

Bridging the Gap: Desert Scimitar as a Model for Military Use of Public Lands

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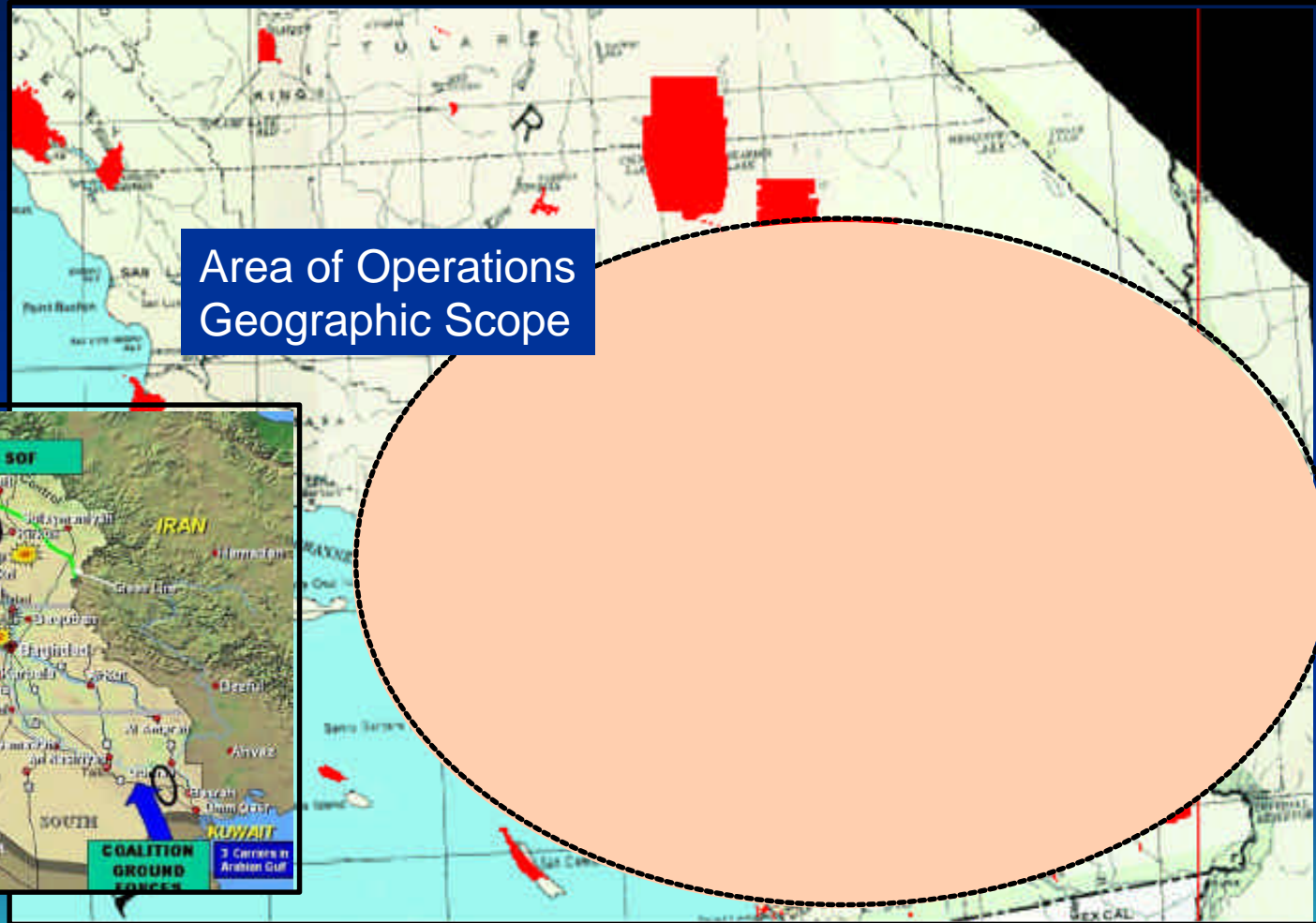


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Purpose and Need for Desert Scimitar Exercise

- Annual 1st Marine Division live-fire exercise at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) – 29 Palms, California.
- Existing military installations lack geographic scope needed to test the command and control, and logistical capabilities of the Division.
- Desert Scimitar 01 sought ways to test and train the Division's command and control element under conditions more representative of the distances and terrain they would encounter in battle.

