[121] The ballistics characteristics of the M16A2 round are ideal for this close quarter fighting. The yawing effect of the round at less than 300 meters will cause catastrophic injury or death at these close ranges; a necessity when fighting in such close proximity.[122] This ballistic characteristic will help counter the "double tap" method of engagement commonly taught to the Marines. Again, taking from SWAT and special operation forces, Marines have been instructed to place two well aimed rounds into the enemy and then lower their weapon to assess the target and situation. Marines should, as instructed on page 37, Fundamentals of Securing a Room, in MCRP 3-11.1A, "Follow through. Engage until the target is down." Unfortunately, the "double tap" is what Marines frequently retain from their training. While surgical shooting skills are required in hostage rescue and such operations, the double tap is an inherently bad technique to instill in anyone. Law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty following such procedures.[123]

The Russians learnt their lessons in Grozny the hard way. The Marine Corps has already taken measures to address some of the difficulties experienced by the Russians. Each infantry squad now has a palm-sized radio capable enough to allow communication at the lowest levels. "Yodaville," a close air support training facility for MOUT has been established at Yuma, Arizona. The small nature of, the standardized instruction, and

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[121] Glenn, 10.

[122] Internal FBI memorandum, from R. Grace to Mr. Pledger, dated 18 August, 1993. Subject: Evaluation of the 5.56mm caliber round for close quarter battle (CQB), p 16.

[123] 1986, Dade County, Fl., FBI shoot-out with Platt and Mattock After-action report.

personnel movement within the Corps means Marines can be brought together to perform combat missions without too much difficulty. Others areas are still works-in-progress, such as the prevention of fratricide. Technology will help but will not provide all the answers. While technological advances hold some promise to assist in MOUT capabilities, changes in doctrine and better training are better near-term solutions.[124] The most significant step the Corps has taken is the establishment and work of the Warfighting Lab's Project Metropolis. As the participants of the J8 Urban Working Group and Rand conference on MOUT concluded MOUT training should focus on combat operations. Units designated for stability and support missions should receive additional training prior to commitment.[125]

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[124] Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker, 26.

[125] Glenn, Denying the Widow-Maker, 16.

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V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Confused and inexperienced Charlie/1/5 took heavy casualties, as had every Marine unit facing its first action in the city. But the survivors learned...The lessons were painful and dearly bought, but they were immutable.[126]

"STUMPS, BRIDGEPORT, GEORGE (?)"

"The US military, otherwise magnificently capable, is an extremely inefficient tool for combat in urban environments. We are not doctrinally, organizationally, or psychologically prepared, nor are we properly trained or equipped, for a serious urban battle[127] The means to correct this deficiency is two-fold. One is to create a legitimate facility dedicated to MOUT training.[128] The Marine Corps would be wise to follow the lead taken by the Warfighting Lab and establish the former George Air Force Base as the Corps' premier MOUT training facility. The second area is doctrinal clarity.

George is an ideal facility for the Corps needs. It is located in southern California, 30 miles west of Marine Corps Base (MCB) Barstow, and 85 miles north-west of MCB 29 Palms. Edwards Air Force Base is approximately 60 miles west of George. There is a functioning airport that would facilitate movements of units onto the base. A foot movement of approximately 2 miles would have the Marines in the training area.

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[126] Hammel, 268.

[127] Ralph Peters, "Our Soldiers, Their Cities." Parameters, (Spring, 1996), 43.

[128] Ibid., 49.

There are existing facilities that could be utilized for support purposes if the units elected not to remain in a tactical posture for the entire training evolution.

The number of buildings that George provides is a major improvement over existing MOUT sites. The area utilized by the Warfighting Lab had over 200 buildings, generally of single or doubled storied family dwellings. The MOUT site aboard Camp Pendleton has 27 buildings, and the *Impossible City* at Ft. Ord only 21. George does lack high-rise construction and subterranean features. The cost of building these additional features would be minimal in comparison with building an entire MOUT facility. Ralph Peters idea that units should train in "our own blighted cities" is not feasible. Life fire training could not be conducted, and future urban renewal would have the military constantly moving from site to site. Nor can the Marines afford to designate certain units as MOUT fighters as he suggests the Army does; the size and expeditionary nature of the Corps would prohibit such an option. Establishing a permanent training site would also be advantageous to the local economy of Victorville, located immediately outside of George, and ingratiating the Marines to their hosts.

