VAN DER WALT OVER BURDENED SOLDIER SEPT 13 2009

----- Original Message -----
From: Pierre van der Walt
To: ANDRE DEGEORGES
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2009 3:04 PM
Subject: Re: OVER-BURDENED

From: ANDRE DEGEORGES
To: TREY DEGEORGES
Cc: Pierre van der Walt ; BUBBA & KATHIE DEGEORGES ; Mark Burr ; david OSINSKI ; DAVID OSINSKI 2
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2009 4:28 PM
Subject: SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY IED RESISTANT VEHICHLES

Trey - you may wish to STUDY what Pierre has sent below and look at the various websites - may save you and your men's lives one day by making sure you get the right vehicle. Don't forget prior to 1995, South Africa had one of the best light infantries in the world, battle tested both in men and equipment in arid/semi-arid environments. Pierre is a lawyer, a military historian specializing in the bush wars of Southern Africa, author of a book on reloading big bore calibers and editor of the Big Bore Journal published in South Africa. If you want any information on this region of the world politically and militarily for your studies - Pierre may be one of the best in the above fields as far as providing you with information, and referencing you to literature where you can research a topic.

He is about to send his boy to study in the USA! Maybe one day you can meet him - he is a hunter and gun enthusiast!

Andre

----- Original Message -----
From: Pierre van der Walt
To: ANDRE DEGEORGES
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2009 4:10 PM
Subject: Re: OVER-BURDENED SOLDIERS - LESSONS FROM THE BUSH WARS OF SOUTHTHERN AFRICA

Andre

Casspirs are indeed used in a number of Middle East conflict zones and they are highly regarded. Since South Africa is the undisputed world leader in land-mine proof vehicles a number of other local vehicles are used over there. The forums are full of US soldiers singing their praises. The Casspir was however built on a standard Mercedez Benz chassis and then mineproofed. We have moved on since.
One of the most popular/respected vehicles is our armoured pick-up. It does not have all the off-road capability of the Hummer, but that is its only drawback. It still is damn good off-road and it costs a fraction of the Hummer and was developed from ground up as anti landmine and armoured vehicle. Go to www.baesystems.com and then click on Products and services. From there go to R and click on RG32M Versatile armoured utility vehicles . You can also go to: *www.baesystemspresskit.com/AUSA2007/**RG_32m**.cfm. Click on Counter IED and MIne and then on RG32 for better photos. Ignore the RG 31 and 34 as these are just stuff made for other countries in terms of their designs. We do not hold them in high regard.*

The Casspir is going to be replaced by the RG3 Mine Protectd Multi Purpose Fighting Vehicle also on BAE systems basic website. It is much more expensive than the Casspir, but the new generation vehicle and far superior. The Casspir will remain in production as a basic mine protected, small arms proof troop carrier.

Pierre

CASSPIR

SANDMASTER

Andre

I found the topic and the articles sourced via David's link quite interesting. Naturally I do not have the answers. In my time we were not particularly overburdened as common soldiers, but in special forces overburdening was hectic due to the stuff operators had to carry in. In normal infantry role a distinction was made between patrols and attacks and we were burdened accordingly. Typical attack weight was assault rifle & two mags (one taped to other) at around 4 kg plus 8 extra magazines (about 3 kg in 5,56) in chest webbing serving as some sort of partial body armour. In attack mode you would typically carry two litres of water (2.2 kg), knife, 1x meal, medical basics and mortar/lmg assist. All in all I think we probably went in at about 15 kg.

Patrol was a bit different. Patrols lasted 3-5 days. We then also carried bivvy sheet, another 2 litres of water, extra rations, dixies, water and esbit pills, wire saw and mostly an extra t-shirt or two in case it got cold. We were unburdened with body armour helmets, gadgets on helmets, sleeping bags, knee pads, elbow pads, sunglasses, etc. I would say about 18-20 kg. We were operating in northern Namibia and southern Angola. White sand, little water, some trees. Kaokoland was particularly barren. Again in Special Forces role overburdening was severe - up to 70 kg including demolitions stuff and what was needed.