DOD Installations in S. California



Objectives of Desert Scimitar 01

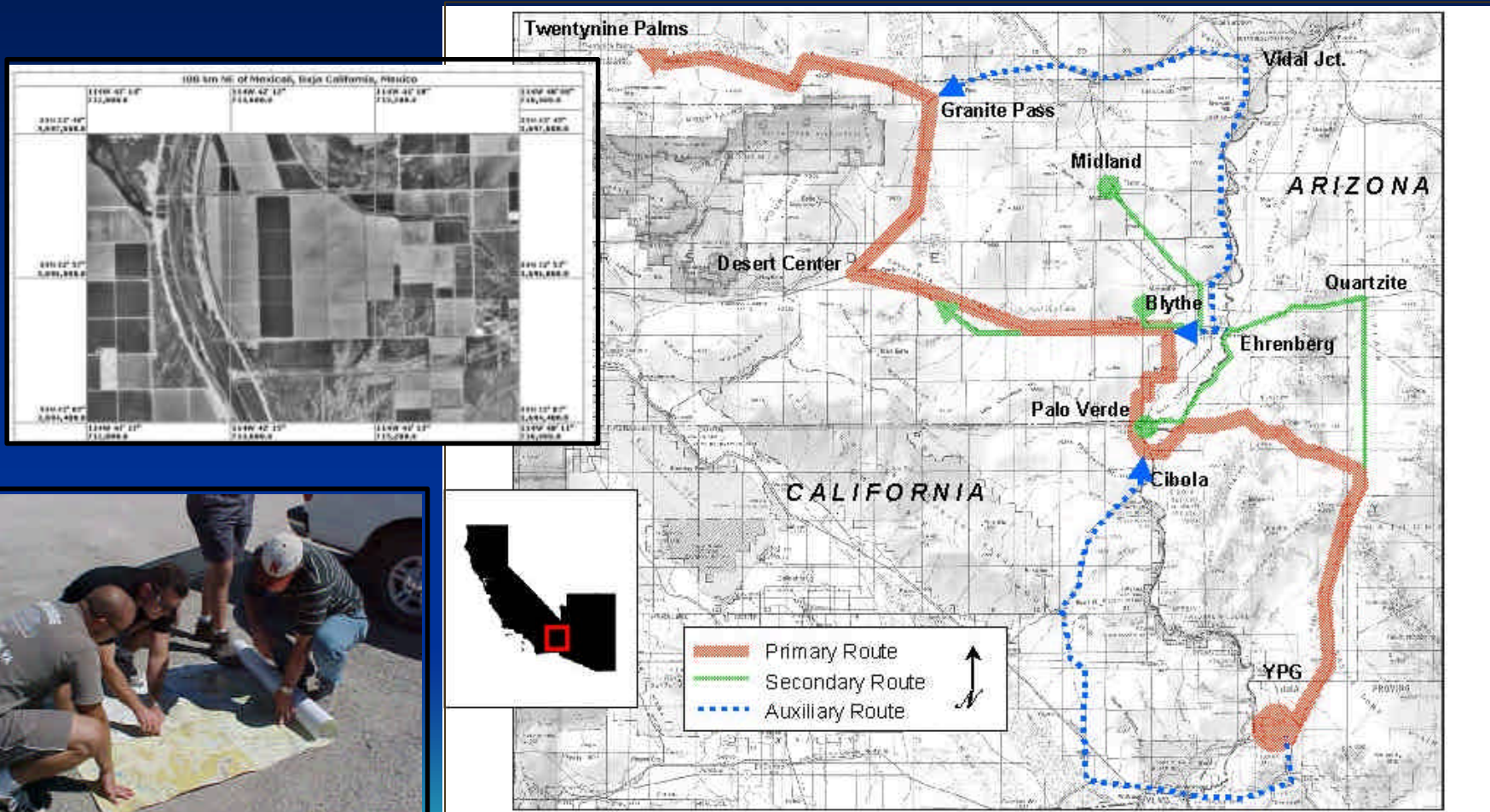
- Test the Division's and subordinate units' abilities to rapidly embark and deploy their forces in response to an execution order.
- Exercise command, control, and communication over moving forces separated by large distances, across terrain which closely simulates the terrain of the actual Area of Operations (AOR).
- Test the ability of new communications systems and the Marines who use them.
- Test the ability of the Division and subordinate and supporting units to conduct a river crossing, to include all of the tactical control measures and coordination required to move a division's worth of equipment and personnel.
- Test the ability of the Division and subordinate and supporting units to provide logistical support to a division's worth of equipment and personnel across extended distances.
- Force Marines (planners and operators) to operate in unfamiliar terrain.

