



# SPECIAL EDITION

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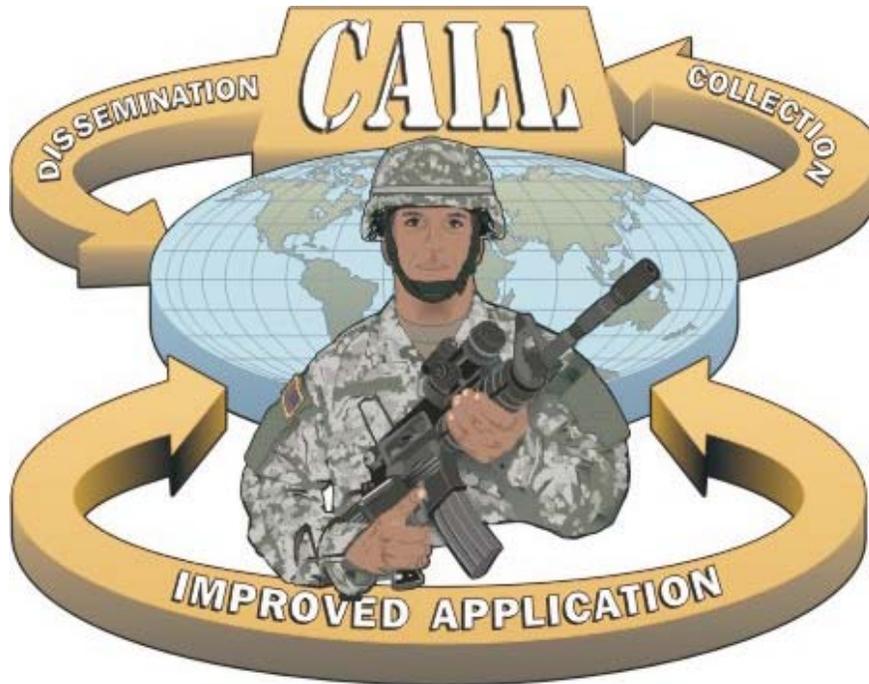
## ADVISING FOREIGN FORCES



**Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)  
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350**

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## Foreword

The purpose of this special edition is to provide a practical reference guide for individuals and units to use in preparation for missions as trainers and advisors to foreign military units. The publication includes tactics, techniques, and procedures successfully used by both United States Army special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces in conducting foreign military training (FMT). The final section of the special edition is an explanation of the security assistance process and includes the organizations involved in planning and resourcing foreign training missions and their respective responsibilities.

This information is derived from multiple sources with direct experience conducting foreign military training during ongoing operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locations worldwide.

LAWRENCE H. SAUL  
COL, FA  
Director, Center for Army Lessons Learned



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<b>Center for Army Lessons Learned</b>	
<b>Director</b>	<b>Colonel Lawrence H. Saul</b>
<b>Managing Editor</b>	<b>Dr. Lon Seglie</b>
<b>CALL Analyst</b>	<b>John Chambers</b>
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Brendan O'Bryhim</b>
<b>Graphic Artist</b>	<b>Eric Eck</b>

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both are intended.

Note: Any publications referenced in this newsletter (other than the CALL newsletters), such as ARs, FMs, and TMs, must be obtained through your pinpoint distribution system.

**This information was deemed of immediate value to forces engaged in the Global War on Terrorism and should not be necessarily construed as approved Army policy or doctrine.**

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## Memorandum for Iraqi Security Force Transition Team Members



HEADQUARTERS  
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE — IRAQ  
BAGHDAD, IRAQ  
9 April 2005

### Subject: Commander's Guidance and Expectations

1. Congratulations on being assigned to a Transition Team. In your new position, you will have a unique opportunity to help develop Iraqi Security Forces and to assist them in taking on increasingly greater responsibility for the security of their country. I have no doubt that this will be one of the most challenging assignments you will ever have; I am also confident that it will be one of your most rewarding. Beyond that, I'm sure that at the end of your tour, you will look back with considerable pride on what you have helped your Iraqi counterparts achieve.
2. To succeed, it will be critical for you to understand and work within the Iraqi culture. It would be understandable for you to want to perform tasks to Western standards in Western ways — and, moreover, to do them yourself when progress is not to your liking. Resist those temptations. Keep in mind the wise counsel of T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"): "Do not try to do too much with your own hands," he wrote. "Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them." Lawrence's words ring as true today as they did in 1917.
3. Remember, as well, that the Iraqi culture puts a premium on respect and personal relationships, frequently valuing such relationships over the professional qualities an individual might possess. Demonstrating respect and investing in personal relationships with your counterparts will yield valuable dividends. As you already probably know, you will also need to be sensitive to the fact that Iraqis are heavily influenced by ethnic, religious, tribal, and political allegiances. Understanding all of this and learning to operate in the Iraqi culture — as well as being willing to accept a different way of doing things — will be critical to your success as a Transition Team member.
4. In watching the development of Iraqi security forces over the past year, it has been very clear that unit leadership is a key element — often the key element — in achieving progress in training and success in operations. Indeed, leaders in Iraqi units have an even greater impact on the success of their organizations than do

leaders in our formations. To accomplish your mission, therefore, you will need to invest heavily in leaders and leader development — as well as in the development of capable headquarters elements and staffs. In all of this, your example, your values, your actions, and the warrior ethos will be very important — especially as it is very likely that your actions will be emulated by your Iraqi partners.

5. Another critical aspect of your job will be to ensure that your Iraqi counterparts understand and comply with the laws and standards governing the treatment of detainees and the Laws of Armed Conflict. You will receive detailed instruction on this subject during your training at the Phoenix Academy. Pay close attention to it, for in order to maintain popular support, Iraqi forces must distance themselves from the abusive practices of the former regime and adhere to accepted norms of human rights and the standards governing the use of force. You must train and re-train in this area and make on-the-spot corrections. You must also be vigilant for evidence of abuses, reporting violations to your Iraqi counterpart and through your Transition Team chain of command. It is very important that we never turn a blind eye to abuses, thinking that what Iraqis do with their own detainees is “Iraqi business;” nor can we wink at suspected transgressions. The legitimacy of and public support for Iraq’s Security Forces would plummet were they to sink to the levels of the insurgents or those of the Saddam regime.

6. As you carry out your tasks, remember that your focus must be on facilitating the transition of security duties to competent Iraqi forces. The process of transitioning should always be in the back of your mind. While transitions must be conditions-based, you should always ask whether and how the process might be accelerated. Although we must not “rush to failure,” we must be willing to get Iraqis into the fight and let them learn by doing. Iraqi forces want to shoulder greater responsibility for their own security. The Iraqi people want them to do so, too. Clearly, the sooner Iraqi security forces can take the lead in counterinsurgency operations, the better for all concerned. Be willing to assume some risk in this area.

7. Enormous progress has been made in developing Iraqi security force capabilities over the past 18 months. I am confident that Transition Teams will enable Iraqi forces to build on the momentum established since the elections on 30 January. The way ahead will not be without frustrations, challenges, and reverses. Indeed, few tasks are easy in Iraq, and you should be prepared for good days and bad days. As you carry out your duties, therefore, be flexible, resilient, and steadfast — providing a positive example for your Iraqi partners in dealing with adversity, as well as in carrying out all your other duties.

8. Again, congratulations on your new assignment. I look forward to hearing of the achievements of the Iraqi units with whom you will partner.

**GEORGE W. CASEY, JR.**  
**General, U.S. Army**  
**Commanding**

## **Chapter 1: Foreign Military Training**

A key point of this chapter is the assertion that all U.S. Army personnel are fundamentally trainers. Success in training foreign militaries depends on professionalism, respect for the counterpart, and patience. The material for this chapter is derived from the Phoenix Academy program of instruction that trains advisors assigned to work with the Iraqi security forces (ISF) and was prepared by United States Army special operations forces (SOF) non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from their experience training and advising Iraqi army units.

### **Part I. Working with Indigenous Forces**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The following guide was prepared by Army SOF personnel as a class for incoming conventional troops assigned as trainers to foreign units. This information is based on SOF experience training foreign forces and explains the basic skill sets and factors that assist non-SOF Soldiers in becoming effective military advisors and trainers.

#### **1.2 Bottom Line**

Every Soldier in the U.S. military has experienced or conducted the type of training involved in foreign internal defense. Training and military skills used by all advisors are derived from such things as training individual fire team members or attending professional development courses at an Army school.

The initial step in assuming the role as an advisor is to dispel the mystique of training foreign soldiers. The primary obstacle is the language barrier. Language issues are easily surmountable by conducting detailed rehearsals with interpreters and conducting all training as practical, hands-on events with realistic scenarios.

The U.S. Soldier assigned as an advisor may be an experienced combat veteran, but he is a trainer by profession. Confidence and professionalism are fundamentals that foreign troops understand and respect.

#### **1.3 The Goal of Advisory Assistance**

The United States provides military assistance to other nations as part of U.S. foreign policy strategy. The ultimate goal is to enhance American security.

The intent of assistance programs is to develop the recipient nation's capacity to assume responsibility for its own security. The role of the U.S. advisor is to develop a positive rapport with his counterparts and to influence the actions of the units he is working with. Personal influence is one of the primary factors determining the success of advisory operations. Even if relations with a counterpart are tenuous,

some influence is inherent due to the fact of the referent power being a representative of the U.S. military.

### **1.4 Leveraging Influence**

Influence is an intangible element built on personal relationships and other factors. An advisor can gain influence by providing the following:

- Funding and equipment
- Lethal and non-lethal effects
- Political weight (prestige to counterparts)

### **1.5 Expanding the Advisory Relationship**

Mediocre advisors who do not understand the dynamics of establishing personal relationships are often reduced to a liaison role. Effective advisors are able to see solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, sometimes guided only by commander's intent. Added to the challenge of being an advisor is the requirement to work through the counterpart's chain of command. Overly hard-charging and ambitious advisors will have a difficult time building up a new unit's confidence while operating behind the scenes. The advisor is part diplomat, part warrior. Be aware of local power struggles and the effect on the mission.

### **1.6 Situational Awareness**

Potential flash points between groups or organizations may exist at the lowest levels. Bureaucratic power struggles occur in the U.S. as well, but in developing countries situations can quickly escalate out of control. Recognizing and managing these relationships is a key part of advising.

Example:

*“Counterpart sources reported that two soldiers were assaulted and arrested and that the local police had threatened other soldiers. The counterpart battalion commander traveled to the provincial police station to discuss the situation. The soldiers were released and a warrant issued for the arrest of the two local police responsible for the incident. Relations between the army and police have been improving. Counterpart sources feel this incident may be due to recent counterinsurgency operations in the province. Some of the individuals detained on these operations have connections to provincial government and police personnel. Trainers will continue to monitor the situation.”*

### **1.7 Psychological Pitfalls and Traits for Success**

Negative factors hindering an advisor's success:

- Culture shock (overwhelming rejection of the new environment)

- “Going native” and losing site of U.S. objectives (overwhelming acceptance of the new environment)
- Usurping a counterpart’s authority with his subordinates (taking charge at inappropriate times)
- Frustration with the ambiguity caused by a lack of clear guidance (no command direction)
- Frustration with a counterpart’s unwillingness to conform to U.S. doctrine, standards, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) (impatience, short time horizon)
- Rolling over to please a counterpart; sacrificing credibility to build rapport (not taking charge at all)
- Being an “ugly American” (see culture shock and the comments below)

Show respect for counterparts. There are U.S. military personnel who find it difficult to interact with foreign troops or officials. Some advisors only talk to their interpreter (and not to the foreign participants) during meetings. Other advisors make insulting or degrading comments about the locals in the meeting, thinking none of them understand English. Reassign anyone that cannot overcome their reluctance to act respectfully with foreign counterparts.

Qualities of an effective advisor:

- Mature
- Professional
- Patient, yet relentless enforcers of standards
- Knowledgeable
- Confident
- Culturally aware, but not coddling
- Situationally aware

### **1.8 Establishing and Maintaining Rapport**

Rapport is defined as understanding, empathy, linking, or bonding. Establishing rapport is the desired method for influencing a counterpart. While not singularly essential, good working relationships enable other activities. Genuine rapport is developed slowly, but can be ruined in an instant. The basics of soldiering are cross cultural.

Lead by example. Foreign troops respect advisors who actually show them the right way to do a task, rather than just talk. The same applies to combat operations. Experience has shown foreign units will not hesitate going into gunfire if their advisors are right there in the stack with them. Eventually, they will beat the advisors to the objective/breach as their confidence grows.

The following also contribute to building rapport:

- Enthusiasm and a positive attitude
- Language skills and/or the ability to utilize an interpreter
- Respect for a counterpart's rank, age, status, and experience
- Negotiation skills
- Interpersonal skills

You will be expected to be confident, competent, and capable. Treat your counterparts with respect. Never expect or demand your students to do something you are unable or unwilling to do. Demonstrate everything. A key point to remember is that an advisor's day does not end at 1700. Learn your counterparts' names and spend time with them on their compound at night and during holidays. Mentally prepare yourself to interact with your counterparts at all times. Avoid creating an American enclave; an advisory assignment requires constant interaction to achieve the desired results.

A successful advisor frequently assesses counterpart perceptions to ensure the role of mentor is being executed properly. Avoid giving the impression of favoring any one group. Recognize threats to discipline (soldiers trying to circumvent their own leadership by going to an advisor with a complaint or problem). Enforce the unit's chain of command even if the advisor discretely assists the decision process and outcomes.

One example of building rapport from Operation Iraqi Freedom:

*“A tough combatives-based physical training program is one of the best techniques to gain and maintain rapport. Involve all the U.S. and Iraqi leadership in this training. Iraqis are not used to their officers and senior leaders taking part in training like this. They will have a new-found respect for both their leaders and the U.S. advisors if they see them participating in this type of training. This has been the biggest rapport builder.”*

### **1.9 Political Discussions**

Try to avoid lengthy lectures about political philosophy. However, foreign troops obviously know about the current situation in their countries. When the topic of politics does arise be ready to discuss American history, difficulties in establishing

peaceful democracies, minority rights, and other positive aspects of the U.S. system. Reinforce the counterpart's national pride, even when correcting their actions. Tell them, for example, "You are part of an ancient and proud warrior culture in the cradle of civilization." Get them to talk about their national traditions and history.

### **1.10 Credibility**

An advisor's leadership, courage, discipline, maturity, judgment, and decision-making ability are under constant scrutiny. Understanding the motivations and perspectives of military counterparts, the indigenous population, and the enemy is essential for proper planning and decision making. The initial impression of an advisor usually begins with being proficient as a trainer, and it is important to know what works well in advance. The ability to provide effective advice is a combination of knowledge and experience.

## **Part II. Lessons Learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom**

### **2.1 Introduction to Cultural Awareness**

Most humans want security, steady employment, and sound government. However, specific cultural practices can be very different. These practices are not the appropriate subject of ridicule by an advisor hoping to establish good rapport with counterparts. Be friendly and polite with all counterparts, regardless of rank. You can avoid giving offense by behaving the way your mother taught you to behave, no more is necessary.

### **2.2 Group affiliation.**

An Iraqi, just like an American, has a complex identity made up of the many cultural influences that have affected his life. No one identifies with only one group. These identities represent potential points of both cooperation and conflict:

- Iraqi Identities
- Arab
- Kurd
- Sunni
- Shi'a
- Christian
- Assyrian
- Communist

- Baathist
- Islamist
- Royalist
- Tribal
- City
- Social Class
- Secular
- Iraqi National
- Turkomen
- Sufi
- Trader
- Farmer
- Professional

### **2.3 Non-Verbal Cues**

Being polite involves identifying non-verbal cues and behavior that would be overlooked by an American who understands that no offense is meant.

Example 1: A trainer is using rapid hand gestures and talking loudly to point, direct action, and illustrate a training principle.

Probable U.S. interpretation: “This guy is really wound up. He needs to relax.” Or, “If he waves that finger in my face one more time, I’m going to break it off.”

Probable Iraqi interpretation: “I have no idea what this guy is saying. Is he yelling at me? Is he threatening me?”

Example 2: A person is sitting at his desk with his feet up on the desktop and someone else comes into the room.

Probable U.S. interpretation: “I know you’re just relaxing. And even though you’re being rude, I know that you do not mean anything personal by it.”

Probable Iraqi interpretation: “Who does this guy think he is? Is he showing disrespect to me personally, or does he behave like this with all Iraqis?”

## **2.4 Rank**

Senior ISF commanders (colonels and generals) are not new to the military, and they expect the same respect that U.S. senior officers receive. When an advisor shows professional courtesy to his counterparts he is also setting a positive example ISF personnel.

Chain of command communication within a counterpart battalion may be substantially different from a U.S. battalion. Subordinates may argue loudly and publicly with senior officers. The Iraqi Army has no history of an effective, professional NCO Corps, and a soldier from the same clan or tribe may be inclined to air disputes openly. Some comparisons can be made with U.S. National Guard units where the members have established long-term, personal relationships and informal communications that may assist collaborative decision-making.

Arguments based on injured pride are extremely common. These arguments can escalate extremely quickly and cause further discipline problems. Many Iraqi soldiers do not understand that they just shouldn't argue with someone of higher rank.

## **2.5 Chain of Command**

Iraqi officers should train with their troops, including combatives and other physically challenging tasks. Make them be the first to do a tough event or task. When officers have a willingness to get their hands dirty, it reinforces the troops' confidence in their superiors.

Reinforce bottom-up planning and top-down guidance. It will take some time, but they are receptive to this methodology once they see it can contribute to successful missions. Make them solve problems at the lowest level. The troops love to go right to the commander with a problem. Reinforce the NCO support channel. After they see it works, they will use it. Do not solve their problems for them. They love to use the U.S. advisors as a scapegoat when a tough/unpopular decision has to be made.

The Iraqis will take on the personality of their advisors. If the advisors are aggressive, confident, and motivated, they will be the same.

Do not tolerate night letters (threats) and excuses to get leaves or passes. The entire time the SOF unit (that developed this article) worked with the Iraqis, no family member or Iraqi soldier was killed or kidnapped as a result of a written or verbal threat.

Iraqi leaders do not like to confront individuals about performance. What an American would consider basic performance counseling is very rare to Iraqis. They prefer not to be the bad guys. Iraqi leadership will continuously attempt to get American advisors involved in simple organizational problems that should be

handled at a much lower level. This lack of straight talk leads to rumors, false accusations, and negative hearsay which will undermine a unit's morale and cohesiveness.

Do not allow tribal or religious discrimination! The SOF unit had zero problems with this mandate. Mix the units and make them work together. Reinforce the theme that ethnic diversity builds national strength. One method to overcome ethnic bias is by promoting teamwork and basing rewards on merit. Encourage competition between platoons and squads to build cohesiveness and teamwork.

Corruption, nepotism, and graft are ingrained into Iraqi society. Family, friends, and affiliated tribe members receiving favored status for appointments, jobs, and other rewards is another challenge that must be anticipated. Advisors must continuously be aware of hiring, poor job performance, nepotism in promotions, etc. There are many reasons for Iraqis to continue these traditional practices, including a lack of economic opportunities. However, to allow the practice is a counter to developing cohesive units. Strong leadership, training, and performance-based awards are factors that contribute to managing this problem.

There is a reluctance to delegate authority or accept responsibility. Iraqis in positions of responsibility may feel threatened by anyone around them who is competent or possesses leadership abilities. They view these people as a threat to their personal position of power. This fear will lead them to attempt to get rid of these perceived competitors through smear campaigns, innuendo, and rumor. American advisors need to assess Iraqi leaders carefully and look for signs that competence is discouraged.

### **Part III. Iraqi Soldier Assessment**

#### **3.1 Physical and Medical Conditions**

Prior to conducting the initial training with a counterpart unit, coordinate for a brief medical examination and modified physical fitness test for all of the students. The ages and physical conditioning of trainees will differ drastically from U.S. units. The objective is to look for pre-existing injuries or impairments, including vision and hearing problems. Testing should include full range of motion testing. Detailed questioning about prior injuries will keep soldiers in training and will help determine if a soldier is actually hurt or just trying to get out of difficult training. Scheduling sick call time early in the morning or during meal times will discourage slackers.

#### **3.2 Counterintelligence (CI) Screening**

An advisor normally can expect to live and work with the counterpart unit. Therefore, effective CI screening is critical for force protection and survival. Enemy collaborators within the counterpart unit pose a significant risk by merely

having access to military or police facilities, in addition to learning friendly TTP and mission information.

