VENOMOUS SNAKES of IRAQ and KUWAIT

Tom Harkins
Entomological Sciences Program
USACHPPM
APG, MD 21010
SOLDIER-SNAKE ENCOUNTERS

TIMING OF INITIAL PHASE

SLEEPING “UNDER THE STARS”

NIGHTFIGHTING FORCE

GROUND OPERATIONS

GARRISON DUTIES
DESERT HORNED VIPER
*Cerastes cerastes gasperetti*
SAW-SCALED VIPER
_Echis carinatus sochureki_
FIELDS’S SAND VIPER
*Pseudocerastes persicus fieldi*

PERSIAN SAND VIPER
*Pseudocerastes persicus persicus*
KURDISTAN VIPER

Vipera raddei kurdistanica
INCIDENCE OF SNAKEBITES
IRAQ/KUWAIT REGION

- Peak Incidence June and July
- Lower Limb Most Common Bite Site
- Inflicted Mostly at Night
- *Macrovipera lebetina* spp. Majority of Serious Cases
INCIDENCE OF SNAKE BITES

OPERATION DESERT STORM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

- Peak Incidence April Through October
- Hands Most Common Bite Site
- Most Likely Daytime Casualties
- Cerastes cerastes gasperetti Majority of Bites

...biggest risk comes from soldiers turning to serpents for entertainment
...the cause of 85 percent of snakebites during Desert Storm
“BUILD IT...
...AND THEY WILL COME.”
PLANNING AND SUPPORT

- SURVEILLANCE/THREAT ASSESSMENT
- CONTROL
- CARE OF BITE VICTIMS
- ANTIVENIN POLICY
- TROOP DISCIPLINE AND MORALE