Inter-Agency Coordination: Fall 2000 –Spring 2001

- 1st Marine Division Planners
- US Bureau of Land Management (NEPA Lead Agency)
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Army Yuma Proving Ground
- Anteon Corporation

DS-01
Exercise
Planned for
1-12 May 01

Exercise Area Reconnaissance



BLM Policy: Military Use of Public Lands

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
November 8, 2000

In Reply Refer To:
1323/1610/2300/2740/2800/2920 (350)P

EMS TRANSMISSION 11/13/2000
Instruction Memorandum No. 2001-030
Expires: 09/30/2002

To: AFO's and AD's

From: Assistant Director, Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection

Subject: Military Activities On and Over the Public Lands

This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides policy guidance to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) field offices. These offices receive numerous requests to use the public lands for both State National Guard (SNG) and Federal military purposes that range from small unit training, with negligible short-term impacts, to uses with long-term impacts on the resources and current users of the public lands. This IM is a compilation and restatement in a single document of statutory, regulatory and policy guidance that affects the authorization of military activities which may impact public lands and resources of the BLM.

Attachment 1 provides supporting information on the application of the policy guidance.

BLM Instruction Memorandum - Military Activities On and Over the Public Lands

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
January 23, 2002

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1323/1610/2300/2740/2800/2920 (350)P
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EMS TRANSMISSION 02/01/02
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To: AFO's and AD's

From: Assistant Director, Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection

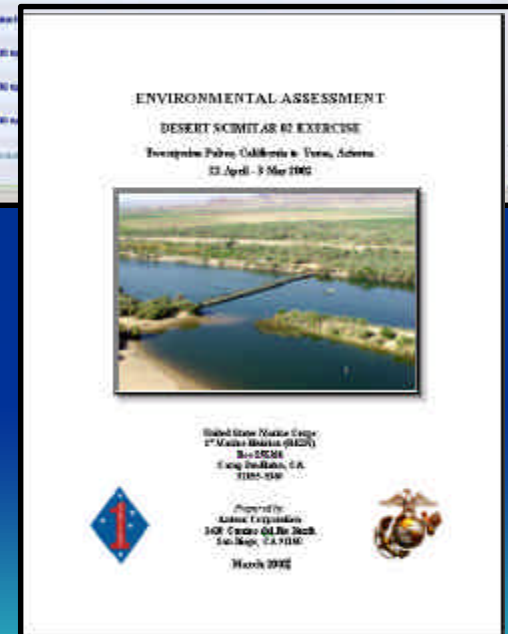
Subject: Supplemental Guidance - Military Activities On and Over the Public Lands

This Instruction Memorandum (I.M.) provides supplemental guidance as to implementation of I.M. 2001-030 - Military Activities On and Over the Public Lands, in the context of the "War on Terrorism" and "Homeland Defense" initiatives.