Use all available tools for identity verification, including biometrics, national databases, and review of photos and dossiers by trusted ISF unit members. CI screening is interpreter-intensive and multiple language requirements may be required for ethnically mixed units. One unit reported that five days were required to screen 300 personnel properly.

### **3.3 Iraqi Soldier Individual Training**

Examples of Iraqi police and army training topics:

1. Drivers training
2. Small unit tactics (team leaders/squad leaders development)
3. Small arms qualification
4. Crew served weapons qualification/familiarization
5. Sensitive site exploitation
6. First aid

### **3.4 Assessing Training**

Experience at any U.S. training center such as the National Training Center (NTC) or Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) provides a basic idea of the processes involved in evaluating training. Factors to consider in assessing training requirements include a unit's previous experience, training, leadership, personnel, and equipment. Be prepared to assess the unit's current level of proficiency in basic tasks and adjust the training plan accordingly. Make sure to include the counterpart chain of command in the planning and decision making process.

### **3.5 Training Motivation**

Find out who wants to train by simply asking at first formation. Put the slackers who do not want to train on the dirty jobs (sandbag filling, police call) and withhold the rewards. The ones that want to train eat chow and begin training. U.S. Trainers do not have the time, interpreters, and resources to deal with every problem plaguing the ISF. General Casey told the Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) (that prepared this briefing) when explaining U.S. involvement with the elections, "We need Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems." The Iraqi chain of command should deal with significant motivational issues.

Look for ways to improve performance during the assessment phase. Iraqi units are operating in a combat environment, so corrections made on the spot are

immediately effective. An advisor may not have the opportunity to take a unit from its duties at a tactical checkpoint to conduct training, but may have observations about how to improve security at the checkpoint. Make those suggestions on the spot to affect their immediate survivability.

One of the best tools to quickly improve how units operate is the use of troop leading procedures (TLP). Small problems may be corrected through a little planning with the leadership. This planning can be done during the assessment phase with leaders and will ultimately affect the entire unit. TLP also will help in building rapport with the leaders of the unit, and allow them to make necessary changes at their level.

The training described below was combat-oriented, Iraqi-led, and concluded with a comprehensive test of the individual soldiers:

*“On 8 January 05, Iraqi Army (IA) cadre led Physical Training (PT) and flat range activities. Students showed vast improvements since the last flat range. Only five students had not improved their shot groups. Students whose progression was below average were coached by U.S. and IA cadre to improve their shot groups. Shooting drills were conducted from the standing assault position (static, moving left to right, moving right to left, turning left and right, and moving forward), kneeling, and prone. IA NCO conducted physical fitness training between firing orders. Students were challenged with a stress shoot to end the day that included all of the techniques they had learned. The students showed good motivation and were pushed hard throughout the day.”*

Teaching techniques used with foreign units are the same as anywhere else. Provide a verbal and physical demonstration of the tasks to be conducted. Ideally, this rule includes the case of Iraqi cadre explaining the procedures. A common problem is that the Iraqi instructor is not prepared to demonstrate the task correctly and the advisor lets the class continue or takes over the training. It is the advisor’s responsibility to correctly train the trainers before they execute. Coach counterparts by walking and talking through the tasks to be trained. Provide practical examples to reinforce the purpose of learning the task. Provide both informal feedback and formal counseling that includes the counterpart chain of command.

### **3.6 Flawed Training Approaches**

When your commander comes to evaluate your training, what will he find?

- Well-prepared formal lecture with no hands-on being delivered by an articulate trainer to a classroom of bored students—the wrong approach
- One or two trainers trying to explain a task they have never seen demonstrated to a formation of soldiers—the wrong approach

- Higher headquarters has directed that the counterpart unit must accomplish all required training within a certain period, and the advisor rigidly adheres to a specific list of tasks in order to complete them by the deadline. The result is a group of half-trained, scared, unprepared Iraqi soldiers—the wrong approach.

### **3.7 Expect Anything**

The following scenarios are taken from training experiences in Iraq:

- A platoon leader quits along with 100 soldiers. He returns two weeks later and wants his job back.
- 15 soldiers report to training with no weapons, claiming they were stolen.
- Soldiers return from leave with no weapons or equipment.
- Soldiers complain that their leadership is corrupt, stealing equipment, and taking kickbacks from soldiers.
- Kurdish soldiers complain that their chain of command favors Sunni Arabs over Kurds and Shiites (or the other way around).
- A platoon strikes an IED and takes casualties and the other members quit. This event puts the unit back into the recruiting phase and hence lowers the overall effectiveness of the platoon. Training must be suited to reinforce previously taught tasks, and allow time for new soldiers to meet established standards.

How will you accomplish basic rifle marksmanship training without butt stocks on AK-47s?

Influence what soldiers wear during operations. Stress the importance of uniformity during operations to identify them from the enemy.

### **3.8 Unit Disintegration Vignette**

*“The IA base for two IA companies was 'overrun' yesterday. The buildings were looted, covered with anti-coalition graffiti and some structures and vehicles were set on fire. The advisory team does not believe that the base occupants resisted in any manner. Today, all of the IA soldiers in the other company of the same battalion left their base. It was then looted. The IA battalion commander is now in the detention facility. A search of his office and house was conducted and a Thuraya satellite phone, a computer, and \$15,000 U.S. were confiscated. The battalion commander had received word that the advisory team was investigating him for corrupt practices and obtaining sworn statements from the unit's soldiers. It is assumed he took precautions to ensure no incriminating material was found by communicating to his men that they should take as much as possible (material, cars, weapons etc.) from the forward operating bases (FOBs) because the anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) were planning to overrun the compounds.”*

### **3.9 Reconstituting a Unit**

Rebuilding a unit begins with finding competent leadership; in this case, with substantial previous military experience:

*“Gen XXX was appointed as the Battalion Commander on 20 Nov 04. He was well received and began work immediately. More soldiers are reporting back to work with exact numbers unknown at this time. The focus is on rebuilding the Battalion. Gen XXX appears to be genuinely concerned about eliminating insurgents in the area and positive about the future of a free Iraq. He stated, “No terrorists and no compromise will be accepted.” He is preparing to “clean house” with the officers in his command, stating that he would rather have a smaller organization with trustworthy personnel than a larger one with members of questionable motives. His plans include assigning sectors to particular commanders and holding them accountable for progress in that area. Several soldiers and officers who refused to fight the AIF have been fired.”*

Rebuilding units also involves brokering compromises and conducting negotiations between quarreling factions. Put a local face on the situation and remember to try to strive for an Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem:

*“We discussed the possibility of recruiting up to two complete companies of Peshmerga, including members of the chain of command. General XXX, the Peshmerga Commander, agreed to this under the following conditions; a Kurdish XO is appointed for IA BN, and the Kurds must maintain their company integrity. This is due to grievances in the past from Kurdish IA soldiers about unequal treatment by Arab IA Commanders. LTC XXXXX will likely accept this as he has very little offensive capability due to the attrition of his BN.”*

### **3.10 Successful Training Models**

Characteristics of successful training models include the following:

- Are cyclical rather than linear
- Include regularly scheduled reinforcement of individual and crew skills
- Plan “hip pocket” reinforcement training by Iraqi cadre
- Are cumulative; each task builds on the previous
- Utilize the smallest possible student to instructor ratio
- Provide immediate feedback
- Develop an indigenous training cadre pulled from top performers
- Include after action reviews

Iraqi soldiers are eager to please and will often feign understanding of the requirements to avoid loss of respect when they really do not comprehend the task. Ensure understanding of expected standards. As a trainer, ask the following:

- Is the task being executed correctly?
- Do they know why it is done that way?
- Do they know why it is important?

Do not assume that the reasons for even the most common tasks are understood (i.e., weapons maintenance must be supervised).

### **3.11 Training Truths**

- This process is not new to you.
- You are an expert trainer.
- Soldiers are still soldiers. Focus on what you know: individual soldier skills, small unit tactics.
- There are no essential differences between Iraqi soldiers and American Soldiers; all of the problems you will see are present in some U.S. basic trainees.
- Accurately assess the human material you are working with.
- Expect to find a lack of education; soldiers may be unable to read or write.
- Expect to find lack of medical care and related symptoms (i.e., bad eyesight, poor coordination, poorly healed injuries, etc).
- Trainees come with emotional, cultural, and religious baggage.
- Good soldiering is the same in every country and every culture.
- Egyptian soldiers come to work on time.
- Jordanian soldiers maintain and account for their weapons and equipment.
- Kuwaiti soldiers dress professionally and show respect to leaders.
- Respect the culture but be able to tell the difference between culture and excuses.
- There is nothing in Muslim, Arab, or Kurd culture that excuses poor performance.
- There is no cultural component to accountability.

- There is no cultural component to professionalism.
- Clichéd but true: standards, not time, should drive the training.
- Trainers must make a personal investment in the training. Trainees can sense a 9am-3pm attitude and respond accordingly.
- Subjective assessments are valuable (they require trusting instincts as to when trainees are “ready” to conduct operations).
- Beware the danger of command/staff impatience.
- If a commander says “I want this unit trained by next week!”, be prepared for the commander to assume this outcome without following up with you.
- Effective training is hands-on.
- Effective training is result-oriented, not time-constrained.
- Training plans must include routine reinforcement of basic skills.
- Avoid the “Arabs do not compete” myth. Arab soldiers enjoy competition as much as Americans do—they just do not “trash talk” afterwards.
- Do not confuse poor leadership and poor training for a cultural difference.
- Did you ever know a U.S. unit that had a breakdown in equipment accountability?
- Have any of your Soldiers ever stolen equipment?
- Do you keep your unit in the field on Christmas Day, over national 4-day holidays?

### **3.12 Flexibility and the Iraqi Personality**

Be flexible and adaptable; the truth will change constantly. Every culture is different; Iraqis do not and will not think like Americans. Know your target audience and adapt your methods to the circumstance.

Iraqi cultural traits include the following:

- Interpretation of time as intangible, fluid, and flexible
- Poor time management; tasks are worked on without a firm completion date
- Lack of punctuality; schedules and appointments are tentative
- Mixing work, family, and social life

- Responding to evolving events of the day
- Blending present and past

### **3.13 U.S. Trainer Preparation**

Trainers must have intimate knowledge of Iraqi weapons and equipment (i.e., AK-47, RPKs, PKMs, rocket-propelled grenades [RPGs]); load, unload, malfunction procedures, location and use of safeties, and clearing procedures, etc.

Be familiar with the tools used on host nation weapons and learn how local nationals deal with those weapons' function problems.

Become familiar with expedient methods for working on host nation weapons and rules of thumb for zeroing sights.

Understand how to properly zero the AK-47 and the ballistics of 7.62 x 39mm ammunition. Know how to identify defective ammunition.

Do not reinvent the wheel.

- Use Infantry field manuals (FMs), ARTEPs (Army training and evaluation programs), and Soldier training publications (STPs).
- Use Battle Focused Training FM.
- Use FID FM and selected FID related ARTEP task.
- Use instructor training course (ITC) material.

Know how to instruct, and know different methods of instruction.

- Soldiers might know the task. But can they teach the task?
- Be aware of the difference between lectures and performance-oriented instruction.
- Use the following progression: "I do, you watch; I do, I say, you do; you do, I watch."
- Break everything down into smaller steps than usual.
- Strive for a small student to instructor/interpreter ratio.
- Learn the basics before moving on.

### **3.14 Effective Training**

Use butcher block/visual training aids at all times to reinforce teaching points and convey methods; use pictures and diagrams rather than words.

Prep CAT II interpreters prior to any business discussions in order to ensure that the message is communicated properly.

Do not hesitate to make on-the-spot corrections (vocally if necessary); allowing low standards on the part of the Iraqi soldiers will damage the advisor's credibility.

### **3.15 Safety**

Training teams must prepare and rehearse emergency plans for immediate unassisted evasion. This plan is not shared and all team members know it cold.

### **3.16 Indiscriminate Firing**

*“One of the major problems we deal with during operations is fire control and weapons safety. Indiscriminate firing seems to be a way of life in Iraq (look at their wedding parties). Several times we have seen multiple truckloads of Iraqi troops dismount and begin firing in every direction, with absolutely no targets in the area. Stress that this is not only a safety issue, but also a waste of ammunition. One team member saw an Iraqi Police (IP) officer shoot a full magazine into the air, and then the IP walked over to him and said he needed bullets. Negligent discharges are also a big concern. On every operation we have conducted, there has been at least one. A couple times the round impacted within 5-10 feet of a U.S. Soldier. Always stress weapons safety. And, for personal safety, always be aware of where the Iraqis are pointing their weapons.”*

### **3.17 Standards**

Expect equipment to be poorly maintained and soldiers to be poorly supplied. Routinely, we have seen soldiers report for training without proper uniforms, boots, and load bearing equipment. Advisors must be prepared to react to these conditions and continue to train to an acceptable standard.

### **3.18 Appropriate Standards**

Unrealistic training standards should not be the result of time constraints developed in theater. For example, U.S. policy set by a partnership brigade provides Iraqi units two days of training and 180 rounds per man for grouping/zero. The “standard” is for Iraqi soldiers to meet the same qualification standard that U.S. Soldiers are expected to meet on the “Alt Qual C” targets. U.S. Soldiers in initial training are given seven days of training and range fire before they are expected to meet this standard, with a more accurate weapon. You cannot expect Iraqi soldiers with less training and poor equipment to meet the same standard to which you hold U.S. Soldiers. Set an achievable standard during your assessment phase of training. As soldiers improve and meet those standards, increase what you expect to continue their improvement.

### **3.19 Time Schedules**

An American 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. training schedule is not normal for Iraqis. Nine to five means seven hours of work plus one for lunch, usually from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Five days equals 35 hours of actual work. Middle Eastern military schedules vary. They may be 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. without a lunch break, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., or even 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., including PT and lunch from 2 p.m. to 3 a.m. Most people do not work in the afternoons but civilians will reopen businesses in the evening. A work week is usually six days with Friday off, although some Gulf countries have adopted a two day weekend, Thursday/Friday or Friday/Saturday. So even a 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. schedule for six days is a 30-hour training week.

### **3.20 Time Management**

ODA Comment: four hours is the maximum time this ODA has been able to train ISF. Their culture allows them to stop working from 1400 to 1800 for lunch, praying, and relaxation. Fridays should be reserved for light training or as a religious holiday. The ODA always has chow ready for ISF prior to conducting training. It might be the making of a bad habit, but it allows training to start with no distractions 30 minutes later.

### **3.21 Discipline**

Use Iraqi chain of command to make corrective actions, and be prepared to support them. Do not tolerate quitting. It is not an option. Fine them if necessary. Fines work great as a form of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Let the Iraqis come up with the fine amounts for offenses. Nothing motivates more than taking pay. Have a disciplinary board that is Iraqi-run with U.S. advisor oversight. UCMJ within ISF is the responsibility of ISF forces and must be pursued through their chain of command. The advisor must monitor the process to ensure it is completed.

Corrective Actions: punishment should reinforce the task being trained and not merely be punitive in nature (i.e., low crawling on concrete does not reinforce safe weapons handling).

### **3.22 Identifying Iraqi Cadre**

There are at least two methods for identifying Iraqi cadre and potential NCOs. One is to identify the most competent performers, train them, and recommend for promotion. The second is to identify those with social or professional status within the training group. The first method will lead to more competent cadre but there may be resistance from the trainees if the assistant instructor (AI) lacks status. The second method ensures the AI will be listened to but may sacrifice some competence. The most effective method is probably some combination of the two. Remember that you have a vote in this process, but not the only vote. And you probably do not have a veto. The Iraqi commander will make the final decision

based on your recommendation and his own understanding of personal and social dynamics.

Two ODAs recommended different methods for cadre development, which implies that either/both can be successful depending on the local situation. The end-state remains the same: competent Iraqi trainers.

COA 1: “Iraqis are better suited to train Iraqis. You should immediately identify the leadership cadre within the unit that displays the aptitude for certain tasks. Use those soldiers as your AIs or peer instructors. Ultimately the goal is for the units to run their own training with their soldiers as the trainers. It is never too early to start this transition.”

COA 2: “Use their informal leaders as AIs, and recommend to their chain of command that these informal leaders be given additional responsibilities and rank. This core can become the nucleus of the unit's NCO Corps and your AIs.”

Work the Iraqi leaders into the primary trainer slots ASAP. Start with small tasks (PT and weapons maintenance) and work to large tasks. Be prepared to rotate identified Iraqi NCO leadership to new units once trained, for the same reasons we rotate new NCOs away from their running buddies. There will be noticeable resistance at staff levels to empowering NCOs because NCO authority, responsibility, and ability varies greatly from U.S. norms. Do not use this variability as an excuse not to develop their NCOs. When it comes to their NCO corps, “That’s how they have always done it” does not mean it works. Reinforce and develop a unit chain of command.

Negotiate a clear definition of the standards for training, soldier discipline, etc. with your Iraqi cadre. These standards keep you both on the same page in dealing with students. Tell the students the standards up front. Additionally, it helps the instructors be more professional with the students instead of coddling them and being easy on them. Take the time to train your Iraqi cadre the skills that you want the soldiers to learn. Ask them questions and explain the details of what you’re doing. Keeping the Iraqi cadre informed helps when you are teaching students. The Iraqi cadre can answer many of the questions because of their new-found familiarity with the subject.

### **3.23 Officer Leadership**

Ensure officers participate in all training (PT, etc); enforce the American principle of leadership by example. Before you can build a battalion staff, you have to build successful, strong, and tactically proficient companies, platoons, and squads. Staffs and higher officials need to participate in all training so they know the capabilities of their unit. Bringing a guy in from the street as a battalion commander does not mean he has the experience or knowledge of that unit. He must go through the training (which Iraqis in this position do not like to do) in order to show his men

that he is a capable leader that truly wants to lead them well. Convincing potential leaders to engage in this training will require some negotiating skill on your part.

### **3.24 Developing Iraqi Leadership**

Establish duties and responsibilities. Keep them basic and per U.S. doctrine, ensure that the counterpart leaders are accountable for enforcing the standards.

Initially, provide suggestions to demonstrate the correct decision criteria and allow the leaders to take ownership of their decisions. Realize that there are few formally trained officers, and even the formally trained officers have a background in the British-style officer system. It will take some re-engineering. Realize that there is only a framework of an NCO corps. Have a plan to professionally develop leaders and encourage command interaction by the battalion commander with his subordinates. This interaction is important because Iraqi units were initially formed and operated as companies. In many cases, they have not had time to foster battalion command and staff relationships. Immediately review and implement a written set of standards following a UCMJ-type system if no Iraqi policies are available to enforce corrections. Emphasize basic standards and discipline along with operational skills

Remember that Iraqi soldiers risk not only their lives but also those of friends and family by joining with coalition forces. Put yourself in the trainees' shoes to comprehend their initial experiences and perspectives. Be prepared to handle family emergencies and empower the chain of command to deal with these problems. Program leave and down time into the unit training plan and be aware of Iraqi religious and national holidays by including the Iraqi leadership in the development.

### **3.25 Making Training Enjoyable**

The regular ISF soldiers are basically like U.S. Soldiers. They like to be challenged and do tough training but will complain when they are first asked to do it.

PT: They hate to run but love to play soccer! Tailor training to their culture. If it meets the desired end state, then go with it. It is common for PT in Middle East militaries to begin with instructor (Iraqi) led group calisthenics and end with sports.

Conduct stress tests and competitions at the end of the training week to reinforce proficiency. They are as competitive as us.

Give out awards for the troops. This kind of recognition is as big a deal for them as it is for us. A little ribbon goes a long way.

### 3.26 Motivating Trainees

Explain the real-world cost/benefit of training. “A day or two prior to training we look on the Internet and get a total number of ISF and CF (coalition forces) KIA/WIA (killed in action/wounded in action) and causes of the casualties. We brief them that the numbers are higher on the ISF side of the house. We tell them no one wants to engage a hard target. If they train and learn to be an effective force, they would become the harder target.” Peer pressure and pride can be utilized when other forms of motivation are ineffective.

Leave and pay are the primary motivators for the common Iraqi soldier.

### 3.27 Motivation

You will have to use your judgment and experience to decide how much to expect from trainees and how to deal with those who do not perform. U.S. advisors in this example decided to make an example of the LT.