In the July 2000 issue of the Marine Corps Gazette, LtCol J. Reynolds, USMC (Ret.) contributed an article entitled, "A Case for 21st Century MOUT Facilities." His proposed facility, with embassy, high-rise apartments, junk-yards, schools, factories, subways, sewers, and everything else one could find in a city, would certainly address our needs. First, it needs to be approved, funded and built. This will take time and Marines could find themselves fighting in cities before this thesis is finished or the proposed facility built. Closed military facilities, even with their limitations offer an immediate, if stopgap, solution. The perfect answer may be a combination of the two.

Build LtCol. Reynolds' facility adjacent to, or in conjunction with, an existing facility such as George. This would not only reduce the cost of constructing a large residential area, but would increase the size of the facility to enable larger units to train. The Russians noted their lack of division level exercises as one reason for their initial poor showing in Chechnya. Existing facilities, as LtCol Reynolds noted, are only good for what they were designed for, small unit training. Such a combined facility could accommodate two reinforced battalions or more, and allow higher-level staffs, such as regiments and division, to conduct training in this complex environment.

During the construction of any new MOUT facility, the ability to simulate breaching procedures must be incorporated. Concrete block walls must be constructed so that Marines can simulate blowing entry points into the structures, and thereby gain access other than by using doorways, windows, or pre-existing openings. After each training evolution units would simply replace the blocks for use by follow on units.

The cost of leasing George for the Warfighting Labs experiment was $10,000. A long-term lease agreement could possibly lower this cost. Initial additional costs would be converting a stockpile of weapons to utilize the paintball system, or SIMMUNITIONs. Each M-16A2 conversion costs $500, plus $25 per magazine. At 622 M-16's per infantry battalion, it would cost $622,000 to equip one battalion, plus have a surplus to outfit an opposing force (OPFOR), and account for weapons in the maintenance cycle. Magazines would cost an additional $46,650 if each weapon were allotted four vice the usual seven magazines each Marine carries. Each paint ball or SIMMUNITION round currently costs 30 cents. Other weapon systems in the battalion inventory could utilize the existing Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) gear until a type of simulated

munitions was available. In comparison, the cost of a CAX at 29 Palms has a $1.1 million ceiling. Budgeting for CAX is not broken down into individual unit costs. While each CAX is built around an infantry battalion numerous other units are integrated into the 22 days training. A battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment conducted its own Major Conventional Exercise (MCE), which was essentially a battalion CAX with supporting artillery, close air support, and combat service support. The cost of this evolution was $200,202.16 A battalion deployment to the Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC), Bridgeport, Ca. ranges from $13,000 to $18,000.[129] A month long MOUT training package would certainly not exceed these costs, and would definitely provide training that had a much greater probability of being utilized.

If the Corps is serious about the *Three Block War* and improving MOUT training it must invest the time and money. While Marine units routinely train in 29 Palms and Bridgeport, the Corps has seldom fought in desert or mountainous terrain. A month long MOUT training deployment to George should become a priority.

Taking the 1st Marine Division as an example the following training cycle could be established. All deploying battalions would conduct a month MOUT training at George. 1st Marines, who currently source the MEUs deploying to the Persian Gulf would conduct a second month training deployment to 29 Palms based upon the current CAX training. 5th Marines currently sourcing the UDPs to Okinawa, Japan with a focus on Korea should conduct a training deployment to MWTC. 7th Marines would duplicate 5th Marines training cycle as they too conduct UDPs to Okinawa.

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[129] Figures provided by 1st Mar Div comptroller office, August 7, 2000.

1st Marines could still benefit from MWTC by school seats to the Mountain Leaders Course at MWTC. 5th Marines could conduct combined arms exercises aboard Camp Pendleton, utilizing the new live fire and maneuver (LFAM) ranges, and by sending their Fire Support Teams, (FISTs) and Fire Support Coordination Centers (FSCCs) to 29 Palms to observe other units and/or conduct their own generated mini-CAX. 7th Marines, stationed at 29 Palms, could utilize the ranges to conduct their own CAX training between scheduled units. This proposed training cycle would alleviate another training deficiency.

In 1998, MajGen. Hagee, then Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, directed that there be a more equitable sharing of major conventional exercises (MCE's) within the Division. When the Division prepared to deploy units to the Persian Gulf in February 1998 in support of Operation Desert Fox to counter Saddam Hussien's bellicose and threatening actions, it was discovered that some units' preparedness was questionable. It was noted that certain units, primarily those deploying with MEUs, were receiving a disproportionate share of the major training evolutions. The inclusion of George would help alleviate this problem.