The "War on Terrorism" and "Homeland Defense" have led to new and evolving training and testing requirements for the military services. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policies must be responsive to these national security needs, within the context of existing statute and regulations. Additional needs to amend existing statutes and regulations will also be identified by the BLM and forwarded to the Department and Congress for appropriate action.

Environmental Survey and Assessment

- Existing Environmental Clearances
- Environmental Assessment
- Biological Assessment
- Cultural Resources Inventory
- Agency Consultation
- Public Participation
- Contingency Plans
- Permits and MOAs



DS-01 Proposed Action

- Long-range tactical C3 exercise between YPG and MAGACC 29-Palms
- 1,500 Marines, 500 wheeled vehicles
- Scripted enemy engagement scenarios conducted over radios
- Travel on existing roads, daylight training
- Use developed properties and pre-disturbed sites
- Food, water, and supplies imported
- Waste disposal provided



Potential Environmental Impacts

	Potential Impact
Environmental Element	Proposed Action
Air Quality	Yes
BLM ACECs	No
Cultural Resources	No
Farmlands	No
Invasive, Non-native Species	Yes
T&E Animal Species	Yes
T&E Plant Species	Yes
Wastes (hazardous/solid)	Yes
Water Quality (surface and ground)	Yes
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No
Wilderness	No
Environmental Justice	No
Visual Resource Mgmt.	No

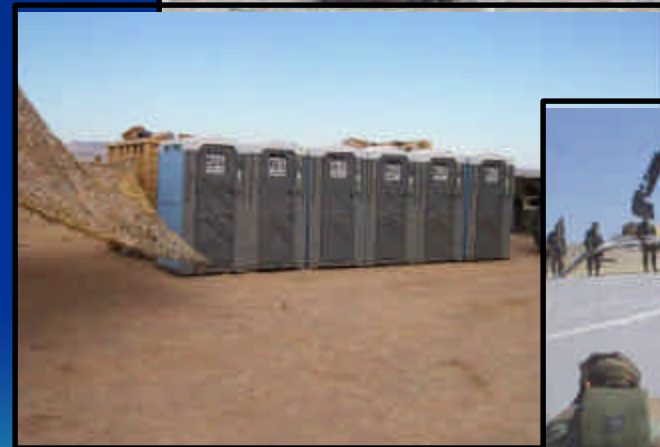
Threatened Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population)



Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat

Strategy: Avoid Significant Impact

- No “live-fire” or simulated fire
- No pyrotechnics, smoke, or obscurants
- No “aggressor forces”
- No physical engagements
- No “off-road” maneuvers or “free play”
- No tracked combat vehicles
- No nighttime exercises