*“On 15 JAN, Advanced Military Operations on Urban Terrain (AMOUT) training continued with U.S. and Iraqi cadre. Trainers presented scenarios that included opposing force (OPFOR), wounded friendly and enemy, sensitive site exploitation (SSE), approach for the assault, outer security, moving wounded to helicopter landing zone (HLZ) or vehicle pick up site, and various settings in the shoot house. During the friendly wounded scenario, the students were moving wounded teammates to a HLZ site and failed to execute in appropriate time so the IA cadre had the group do buddy carries to drive home the importance of making the time regardless of fatigue. IA and U.S. cadre gave the group another operation about 150 meters away from the training site. Lieutenant (LT) XXXX, the PL, refused to train and quit during the event and sat down in full view of his struggling soldiers while they carried the wounded man. When approached at the end of the training event, He told U.S. cadre that he quit. U.S. cadre escorted LT XXXX off the base. This event proved to be the exception to the norm as the group of students rose up to the tasks and worked hard to assist each other in accomplishing the tasks. Overall, the day showed the students that they have the resolve to fight through adversity and many left with a feeling of accomplishment and pride and expressed their gratitude.”*

### 3.28 Training Issues

Select/train/implement certification standards and continue to use these as screening criteria to keep quality personnel in the unit. Focus on physical training—a general lack of fitness in Iraqi society requires this focus. Regarding marksmanship, utilize dry-fire sessions to teach, emphasize, and enforce weapons handling procedures.

Supply issues are a major concern for the Iraqis. Every time we meet with them, the subject of the coalition (U.S.) giving them something comes up. Many times training is interrupted because the majority of Iraqi soldiers migrate to the

ammunition point and harass the person there for extra bullets. Most Iraqis do not understand equipment accountability. Iraqis have related that their weapons are gifts from the Americans and they can sell them if they want to. Do not give anything to an Iraqi without making them sign for it and explaining that the equipment is only on loan. Also, we have done in-ranks equipment inspections and singled out those who are missing things. Care and accountability of equipment needs to be a major focus of working with the Iraqis. It also needs to be made an Iraqi leadership issue. Hold the leaders accountable for their soldiers.

*“Never give the ISF anything to take with them after training. In the beginning, the ODA was supplying bullets during training. The ODA learned that they were selling the bullets that they were issued. Now the ODA only gives them the bullets they shoot during training. They leave with the bullets they came with, if it is zero they leave with zero. Flex cuffs and chemlights are two other items which they will try to steal or take. During operations they will never use their handcuffs on detainees.”*

### **3.29 Operations**

Identify and train a quality S2 to provide intelligence products reliably. Attempt to merge U.S. tactics with Iraqi modified tables of organization and equipment (MTOE). The lack of up-armored vehicles and other equipment requires this sharing. American tactics are new to Iraqis; do not expect instant success.

### **3.30 Teaching through Interpreters**

Factors to consider when selecting and using Interpreters:

- Recommend local hire (Level 1s); the majority have military experience
- Social status
- English fluency
- Intelligence
- Teaching ability
- Reliability
- Sex, age, and race
- Compatibility

Screen interpreters to determine their strengths and weaknesses and align them with subject matter that best suits their individual ability levels. Avoid female interpreters if at all possible. Identify potential assistant instructors early/observe soldiers during down time to identify informal leaders—use the informal leaders who pick up on tasks quickly as demonstrators/AIs. A soldier who can master the

## **CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED**

task quickly may be able to explain it more easily to his peers. Native Speakers, even a U.S. 3/3 (fluent), will have a difficult time with rapid language and accurate language translation.

## **Chapter 2: Winning On The Ground**

**by SSG David Karle, HHC, 81st INF BDE (TF Chinook)**

### **Executive Summary**

Factors for waging a successful counterinsurgency campaign include influencing the population of the embattled nation to support friendly operations and having effective national security forces to fight the insurgents. However, if the security forces are viewed as a puppet force and are incapable of independent action, it is difficult to win popular support. Unfortunately, coalition trainers, who are key elements in developing security forces, often do not achieve optimal results when dealing with counterparts due to misunderstandings and misconceptions grounded in cultural differences. Close, positive interaction between coalition advisors and counterparts is a prerequisite for successfully developing security forces. General purpose forces are being used extensively in advisory positions, a traditional special operations forces (SOF) mission, without having the advantage of specialized training. Therefore, it is important to share what works.

Coalition units have conducted a wide variety of missions in support of counterpart infantry units in Iraq. Coalition units have helped organize, train, and support them and accompanied them on many combat missions. U.S. units have used the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) contained in this chapter to successfully conduct combined counterinsurgency operations.

### **Force Protection and Risk**

Coalition platoons who show up to work with a counterpart unit often totally bypass the counterpart chain of command, do no mission planning or rehearsals with the counterpart unit, and then pick four counterpart soldiers at random to make sure they have enough counterpart personnel to call it a joint mission. They resist involving an adequate number of counterpart soldiers out of ignorance of the counterpart unit's capabilities and the fear that involving the counterpart leadership in planning will compromise the mission. They also fear having more counterparts than coalition Soldiers on the mission. This fear and mistrust is the single greatest barrier that exists between coalition and counterpart forces, and coalition Soldiers must have the courage to overcome this mistrust.

Not addressing this fear and mistrust will create a vacuum that the insurgents will take advantage of to infiltrate the unit and foster dissent among the counterpart soldiers. Cohesion is a basic factor for an effective combat force. There is definitely a requirement for mutual support if the advisory team is small. Overcoming this fear and mistrust is very difficult for the average coalition Soldier not trained as an SOF operative.

### TTP

- Use the counterpart unit as a unit. Using the chain of command will make it easier to build a cohesive team. Adhere to this concept from the fire team level all the way up to battalion level.
- Develop counterpart leadership. Make them do their job, include them in the planning, make sure they conduct pre-combat inspections (PCI)/rehearsals, and do not allow lapses of discipline. Following these TTP reinforces their positions as leaders and your position as mentor:
  - Praise publicly and chastise privately.
  - If you have concerns about mission planning security, make sure your S2 is taking care of the problem, and use other methods such as these to mitigate the risk:
    - \* Isolating the unit (coalition and counterparts together) from the beginning of mission planning until execution.
    - \* If at all possible, avoid using counterparts in their home village.
- Do not let the size of the coalition force dictate the size of the counterpart force. You should be comfortable taking counterpart troops that you have trained and worked with into combat with little regard to the force ratio of coalition to counterparts.
  - Some operations have a ratio of one coalition Soldier to ten counterpart soldiers.
  - If the counterparts see you relying on them, they will know that you believe in them and will perform accordingly. There are reasonable limits to this ratio, based on the experience/training of the coalition and counterparts in question.
  - Know the composition of the force that you are taking. Know their village, tribal, and religious affiliations. Some advice:
    - \* If a particular tribe forms the base of the local insurgency, know if you have soldiers who fit this profile in your patrol.
    - \* If you are going to a particular village, know which soldiers come from that village.
    - \* Know which soldiers have been recently detained or have had relatives detained by the coalition or government forces.

- SOF troops always have contingency plans for dealing with the risks that come from working with indigenous forces. There are many ways to mitigate the risk, and you should engage in this risk mitigation long before the mission. Some examples:
  - Have an escape and evasion plan for missions.
  - Make sure counterparts that you can trust are in positions to cover you.
  - Maintain good communications with other coalition members during combat operations.
  - Make sure all coalition members have radios to communicate with other coalition forces.
  - Use coalition force overwatch wisely.
  - Rigidly enforce the arming posture. Either have the counterpart unit lock and load the AK-47 and put the safety back on (slow to put the weapon into action) or have them put in the magazine and flip the safety off but not chamber a round until they are actually under fire (very fast, but loud).
  - Have appropriate signaling equipment (at the very least a full VS-17, day/night Wolf Tails, and two or three Phoenix strobes).
  - Show confidence and be prepared for anything.
- Share the risk. Do not use your counterparts as a trip wire in the most dangerous situations without sharing that danger with them.
  - Using the same vehicles and weapons on missions gives them confidence that you believe in the equipment. If you lead by example, they will follow.
  - They take tremendous risks, in many cases just to show up for work, and you should acknowledge that. Take steps to shield them from potential attack as they enter/leave the post and have battle drills that they can execute outside the entry control points (ECPs) in case of an attack.
  - Have a contingency plan for a reaction force at shift change in case of an incident.
  - If the coalition does not work hard to minimize the counterpart's risks on missions and does not share the burden, the counterparts know they are nothing more than cannon fodder and will act accordingly.
  - When you are in combat with them and they see coalition members treating counterpart wounded with the same care that they treat coalition wounded, they will understand that you share the risk.

- Weed out coalition members and counterparts who cannot find common ground. Get rid of bad apples from both sides.
  - Often you will find coalition Soldiers who cannot bring themselves to have any common trust, and they will insist on ludicrously conservative force protection measures. Move them down the road quietly, and use coalition Soldiers who have enough personal courage/confidence to deal with the ambiguity that pervades this mission.
- Embed advisors with specific counterpart units to build the team.
  - Embed coalition Soldiers early. Make sure you have enough and that they are right for the job.
  - Pick coalition Soldiers with enough experience and judgment to understand the counterpart point of view and still enforce the standards that need to exist for high performance. Junior soldiers will generally lack the depth of experience to succeed in such a fluid situation.
  - Have enough coalition Soldiers for the mission. Generally, a less proficient counterpart platoon needs three or four advisors, while a proficient counterpart platoon may require only one or two advisors. The key is to keep assignment static so the advisors and counterparts have time to get to know each other and build trust.

### **Cultural Bias**

Counterparts have a different work ethic when viewed from a coalition perspective. Coalition Soldiers often display obvious contempt for what appears to be a lackadaisical attitude displayed by counterparts. In reality, this attitude reflects the Islamic belief that all events are controlled by a supreme being and are preordained.

It is the rare coalition commander who treats counterpart soldiers the same way he treats his own Soldiers, and that attitude persists down to the lowest ranks in the U.S. Army.

Coalition Soldiers often treat the counterpart soldier as if he is not pulling his weight. The well-fed and equipped coalition Soldier moves from his air-conditioned surroundings (bunker, building, high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle [HMMWV]) out into the heat for an hour at a time with ice-cold water to drink and passes counterparts in the intense heat with no acceptable shade, cold water, or the prospect of adequate relief from the environmental conditions. These same counterparts travel to and from their houses under hazardous conditions to work these shifts and are often placed in the most exposed positions with severe limitations on their arming posture. Couple this attitude with the counterparts' fatalistic beliefs about their lot in life, and you create a situation that will not build trust and respect.

**TTP**

- Treat counterpart soldiers under your command with the same care that you show to coalition Soldiers.
  - Ensure they have proper relief, supply, and adequate facilities.
  - There is no such thing as separate but equal. Counterparts live in a social structure that is much more formal than ours, and they are much more sensitive to class structure.
  - If advisors treat counterpart soldiers in ways that are unequal, the counterparts will believe that advisors do not value them as men or soldiers.
- Fight for counterpart soldiers as if they were coalition Soldiers.
  - If you publicly stand up for the counterpart soldiers when they are mistreated/misused by coalition Soldiers in any way, counterpart soldiers will recognize that you are looking out for their best interests.
  - When you encounter a situation where the counterparts feel they are being mistreated, enforce discipline. Once discipline is restored, verify the reason for the dispute. If a counterpart soldier has done something wrong, use his leadership for processing the complaint. If an advisor has done something wrong, correct the situation and make sure measures are put in place to make sure it does not happen again.
- Learn some Arabic and enforce the use of Arabic in your interactions.
  - Many counterpart soldiers are poorly educated, and English is difficult to learn.
  - The more spoken Arabic you can use, the more you break down the communication barrier.
  - Use Arabic methods of greeting (you do not have to kiss both cheeks, but you can give a shoulder hug).
  - Once you are accepted, key barriers will begin to disappear. You will be invited to meet their families and attend celebrations. The elimination of these barriers is an important sign of progress.
- Do not show contempt.
  - Praise publicly and chastise privately.
  - If you have to give an on-the-spot correction, do so in a respectful manner.

## **CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED**

One aspect of working with foreign forces is differences in hygiene standards. Some of the reasons for these differences include lack of education, resources, and infrastructure. In many cases the reason is a lack of available water. Water usage must be reserved for cooking and drinking. Washing clothes or bathing is secondary in their culture. Counterparts often lack the basic necessities to maintain the hygiene standards we observe in the U.S.

### **TTP**

- Always make water available to counterpart soldiers. At the very least they can clean their face and hands, which is much appreciated.
- Get a good physician's assistant (PA)/medical doctor (MD). A good PA to run sick call and ensure decent medical care is a huge help in earning their respect.
  - If possible, find ways to get treatment for dental problems. Many counterpart soldiers have dental issues that make it hard for them to eat meals ready to eat (MREs), which are the only food generally available on missions.
  - Encourage counterpart soldiers to bring in ailing family members, especially children.

### **Cultural Differences**

The average counterpart soldier must compete to acquire the basic necessities, and so they view even the casual distribution of necessities as a chance to acquire "wealth." Counterparts have allegiances to family and tribe that transcend any higher obedience (except to Allah) and, consequently, will often look at any discussion as the beginning of a negotiation to provide for that family. Do not let this behavior bother you. Once you gain their respect, the amount of negotiating you will have to do will decrease. Enforcing discipline that is consistent with counterpart culture is the key.

Make discipline paramount. Coalition Soldiers are conditioned differently. Our primary allegiance is to the U.S. government. However, the counterparts' allegiance to his country is secondary to his allegiance to his family and tribe. Their previous military service was in the conscript army of a brutal dictator, where even field grade officers were treated poorly by their standards. Commanders and the counterpart leadership need to agree on standards to be followed and enforce them consistently. Most counterpart soldiers are primarily motivated by the pay, so use that knowledge to enforce discipline.

### **TTP**

- Explain the rules/regulations in clear, unambiguous terms.

- Post the regulations governing behavior in public areas in Arabic so that the counterpart soldiers see them.
- Make sure they understand what the discipline review board is for, and ensure that the counterpart leadership is properly executing that board's mandate.
- If a counterpart soldier quits because he does not like something, let him go.
  - Take his weapon, uniform, and identification (ID) and escort him out the gate. Make sure you have something for him to wear, hospital scrubs, for instance.
  - Prohibit him from ever rejoining the unit, and make sure he knows that.
  - Barring his return to the unit sends the message that he cannot quit if he does not like how things are now and rejoin later when things are easier.
- The counterpart leadership is responsible for enforcing discipline.
  - Put counterpart soldiers on unpaid leave between the date of their offense and the date of the board.
  - Have the board meet twice a month. This schedule provides the following:
    - \* A cooling off period that allows the soldiers to reflect on what it is like to not have a paying job
    - \* Time to gather facts about the incident
    - \* A cooling off period for the chain of command to consider the merits of reinstating or firing the soldier
  - Have them convene regular discipline review boards.
  - Have the counterpart unit commander chair the board.
  - Hold the counterpart leadership accountable if they fail to uphold the standards.
  - Make the board fair; if a soldier has a reasonable case he should be reinstated.
- The discipline review board should impose the following types of punitive measures:
  - Loss of pay by docking X number of days

## **CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED**

- Suspension from duty (and consequent loss of pay) for X number of days
- Firing (blackballing for specific time periods)
- Reduction in rank
- Transfer to another unit or position
- Make sure discipline is consistently enforced across the rank structure and that no special privileges are afforded senior officers or noncommissioned officers (NCOs).
  - If a company commander is accused of a discipline violation, he should get the same punishment as the lowest private.
  - Counterpart officers may be offended when coalition staff sergeants do not treat them like royalty. But if discipline is applied correctly, everyone will realize the rules are fair for both coalition and counterpart soldiers.
- Break down traditional/counterpart bias through organization:
  - Officers and senior NCOs will often request special personnel, such as drivers, clerks, and bodyguards. Require that these special personnel get extra training for their jobs. Bodyguards are necessary, and to be properly trained they must be accomplished in hand-to-hand combat, be physically fit, and be experts in the use of their weapons.
  - Do not let counterpart soldiers who are sons of sheikhs or imams receive special treatment.
- Continuity: Try to have some reasonable overlap between incoming and outgoing units.
  - It takes two to three months for a new unit to learn enough about the culture, language, and counterpart unit to become effective.
  - Unfortunately, that means that key members of the outgoing unit (experienced patrol leaders, administration, and S2/S3 personnel) should stay in place and manage the relief in place/transfer of authority (RIP/TOA).
- Physical contact/Insults: There are going to be times when you need to verbally discipline counterpart soldiers.
  - Be careful not to offend a counterpart's honor (such as calling a counterpart a woman).
  - Avoid any physical contact, as it is highly offensive to a counterpart. Such situations quickly become life-threatening, and you must be prepared to deal with the consequences.

- There will always be situations where a coalition or a counterpart soldier offends a counterpart soldier through an imagined or real insult or even physical contact. You must always be prepared to restore order, defuse the situation, and drive on with the mission.
- Your judgment will be the best guide in these situations and is yet another reason why only experienced and level-headed NCOs and officers should be in this role.
- Counterparts say “maybe” when they really mean no.
  - “Maybe” means "no" in a lot of cases, and if a counterpart tells you that he will try to fix a situation or answers your request with anything other than a firm “yes,” he is often looking for an out.
  - You must work harder to get a firm "yes" or "no" from a counterpart soldier.
  - “God willing” is also not an acceptable answer.
- The tribe is the paramount affiliation for a counterpart.
  - You should know what tribes the counterpart soldiers belong to and how they are allied.
  - To get this information you will need to soldier readiness process (SRP) the counterpart soldiers and record their tribal/religious/village affiliations and print them on the ID cards that you issue.
- Know your soldiers.

Once you SRP counterpart soldiers, you should have a searchable database that includes the following:

- \* All four names (first, fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers)
- \* Tribal affiliation
- \* Village/neighborhood affiliation
- \* Religious affiliation
- \* Military history
- \* Education history
- \* Key relatives in the military
- \* Names of relatives who are sheikhs, imams, political figures, etc.

- \* Picture of soldier
- \* Weapon information
- \* Fingerprints would be very helpful
- Make sure the key information makes it onto their ID cards. The ID cards should have the following:
  - \* Picture (make sure it is not distorted)
  - \* All data in English and Arabic
  - \* Tribal/religious, and village affiliation
  - \* Weapon data
  - \* Contact information of the issuing unit

### **Why Should I Care About Counterparts?**

If you do not win the respect of the counterparts you work with, they will work against you. An insurgency can only exist if it has the support of the people, and the only way to defeat it is to turn the people against it. Counterpart soldiers are a direct conduit to the civilian population. If counterpart soldiers believe in what they are doing and take that belief back to their families to spread throughout the community, that community becomes a strong front line against terror. Any other scenario allows the insurgents to continue infiltrating the community and the ranks of counterpart soldiers.

How do you get the counterpart soldiers to take that belief back to their families? Find ways to improve their value to their family and tribe. It might be as simple as rewarding the platoon that does a good job with bottles of water to take home to their families. This type of simple soldier care raises each soldier's status in the eyes of his family and creates goodwill that is hard to match. Reward good performance with tangible privileges and benefits that help their families.

Counterpart soldiers were probably not treated with the respect they deserved by previous coalition units, and you need to undo some damage. Rewarding good performance with simple recognition and rewards will be appreciated.

### **TTP**

- Find ways to help improve the counterpart soldier's value to his family.
  - Set realistic work hours.
  - Help them get clean water to take to their families.

- Make sure that they are being properly paid by their leadership.
- Get civil affairs involved with the villages on projects, and make sure that the counterpart soldiers know that you have helped in that process.
- The more you know about the soldiers, the more you will be able to help them.
  - Basic data such as tribal affiliations, military background, and photos are all important to successfully understand the dynamics of the unit.
  - You will be able to anticipate and defuse volatile situations when you are aware of the tribal makeup of the unit. You will know when one tribe is in conflict with another tribe because the counterpart soldiers will tell you.
  - You might have soldiers who have to travel great distances or travel through a dangerous area. Use that information to assign them to a platoon where they can travel to/from work together. There is definitely safety in numbers off duty.
  - Find out when soldiers have been hassled by coalition forces.
- Unit administration must be done in Arabic and English so IDs and manifests can be read by officials from both sides.
  - Bilingual IDs prepare soldiers for traffic control point (TCP) search by another coalition unit. If the ID is in the wrong language, his weapon may end up unnecessarily confiscated at a TCP.
  - Use both languages so administration sections on both sides can work effectively together.
- Use a common identifier such as a badge number to identify soldiers. Coalition Soldiers have trouble with counterpart names, so using badge numbers will transcend the language barriers when you are talking about a specific soldier.
- Make sure counterpart soldiers have their ID cards or some kind of dog tag on them at all times.
- Treat the dead with utmost respect:
  - Return their bodies as soon as possible to their families
  - Have your physician's assistant (PA)/medical doctor (MD) prepare the bodies, as this care is appreciated.
  - Arrange transportation of the body if the family does not have suitable transportation.