Even so I have always thought it ridiculous to sent an urban boy carrying boots, helmet, water, gun, ammo, food, backpack/webbing, etc to chase a barefoot mountain goat in the latter's terrain. I have raised this with you before. The Rhodesians had a good system: shorts, t-shirt, floppy hat, running shoes/vellies, gun, water, ammo and men from the same area to work it.

Personally I don't know if the clever guys will ever solve the overburdening problem. Perhaps the solution is not to try and find a single solution, but to try and find a number of solutions tailored to different habitat and engagement scenarios. I understand the soldier's fear of running out of ammo. It is a real fear, but if I look at how rounds expended per casualty escalate and now run into hundreds of thousands, if not millions of rounds per casualty, I say there also is something patently wrong with ammo expending doctrines. I get the idea that special effects (thunder and dust) have become a more important doctrine in some tactics than results. Our war was mostly waged under considerably more favourable conditions than the US Forces are operating under in the Middle-East, but when our kills to casualty ratio dropped below a 1000:1 there was hell to play and we were '*sent back to war school*'. Bear in mind that our kills came from face to face situations and were mostly not the result of air strikes, bombardments etc. I do not see such a ratio as possible in the Middle East were US soldiers often operate in more urban conditions - it is hellish and I still get that shit feeling in the stomach when I think of nights sneaking through shantytown streets in the pitch of night - not knowing where the next shot is going to come from. Remember the Russians sent 3-4 soldiers into combat with 1x rifle between them. As a man was shot the rifle was picked up and the fight carried on. The one solution to not running out of ammo is to fight so hard that you can get guns and ammo from dead enemy when you need to. It also prevents the needless wasting of ammo for speciasl effects so prevalent in modern contacts.

Mountains present a further problem of significance regarding overburdening. The obvious solutions to overburdening are almost impossible to implement in such terrain. Again something we hardly ever faced. Overburdening can be partly countered by selection and training as you experienced. Mountain from mountains operate well in mountains and vice versa. In a large army it is difficult if not impossible to implement though. We had the same experience - when the first TV generation kids (spent high school years in front of tv) made it into our Army (1981) we suddenly experienced an alarming and annually escalating injury rate during normal military training - mostly ankle, achilles tendon, knee, lower leg and back problems. It was studied and found that these kids physically differed vastly from the material we had before. They were not from a biking, tree climbing, playing background. They were sitters and lacked the physical development and balance of their predecessors. They had other excellent attributes though, but physicality was not a general trait any longer. We had to change our PT training courses and schedules considerably to reduce the injury rates back to acceptable levels. It was interesting evev if frustrating.

I do however have very specific ideas which may not endear me to the bunny huggers or public in general, but when I go into combat I hold no other concern than getting my men and myself in and out alive in the process of achieving the operational objectives. My first solution does not relate to overburdening as such, but I am a firm believer of having a pack of dogs preceding a patrol in potential rural ambush situations and urban operations. Stand off tactically and let the dogs go in. Better sacrifice a dog than a man. In urban operations soldiers are sent on patrols that lasts a day - absolute no justification for overburdening and I think that situation can be managed by simple kit management doctrine and discipline.

Anyhow, both Army and the Koevoet (Crowbar - wedge 'em loose))section of the Police had particular success deviating from the typical patrol. Koevoet were the best proponents of the system I am about to describe and it resulted in absolute zero overburden of the soldiers. Koevoet operated in vehicles called Casspirs. These were basically mine protected trucks with armoured side panels and