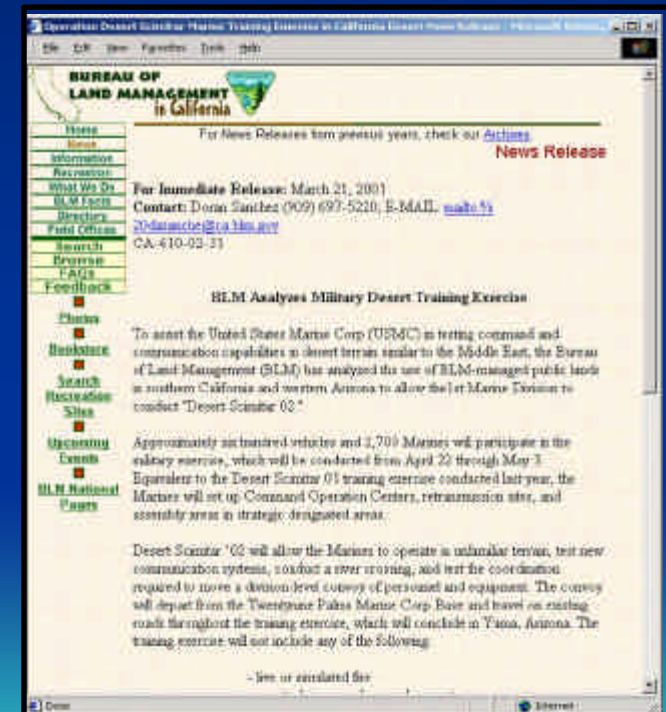
Approvals and Permits

- Section 404 (CWA), Nationwide 12 Permits: USACE
- Section 7 Consultation (ESA): USFWS
- Section 106 Consultation (NHPA): SHPO
- Water Quality Certification or Waiver (Section 401): California RWQCB
- Section 1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement: California DFG
- Section 2081 (CEQA) Incidental Take Permit: California DFG
- Encroachment Permits: Cal Trans
- Encroachment Permits: Arizona DOT
- Right of Use Permit: US BOR
- Bridge Permit: USCG



Approvals and Permits (cont.)

- Letter of Intent to Use (Blythe Landfill): Riverside County
- Letter of Intent to Use (Desert Center Airport): Riverside County
- Park Facility Activity (Palo Verde Campground): Imperial County Parks and Recreation
- Environmental Agreement for Training Units: US Army YPG
- Use Permit: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- Use Permit: Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Cooperative Agreement: USMC and BLM, USMC and BOR
- Property Use Permit: 5 Private Properties



DS-01 Exercise Implementation

- Pre-Staging Activities
- Staging at Assembly Areas
- Movement to Contact
- Seize Near-Shore Objectives and Shaping
- River Crossing
- Staging for Retrograde/End of Exercise
- Post-Exercise Activities



Press and Public Relations

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Marine division plans major desert crossing



Marine convoy has biologists worried

TREK: A 175-mile desert exercise involving 3,000 Marines will penetrate wildlife areas.

SignOnSanDiego.com
THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Troops well trained in protecting tortoises



Environmental Monitoring and Compliance

- Pre-exercise clearance surveys
- Full-time desert tortoise monitoring
- Inter-agency emergency response coordination
- Post-exercise surveys, review, reporting, and close-out



Desert Scimitar 02 and 03 Planning

- Expanded Exercise Area
- Additional Routes, Additional Assembly Areas
- 2,200 Marines
- 600 Vehicles
- Additional Aircraft
- MCAGCC to Yuma (reversed direction)