- Have a proper unit memorial service (in Arabic), and make sure you have the ability to play Mawtini (Iraqi national anthem).
- Follow-up to make sure the full death benefit gets paid to the next of kin quickly.

### **Corruption, Corruption, Corruption**

A couple of thousand years ago, Alexander complained in his journals about the organization and depth of corruption in what is now Iraq. Corruption in Iraq is still a problem today.

You can, however, work to limit the corruption. The most serious examples of corruption include senior members of the unit controlling access to installations for vendors, taking bribes/kickbacks from soldiers, extorting vendors, and pilfering stocks to sell outside the base. Always be observant for obvious examples, investigate them quietly, and then publicly fire the offenders. Counterpart soldiers will tone down the activities to a lower level if you follow this strategy.

### **TTP**

- Make the counterparts account for the payroll.
  - Observe the payroll procedures, and ensure that the counterpart leadership is not skimming off the top.
  - Ruthlessly prosecute any officer or NCO who is taking kickbacks from the soldiers.
  - Do spot checks of pay as soldiers leave the payroll table to make sure that they get their exact pay. If they are docked pay, make sure the amount is properly documented in a discipline review board before payroll distribution.
  - Release the soldiers as soon as possible after they are paid. This tactic makes it difficult for the leadership to corral the soldiers to take their pay.
- Supervise your ECPs.
  - A common theme is to extort contractors as they enter bases.
  - Make sure the lines are managed in an orderly fashion (no cutting) and that nothing changes hands in the line.
  - Any soldiers or leaders who condone the taking of bribes to allow access to a base compromise the security of the base.
  - If a force protection issue arises, get your S2 involved.
- Do not allow counterpart soldiers to leave/arrive in the middle of a shift.

- Arriving or leaving in the middle of a shift is almost always a sign of potential extortion/corruption, insurgent activity in the unit, or that the counterpart leadership does not have control (i.e., soldiers skipping out early because they are not being supervised).
- Come down hard on the counterpart leadership in these instances, and investigate the situation.
- Have well-documented shift times.
- Account for all soldiers on duty (those that checked in at the start of the shift). If someone appears suspicious, radio back to the battalion S1 to confirm that the soldier in question was present at the first formation for that shift.
- Any soldier who misses the first formation by more than ten minutes should not be allowed on base. Keep stragglers to a minimum.
- Monitor what is leaving the base with counterpart soldiers.
  - Soldiers should be properly searched outbound (also inbound), and if they are carrying contraband, it should be confiscated and the offenders should be disciplined.
  - Monitor supply sergeants to make sure they are not stealing.
- Make the counterpart leadership personally accountable for facilities and equipment.
  - Counterpart leaders need to sign for facilities and equipment, and you need to participate in the turnover.
  - Inspect air-conditioners, refrigeration units, gasoline, electrical components, hardware (screws, nuts, and bolts), and all other high-pilferage items every day.
  - Punish any officer who fails to secure equipment.
- Do a shakedown of all ammunition at issue and turn-in time.
  - Counterpart soldiers will often substitute poor quality ammunition or put rocks in their magazines below the top rounds to hide what they have taken/exchanged. Punish any soldier who exhibits this behavior.
  - Do regular shakedowns of the TA-50.
- Corruption and insurgent activity go hand in hand.
  - The insurgents make a lot of money through corruption; therefore, all corrupt activities should be viewed as potential insurgent activity unless proven otherwise.

- If you suspect any insurgent activity, make sure that you have the right people involved to assess the situation.
- You are the front line against subversion and espionage directed against the U.S. Army (SAEDA) in this mission.
- Do not allow the soldiers to keep journals or take any documents (especially handwritten documents) off post.
- Corruption will often become apparent when something unusual occurs.
  - A private publicly being deferred to by a captain is an example. The deference might be because the private is running a protection scam as the leader of a gang, and the captain is afraid of him and/or receiving money to look the other way. Sometimes the private is the son of a powerful local sheikh.
  - You must always understand what is going on; critically examine any unusual situation, and do not take the easy way out. Investigate anything that is out of the ordinary.

### **Training/Operations**

Here are some common facts about counterpart soldiers:

1. Saddam's army was a conscript army, and we are trying to undo some of the traits that were drilled into counterpart soldiers:
  - The training was poorly planned, resourced, and executed.
  - The discipline was poor and inconsistently applied to those without political connections.
  - Punishment was severe for even slight infractions.
  - The higher you went in rank, the more privileges you accrued.
2. They have poor nutrition.
3. They have poor health care; severe dental problems are common.
4. Access to clean water is limited, so many resort to using canned soda as their primary fluid intake.
5. Previous coalition attempts to train/operate with counterparts met with very limited success, and the counterparts can be very cynical about the whole process.

Take steps to make sure that counterpart soldiers receive better nutrition, preventative medical care, and proper hydration. Provide access to medical care (especially dental) for severe problems. Take proactive steps to keep them hydrated during training.

## **TTP**

- Have fresh, cold water available at the start of every shift.
  - Make sure soldiers drink water.
  - Allow time for re-hydration to take hold before the beginning of training or an operation.
  - Keep a supply of water available throughout the shift.
  - Bring water tablets on missions so soldiers can replenish from canals.
- Do not start any training day with physical training (PT) (especially early in a cycle). PT is okay if you ensure that the soldier has access to clean water, proper nourishment, and good health care.
- Sick call:
  - Run sick call at the start of every shift.
  - Over time, fewer and fewer soldiers will need to come to sick call, and the malingerers will become evident.
  - If you do some medic training, you can use those medics to help with sick call.
  - Properly resource sick call so medics have the appropriate medical supplies.

## **Training**

Repetition is definitely the best method of reinforcement. All instruction must be done in Arabic with simple and clear instruction. Try to limit the amount of judgment that leaders need to exercise early on, and focus on very simple scenarios. Many counterparts read poorly, so printed training materials need lots of diagrams to be effective. Often coalition Soldiers will become frustrated with the counterpart soldier's seeming inability to learn. The problem is more likely than not one of the following:

1. Poor translation. Even simple concepts get poorly translated. It is critical that coalition forces teach in the native language using clear, simple commands.
2. Lack of attention. Keep the classes short and to the point with lots of hands-on training time. Often a simple collective tasks such as react to near ambush will need to be repeated several times before it becomes a battle drill.

### TTP

- Do not get frustrated.
  - Training is often two steps forward and one step back.
  - Always review with the interpreter exactly what to say and how to say it.
  - Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat. The counterpart soldiers will get the idea that they must perform to a standard before they can move forward in their training.
- What to train? At the minimum, the following courses will represent a 6-8 week training course for a platoon:
  - Weapons handling, maintenance, and marksmanship (AK47/RPK/PKC)
  - Move as a member of a fire team
  - Initial military training (IMT)
  - Personal hygiene
  - Buddy aid
  - Basic radio procedures
  - Preparation for combat (collective)
  - Basic patrolling (squad and platoon)
  - Squad level: React to contact, near ambush, far ambush, clear a building, cordon and search, snap TCP, and indirect fire battle drills
  - Basic driving and vehicle maintenance
- Train properly.
  - Have the best facilities possible. Provide shade in the summer and somewhere dry/warm in the winter.
  - Give appropriate breaks. Much of the summer training is done in heat category 1,000, and stateside U.S. troops are stripped down to their underwear for this kind of weather. Be realistic about what you can get done under these conditions.
  - The training should not be hip-pocket in nature. Training should be properly resourced with training aids, classroom areas, restrooms, cool water, and shade in the field sites. Instructors need to be subject matter experts.

- Instructors need to be highly proficient with weapons.
- Many counterparts need glasses: eyesight affects marksmanship.
- Do not send truck drivers to teach infantry tactics.
- Make sure soldiers move as a unit between training sites. Formation marching, tactical foot marches, or tactical vehicle moves reinforce the chain of command.
- Reward the highest performing teams. The counterparts like to compete, and in a team environment they get excited about the competition.
- Training site upkeep:
  - Make sure you provide the counterpart-style Sanicans (portable toilets).
  - Post a guard to ensure that every water bottle that goes into the Sanican comes back out.
  - If a tent blows down, immediately put it back up. Do not let the camp fall into disrepair.
  - Enforce daily police calls.
  - Enforce proper hygiene anywhere that the counterparts eat or sleep.
- Without total control and four months or more of training, counterpart soldiers will probably not achieve the same standards as a coalition Soldier.
  - Set achievable standards.
  - Know that skills are perishable and retraining is essential.
  - Train all levels of soldiers and officers in their job.
  - Train special skills (mechanic, driver, administration, supply, and medics) as well.
- Use the troops once they are trained. Using counterpart soldiers on missions helps them keep their skills trained and makes them feel useful.
- Coalition Soldiers have been conditioned to use their initiative and counterparts have not.
  - You are asking too much to expect junior leaders to make big decisions.
  - Give them achievable and simple situations to display initiative, and praise them publicly to build confidence.

- When they fail, make sure that they understand that it was a learning experience, and get them back on track as soon as possible.

### **Operations**

Counterparts can be just as effective as coalition troops when properly led. Units with poor leadership will often need the coalition to take a very active role in mentoring the leadership. Operations may lack the same crispness you would expect, but often they will achieve equal or better results.

### **TTP**

- Mission planning/rehearsals/PCI:
  - Bring the counterpart leadership in as soon as possible.
  - Get as much knowledge as you can from soldiers who live in the area. They can often tell you about the best approaches, choke points, and special information about the target.
  - Have the counterpart leadership construct the sand table, so you are confident they will be able to explain the operation.
  - Keep the plan as simple as possible. The more complicated it is, the higher the likelihood the interpreter will mistranslate with disastrous results.
  - Identify the top worst case scenarios (for example: deploying from a vehicle under fire and react to contact with casualties), and make sure they are incorporated into rehearsals. Allow enough time for rehearsals and PCI.
  - Make squad leaders do full PCI; personally spot check their work.
  - Above all, reinforce the importance of weapons' control. Tell soldiers to look to their NCOs for guidance.
  - Hammer home the theme that leaders need to be prepared to make decisions without having all of the relevant information. Accomplishing the mission within the rules of engagement (ROE) is a leader's prime objective.
  - Issue ammunition as the last step before leaving the base. Have ready a box of magazines loaded under the supervision of a counterpart platoon sergeant.
  - Explain in an abbreviated operations order (OPORD) if soldiers will be allowed to smoke, how often there will be rest halts, and what actions will be taken at rest halts.
  - Place emphasis on the importance of water conservation for long dismounted patrols.

- Review the ROE several times during mission preparation with all participants.
- Execution:
  - Position yourself close to the key leader you are mentoring.
  - Instruct the interpreter to stay within five to ten feet, so he is instantly available.
  - Always be fully aware of exactly which counterpart soldiers are around you and their weapons' posture.
  - Preach muzzle awareness.
  - On contact:
    - \* Focus your attention on the leader and the immediate team.
    - \* Make sure 360 degree security is maintained and troops are properly deployed.
    - \* Keep the leader moving among his men so they can see that he is up and doing his job. Do not let the leader become fixed in place! His men need to see him doing his job.
  - As the mission nears its end, do not become complacent or allow the men to become complacent. Missions in a combat zone do not end until you are inside the wire and the men have gone home after their shift.
  - Do not allow smoking on missions.
  - Enforce rest halts for sock changes, food, and rest. Do not let security lapse.
  - Resist the urge to get frustrated with laxness. Get the problem corrected quickly and firmly, and make sure the offender does not repeat the behavior.
- Post mission consolidation:
  - Immediately collect and account for all ammunition, sensitive items, vests, etc.
  - Do an immediate after-action review (AAR). Be honest and blunt.
  - Once you have accounted for all men and equipment and the AAR is completed, rest the soldiers (if their shift is ongoing) or send them home (unless they prefer to wait for morning).

- Make sure you make a full and complete mission report especially with regards to unusual occurrences involving the troops.
- If at all possible do not have them conduct operations in their home village.
  - If you do, allow them to cover up, and make sure they are fully committed to doing the right thing.
  - Never forget that their allegiances are to their families and tribes.
  - They can often provide very valuable intelligence regarding the target and the target building.
- Do mission manifests that include both coalition and counterpart soldier data.
  - Manifests enforce the planning process and makes casualty collection/identification easier.
  - Manifests make the patrol safer because you have firm accountability of soldiers, and you prevent insurgents from joining the patrol when you detach teams and squads.
- Train your coalition Soldiers to do the right thing, and make sure you hold the coalition Soldiers to a high standard of personal and professional conduct.
  - Use spoken Arabic and minimize the use of interpreters.
  - Hand and arm signals need to be consistently used as they transcend the language barrier.
  - Properly arm counterpart soldiers with a basic load.
  - Be confident that risk mitigation is acceptable force protection, and do not treat counterpart soldiers as threats to your personal safety because they have loaded weapons.
  - Do land navigation along with the counterpart leader.
  - Make sure the mission brief and rehearsals include very clear instructions on exactly what to do on contact. If you do not drill this point home, they will not know how to react.
  - Be prepared to switch from observer mode to a more active leadership role if necessary, but try to avoid the leadership situation if at all possible.
- Have counterpart medical personnel present. Counterpart medical personnel can quickly explain to a patient the treatment and prognosis, and they are incredibly brave and inspiring to the men around them.

- Do not allow trained units to be broken up. Transfers should be kept to a minimum.

### **Interpreters/Arabic**

Arabic is a difficult language for most coalition Soldiers. Learn as much as you can of the spoken variety. Any coalition Soldier who works with the counterparts directly needs to have a basic grasp of Arabic.

Use interpreters. Most likely, the interpreter will be a 20-30 year old counterpart with some college, who has previously worked for coalition units and speaks passable English. In many cases, their English is poor and directly affects the translations. Interpreters also consider themselves superior to the average counterpart (class consciousness), and this feeling can cause a number of problems.

### **TTP**

- Insist that your interpreters translate exactly what you say.
  - Do not allow them to add anything extra or usurp your authority by giving an order.
  - Giving an order turns them into defacto leaders, which can lead to major complications about who is really in charge.
  - Once your Arabic gets good enough, do not be afraid to correct the interpreter if he is not translating exactly what you said.
- Make your interpreters live and operate under the same conditions as counterpart/coalition troops.
  - In the field, interpreters should wear protective gear, observe noise/light discipline, get down when the soldiers get down, and eat the same food.
  - Do not let class distinctions get in the way, as this will reinforce counterpart class stereotypes that you are seeking to break down.
- Be aware of the interpreter's tribal affiliations. They will play up or down the class distinction based on who they are interpreting for, and you cannot allow that to happen.

### **Conclusions**

Most Soldiers are not SOF, yet they are expected to perform their mission without adequate training. The best way to accomplish the mission is to gain skill through on-the-job training (OJT) and using lessons learned.

It would also be helpful to have some mobile training teams (MTTs) in country to supplement the SOF teams that are stretched thin with other missions. Access to

## **CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED**

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SOF training materials and even a two-week immersion course taught in theater would be very helpful to units that have to perform the same type of mission with any ISF elements.

We can succeed in this mission if our training and operational concepts evolve as we work more closely with the ISF and they continue to grow more competent in accomplishing their mission.

## Chapter 3: Training the Afghan National Army

by Captain (CPT) Charles Di Leonardo

*Originally published in Infantry, March-April 2005.*

*CPT Deleonardo's experience as an advisor to an Afghan weapons company provides interesting perspectives on foreign military training. Common sense, professionalism, and willingness to learn about the country and people of Afghanistan were the keys to developing an effective training program.*

It is impossible to talk about my participation in training the Afghan National Army without mentioning the how and the why behind becoming a trainer and advisor. As a lieutenant in the 10th Mountain Division, I was deployed in October 2001 to Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan, as an anti-tank platoon leader with Task Force 1-87 which was attached to Joint Special Operations Task Force North, also known as Task Force Dagger. From Uzbekistan, I was among the first regular ground troops deployed to Afghanistan in late November of 2001.



Figure 3-1

I had arrived at night, and when I awoke the following morning, I saw the majestic Hindu-Kush Mountains that surrounded Bagram airbase. The beautiful snow white capped mountains, dotted with gray and black rock faces that towered all around

the airbase, hid the reality that something so beautiful was in fact one of the most dangerous places in the world.

The primary job of my platoon at Bagram Airbase was as a security element for the Special Operations forces who were also staying at the airbase; this included manning joint checkpoints with the local Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) around the airbase. This was my first interaction with the people of Afghanistan. We did not have interpreters, so most of the conversations were limited to games of charades and trying to express ourselves through hand gestures. I was really taken by the dedication of the Afghan men who were manning these checkpoints with my Soldiers. Most were in their mid to early thirties and were veterans of years of combat.

The local militia commander was a man by the name of Kwani; he showed me the scars he had received from being shot three times and blown up twice. He received the first set of wounds during Afghan fighting with the Mujahidin against the Russians, and he had received the last three sets of wounds fighting against the Taliban as a Northern Alliance fighter. I was very intrigued by him and these people; they had gone through so much and had done it purely out of love for their people and their country, not for money or personal gain.

After a few months of pulling security around the airfield, my Soldiers and I participated in Operation Anaconda. I saw three towns: Marzak, Serkhenkel, and Babakhel destroyed by fighting. I was extremely taken by the beauty of the countryside and the great fighting instinct and abilities that these people possessed. I came back to the airfield after that and two subsequent missions and returned to manning my check points with a new found respect for the people of Afghanistan and the hardships they endured. I left Afghanistan later that month, but I made a promise to myself that I would return if I ever had the opportunity. That opportunity came in January of 2003 when I was asked if I would delay attending the Infantry Captain's Career Course (ICCC) to become a trainer for six months with the newly formed Afghan National Army (ANA). The ANA's first battalion was stood up and completed its initial training period in July 2002, and the Army was starting to stand up its third brigade. I thought about the beauty of the country and the people from my last deployment, but initially I was not attracted to the idea of going over there purely in the function of a trainer. However, I was then told I would not only be in a trainer role, but I would also be taking the trainees out on combat operations. I liked this idea and had read the books of Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf and how they had enjoyed doing this same type of mission during the Vietnam War. So with these grand visions, I jumped on board and was told that I would be leaving the end of May to become a trainer.

I learned that my responsibility would be with the weapons company of the battalion, which included training the officers and NCOs in combat operations using U.S. Army tactics with Soviet-era weapons. The weapons company consisted of a scout platoon, 82mm mortar platoon, and an SPG-9 anti-armor platoon. My

responsibilities included instructing company-level logistics, range preparation, proper execution of live-fire exercises (LFXs), walking through the orders process, and finally taking the company out on combat missions throughout Afghanistan. This could have been an easy task, but the ANA provided many unseen factors that I had to take into consideration, to include multiple languages, ethnic rivalry in the unit, a low literacy rate, and pay issues.

### **Camp Phoenix and Other Important Areas**

I left Fort Drum on 27 May 2003 and flew into Kabul International Airport (KIA) 31 May in the middle of the night. From the airport, it was a five-minute trip on a large green German bus to Camp Phoenix. Camp Phoenix was built for the purpose of housing the trainers and the support elements of Combined Joint Task Force-Phoenix (CJTF-Phoenix) until other more fixed compounds were completed. The significance of the German bus was that it was blown up 800 meters from Camp Phoenix a week later by terrorists, killing three German peacekeepers and once again reminding me of the seriousness of the situation.

Camp Phoenix is a small camp that was a truck parking area, so it is totally paved. There were significant security measures in place, including a whole wall of Hesco Barriers around the camp and a more fixed cement wall that had guard mounts and vehicle search checkpoints that were manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a company of light infantry Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division. Inside the camp were many buildings, most consisting of wood “Sea-Huts” and tents. The camp also had a huge dining facility (DFAC) and a laundry service, and local national workers did a variety of jobs around the camp.