Ideally all units would receive all three training opportunities in their pre-deployment training. This is not feasible with current operational and personnel tempo (OPTempo & PERSTempo), plus fiscal restraints. With each infantry regiment deploying two battalions each calendar year, there would be six one-month battalion deployments to George each year. If battalions from 3d Marines in Hawaii were to be flown into to train at George, this would increase the number of battalion rotations to

eight per calendar year. This would obviously require a similar facility to be established on the East Coast for the 2d Marine Division.

Urban combat requires large amounts of infantry. While current doctrinal publications adequately address the issue, there is a lack of emphasis on MOUT training.[130] The three rifle regiments of the 1st Marine Division can theoretically put 324 rifle squads into combat, or a total of 4212 "trigger pullers" if at full T/O strength. This total does not reflect battle casualties or Marines lost to the MEU's. In 1945 the battle-experienced Red Army sustained over 300,000 casualties in seizing Berlin.[131] With present manning levels and possible future force cuts the Marine Corps needs to focus its MOUT capabilities to produce quality, as quantity will be lacking.

A month long training evolution dedicated to MOUT out of an eighteen-month life cycle of an infantry battalion would go a long way to correct this deficiency. Ideally, to maximize this training opportunity units deploying to George should have already undergone some MOUT training. Realistically this is not always possible and therefor George must be a *complete package* in the same manner as a CAX or MWTC. George, with some additions, offers the required facilities. What is further required is a training cadre, a syllabus, and finance.

The training cadre would need to become subject matter experts and while not actively engaged in training or revising the period of instruction (POIs), need to be

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130 T.R. Milton, Jr., LtCol., USA, "Urban Operations: Future War." Military Review, (February, 1994), 40.

131 Robert Scales, MajGen. USA, "The Indirect Approach." Armed Forces Journal. (October, 1998), 68.

continuously developing their knowledge. Exchange programs to study other militaries that routinely conduct MOUT operations or training, such as the British military, should be established. Retired Marine officers and staff-noncommissioned officers, such as those under contract to the Warfighting Lab, should also be utilized to form the core of the cadre. As occurs at CAX, post-deployment Marines from other units, who have undergone the training, could be used to augment the training cadre. The incorporation of technology, such as sensors and television monitors to record a unit's and individual's actions for debriefing will lessen the number of permanent instructors, and enhance the learning experience.

While the facilities at George could be utilized by units for MOOTW training between scheduled battalion deployments, primary focus of George and of the instructor cadre should be on high intensity conflict. The final POI should be based on the findings of the Warfighting Labs' experiment. Once approved by Training and Education Division, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, the POI must be continuously evaluated against real world events, and progress abreast of technological advances. Proposals for subjects to be included in the POI can be found in Appendix C.

The need to address the psychological aspects of combat as presented in Chapter IV should take place at the beginning of the training at George. A combination of veteran Marines, such as Generals Ray Smith and Christmas, and psychologists, along with military personnel who have recently undergone combat in an urban environment, should present a series of lectures to all Marines undergoing training at George.

Also included in the POI at George would be live fire training exceeding that currently conducted at existing MOUT facilities. The live fire ranges at present allow for single, or at most two, partial "buildings" to be utilized for live fire. George can provide the depth that would help replicate what the Marines will experience in MOUT. The use of movable bullet traps in the existing houses would allow up to a platoon to conduct a live fire assault through several buildings. This is not offered at any other MOUT facility. If we cannot safely execute this level of training, we should not allow our Marines to fight in urban areas. (TRAIN AS WE FIGHT!)

The other area that needs to be addressed is doctrine. The current MOUT publication includes four pages of noncombatant considerations in urban operations and six pages dedicated to MOOTW. Doctrine should reflect the concepts of the Three Block War. High intensity combat in a city is not MOOTW. MOOTW operations can take place in various settings, rural, urban, coastal, even at sea. Doctrinal clarity will help alleviate the confusion at the tactical and trigger-puller level.

As stated in Chapter 1, the Marine Corps cannot become specialized in one area of warfighting due to our expeditionary nature and world-wide employment. This said, operations in urban areas appear to be in our future and needs to be addressed.

VI. CONCLUSION

It's a squad leader's war, this kind of fighting...the young Marines were responding magnificently. ... in Hue, I observed some of the finest fighting men in the world. Individuals who were wounded refused evacuation... [132]

Marines have always been able to *adapt, improvise, and overcome.* Rather than wait until the next urban battle and have our Marines have to learn these lessons the hard way, we must learn from our own, and others, experiences. The way we are currently training our Marines we are setting them up for initial failure in our next Hue City.

Marines will fight the Three Block War. Blocks One and Two will continue to be where we usually operate. We must be ready and prepared for Block Three. Currently we are not. But we can be.