DS-02 Exercise
Planned for 15 April to
10 May 02

DS-03 Planned for
Spring 03 - Cancelled
Sep 02

DS 03 Planned Routes

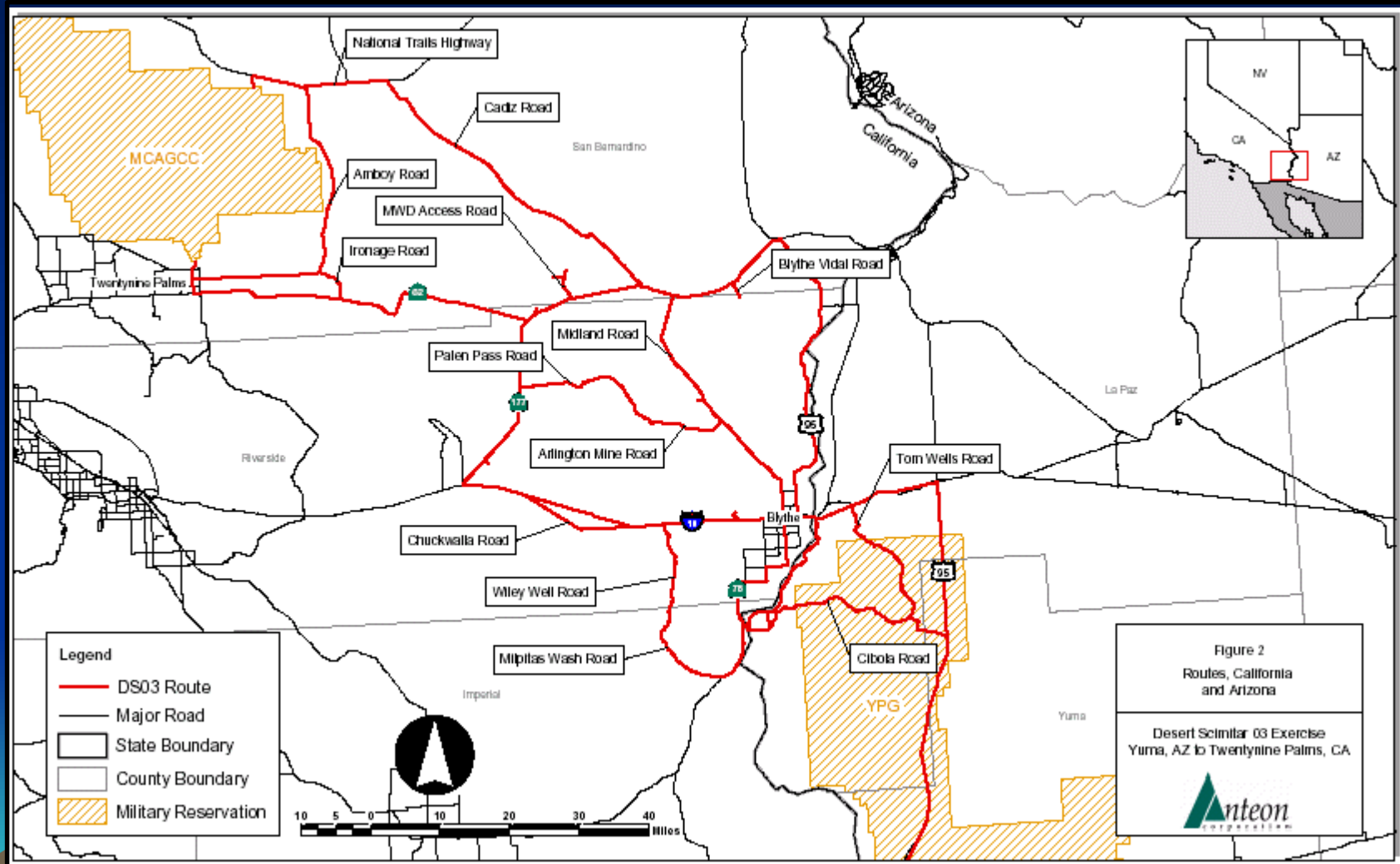
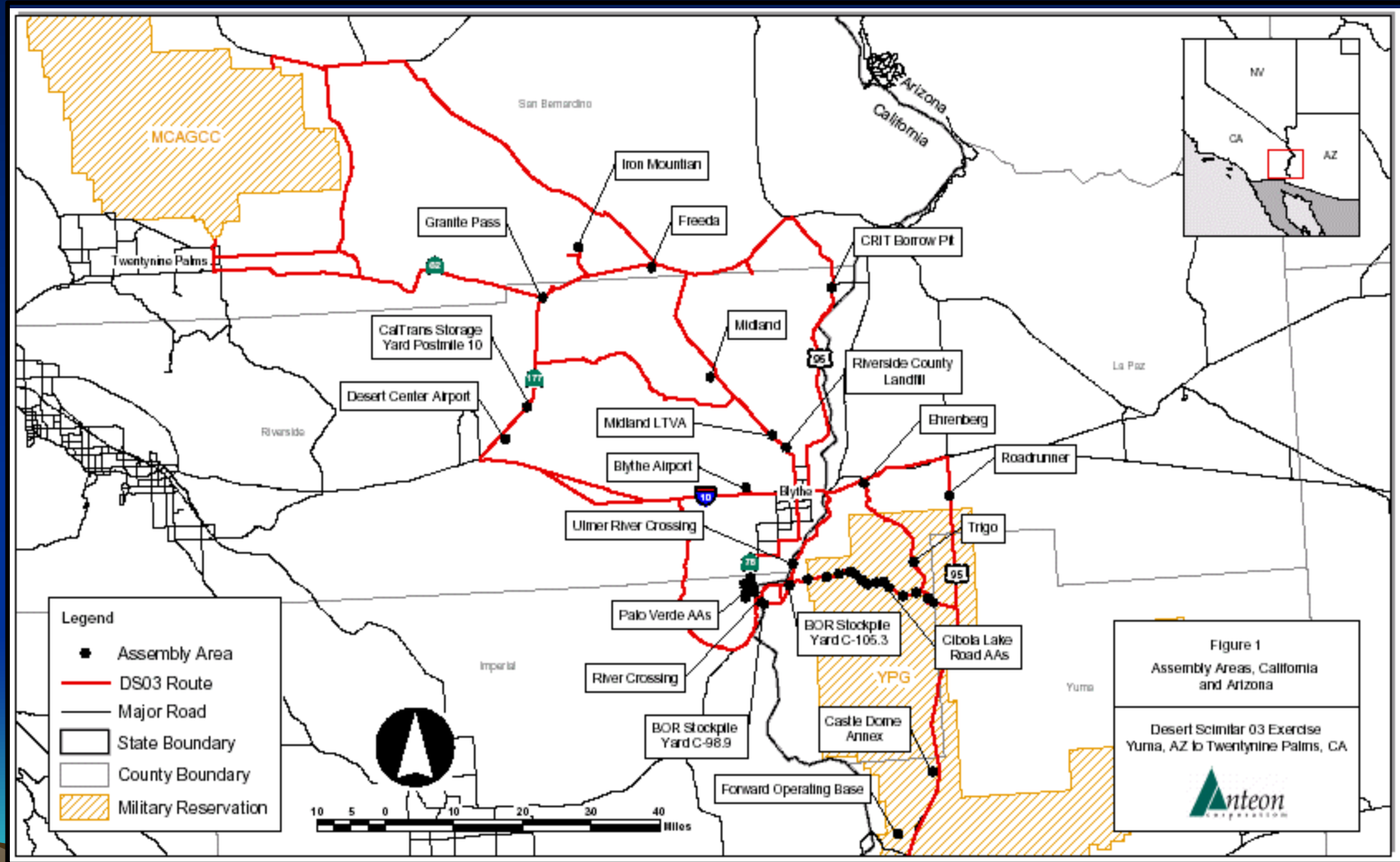