roof - infantry combat vehicle. Right at the front - next to the driver the crew commander stood behind a .50, a 14.5mm or even a 20mm. In the back the patrol members sat in special seats to absorbed land mines etc. Patrols were conducted with two Bushman running ahead of the Casspir far enough to just be covered by the turret gun. They were alternated every half hour or so. One tracked - one acted as point man. Strangely enough they were relatively safe as the ambushers could not fire on them for fear of making their presence known before the main force in the Casspir arrived and they would just give a secret signal if they saw the ambushers. If spoor was hot they were extracted and patrol deployed before contact. Casspirs also worked in teams of 3-4. One on the main spoor and two on triangle formation to the sides where possible - about 200m apart. These patrols were bad news for ambushers as the main Casspir could unleash hell in the contact, the men inside mostly survived the intitial contact and at least one Casspir would be behind the ambushers with another 1-2 ready to encircle. Once the contact is made the Casspir would rush through and stop to deploy its patrol under HMG cover to sweep towards the approach Casspirs. The support Casspirs would be called in and the ambushers wiped out. If they ran Koevoet gave chase and shot them or ran them over.

Now this exact system works in rural areas, but not in towns or mountaneous areas, but it completely eliminates overburdening, patrol duration limitations and most other problems. Main problem was the RPG, but speed of movement resulted in low casualty rates. There is no rule that a patrol must operate without vehicle support. IN towns you deploy a patrol in center street with ICV in adjacent side streets. Brave martyr that will stand and fight the patrol and they will have very little deployment time as they do not know in which streets vehicles will begin. Again - overburdening no problem.

In mountains horses and motorcycles should be used to alleviate individual soldier burdens. Dogs, much like wingshooting dogs, should lead patrols to serve as early warning systems. The terrs in Zim used donkeys and mules to great effect to carry their burdens. Why is it that when we move on technologically, we totally forget the tactics of the past?

I have also harboured ideas about patrols for many years which will work in many areas, but will need some tactical development. I don't know if you know the off-road rally vehicles called Sandmasters. My idea has been to develop mine proofed ceramic armoured versions of these with orthopedic seats on shock absorbed seat systems. Each has a driver and a No.2. You can develop a variety of versions and deploy them needed combinations. Examples:

V1 =Command vehicle - Coms & LMG (LMGs are nose mounted and remote fired like chopper guns
V2 = Medical vehicle - LMG
V-3 = Logistics vehicle - HMG belt-fed
V-4 = Flamethrower vehicle
V-5 = 81mm mortar vehicle
V-6 = HMG with Gattling chain gun
V-7 = Tracker vehicle both trackers with 105mm recoilless.
V-8 = You can even have a dog management version

The argument will be that they will be RPG susceptible. The reply is that it will be less so than anticipated due to speed and tactical doctrines. It will have to be a man prepared to die to take them on as they offer total & immense firepower system, manouverability, unrivalled outflanking capability, speed and tremendous terrain access capability. They can be deployed behind, alongside, ahead of, with normal patrols and if necessary - even without patrol support in some instances. They can support convoys etc and can scout ahead and busy about towards potential ambush points, etc. Have you ever tried to hit something that size doing 140- 160 kph except from straight up front or directly behind, or doing 100 kph off-road? Again such a system unburdens the patrolman. Nothing prevents the vehicles to be partly abandoned temporarily for occupants to do a specific foot only task - provided it is dome tactically correct. They can roam in formations adjacent to convoy roads hundreds of meters wide and totally off-road. Their effectiveness will be enhanced by air support and even UAVs.

Pierre

riginal Message -----
From: ANDRE DEGEORGES
To: DAVID OSINSKI 2 ; david OSINSKI
Cc: Ann & Werner Brach ; TONI WICKER1 ; Willem LOMBAARD ; BUBBA & KATHIE DEGEORGES ; BRIAN TUT REILLY ; Pierre van der Walt ; PETER NIEUWOUDT ; Don Heath 2
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2009 10:59 PM
Subject: Re: OVER-BURDENED

----- Original Message -----
From: david o
To: ANDRE DEGEORGES
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2009 2:51 PM
Subject: Re: OVER-BURDENED

The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation, by S.L.A. Marshall.

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1646798.The_Soldier_s_Load_and_the_Mobility_of_a_Nation

Andre,

We do this - overload our troops. I believe it is a functino of our affluent, opulent, society. We have always paid the price for this.

Try to find his book on line. It is not long. It is on the mark.

I have a copy in Bellingham, read it there if you don't find one.

Dave