Camp Phoenix represented one of the most interesting conglomerations of nations ever formed. Each of these countries and contingents was responsible for a school, maintenance, or training task that would help to benefit the ANA in some way: a contingent from the Vermont National Guard was responsible for Basic Training and Range Control; the British were responsible for training the ANA NCO Academy; the French were responsible for training at the ANA Officers Academy; the South Koreans were responsible for maintaining the Troop Medical Center (TMC) at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC); the Mongolians were responsible for the training of the field artillery; and the Romanians and Bulgarians were responsible for maintaining all the wheeled and mechanized equipment and training the mechanics in the third brigade.

There are many different training areas, and the locations of several important camps are important to understanding the training of the ANA. Camp Phoenix is where all the trainers initially stayed, and later it became a logistical center. It is located on the eastern edge of Kabul. The Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), located five kilometers east of Camp Phoenix, contained the Officer School, NCO Academy, Range Control, Central Issue Facility (CIF), Basic Training, and the Central Corps Headquarters. It was also where Forward Operating Base (FOB) 31

was located until the special operations forces (SOF) left after the relief in place (RIP). Right across the road from KMTC and FOB 31 is where the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) is located, which is part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), responsible for patrolling and maintaining security in Kabul. About 10 kilometers east is Pol-e-Charki, which contained a lot of the ranges and the 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the Afghanistan Central Corps. About five kilometers south of this compound, just past the infamous Pol-e-Charki prison, are what was called the “brick ranges.” They were located by an old brick-making factory and primarily used for live-fire exercises. The final location of importance is the Presidential Palace and home of the 1st Brigade, Central Corps, ANA, where I spent a majority of my time. The palace is located 10 kilometers east of Camp Phoenix in downtown Kabul.

A standard Afghan brigade’s table of organization and equipment (TO&E) consisted of three light infantry battalions and one brigade headquarters and headquarters company (HHC). Within these three battalions, there were three light infantry companies, one weapons company, and a headquarters company. The three light infantry companies contained three light infantry platoons and a mortar section, and each of the three light infantry platoons contained three light infantry squads with nine men each. The headquarters company consisted of all the staff sections, a support platoon, a cook section, medical platoon, and a Mullah (chaplain in the U.S. military). The weapons company consisted of the scout platoon with three squads each; the SPG-9 73mm recoilless rifle platoon, with three sections or two guns per section; and the mortar platoon with six 82mm Hungarian mortars or three sections with two mortars in each section.

### **The Training Teams**

Task Force Phoenix training teams consisted of three brigade training teams with each team broken down with the same allotment of trainers. At the brigade level, each team had a lieutenant colonel, whose counterpart was the ANA brigade commander, a brigadier general; a major, who was responsible for the brigade XO; a sergeant major responsible for the ANA brigade sergeant major; a Transportation captain to cover the ANA brigade motor pool; a Signal captain to cover the communications for the ANA brigade; a Quartermaster captain to help the ANA brigade S-4; and a Military Intelligence captain who would help the ANA brigade S-2 or intelligence officer.

Underneath the command of these brigade training teams, there were three battalion training teams. Each battalion training team consisted of a U.S. Army major who was the mentor and trainer of the battalion commander for which he was responsible. Underneath this major, there was a senior NCO who was the coach, teacher, and mentor of the battalion sergeant major. Then, for each of the companies, a captain and an NCO trainer to help and advise the companies. These captains also had additional duties of helping train one of the staff sections at the battalion level.

I was on the 1st Brigade Training Team (1st BTT), which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Gallant, the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, Florida National Guard. He was the mentor for the ANA's 1st Brigade commander, Brigadier General Alim Shah. Underneath LTC Gallant was my immediate boss, Major Mark Kneram, the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade team chief. He was responsible for the training, coaching, teaching, and mentoring of the battalion commander. In addition, we had First Sergeant O'Brien, who was responsible for the battalion sergeant major, the S-3 or operations sergeant major, and the S-2 or intelligence section. 1SG O'Brien was a veteran of the Vietnam War and more than 50 years old; he brought a lot of experience to the team and was very much liked by the Afghan soldiers and the rest of the training team.

### **Relief in Place**

After getting all of the trainers together from their different units and defining what their jobs would entail, it was time to execute the relief-in-place (RIP) with the Americans currently training the Afghans—operational detachment alpha (ODA) team 321 from 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group. The SOF team had been with the 1st Kandak (Dari word for battalion) for only two months but seemed to be more than happy to turn over the mission. The SOF Soldiers picked us up from Camp Phoenix the first week of June and took us down to the palace to meet the Kandak and the interpreters who would act as our go-betweens for both the trainers and the ANA.

The first ride to the palace was very memorable. I rode in my Toyota Hilux pickup truck that was issued to me to travel back and forth to the palace. It was amazing driving down Jalalabad Road. Afghanistan had changed so much since the last time I had been there. I saw endless convoys of refugees returning to Kabul from Pakistan, and numerous rock quarries that were crushing rocks to make cement, bricks, and cinder blocks which would help rebuild dilapidated buildings and repair the scars of 25 years of war. It was amazing to see all the traffic and the people walking around; especially amazing was seeing numerous women out walking around without wearing the traditional burka (a long robe that is usually light blue that covers the females from head to toe with a screen like mask for them to see out). Under the oppressive rule of the Taliban, the females would never have walked around without wearing their burqas at the risk of death. I was extremely impressed by the rebuilding that was going on and was amazed by the amount of reconstruction that had gone on in my absence. As we started pulling through the numerous security checkpoints to the palace, I saw a larger-than-life green, red, and black flag flying high above the palace and knew that I had come back for the right reasons.

We pulled to a stop just outside a rather large building that served as the offices and barracks of the 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, ANA. The building looked brand new, but upon further inspection, it was clear that it had been refurbished and had been standing there for many years. The first people we met were our interpreters, all of

them young college students or businessmen. The first one was Zahir, a young college student from Kabul who had been working with the Americans as an interpreter for about six months. The next interpreter was Wahidullah (Wahid), a 24-year-old college student studying literature; he was soft spoken and had a good sense of humor. Tahir, or “Doc” was in his early 30s, spoke impeccable English, and earned his nickname because he was a doctor at the Kabul Military Hospital (KMH). The next interpreter introduced was Hickmat; he was a well-dressed young businessman whose father worked for the Department of Commerce. The last interpreter introduced to us was Zia, a very slight and soft-spoken 27-year-old Afghan who spoke English well but, when pressured, stuttered and was often caught on words when he was nervous. There were some initial introductions made with the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Kareem, and the battalion operations officer, Major Taza Gul.



**Figure 3-2**

The palace was very impressive and extremely beautiful with many buildings that were being rebuilt all over the grounds. We first looked at the barracks where the soldiers lived and slept. The barracks were open bays with metal bunk beds and wall lockers lining the walls. All the beds were neatly made, dress right dress, and the solid cement floors were neatly swept. The next thing we were shown was one of the company offices which had a dual role of serving as where the officers of the company slept and as an office where all the paperwork was done. The showers and

bathrooms were the next facilities on the tour, and they were very clean and looked to be brand new. We were informed that they had just finished constructing them and that there had been a little bit of a problem when the soldiers initially used them because some of the soldiers were using flat stones for toilet paper and then throwing them into the toilet, causing the toilet to clog. The last item to see was the palace orchard or garden area which was overgrown but looked pretty with all the flowers and trees in full bloom. We were informed that the palace orchard or garden area was where the Kandak did a majority of its squad-level training.

At this point, we returned to where we had parked our vehicles, and the battalion commander invited us to eat lunch with him. We had chicken covered with rice, nan (unleavened bread), and a bowl of beans with a small piece of meat in it. I sat there patiently as the ODA team chief and LTC Kareem chitchatted through an interpreter. Eventually, the conversation ended, and we returned to FOB 31 to receive a briefing on where the Kandak stood in terms of training and leadership.

The briefing was extremely interesting and informative. The Kandak had done squad level live-fire exercises (LFXs) and had been on multiple combat missions to Khowst and Gardez. The leadership slides were very interesting to me because I had yet to meet my counterpart and was looking forward to seeing a picture of him and seeing if he was a capable leader. His slide finally came up, and I got to see who he was and see what he looked like on paper. Captain Sayeed Mohammed, commander of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, ANA, was 34 years old and half Tajik and half Pashtun from the Parawan province. The SOF team assessed him as an exceptional commander. After seeing this slide, I was relieved and looked forward to meeting Sayeed Mohammed and start working with him.

The RIP continued with the special operations forces (SOF) meeting us at the palace every morning. We shadowed the SOF team for the next two weeks, observing several blocks of instruction on Russian and Eastern Bloc weapon systems and some training. The SOF team was very good about linking us up with a counterpart from its team that would give a good brief on the scope of his duties and how he had covered his particular tasks. It was amazing what the SOF team had been able to cover, considering their small numbers and the sheer size of the ANA battalion. This also made it very apparent why the SOF team was turning over the responsibility of training the ANA to the regular Army. The SOF team had taken the ANA as far as they could in terms of training, and the battalion was now ready to be taken to new levels.

### **Weapons Company Initial Assessments**

I met CPT Sayeed Mohammed during one of these counterpart demonstrations. He had a wealth of experience, making it as high as lieutenant colonel with a position of brigade executive officer (XO) under the Soviet puppet regime in the early 1990s. After the overthrow of the government by the Taliban, he went back to his home province and became a money trader. With the defeat of the Taliban by the

Northern Alliance and the insertion of Hamid Karzai as president of the country, he heard that the ANA was forming and again volunteered his services to his country.

Initially, I believed that it was very important to learn as much as I possibly could about this man and his culture so I befriended him immediately and told him I would be his advisor and assist in training his company. Through my interpreter Hickmat, he proceeded to introduce me to his executive officer, his platoon leaders, and his first sergeant. The XO of the company was First Lieutenant Abdul Ghafar; he was 33 years old and was also a former company commander with a wealth of combat experience from the same regime of the early 1990s. The first sergeant of the company was 1SG Mostaqim, a former Mujahidin fighter from the Logar province. He was clearly battle hardened from his fighting with the Mujahidin and initially seemed very wary of me. The company currently had two platoon leaders, with the Scout Platoon leader position being open. The Mortar Platoon leader was First Lieutenant Abdul Qadir who had impressed me earlier during a mortar live-fire demonstration that the SOF forces had done for the new trainers. He was also a former company commander under the puppet regime and had numerous scars and wounds to prove it. The SPG-9 (Recoilless Rifle) Platoon leader was First Lieutenant Lotif Khan; he was 37 years old and had been a corps-level staff officer under the former puppet regime. He and his platoon had also impressed me during the earlier demonstration.

After the initial introductions I spoke to Sayeed Mohammed about the current status of the company. He informed me that it had just returned from a deployment to the city of Gardez where it had a lot of success capturing and destroying caches. The platoons had done limited LFXs while there and had been in some minor skirmishes with a local warlord. This particular battalion had been around for almost one and a half years, and Sayeed Mohammed said that he was starting to see attrition among his forces. He said that because it was volunteer army, the soldiers would occasionally leave, never to return, and that he was currently at about 70 percent strength. He also informed me that a lot of the soldiers were barely literate, and the reason a lot of the soldiers were leaving was that the pay was extremely poor.

The conversation continued over numerous cups of chi, or green tea, and later over a lunch of chicken and rice. He told me how a typical day and week would go in the ANA. The first working day of the week was Saturday. The soldiers would wake up at 0400 for morning prayer, and then at 0500 complete physical training (PT), during which they would run or do calisthenics for about an hour and then would be off until 0900. Being soldiers in a country based on Islam, they pray five times a day, which would cause some difficulty scheduling training around prayer time. The soldiers trained until about 1130 and then were off until 1330 for lunch and prayer. The afternoon usually consisted of more training and classes until about 1600. This schedule would hold true until Thursday, which was a half day and consisted of a battalion training meeting for company commanders and staff and maintenance for the soldiers. In the afternoon, the soldiers would be off again until Saturday.

After my initial conversation with Sayeed Mohammed, I sat down with SSG Sandoval, and we tried to figure out where the company was and where it needed to go. The SOF team would be with us for about one more week, and then it would be our turn to take over the company. Based on my initial conversations with the SOF team and Sayeed Mohammed, there was one huge problem I could see in terms of the company. The NCOs in the company had no power, and the 1SG was there for making Chi tea and bringing it for the officers. This was also very apparent to SSG Sandoval based on his conversations with the NCOs in the company. We determined that the root of the problem was that the French Officer Academy, being run at KMTC, was training the officers to control all the aspects of the company. There were also trust problems between the officers and the NCOs; in addition to that, the NCOs were not formally trained in their duties and responsibilities. To counteract this problem, the British had begun an NCO Academy that would train the NCOs. SSG Sandoval and I thought we could send NCOs to this school and also manipulate training so as to help the NCOs assume leadership and responsibility in the company.

Another problem we found was that the company had no systems in place, such as training schedules, soldier accountability charts, logistics accounting, or equipment accountability paperwork. The commander did have a piece of paper that he had signed for equipment, but it was not complete and was just a bunch of pieces of paper stapled together. To help the company get their systems in place, I was going to work with the commander and his lieutenants on developing these systems. The biggest problem I saw with soldier accountability was that even though a lot of soldiers had been gone for a long time they were still on the books. So we had to get these soldiers who were gone off the books and then get a true accountability of what each platoon had for soldiers.

The next large problem to address was with the training schedule. There was absolutely nothing in place, and none of the training was planned by the company; it was all being fed to the company by the SOF team. To change this, I decided to first show the commander how to plan training and then how to execute the training. Then the company commander would plan his own training and execute the plan with SSG Sandoval's and my supervision.

As far as logistics, there were several problems, the biggest of which was there were no combat service support (CSS) units or clear logistical lines in place. The system that the SOF were using was to just buy whatever the Kandak requested, and if the SOF team did have it, they would artificially put it in the supply system by giving it to the S-4. There was a Central Issue Facility (CIF), but it was purely for uniforms and Basic Initial Issue (BII) for the soldiers. It looked to be a daunting task of trying to establish some kind of logistics system for the company. I decided to work this issue solely with the company XO, developing supply requests and range requests and how to go through the process of submitting the requests.

### **Additional Duties**

Just before the SOF team left, there was one last duty that it performed that we needed to assume. This job was paying the soldiers, and it was no easy task. The responsibility of paying the soldiers fell on the paying agents: me and Captain Phillips. CPT Phillips was responsible for drawing and disbursing the money, and I was responsible for maintaining the records via a computer and paper pay rosters. To do this, I had to be taught how to use a very difficult computer program that had been built specifically for paying and maintaining the records for the Kandak.

The paying process was a gigantic headache that took two days every month to perform. I would bring all of the company commanders together into the Kandak's S-1 office a few days before the payday. We would scrub the pay roster to make all the necessary corrections to soldiers' pay in terms of promotions and any other adjustments or errors. After scrubbing the pay roster with the commanders, I would go back to Camp Phoenix and make all the corrections in the database. This was not only time consuming, but it was also a really annoying process. CPT Phillips would then draw the money, in cash, in the amount that the database had worked out was to be paid to the Kandak that month.

The process was then to hand out the money to every single soldier in the Kandak. He would sign his name and put his thumb print right next to his picture and his pay information. Undoubtedly there were corrections every time; soldiers who did not receive pay from the month before, soldiers who had been promoted and it had not been reflected on their pay ... just all kinds of problems. Initially, I hated payday because of how much time it took, but later on I looked at it as a challenge to see how correct and how quickly I could get it done. The first time we did payday, it took until 2100, and we started at 0900, I eventually got it down to about four hours with two corrections. But for seven months, we went through the exasperating process of paying the soldiers by hand. The lesson learned from this was that this responsibility had to fall on someone else eventually, like a finance team; however, the trainers would still have to be involved to ensure the soldiers were still getting paid the proper amounts. Eventually, I see the responsibility falling on the Kandak S-1 with some oversight from the American trainers to ensure there is no corruption and that everything is done to standard.

### **Initial Training**

After determining the status of the company on paper and getting a feeling for the leaders, it was time to see the company in action. I told Sayeed Mohammed to have the soldiers ready to train the following morning. Specifically, I wanted them to set up the mortars and SPG-9s so that they could show me crew drills on the weapon systems. While this was going on, SSG Sandoval would take the scouts and have them show him movement techniques. The next morning, we showed up at 0830, picked up our interpreters, and went to the company areas. Sayeed Mohammed was waiting for us with the company XO. We went through the normal greetings, and he said that the Mortar and SPG-9 Platoons were waiting at their training area and that the Scout Platoon was waiting for SSG Sandoval in the King's Garden.

Sayed Mohammed and I walked over to the Mortar and SPG-9 Platoons, and SSG Sandoval went with Abdul Ghafar to the Scout Platoon training area. When I arrived there, the mortars and SPG-9s were set up, with the officers barking orders to the soldiers and controlling much of the action. I called the platoon leaders over and told them to take the mortars and SPG-9s and run through an immediate setup as fast as they could and to be prepared to fire.



**Figure 3-3**

I watched the mortars first. Their platoon leader was controlling the platoon. He was everywhere, yelling at the soldiers to hurry it up and get the mortars set up. I told them to set the mortar with the sight focusing on the top of a large building about one kilometer away. The times were very slow, and the soldiers' actions were very deliberate, afraid to make a mistake and catch the wrath of their platoon leader who was trying to impress his new American trainer. There were a few things that caught my eye that looked wrong. The first was that not all the mortars were the same; there were three mortars from Czechoslovakia, two from Hungary, and one from China. I knew this would cause problems later based on how mortars are fired and how each different kind of mortar fires differently based on its charts and other factors. The second thing I noticed was that the platoon leader was controlling all the soldiers and that the NCOs would just stand there looking around like overpaid privates. The last problem I observed is that there were no aiming circles or plotting boards; this was extremely bad, as it limited our fires to direct alignment and direct lay. Therefore, there was no way to fire indirectly, and this was not something we

could show or teach the platoon without the equipment. This problem was compounded by the fact that there were no compasses, and it was not possible to use American compasses because they use 6400 mils and Russian and Eastern Bloc compasses use 6000 mils, as do the Eastern Bloc mortars. Overall, the motivation and training was there and the SOF team had done what they could with the Mortar Platoon, but it still needed work.

The SPG-9 Platoon was a completely different story: the platoon leader was excellent and the platoon was clearly well-trained. The platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class Hafizullah, was exceptional and helped the platoon leader execute the crew drills to the best of his ability. I gave the platoon leader the same directions as the mortar platoon leader: set the guns up as quickly as possible and then put them on target. For this, I gave them a target of a building approximately 600 meters away. The setup and execution were exceptional; the guns were up extremely quickly and all of them were on target. Once again, however, except for the platoon sergeant, there was little NCO involvement and there was a problem with the SPG-9s. The problem was that some of the sights were missing, the SPG-9 has a vehicle and a personnel sight and some of the vehicle sights were missing. Overall, I was pleased with the SPG-9 platoon and knew that it was ready for a greater challenge.

SSG Sandoval's assessment of the Scout Platoon was similar to my assessment of the Mortar Platoon. The scouts had received limited movement training; they understood the concepts but did not know the battle drills. They also did not understand the concept of a scout platoon as a result of a translation problem of the word scout from Dari to English. In Dari, the word scout translates into intelligence, so they thought they were to go forward and gain intelligence by engaging the enemy. This was a severe problem which would take some time and training to correct, so that they would go forward of the battalion and observe the enemy without being seen. One bright spot in the Scout Platoon was that the platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class Ahmadullah, was in charge because the platoon leader had left the unit. SFC Ahmadullah was a former Mujahidin fighter with a wealth of experience and an interesting "can do" type of personality. He had the respect of all the officers and soldiers in the company.

SSG Sandoval and I compared our notes that night and decided to be very aggressive in our training program with the company. This would be affected by a couple of outside taskings which would effect who could train. These taskings were mainly guard posts around the palace and would take a platoon away for that particular week of training. We decided this would work well because we could handle training two platoons, but more than that, initially, would be difficult. Simultaneously, I would take the officers aside and teach them the operations order (OPORD) process and systems. This would free SSG Sandoval to work primarily with the NCOs. This would allow him to develop the NCOs to be leaders and trainers while training them in their battle drills without officer interference. We would also send about two or three NCOs to the British NCO Academy. In

addition, SSG Sandoval would lead PT for two weeks to teach the NCOs how to lead PT.

