

# Mapmakers Scope Out Iraqi Terrain

By Sergeant Mitchell J. Armbruster

**S**oldiers with a terrain analysis detachment in Iraq provide maps and terrain analysis to the corps support command (COSCOM) and its subordinate units to help them accomplish their missions. The detachment, part of an active duty brigade, is on its first deployment with a COSCOM. The detachment was chosen after working with the COSCOM on two field exercises.

The detachment works near the COSCOM headquarters, making maps or creating overlays that give information on soil type, vegetation, and hydrology that are in a specific area. Soldiers can use this information to understand the types of roads, rivers, or canals they might be dealing with, as well as the depth or slope of the terrain. There are tactical applications for this knowledge, but it can also help coalition forces give

the Iraqi people vital information to help them stimulate their economy.

The detachment can determine where vehicles can travel by soil type; they have a scale that ranges from *go*, *slow-go*, to *no-go*. By making these determinations, the terrain analysts can give units the vital information they need to make a mission successful.

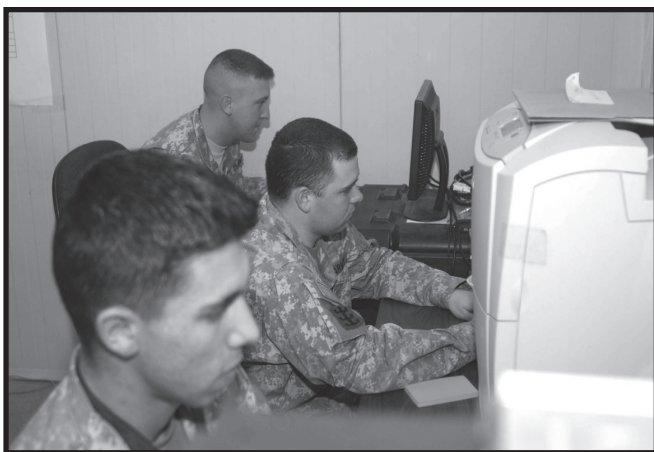
The detachment makes hard copy maps or transfers the maps digitally to other parts of the COSCOM when needed. Their business is dictated by customer requests, and they have been extremely busy. Many units, after seeing the maps and products, have put in requests for their own maps.

Any map can be adapted to the needs of a unit. Most of the time, the team will use a map that is already made and add specific items to it. If items on the map—such as boundaries, buildings, or roads—have changed drastically, the map is reproduced. Terrain analysis is an ever-changing job because maps must be updated constantly.

Many things are involved with terrain analysis, such as cover and concealment and drop zones, that help U.S. forces secure victory with topographic analysis. The analysts in the detachment know that the work they do helps units and all Soldiers be successful.



*Sergeant Armbruster is a public affairs specialist for the 207th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Fort Collins, Colorado. He holds a bachelor's in filmmaking and is working on a second degree.*



Terrain analysts work on customer projects