MOUT training must be elevated to at least the same status as CAX, Bridgeport, and SOCEX's (MEU SOC Evaluation Exercises). MOUT training must be MCCRESS testable. By establishing a training program similar to the above-mentioned evolutions and providing adequate facilities, the Corps will be better prepared to answer the call when it comes. Utilizing the findings of the Warfighting Lab's ProMet program and existing closed bases is the first step. Adding to these existing facilities with construction and instrumentation will give our Marines the edge over their adversary. To better focus the planners, trainers, and most importantly, the executers of these plans and training

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132 Nolan, Keith William, Battle for Hue – Tet 1968. Novato, Ca: Presidio Press, 1983, 82.

programs, doctrinal changes must be made to reflect the Corps' concept of the *Three-Block War*. The time to start saving lives is now.

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APPENDIX A. RUSSIAN FORCE DEPLOYMENT INTO CHECHNYA

(From LtCol. Thomas's Chechnya III. 1-26 January, 1995.)

Russian Forces in Chechnya: December 1994 –January 1995

- 21 Dec. 503rd Motorized Rifle Regiment, plus composite battalion. Units were drawn from five military districts.
- 22 Dec. 104th Airborne Division (diversionary operation)
- 23 Dec. 131st Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade (diversionary operations)
- 31 Dec. 81st Motorized Infantry Regiment, plus composite detachment from 20th Motorized Infantry Division
- 1 Jan. 106th & 76th Airborne Divisions (rescue operations for 131st Brigade & 81st Regiment)
- 4 Jan. unidentified unit from Kola Peninsula, 200 hundred border guards troops, marine battalion from Northern Fleet. Composite unit formed around elements of 27th Motorized Infantry Brigade.
- 129th Motorized Rifle Regiment, 165th Marine Regiment (Pacific Fleet), infantry battalion (Baltic Fleet)
- 10-12 Jan. marine units from both Baltic & Pacific Fleets
- 13 Jan. elite units of *Dzerzhinskiy Division* & two detachments of OMON troops.
- 19 Jan. 376th Motorized Infantry Regiment & 876th Separate Airborne Brigade (Northern Fleet)
- 20 Jan. MVD training regiment No. 6653
- 25 Jan. 506th Motorized Infantry Regiment of the 27th Motorized Infantry (peace operations division) Division

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(From Jane's Infantry Weapons, 1999 edition.)

APPENDIX B. PROPOSED TRAINING SYLLABUS

Phase 1.

T-1 - Inbrief & Safety brief. Establish bivouac. Leaders' reconnaissance of facilities.

T-2 - Weapons effects; US & adversary weapons , use of live fire demonstration and video to show effects of blast and penetration on material and personnel (use of gelatin blocks). Effects of friendly weapon systems on Marines when fired within enclosed or restricted areas.

Psychological Factors of Combat; amplification of factors in MOUT. First aid for psychological casualties.

Case studies; USMC MOUT experiences; recent MOUT operations such as Grozny.

[For the remainder of the training battalion command and staff element should divide time into "thirds."

1/3 - PME, TEWTS, MAPEX's (T-10 through 12; fire support and logistic exercises)

1/3 - observing, application of TTP's to provide an understanding for their order writing process. (T-3 through T-8)

1/3 - fighting the battalion. (T –13 through 27)]

Phase 2.

T-3, 4, 5 - Squad and platoon level offensive TTP's (day and night)

T-6, 7 - Squad and platoon level defensive TTP's (day and night)

T-8, 9 – Fire-team, squad, and platoon live fire attacks (day and night; TTP reinforcement)

Phase 3.

T-10, 11, 12 – Company (Rein) Field Exercise (FEX) force on force exercise with rifle companies, augmented by H&S Co. Marines and Weapon Company attachments. Companies establish defenses, conduct attacks, establish new defenses, continue the attack.

Phase 4.

T-13 – Maintenance day; battalion orders process and dissemination.

T- 14 – 27 battalion FEX: (externally sourced opposition force {OpFor})

Part 1; conventional OpFor.

72 hours force on force with forced entry into city;

12 hours critique, lessons learned, rehearsals

60 hours force on force;

48 hours battalion defense; critique/maintenance/orders process

Part 2.unconventional OpFor,

60 hours force on force

12 hours critique, lessons learned, rehearsals

Part 3. mixed conventional & unconventional OpFor,

48 hours force on force

transition out of city into rural areas in pursuit of withdrawing OpFor

Phase 5.

T-28 – leader's debrief & facility maintenance

T-29 – all hands' debrief and lessons learned

T-30 – MOVEMENT

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