I came to the palace the next day armed with a training schedule for the next three months. I provided Sayeed Mohammed with a training schedule translated into Dari; he and I sat down with an interpreter and discussed the training schedule. He agreed it was very good and that he would have his soldiers at the training sites at the times required. I explained to him that I developed the first three months of training and that I wanted him to develop the training for each subsequent month. I also told him that I wanted all the officers in the office every day for the next two weeks to go through classes with me and to let the NCOs assume responsibility of the soldiers. He agreed that the NCOs needed to assume more responsibility in the company because the officers could not always be there and that the NCOs “needed to start earning their money.”

While I was making all of these plans, the other company trainers were doing the same. The rifle companies were planning marksmanship ranges, and HHC was planning drivers’ training, in conjunction with the ISAF LNO. The staff sections were also learning their jobs better and were putting in better systems for tracking soldiers, supplies on hand, and training schedules for the future. I decided to “piggyback” with the rifle companies on their marksmanship ranges to see where the soldiers stood on basic rifle marksmanship (BRM) and weapons familiarity. I also wanted to see the company XO send up supply requests to the S-4 shop for transportation and ammunition to see how the logistics lines worked. He did an excellent job of requesting the ammunition and vehicles, but he did it on a piece of paper that he handed to the S-4 and did not keep a copy for himself. Of course, the S-4 shop lost it and claimed never to have received it but the American trainer in the S-4 shop said the shop did receive it but had lost the request. The XO learned several valuable lessons, and he took note of them and never made the same mistake again.

The range was a nightmare; because the request was lost there was not enough ammunition initially, but the XO scrambled and found a few cases of ammunition in the arms room. The soldiers were proficient with their AK-47s and could hit the silhouette target; however, there were no adjustment tools for the AK-47s, so no one could zero his weapon. To correct it, we had the Romanians, living on Camp Phoenix, loan us 10 zeroing tools, so that we could zero the soldiers’ weapons. The American trainers ran the range, and we had some problems. We learned we needed zeroing tools and better direct coordination with the Kandak so as to not have the ammunition problem in the future. We also learned that there were things that SOF team had failed to tell us about the weapons, specifically, the need for a zeroing tool.

The lack of zeroing tools, mortar tubes from three different countries, no compasses, SPG-9s missing sights, and having no plotting boards or aiming circles forced me to find where the ANA was getting their weapons from so that I could

see if I could find some of these missing pieces and parts. To do this, I had to find the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces, S-4 at KMTC to try to find where the weapons were issued. I found him rather easily, and he directed me to a first lieutenant located in a back room at KMTC. Once I found him, I told him my dilemma, and he said I could bring the ANA company commander, the equipment to be traded, and his property book to KMTC the next day. He said there was a huge cache of donated weapons that were stored in a warehouse on KMTC, and we could see if we could find the equipment we needed.

The next day, the commander and I dug through the warehouse, and we found some brand new Hungarian mortars and SPG-9 sights; however, we found nothing else we needed. We turned in the Czechoslovakian and Chinese mortars and drew out the new mortars and SPG-9 sights. Sayeed Mohammed brought his hand receipt with him, which consisted of a bunch of pieces of paper in Dari and English with items he had signed for in the company. The lieutenant made the proper annotations on a DA 2062 hand receipt to reflect he had turned in the mortars and drew out the new mortars.



**Figure 3-4**

I was very wary of this hand receipt, so I directed the company commander to do a 100 percent with his officers the next day, so that we could actually see the equipment he did have on hand. This was pretty much the way it went: every time we would correct one problem, another problem would present itself. In this case, it was receiving all like mortars and discovering the hand receipts for the equipment were sketchy at best. Who was to say that the AK-47s he was supposed to have in

the arms room had not been sold at the local market? I was concerned; I knew that Sayeed Mohammed was an honest man, but were the soldiers in his company honest?

The next day we did 100 percent inventory of all equipment and found that not only did he have all his equipment, he had extra AK-47s, mortars, and SPG-9s. This was a problem but not that significant compared to the huge problem we discovered in the arms room and supply closets, where we discovered huge caches of extra ammunition. This worried me because my immediate thought was that they were planning a coup or something. It turned out to be quite the opposite; it was for the defense of the palace and the protection of the President Hamid Karzai who lived at the palace. Because of the possibility of a threat from the outside warlords, they believed they needed the ammunition. I agreed with their reasoning to a certain extent, but the amount of ammunition that I saw was excessive, so I decided to use some of it for training in the future.

### **Training**

As a training team, we decided to do battalion consolidated PT because all of the companies were lacking in this area. The first day of PT was extremely amusing. The battalion SGM came and greeted us, wearing his ANA-issued all black PTs with green and red pin stripes and Chuck Taylor looking shoes. He went through the normal greetings and then pulled a whistle out and started blowing it in front of the barracks. As he did this, scores of soldiers started coming out of the barracks and forming up in about a thousand different uniforms. The soldiers were wearing their uniforms with sandals, or any other possible combination of issued uniform that one could imagine. This was a problem, so SSG Bivens, who was leading PT that day, pulled the SGM aside and instructed him on the correct uniform to be worn. The SGM informed SSG Bivens that not all the soldiers were issued PT uniforms, again problem solved ...another problem becomes apparent. This was easily fixed by taking the soldiers to KMTC and the ANA CIF building and getting the PT uniforms.

The biggest problem noticed was that not one officer showed up for PT! This could not be fixed because the officers lived throughout the city of Kabul, and if they were not present at the battalion for staff duty or sleeping in their offices, they were not going to show up for PT. In addition, only one officer had a car and the rest used buses and other transportation to get to the palace, so we never expected the officers at PT. This and the lack of uniforms had us put off organized PT until we could get the PT uniforms, which ended up taking two weeks.

Once the PT program started, the NCOs started stepping up and demonstrating leadership and accountability for the soldiers. The NCOs were quick learners, and the soldiers could run and road march well, but push-ups and sit-ups needed a lot of work. The benefit of the PT was that the NCOs gained confidence and showed their

leadership in all facets of training. The fact that the officers were not there actually helped achieve one of the training goals we had set.

The daily training that SSG Sandoval was doing with the platoons was also starting to pay dividends. I would keep the officers preoccupied in the morning with OPORDs, developing accountability systems, planning ranges, and setting up LFXs. This would free up SSG Sandoval to take the platoons out to train. In the afternoon, I would take the officers down to the training area, and the soldiers and NCOs would show what they had learned that morning. Eventually, it reached the point where SSG Sandoval would name a battle or crew drill or movement formation, and the soldiers would execute.

At this point, several of the key problems we were initially facing had come to resolution. The NCOs were starting to take charge of the soldiers and lead PT every morning, therefore establishing some powerbase. The officers were beginning to understand their administrative role, to include placing numerous systems in place to track soldiers and equipment. With some help from SSG Sandoval and Hickmat we took a tracking chart, translated it into Dari, and then used a plotter to enlarge it and laminate it, making a huge personnel tracking chart that the officers could put on the wall to track soldiers. Sayeed Mohammed and I made adjustments to his hand receipt to make it more accurate and easier to understand and made sure that the S-4 and CIF had a copy. I had also issued the lieutenants two very effective training OPORDs from which they learned how to issue and execute an effective order.

### **Ranges**

To test the training the soldiers had received, it was time to execute some ranges with the platoons to continue with the aggressive training plan we had derived. The timing was perfect for these ranges. It was August, and we had entered a tasking cycle in which two platoons would be on guard duty and one would be able to train. The officers and soldiers were really excited to get the training going, and I was excited to see what the soldiers could do and put the officers to the test by putting them in stressful situations to see how they would perform.



Figure 3-5

I briefed the plan I had made with Sayeed Mohammed to MAJ Kneram and the rest of the trainers and made some minor adjustments based on their input. They all seemed surprised and excited and were anxious to see how the Weapons Company would perform. I had the finalized plan translated into Dari via Hickmat and made sure all the officers in the company understood the schedule for the training. I then took the XO and commander out to Pol- e-Charki and showed them how to do a range recon and set up the range. The next step was to go to range control and confirm that the ranges were reserved for the training. To do this we went to the fourth floor of the ANA Central Corps Headquarters (HQ) where a joint range control, with both Afghan and Americans, were controlling the ranges. I confirmed with the Americans that the ranges were reserved, and I overheard a similar conversation between Sayeed Mohammed and the Afghans responsible for range control. The last preparation for the ranges was for the company XO to confirm the logistics for the ranges. This consisted of his confirming requests he had put through the S-4 for ammunition and to the HHC XO for vehicles. He confirmed these requests and that a few days before the scheduled training, he would pick up the ammunition and augment it with the ammunition we already had at the palace.

The first platoon to run through the training was the Mortar Platoon; however my personal qualifications and lack of experience forced me to bring in my battalion's Mortar Platoon Leader, First Lieutenant Dave Smith, who was a trainer in 3rd

Kandak. He was Mortar Leaders Course qualified and had numerous mortar LFXs under his belt, so he was perfect for the job.



**Figure 3-6**

The XO had the trucks loaded with all the ammunition and the troops were ready to go when we arrived at the palace. We drove down to KMTC and signed for the range and continued down to Pol-e-Charki range 2A. The first classes had the soldiers focus on the basics and consisted of basic range estimation and registering a mortar system. The range estimation class went well, but the mortar registration class did not go that well. There was difficulty understanding the concept. Because we were using direct lay and direct alignment, the troops could see where the mortar was landing, so they would adjust the rounds visually and get the rounds on target. Because of this, LT Smith and I decided to move the mortars down into a wadi where the mortar men could not see where the mortar was landing, and we had one of the scout teams that were out providing security call the adjustment in over the radio. This worked much better; the mortar would be directly aligned with the target, and the platoon leader would call instructions over the radio, using his charts, after estimating the range to the target, using a map. Then, they would fire a round, the scout would call adjustments, and the mortars would fire another round. Once on target, the scout would call fire for effect, the mortar platoon leader would give all the adjustments to the other guns, and then they would fire a 16-round

volley or four rounds out of all four tubes. The scout would call target destroyed and then give them another target.

The Mortar Platoon also performed the mortar out of action drill that was really impressive. The drill is performed when a mortar round is dropped into the tube, and it is not shot for any of a number of reasons. The drill was executed with everyone backing off the firing line and the assistant gunner (AG) going up after a few minutes and kicking the tube to try to get the mortar to drop if it was stuck in the tube. If nothing happened, he would come back, and after two minutes, the whole gun crew would go to the gun line, twist the mortar off the base plate and then unhook the tube from the bipod, and tip it forward until the AG could catch the live round. This was a scary drill to watch because it was extremely dangerous, but the mortar soldiers performed it more than 30 times to perfection.

The next drill we did was the mounted hip shoot which went exceptionally well. The platoon would be loaded into the two vehicles with two mortars loaded into each vehicle. They would drive up as if their convoy had just made contact, run off the vehicle, set up the mortars, and fire immediate suppression as fast as possible. We executed the drill five times, and each time the mortars had a faster time than the one before.

The last drill executed was a dismounted movement to a hip shoot. This was interesting to watch and was difficult for the Mortar Platoon, but it was satisfactory in the end. I set the movement up as a five kilometer uphill movement to the mortar firing point, with the soldiers carrying the mortar tubes and a rucksack. Being at 6,500 feet of altitude really took a toll on the soldiers. The platoon leader started the movement with gun sections together and the ammunition bearers (ABs) providing security. He used a huge wadi running off the mountain to cover and conceal his movement to the mortar firing point (MFP). Once he got within 500 meters of the MFP, he popped out of the wadi and did a quick leaders recon with his PSG. While he was gone, things got interesting. Soldiers took off their helmets, boots, and blouses and went to sleep. I made a mental note of this and continued with the training. Once the mortars got into place at the MFP, it was almost as if the soldiers had forgotten everything they had learned; there were all kinds of problems. I decided to have them restart 500 meters back, and this time, they performed well, but I had plenty of comments for the AAR.

Sayed Mohammed had been on my hip, observing training, and I had taught him the after action review (AAR) process during one of our officer training sessions so I let him lead it, and I would add comments during the AAR. I chastised the soldiers for losing focus while their platoon leader was doing his leader's recon, explaining to them that whenever they are in a combat environment, their senses always needed to be sharp because that is when the enemy attacks. I also praised them for their improvement since the first time I had seen them go through their drills, and that it was the responsibility of the NCOs to maintain this training by doing the mortar battle drills as often as possible.

One technique I used was that after we would eat dinner, I would take the platoon out for a long foot march to a grid point and establish a patrol base. I demonstrated this for the platoon leader and NCOs the first night and had them execute the second night. It really took advantage of the time they had away from the palace to train, and they enjoyed walking at night when it was much cooler. This gave them an opportunity to work on movement formations and setting up and establishing a patrol base, but most importantly improving their field craft. I did this with every platoon, and it really boosted their confidence and reinforced the training we had done at the palace.

The SPG-9 Platoon was the next platoon to train at Pol-e-Charki and I was most confident in their abilities of all the platoons. The platoon started with digging a standard SPG-9 crew fighting position. This was intended to take a long time to show just how much time it takes to dig the position. Once the position was finished, I had the soldiers practice their SPG-9 crew drills and then conduct dismount and setup drills for the best time; the crew with the best time would be the first to fire from the SPG-9 position. The crew that won did so in an amazing fashion, demonstrating that the crew drill practice was working. The platoon used the rest of the day, engaging tank hulks from the hillside where they had dug the SPG-9 fighting position. That night, I had them do a five-kilometer movement to a wadi and, then the next morning, do an anti-armor ambush on the tanks right as dawn was rising. The SPG-9 platoon lived up to all my expectations, and I was extremely pleased with their range time. Sayeed Mohammed made the same comments during the AAR.



Figure 3-7

The Scout Platoon was last to go through range training; it only had enough soldiers to actually train two scout teams, but we made the most of it by jamming the schedule with as much training as possible. I first had the scouts practice movement formations and then go through the break contact drill. SSG Sandoval and I had set up some silhouettes inside of one of the wadis, and we had the platoon patrol up to the wadi and make contact or “be seen” by the silhouettes. Then, the scout team would break contact by bounding back, while using suppressive fires. During the crawl phase we did not use ammunition. We did about 10 iterations between the two scout teams, and when they were finished, they looked exceptional. I would AAR every break contact drill right after they performed it and tell them what corrections they needed to make for the next iteration. It was fast and furious, but we never had a single incident where there were any safety issues.

At night, I would take the scouts out and reinforce their stealth abilities by having them observe a nearby village and report back to me what they were seeing. This went really well, and the second night, I had them go out on their own and report back to me via the radio what they observed. In the morning, I would do an AAR and tell them what they did right and what they needed to improve on for the future. Overall, I was pleased with the scouts’ improvement and grasp of the concepts and looked forward to one day maybe seeing them perform their new observation skills.

### **Future Operations**

Toward the end of August, word came down that we would assume some missions, working jointly with the SOF in Kandahar. The first company to go would be 2nd Company, and then at the end of September, my Weapons Company would assume the mission. SSG Sandoval and I were to go along to be the liaison officers between the SF and my ANA company. Sayeed Mohammed and I realized that we needed to do some light infantry training because we would not be used as a weapons company but

rather a light infantry company. To get prepared for this mission, Sayeed Mohammed and I made a training plan where we would do two weeks of training, the first being a round robin training event with three separate stations and the second being platoon LFXs assaulting an objective. This would all be done at the Kamari Brick Ranges. The three separate stations would be establishing a checkpoint to search vehicles, patrolling, and cordon and search operations.

The ranges went very well. The most notable event was the checkpoint which we set up in a real situation on a major road and captured a few weapons just outside Kabul. The LFXs also went well, with each platoon doing two iterations and finishing the LFX with a company seizure of an objective with platoons bounding online after dismounting trucks. After the ranges, the company XO and I started gathering the ammunition and supplies we would need for the mission. Word had come down that we would fly via three C-130 flights to Kandahar in the southeast of the country, but no one had told me what the mission would be or what the ANA soldiers would be doing. Some news finally came when a SOF team linked up with me and SSG Sandoval at Camp Phoenix. I met the team sergeant, "Jim," and he said he would escort us down to Kandahar. He also said that he would tell us our mission when we got down to Kandahar and that we needed to focus on getting the company all set to fly down to Kandahar. This was easy, and the soldiers were excited to get on an airplane because most of them had never flown before in their lives. I was on the last flight with part of the SOF team; the soldiers were exceptionally excited and nervous, but they really enjoyed themselves on the flight.

Once in Kandahar, we stayed for a few days at the American base and ran some local security patrols to let the local people see the ANA. I was a little concerned with the sitting around and the lack of a real opportunity to do some missions, so I kept the soldiers gainfully employed by doing movement to contact drills and running checkpoints. After about three days, we moved by truck to the Zabul province north of Kandahar. Everything went uneventfully, and the soldiers did a superior job of being friendly with the locals while being professional about all their actions.

I still had not received an idea about what our mission was going to be but knew that we were going to be working in the Zabul province as requested by the local governor, Hafizullah Hashami. He wanted to demonstrate and flex the power of the

central government because the local Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) had not been doing much to curb the intertribal fighting in the province and the police forces had been ineffectual. In addition, Highway 1 from Kandahar to Kabul was being paved by foreign contractors, and they kept being attacked by vigilantes and robbers. The governor believed that the presence of the troops would stem the violence and help to increase his power base, while at the same time serve notice to the AMF that its days of providing security in this particular region were numbered. I had received this information in Kabul and was looking forward to dinner that night at the governor's house once we arrived in Qalat (Zabul's provincial capitol).

When we arrived in Qalat, we went to the AMF compound in a fortress on top of a hill that overlooked the city. We arranged with local AMF commander, Sher Allahm, for some lodging for the SOF team and the ANA company. Sayeed Mohammed immediately set out security and positioned soldiers all around the fortress as if he had been doing it for years. Sayeed Mohammed, "Chief" (the SOF team leader), and I walked the perimeter and discussed defensive positions and how the ANA company should be arrayed. Chief was extremely impressed by Sayeed Mohammed and the way he had set out security and only made a few adjustments to the perimeter we had established.



**Figure 3-8**

After getting established, we had to go down and meet the governor and discuss his ideas of what needed to be done and what issues he had that he would like us to

address. The first person I met at the governor's house was his secretary who seemed to be the person really running the province. He always seemed to know what was going on and would do anything to support our operation. I set up feeding the ANA through the secretary. He would buy the food, supply the cooks, and ensure that everything was good. Governor Hafizullah Hashami was an outsider as far as the locals of Zabul were concerned; especially after he was appointed governor of Zabul after the old governor was fired by President Karzai. He was originally from Kandahar and believed that all of the people in Zabul "were peasant dirt farmers of no consequence." I spent a few minutes with Chief and Zahir, who had made the trip with me, talking to the governor about any recent security problems in the province. He said that there had been a district police station overrun by the Taliban about six hours north of Qalat, in the town of Saygaz, and there had been rumors of several high ranking Taliban moving through and living in the province. I took what he said and made sure Chief was informed of the information he had provided.

That night, Chief explained our mission to me, which was essentially getting the ANA out into the Zabul province and getting them as much exposure as possible to show the legitimacy of the government. In addition, we were to help secure the workers working on Highway 1 by doing daily patrols along the road. The last mission which Chief said we were to do was hunt for high value targets (HVTs), and this turned out to be the primary focus of the SOF team. It was interesting to hear the intelligence he was giving me and the information he had about the province, but I was not allowed to tell the ANA. I kind of hated how secretive the SOF operators were being about everything, but I understood the team was unsure of me, and they did not trust the ANA.

For the next week, the ANA executed a number of dismounted foot patrols that were very successful. They also established numerous checkpoints along Highway 1 and took down one illegal checkpoint that was taking money from the civilians to let them pass. There were a number of weapons collected from the illegal checkpoint as well as some from the checkpoints that we had established. I was extremely pleased with the execution of both of these operations, and the people responded well to the ANA because of their professionalism and fairness. The local people were amazed to see all the ethnicities that were working together, that they did so professionally, and that they did not loot or mistreat the civilians. The ANA's presence was definitely paying dividends so much so that the governor came to see me and thank me. I told him to thank Sayeed Mohammed and to give him the credit he deserved.