Figure 2
Routes, California
and Arizona

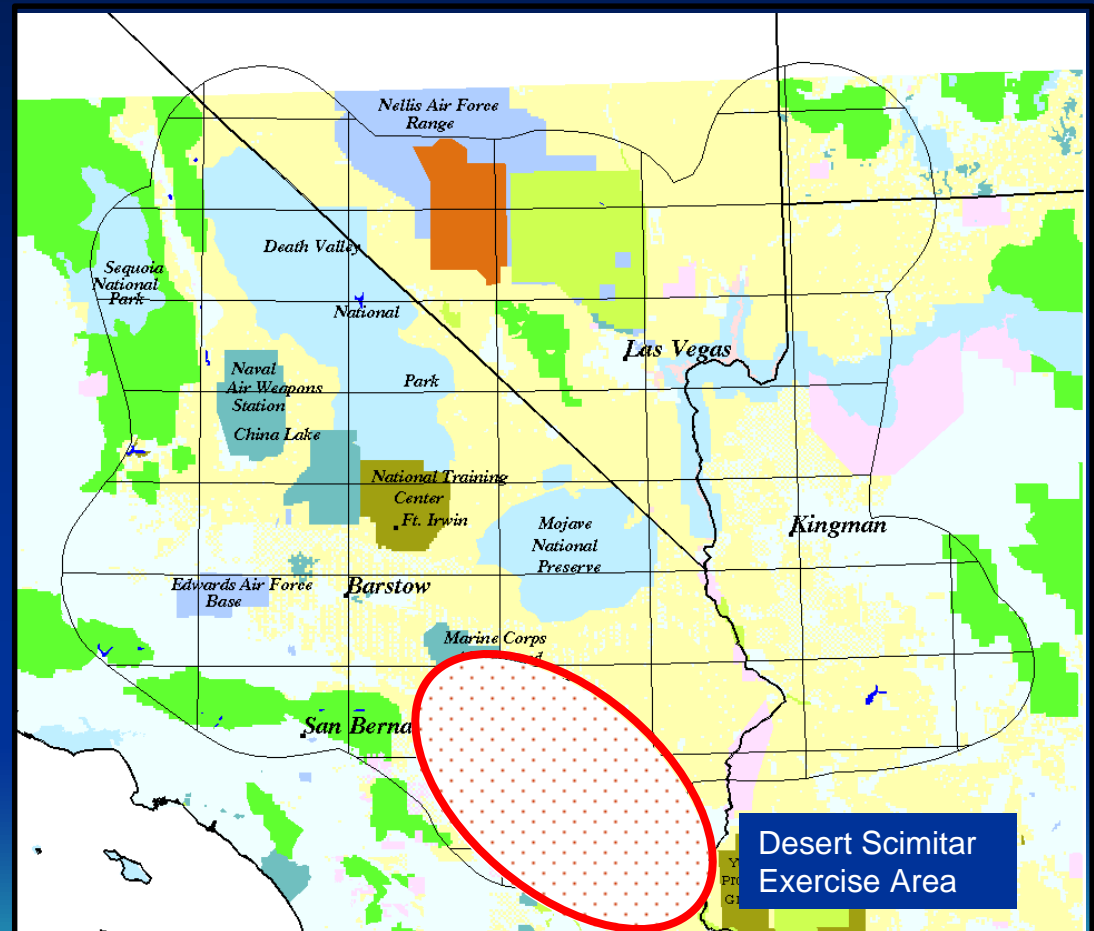
Desert Scimitar 03 Exercise
Yuma, AZ to Twenty-nine Palms, CA

DS 03 Planned Assembly Areas



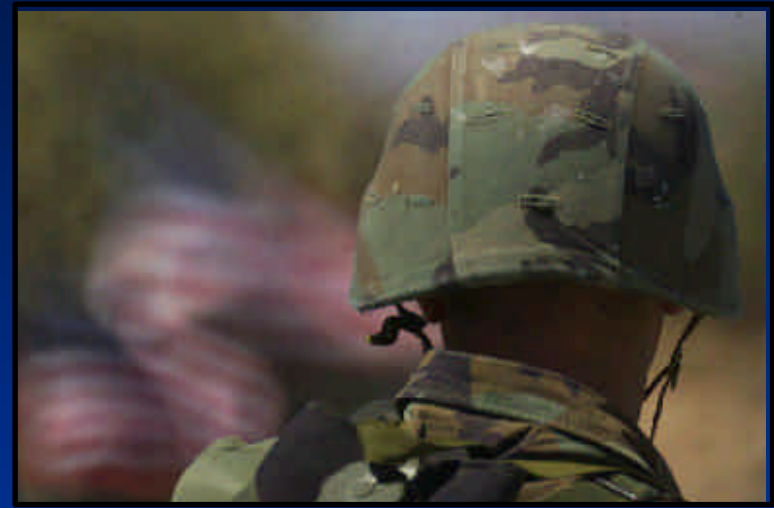
Future Opportunities

- Finalize Programmatic Agreements for DS Exercise Area
- Develop Joint Use Areas
- Create Similar Corridors Between Other DOD Installations
- Ensure Stakeholder / Public Buy-In



Conclusions

- Desert Scimitar is a useful model for future military exercises on public and private lands
- DS-01 and 02 succeeded because of inter-agency cooperation and local community support
- The DS exercise area should be preserved through programmatic agreements between DOD and land management agencies



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