After a week of doing minor missions around the area, the ANA set out to do a major mission in the De-Chopan District of the Zabul Province. The trip was about eight hours along a very dusty trail. When we reached the village, we did numerous cordons and searches of buildings and worked with the local government officials to help with patrolling the district. I was extremely pleased with the execution of the cordon and search. We had practiced this operation in Kabul, and I was a little

wary of the execution. I was also pleased with the treatment of the civilians which was a concern to me because of the many different ethnicities in the ANA. I did not know if a Pashtun civilian would be upset to be searched by a Hazara soldier. Everything seemed to work itself out though, and Sayeed Mohammed and his officers and NCOs were the primary reason. There were numerous other operations that went on in De-Chopan, including multiple joint operations to seize HVTs and other security missions before we returned to Qalat.

When we returned to Qalat, we retrieved all of our equipment, packed up, and took the long road back to Kabul. It was mostly an uneventful trip back to Kabul except for a flat tire. Once we reached the palace, the entire Kandak had lined the streets to cheer us as we arrived at the palace. I shook the battalion commander's hand and returned to Camp Phoenix. At Camp Phoenix, I was greeted by MAJ Kneram who informed me that a Canadian training team was taking over 1st Kandak and that I would be leaving in a couple of weeks. I was disappointed about this but understood it was time to move on.

I could not have been more pleased with the accomplishments of the Weapons Company and believed that the Canadians would receive well-trained soldiers to continue in their training. I said good-bye to Sayeed Mohammed and his officers and NCOs and wished them well. He thanked me and told me I was always a welcome guest in his house, no matter where it was. I took these words to heart and told him at some point I would return to Afghanistan and looked forward to that day. I learned a great deal about myself, soldiers, the warrior spirit, and the strength of man; many of these lessons I will always remember, and I will always volunteer to try to get back and help the people of Afghanistan.

### **Lessons Learned**

To conclude, I would like to focus on some of the most important lessons learned from training the ANA. These lessons are specific to my experiences with the ANA but can be used when training any foreign army.

The most important lesson I learned was the understanding of the culture of the Afghan people. At first, it was very difficult to know what to say and how to act without offending the Afghans. It was a learning process that was more of a trial and error scenario. It is essential that the trainer makes an active effort to learn the most predominant language, the different ethnicities and how they interact, the history of the country, and the many different cultures of the people. It would benefit the trainer to do a country study and have language classes at home station. Unfortunately, none of the trainers had these opportunities before they left, so it was very difficult. I would spend my nights at Camp Phoenix on the internet, reading history of the country and learning the different cultural aspects of the country, but this did not compare to what I learned when interacting with the Afghans during the day. After about four months, I had taught myself enough of the language that I could hold a conversation and not need an interpreter when talking

to the Afghans. Another possibility is to have good interpreters teach soldiers as much as possible about the country and the language.

It is very important that the trainers learn about the weapons systems and their capabilities. We had a huge benefit of having the SOF team there, who knew the weapons and were able to train us up on them. This is a very important; it is impossible to train someone how to shoot if the trainer does not understand the weapon system. We commanded immediate respect from the ANA by being able to demonstrate knowledge of the weapons. Once again, if the trainer can get a hold of the weapons at home station, it would be beneficial to shoot those weapons and know all the weapon's capabilities.

Paying the Kandak was exceptionally difficult. The best advice I can give is to have a system and make sure that all money given out has multiple documentations. We had a really good program, but there was nothing that could prepare us for this operation, and it is very difficult to make sure there are always proper documentations, or you will be paying out of your own pocket.

It is important to have clear cut training goals when training a foreign national army. The training should be geared toward a goal or give the soldiers capabilities to operate in the environment to which they are suited. Guidance from higher headquarters on where the unit needs to be or what exercises they need to execute to get where they need to be is always good and helps to develop the training. In all cases, you should try to teach your counterpart what you are doing so that he can assume that leadership responsibility.

Take full advantage of the operational environment for training the soldiers. This will make the jump from doing training exercises to combat missions less significant and get the soldiers used to the stress. I used roads close to where we were training to establish traffic control points and vehicle searches for practice but in a real situation. As a result, when we went out to questionable areas, the soldiers did an exceptional job of establishing these TCPs and had no problem transitioning to doing it realistically in a questionable environment.

Interpreters are key to the success of the trainer. I cannot stress this point enough; although it is a paid position, often times, the interpreters anticipated my answer or already understood what I wanted and it made my job easier. It is exceptionally important to have great interpreters who will help with translation and answer questions that the soldiers have; it saves you a lot of time. If at all possible, choose your own interpreters and make sure they are loyal and have a good grasp for all the languages of the country.

*Captain Charles Di Leonardo was commissioned out of Saint Mary College—Leavenworth, Kansas, through the University of Kansas ROTC in May 1999. He was previously assigned to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry "Polar Bears" and Task Force 1-87 Infantry of the 10th Mountain Division.*

## Chapter 4: Hoosier Red Legs Train Afghan Kandak: Semper Gumbi

By Majors Kellard N. Townsend, Jonathan E. Marion, Joseph W. Boler  
and Captain Madison M. Carney, INARNG

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*The chapter explains how a National Guard artillery unit assumed the mission of training Afghan Infantry battalions. The authors identify flexibility, cultural awareness, and a willingness to learn new skills as important traits for advisors. The assertion that all U.S. military personnel possess the fundamental skills to train foreign military is also made in this article.*

“Chotur as ti?” [“How is your health?”]

“Khub. As, ti?” [“Good. And Yours?”]

“Bkhail as. Ti?” [“(and) Your body fitness?”]

“Bkhail. Jonny jur as?” [“Healthy. And your well being?”]

“Jur as. Ti?” [“It is well. And yours?”]

“Khub, tashakur.” [“Good, thank you.”]

These repetitive Afghan greeting phrases are now standard for a number of Redlegs from the three Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG) artillery battalions: 3d Battalion, 139 Field Artillery (3139 FA), in Crawfordsville, part of the 38th Infantry Division Artillery; 2150 FA in Bloomington, a corps support battalion; and 1163 FA in Evansville in direct support (DS) to the 76th Infantry Brigade (Separate). The Hoosier Redlegs are deployed to Afghanistan until August 2005. Yet none of the phrases used to execute the missions are fire commands or elements of a call-for-fire. This is because none of the Hoosier Redlegs are involved with artillery missions or artillery training.

All are mentors to the Afghan National Army (ANA) infantry kandaks (battalions), serving in both battalion staff and company advisor positions. These nonstandard missions represent the continuing evolution of the role of the Field Artillery in the contemporary operating environment (COE).

In March 2004, plans were finalized to send the 76th Brigade to Afghanistan to lead Task Force (TF) Phoenix III. The TF had embedded training teams to accomplish its mission: advise, train and mentor ANA officers and NCOs from the corps down to company levels. This training was conducted “down range” and at training centers in Kabul: Kabul Military Training Center and Pole Charki Compound. Each team consisted of 12 to 18 officers and NCOs from up to 17 different states for a total of more than 400 trainers.

## **CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED**

Indiana provided the bulk of the infantry embedded trainers (six kandak teams) with 20 percent of the infantry officer slots filled by Hoosier artillery officers.

While one would like to think these artillerymen were chosen for their knowledge of infantry tactics and flexibility, the truth is closer to a need for any combat arms officers. With increasing deployments and commitments, Indiana found itself short of senior infantry captains and majors.

**General Organization.** Organized much like a fire support or an observer/ controller (O©) training team, each kandak team advises its respective Afghan Army counterpart. The team has two advisors (officer and NCO) per line company (tulai) and an advisor each for the headquarters and headquarters company (HHC), S1, S3, S4, XO, sergeant major and kandak commander.

Similar to fire support, the embedded training teams are the liaison between the kandaks and U.S. forces from the 25th Infantry Division (Light) out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; special operations forces (SOF) and Marines; and forward observers (FOs) for artillery and close air support (CAS). The team also coordinates with German, Romanian and Mongolian embedded trainers.

The embedded teams provide emergency purchasing power for the kandaks, deploying on missions with \$50,000 at a time. This money buys the kandaks fuel, building supplies and the Afghan equivalent to rations: rice, milk, and goats.

Helping is a pool of interpreters, called “terps” or tarjimans, who range in age from 18 to 45. Many have grown up in Europe or Pakistan during the Russian occupation, civil war or Taliban regime. They all speak at least two of the Afghan languages in addition to English.

While Afghanistan has as many languages as all of Europe, the primary ones are Dari (Farsi) and Pashto. The ANA uses Dari and most of the southern province civilians speak Pashto. In addition, the terps must understand U.S. military jargon, a difficult task for anyone.

**Functions.** On one embedded team for the 3d Kandak, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps (3/1-205 Kandak) (Nightfighters), artillerymen make up 25 percent of the team. They serve as mentors for HHC and the 2d Tulai Commander, S1 and S4.

On another team, 2/1-205, the kandak commander, S3 and S4 mentors are Redlegs. On a third, ½-205 Kandak, two of the three tulai mentors are experienced artillery staff officers.

The tulai mentor’s primary mission is advising the tulai commander and his first sergeant on individual and collective training as outlined in Field Manual 7-8 Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad, administration and attendance procedures,

logistics planning and accountability, and leadership as outlined in Field Manual 22-100 Army Leadership.

One focus is the use of military decision making process (MDMP) at the tulai level. This is coupled with after-action reviews (AARs) following training exercises, combat patrols, village assessments and larger combat operations and stability and support operations (SASO).

The secondary mission is training tulai NCOs and officers in their duties and responsibilities. Critical to this is fostering the ability for individual decision making at the platoon and squad levels.

The ANA has experienced a mixture of leadership training—Russian, Mujahidin and French—none of which are very compatible with the U.S. philosophy of individual initiative. This proves to be one of the toughest challenges. Not only does this mixture of military styles affect how the team trains the company, it also affects how the team monitors attendance, slots modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) positions and plans missions.

A third nonstandard mission for the tulai mentors is in field ordering officers/pay agents (FOO/pay) operations. Each team is trained on the drawing, spending and clearing procedures for operational funds (OPFUNDS) of \$50,000 dollars in Afghani (roughly 2,350,000 Afghanis). These funds often directly support kandak and tulai logistics at both base camps and on missions.

Budget constraints and attempts at fiscal responsibility drive what the FOO/ pay teams can purchase. These purchases are managed directly by a kandak staff mentor, usually the S4, and processed through TF Phoenix J4. During an initial occupation of an area or on an extended mission, much of the team's time can be taken up by FOO/pay activities rather than actual mentoring.

At the kandak level, embedded mentors' primary mission is to implement cohesive staff operations, supervising mission essential task list (METL) development and the MDMP. Again, the previous military leadership models of the kandak soldiers are barriers to this implementation.

For example, during combat operations, decisions and planning often take place in the mind of the kandak S3 or XO only and then are disseminated to the commanders and staff. While this is a direct, clear approach, it creates a reactive environment for the staff.

At the kandak level, the mentors' secondary mission is to develop each staff officer and staff section. While many kandaks have good accountability of personnel and equipment, they have not developed clear disciplinary actions for soldiers' failing to show up or losing equipment.

## CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED

A third mission is to help manage and pay ANA personnel, which is in excess of one million dollars each month. As in our Army, a soldier's pay and record keeping are critical retention tasks.

Hoosier Redlegs serve as S4 mentors in four infantry kandaks and for a brigade (lewa). Of all the mentors deployed from Indiana, those in the artillery have the most experience with battalion-level logistics. Most have served either as S4s, headquarters and headquarters battery (HHB) commanders or battalion motor officers, and all have extensive experience in the battery XO position. Most of the infantry mentors come from line unit command slots or secondary staff positions.

Logistics for the ANA is based on donations from various countries, primarily former Soviet satellites and eastern countries eager for a new market. This results in a fill-or-kill system of supply (fill immediately or kill the requisition) for Class II, V, VII, VIII and IX, which does not keep pace with the needs of the forward-deployed kandaks. U.S. supply assets or OPFUNDs are used for Class I, III, VIII and IX. Due to the Afghan terrain and sudden mission shifts, supplies often are available only by cash purchase from an Afghan vendor.

The kandak transport vehicles include U.S. 2.5 ton trucks, Russian Kamaz and Zil trucks, Chinese Hinos, German Mercedes, European Ivecos and Indian Tatas while the nontactical vehicles include Ford Rangers, Russian Jeeps, Indian Mahindra Boleros and Toyota Land Cruisers for ambulances. This makes Class IX ordering difficult and prescribed load list (PLL) maintenance a major challenge.

In August 2004, only one half of the 5/1-205 Combat Service Support (CSS) Kandak performed support functions. The other half of the kandak served as infantrymen. This was true for the other CSS kandaks as well. Only in the second quarter of 2005 has a conscious effort been made to train and use the CSS kandaks in other than infantry roles.

**TrainUp.** Before deploying, the 76th Brigade embedded trainers trained at Camp Atterbury Maneuver Training Center (CAMTC) outside Edinburgh. The training consisted of three phases: standard Soldier tasks, embedded trainer tasks, and an in-country orientation. See the figure on Page 76.

Key Traits for Success as Embedded Trainers. Success depends on a number of personal traits. These traits, for the most part, are those ingrained in every artilleryman at FA Officer's Basic Course (OBC). Some have been developed through civilian occupations or individual experiences. Also important for success were some military skills.

Flexibility. This trait is the hallmark of the embedded trainer mission. With changes in focus and mission occurring daily in both the ANA and U.S. forces, flexibility allows the trainer to maintain both his sanity and focus on the kandak level.

Willingness to Learn. Such a trait sets the example for the officers and soldiers being mentored. Whether it is a function check on an AK47 rifle, a crew drill for the SPG9 antitank gun or a demonstration of how to use pepper and egg white to stop a radiator leak, opportunities to learn present themselves daily.

Self Evaluation. This is a related trait. Realizing personal areas of strengths and weaknesses allows the trainer to continue development. While mission AARs help the tulai and kandak, self AARs enable the mentor to better advise and coach the ANA.

Infantry Tactics Proficiency. All officers must be proficient in basic infantry tactics. Whether training or in an actual operation securing the firing position or conducting a dismounted patrol or a cordon and search, artillerymen must be prepared to call, "Follow Me!" and be followed.

Physical Fitness. This complements the growing role of artillerymen as infantrymen. It is the basis for survivability in Afghanistan.

**Cultural and Religious Knowledge.**

<b>Phase I: Basic Soldier Tasks</b>	
• Mission-Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP)	• Weapons Qualification
• Individual Mobilization Training (IMT)	• Driver’s Training
• Mine Marking and Minefield Extraction	• Physical Fitness
<b>Phase II: Embedded Trainer Tasks</b>	
• Combat Lifesaver Skills	• Use of an Interpreter
• Mortar Call-for-Fire	• Checkpoint Operations
• Squad Live-Fire Assault on an Objective	• Dismounted Patrols
• Operations of Tactical Satellite Radios for Close Air Support (CAS)—Harris 117 and 150 Defensive Driving (J-turns, Deadman Exchanges and Reverse Handbrake Turns)	
<b>Phase III: In-Country Orientation</b>	
• Afghanistan—geographically, geologically, socially, politically and militarily. It is a complex country as the result of standing at the crossroads of Asia for thousands of years. The country is divided by the Hindu Kush Mountains, deserts and dry river beds waiting for spring floods.	
• The people are divided by distinct ethnic and religious lines with the only common point of reference the Afghan National Army (ANA).	
• The ANA is an army influenced by the Russian communist model, Mujahidin tactics and organization, British instructors for soldiers, French instructors for officers and U.S. mentors “down range.” This polyglot of military styles often creates confusion and friction in expectations and standards.	

**Figure 4-1.** Three phases of predeployment training for the Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG) trainers of the 76th Infantry Brigade (Separate) who are embedded in Afghan Kandaks.

These add a new dimension to the battlefield. Artillerymen currently are executing missions demanding the ability to think outside a military context. Information officers target civil issues and unrest. Embedded trainers interact daily with civic leaders and businessmen. Demonstrating understanding of others lowers cultural barriers and increases opportunities for mission success.

Lessons Learned. The key embedded trainer lesson is the same one artillerymen are learning in every theater of operation: *Semper Gumbi* (Always Flexible). Like no other branch, the FA is required to take on tasks outside its normal lanes. From infantry tactics to landing zone (LZ) preps to civil affairs management, embedded

trainers cover more ground and more nonmilitary occupational specialty (MOS) specific tasks than any other branch.

As embedded trainer Redlegs, we have learned other important lessons from this deployment that are applicable to all.

Individual mobilization training (IMT) and squad live fire training provide the individual warrior spirit and team fire control skills. As we continue to take on force protection and infantry missions, we must revisit the basic skills of the infantry Soldier. Our ability to engage the enemy, once again, is based on direct fire and close range actions.

Combat lifesaver (CLS) training is a must for every Soldier. The enemy can strike anytime, anywhere. Too often this training is neglected or only provided to a limited number of Soldiers. The skills gained allow the Soldier to act when a buddy goes down or a mine throws a vehicle off the road. The fog of battle is reduced and lives are saved when Soldiers know they can quickly dress a wound or prevent shock by giving an intravenous (IV).

The new environment in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) requires us to look at convoys from a totally different perspective. For artillerymen, conducting convoys is part of basic FA operations: move, shoot and communicate. We practice many tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) involving actions to be taken if a convoy is hit. Most focus on the convoy's ability to either fight through an ambush or stand and fight.

As the threat has changed from ambushing friendly forces to emplacing mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), so too have the TTPs changed to emphasize, among other things, site clearance and security, and medical evacuation procedures.

As we learn daily with the ANA, logistics is a showstopper if not properly forecasted, planned and executed. The key is not the numbers in the daily logistics and personnel reports, but what those numbers mean to push packs, short tons and numbers of vehicles to send on a log push.

Officers and senior NCOs also must be trained on nonstandard logistics—OPFUNDS and purchase request and commitment (PR & C) forms. These are the methods maneuver units use to extend their influence over civil affairs and civilian reconstruction projects.

The time to train is not two days before a unit deploys by air to a remote portion of a foreign country—it is now.

The role of the artilleryman in battle is a dynamic, everchanging one. From effects cells in Iraq to infantry embedded trainers in Afghanistan, Redlegs must prepare for every contingency. As missions change, so must training and mindsets.

To be the King of Battle calls for political savvy, logistical planning and the ability to perform any task anywhere as well as or better than those formally trained in that task. Semper Gumbi!



## Chapter 5: Marines Are From Mars, Iraqis Are From Venus

Major Ben Connable  
First Marine Division G-2  
30 May 2004

**Introduction:** Marines find themselves regularly frustrated by the behavior and reactions of the Iraqi people. There are very fundamental cultural differences between Americans and Arabs, but for a variety of reasons these differences are exaggerated between the Marine tribe and the Iraqi tribe. Our fundamental differences lead to fundamental misunderstandings. As we enter a period of ambiguity leading up to the transition, it may be helpful to look at how we deal with our Iraqi counterparts from a fresh perspective. American Marines and Iraqis are hardwired at far ends of a cultural void not by genetics, but by social conditioning.

*These descriptions are necessarily simplified, skewed and hyperbolic toward the ideal to make a point. No two people are the same, not everyone lives up (or down) to the ideal. I've used very sweeping generalizations that may not match preconceived notions or reflect common wisdom on the nature of our two cultures. Both the Iraqi and the American people share the same human spark. Not every American or Iraqi will find themselves in these descriptions. The purpose of this paper is to help Marines in the Al Anbar Province find patience and understanding to help an embattled people.*

### AMERICAN MARINES

People in general are hardwired to see obstacles or problems, find solutions for those problems, and execute those solutions. The American culture reinforces this natural instinct in what most other cultures consider an extreme manner. Americans focus on winning, achieving, succeeding, and producing. Our children learn and play aggressive, competitive sports from a very early age.

For example, football, arguably the most popular and widely played American sport is a linear, aggressive, goal-oriented endeavor that usually ends with concrete results. This is a simple construct that satisfies our basic needs. We see a problem (the other team, the goal line), we see a solution, (drive forward, score more points), and we can easily envision an end state — unambiguous victory. Ties are a disappointment, not a means to an end. In professional football we have done away with ties entirely because they don't satisfy our Manichean need for a concrete solution.

As children, most of us are taught that lying and cheating are wrong, and that "honesty is always the best policy." You might say that "honor" to an American means never quitting, never betraying your word, living up to a high standard of performance and behavior. "Honor" on the athletic field means playing by the rules

and giving your best performance no matter what the conditions. People who give excuses for poor performance are deemed weak and are shunned.

When we are presented with challenges, we are expected to overcome them with personal initiative. People who overcome personal disaster are held up as examples to the rest of us. The worse the disaster faced, the greater the comeback, the better the story. The skier who breaks both legs in a fall and drags himself five miles for help is a hero, but it's even better if he crawls all the way back to save his dog from an avalanche. Most Americans are generous to a fault, but we tend to lack respect for those who don't help themselves. Most of us can (still) relate to statements like, "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps," "Self-made man," "I don't take handouts."

We see ourselves as separate and distinct individuals. Choosing our own relationships, memberships, associations, and path in life, we see it as standard practice to move 3000 miles across the country, away from family and friends, to "start over." If we don't like our families, we simply dissociate ourselves from them and seek other relationships. We marry and divorce with impunity, and often without input from friends or family. We decide what is best for ourselves. If we fail, we're generally expected to view it as our own fault. We have responsibility to take care of our parents in their old age, but we often pay someone else to take this burden off our hands.

Most Americans are lucky enough to have a fairly high standard of living compared to the rest of the world. More than ninety percent of families can afford three full meals a day for their children and nearly everyone has an opportunity to go to school. Our safety is buffered by regulatory agencies that protect us from dirty water, dirty air, and even noise pollution. Although we have many bad neighborhoods, there is little threat from brutal torture, state-sponsored mass murder, oppressive martial law, or enemy invasion across our borders. Our health care isn't perfect, but our life expectancy is high and most of us feel good about our futures.

In fact, our ability to envision our future is one of our greatest strengths. Because most of our basic survival needs are met, we have the luxury of a long-term view. Retirement planning is a normal part of life. Most Americans envision their children going on to college, and have no reason to expect they won't be able to fulfill this expectation even if they have to take out student loans. We save money and plan our careers.

Our system of government gives us the perception that we also have a greater role in our collective future. Although many Americans say they feel disenfranchised, our ability to vote elected officials in and out of office gives us an avenue of participation. Our anger and frustration can be vented with the pull of a lever or a letter to our congressman. The fact that the congressman writes back and will probably look into each individual case would shock most people from the developing world.

The respect for the rule of law is the foundation of our way of life. We modify our daily behavior based on the belief that it's our responsibility to follow laws, we will be punished if we don't follow laws, and that most other people will follow laws. Law gives order, protects us from each other and from the government, and oftentimes from ourselves. Our faith in this system of laws is reflected in the amount of time we dedicate to following the creation of law in congress and the adjudication of law in the courts. Publicly, corruption is unacceptable, and when discovered it is usually rooted out.

We take great pride in being a free people. Our unquestioning belief in our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness make us uniquely American. Unencumbered by the shackles of tyranny, our hearts host the seeds of generosity and altruism. Most of us have an unfailing belief that we make the most of our freedom, living good lives, helping others and trying to live up to our personal standards.

Our altruism and earnestness often make us somewhat naïve. We expect that everyone else can see that our hearts are pure, and we expect them to play by the Marquis of Queensbury rules that we try to live by ourselves. When we find out that people in the rest of the world necessarily live by a more survival-oriented set of rules, we're often overly disappointed. We have trouble adjusting to other people's way of life because we think our way of life is the ideal. We have trouble seeing things from other people's eyes because we think they should always see things from our perspective.

Our sense of moral superiority comes from a real desire to help others and do the right thing, but it also gets in our way when we have to deal with those that live by more nebulous rules. Our earnest overtures are seen as false and naïve instead of moral and brave. Europeans cannot believe that we would sacrifice so much in Iraq just to prevent a WMD attack and to help the Iraqi people, because they would never do it themselves. If they have a hidden angle, we must have one too. Sometimes our lack of street smarts catches up to us. When we don't live up to our own expectations on the national stage, we are our own worst enemies. The shame-fest over Abu Ghraib is a case study in American guilt.

Our national character is built on high moral concepts that not many of us live up to, but most of us aspire to. Our nature is to be strong, moral, and productive. We set the bar high.

American Marines take these characteristics and drive them to a new level. With notable exceptions, we tend to be exceptionally aggressive, mission focused, and strong believers in the American ideal. We do not accept weakness, indecision, laziness, or incompetence because we know that these things lead to death in combat. We drive ourselves past normal points of endurance, often damaging our own bodies just to reach a finish line or save a buddy. We expect no less from anyone else, a point that often leads to friction with our old high school friends, our

families, and especially other Marines. We have been called extremists, and in many ways we are. Marines can best be described as “extreme Americans.

*American Marines have unusually high expectations.*

### **IRAQIS OF AL-ANBAR**

Although we don't like to call ourselves “Arabs,” the Iraqi culture is an Arabic culture. We are a communal people, and our lives revolve around our family; close, extended, and tribal. The paths of our lives are less lineal than the Americans, less “A to B,” more nebulous. Our sport of choice is also football, but not the American variety.

We play the sport played extensively everywhere in the world except America. Soccer isn't a direct, aggressive kind of sport like the game you play. In fact, we spend a lot of time kicking the ball backwards instead of towards the goal. Much time is spent on the field lining up shots, less time shooting. The goal is to win, but a tie is okay as long as it was a good tie. We often view a tie as a victory if it is against a better team.

Our perception of victory and success is often malleable to the circumstances. Our honor demands victory, we have trouble accepting anything less. We're not lying to ourselves; we just adjust the standards to fit the situation. The Gulf War was a victory for Saddam because we prevented you from driving into Baghdad. Despite the fact that we were losing on the field, Fallujah is a victory because you could not finish the attack — our will to hold out defeated your will to crush our forces. If you push us into a position where we have obviously lost, we become distraught and angry, and our honor demands that we seek a victory to balance things out. This is no different from you — Americans hate losing as well. It is different from you because to us it is all that matters.

This sense of honor permeates everything we do. This isn't the Western definition of honor; it's more like Hispanic honor. Perception of manhood is vital, and in fact it can be a matter of life and death. A man without honor gets no wife, often no work, and in Iraq he may be shunned or killed by his family depending on how grave the offense. Defending honor is part of our cultural heritage and it is a focal point for our behavior. We protect the virtue of our women and the pride of our family. We are disgusted that American men allow their women to act and dress like “sharmuta,” or whores. If our wives dressed in public like Brittany Spears we would kill them or burn them with cooking oil.

An Iraqi man unable to support his family has no honor and must take action to counterbalance this loss. It doesn't necessarily matter how we support our families as long as we provide. In many cases, we are pushed out the door by our wives to conduct attacks against the Coalition to regain our honor and to make money. An

Iraqi woman knows that a husband without honor is worthless to her and her children.

Saddam was a terrible father, but many of us loved him as an abused child loves the parents who beat him. We still act like abused children, playing one side against the other, looking for an advantage, support, and acceptance. We will play you against your boss, against the CPA, and against the government to get what we want. Don't expect loyalty from us, we are survivors. When we give loyalty to a cause it is to God's cause. When we give loyalty to people it is to our family.

When we are presented with challenges, we accept the fate prescribed by God. Acceptance of fate is an Islamic trait, and it guides almost everything we do. If we are poor, then it is Gods will that we are poor. If there is a task to be completed, then by the will of God it will be completed — In Sha Allah. In many cases, except for those of us educated in Baghdad or the west, we see no reason to put extra effort into succeeding beyond the norm. Getting by is good enough because that is our lot in life. We have basic expectations and these are tied into our honor — we need food, shelter, water, electricity, and medical help just like everyone else.

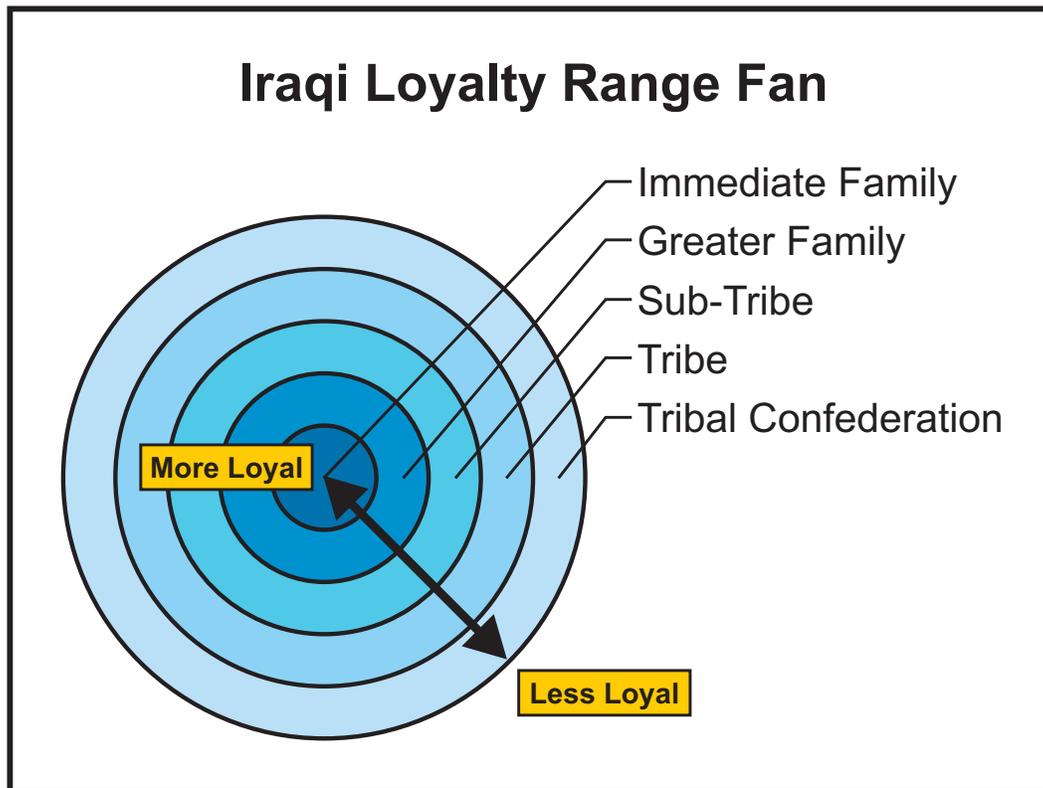
Don't expect any miraculous stories of hardship overcome, "personal best" in the Marathon, or an "I can make it on my own" attitude. These concepts are luxuries for people who live in pampered societies like America. Even when we are poor we have our families and that is enough to keep us happy. When you ask us to do something, we rarely think to ourselves, "Gee, how can I do a great job?" We are answering the call of our stomachs and our screaming wives. Some of us seek much more, many of us seek what we call a normal life.

Our families make us who we are. The family is everything, and only those on the margins of society live without family support. Because we live in a developing country, and our needs are more survival oriented than yours, we have to rely on common survival techniques. People group together to survive, to protect each other, to look out for each others interests. The closer the grouping, the closer the interest of the group. Our immediate families are most important to us, then our larger families, then sub-tribe, then tribe, then tribal confederation.

Our loyalty expands and contracts based on our survival needs, but we almost always work within this construct. If you kill or imprison one of us, you have taken some of our pooled resources and reduced our chance of survival. Because we survive as a group, an attack on one is an attack on all. This is why we demand blood money for death, injury, and damage. You must replace the resource you have taken from our pool to balance things out. As long as you recognize that need, we can work together. Here's a real-life example of how seriously we take our tribal resources:

The tribal feud started when three members of one tribe borrowed some money from a sheikh of another tribe. They had borrowed the money because they could

not find jobs to support their families. After allowing sufficient time for repayment of the loan, the sheikh attempted to collect the money he was owed by taking possession of a vehicle that the three borrowers had purchased in an attempt to start a small business carting groceries from the market to surrounding towns. An argument ensued between the two groups, and the sheikh threatened to harm members of the three men's families if they didn't repay the money. Upon hearing this, the three men shot and killed the sheikh. The sheikh's tribe immediately vowed revenge. Soon, all three of the borrowers had also been killed by a member of the sheikh's tribe. The feud will continue until blood money is paid, balancing out the losses on each side. Very much like your Hatfield and McCoy's, no?



**Figure 5-1**

Pooling resources and interest within a family means that there is little room for individualism. We rarely choose our own path in life. If a father owns a business, the son will almost certainly work for his father. If marriage to another tribe solves an inter-tribal conflict, we marry who we are told. Our parents pick our spouses, and we often have little or no input in who we marry. Only the rich and the elite choose their own life. This lack of individuality further reduces our sense of individual responsibility. Again, don't expect us to act like independent Americans.

Our tribalism is tightly bound to our sense of honor. Just as honor is vital to each one of us, it is also vital to the tribe. A dishonored tribe loses “wasta” and therefore influence. Less influence means less money, less power, less ability to support the members of the tribe. Therefore, a tribe’s honor is jealously guarded as a group resource. Mistreating a sheikh of our tribe makes him less powerful, making all of us less powerful. Less power means fewer contracts, less money, less food, angrier families. We must regain this honor any way we can. Because Iraqi tradition is violent, we often choose violence to regain our honor. If you dishonor our tribe, we have to negotiate with you... or attack you until our honor is restored.

We don’t ask for much. Our standard of living is low compared to the Western world. If you put us in the United States, most of us would fall well below your poverty level. Since the collapse of the economy last year, many of us cannot afford to feed our families without finding odd jobs, begging money from family members, or supporting the ACF. Look around — most of us live in humble homes, farming small plots with a few animals and a broken down car. If we have a big home, we may have had a good job before the war and now we have nothing and are twice as angry as our poor neighbors.

There are certainly rich people amongst us, but they don’t represent the majority. When you tell us you can improve our lives and make us rich, you have an image of your own homes in mind. Most of us cannot even imagine what your lives must be like in America, and we do not necessarily value what you value. We don’t dream of Outback Steakhouse. We are proud of our lives even if they don’t meet your expectations.

Unlike you, we do not enjoy the protection of concerned government leaders. Nobody cares if there is lead in our water or pollution in the air. Sometimes our leaders feign concern about our healthcare system, but that’s only because our harried tribal leaders take up our cry. Your system is so refined that every little whimper draws the ire of a champion congressman. Our system is so broken our raging screams barely make a sound. We must use the power of our tribes and our religious groups to effect any change, so again, if you weaken our affiliations you weaken our only hope of being heard.

Where you have been protected from invasion, martial law, and torture for nearly two centuries, we have experienced nothing but invasion, martial law, and torture for our entire lives. We have been in a state of almost constant warfare with either the US or with Iran. When we weren’t fighting you, we were fighting ourselves in the north and the south. Our sons and brothers were killed fighting to keep Saddam in power, and our lives seemed painfully short. At any time, a government official, police officer, or secret policeman could decide that we had done something wrong and have us killed. They might have to pay off some blood money, but so what?

Just as many of you have become callous about death in combat, we have grown up to be callous about death in everyday life. We are not the Baghdad elite. All of us

have seen animals slaughtered and have helped pull their guts from their bodies, so blood is nothing new to us. Beatings are a part of life, pain is a part of life, and death is an ever-present part of life. If pain and death are our lot in life, we accept that as part of God's plan. This is how we are able to accept money for a relative you have killed — we accept God's will, and you have balanced out our resources. What can we complain about?

Because our lives are so brutal, we have almost no capacity to view the long term. Our inability to envision our own futures is our greatest weakness. We are faced with a simple hierarchy of needs. One must breathe before he can think about shelter and security, shelter and security before water, water before food, and so on. It is only by building a normal, healthy society that you can extend that focus into the long range, to think about things like education, leisure time, investment, and retirement. You have heard our complaints. We want shelter, security, water, and food. Your talk about democracy and culture and prosperity mean little to people who are simply surviving.

With this short term view, if you give us money we spend it. If you give money to one of our public officials, he'll steal as much as he can because he doesn't even know if he'll have a job next week. He has to get more, now, to fulfill basic needs. He can't see into the long term, to see the effect his corruption will have on the future of his community. He may even be a good person, but he has to look out for his family first.

What you see as corruption we see as part of the normal process of doing business. Because most jobs underpay, we always take a cut. This is built into the price of the job. Iraq follows the trend of many other Arab countries — there aren't enough jobs for the expanding population so the government hires everyone. The government can't afford high salaries for so many people, so the pay is low. Because the pay is low, it's expected that you accept bribes and cheat to get by. Everyone knows the rules, even the government.

Typically, we'll take a slice of 10% to 15% off the top of a contract or a work order. Nobody will really get too upset if we keep things in this "normal" range. If we go too far, and take 30% or higher, then we know we are stepping over the line. However, unless you catch on we'll take what we can get. If you're too stupid to figure out what we're doing, it's your fault, not ours. There is no real shame in corruption; after all, we're looking out for our families as expected.

Corruption is natural in a country without the rule of law. We do not respect law the way you do because for us law comes from the end of a gun. In the absence of the gun, we try to respect our families and friends and live by God's will. If the government passes laws, or you give us a transitional law, we don't respect it because we don't respect the government. Government to us means corruption, violence, dictatorship, and rule by fear. In the absence of fear, there is no rule.

We know that Saddam lied to us often. We feel that he did this to protect us, but also to protect himself. We have never trusted our social institutions as much as we trust our families and our friends. It all comes back to the family and tribe. If the government tells us that the Americans are going to enter our town in peace, but our cousin tells us they are coming to murder everyone and rape our women, we will almost always believe our cousin. You have made many promises to us, but kept so few. Why should we believe you? In the absence of trusted institutions, our lives are ruled by rumor, and rumor is spread by word of mouth.

In such a nebulous society, where life is a tenuous prospect, we rarely take responsibility for our own actions. "Owning up" for our poor performance or behavior would be a stupid thing to do if it reduces our chance of survival and success. If we can put off our mistakes on others, we'll do it in a heartbeat not because we're lazy or incompetent but to avoid damaging our honor and possibly losing our jobs. Remember, without honor and a job, we are nothing. So we break a few rules and lie about our mistakes. We don't care about rules anyway; we do things to achieve an effect not because they're right or wrong.

We're masters of achieving effect. Everything we do is designed to coax, cajole, trick, or steer you into doing what we want you to do. This is a standard survival skill, one that you obviously haven't mastered. Your naiveté never ceases to amaze us. You either take us at face value, or you get mad when we "lie." It's not lying if you get what you want, and we almost always get what we want from you. We are in a constant state of negotiation, and there are no permanent solutions to any problem. You pretend to be so honest, but we see you as the biggest liars of all. You promised us security, jobs, and peace. All we have is crime, unemployment, and war. Who's the liar?

You may have noticed we have a very emotional nature. There's no imperative to control our emotions, and in fact we're encouraged to express ourselves. We wear everything on our sleeves, and we change our minds at will. We can be furious at you one minute when you offend us, and truly love you the next minute. Every death is a massacre, every accident a murder, every threat is an impending disaster.

Iraqis are complicated people. We can be kind, generous, and forgiving in the worst circumstances. If you are a visitor in our homes, we will feed you our last morsel of food. If you become a true friend, we will die for you. But we see no future for ourselves or for our families.

We are stuck in a rut, and we need someone who has the capacity to see a better future to guide us onto the right path. We may take your hand, or we may bite your hand because we do not trust you. It is on your head to be patient and forgiving, not ours. Do not expect us to be American Marines. If you expect too much from us, you will be disappointed. There is nothing worse than unmet expectations, my friend.

*Iraqis will never live up to the Marines' expectations because they are Iraqis, not American Marines. We haven't lived up to their expectations either.*

We freed the Iraqis from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, and by that action we have assumed responsibility for helping them along the road to recovery. This is a sacrosanct duty, and we cannot allow our personal frustrations to overcome our patience and dedication to their well-being. Understanding both the Marine culture and the Iraqi culture is the first step to envisioning a day when they are strong and healthy, and we can return to our friends and families knowing we've followed through on our inherent promise.

**APPENDIX: Army and Joint Doctrine related to  
Advising Foreign Forces**

**References:**

FM 31-20-3 Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Special Forces

FM 90-8 Counter-guerrilla Operations

FM 3-07 Stability and Support Operations

FM 7-30 The infantry Brigade

FM 7-20 The Infantry Battalion

FM 7-10 The Infantry Rifle Company

FM 7-8 The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad

FM 7-98 Operations in a Low Intensity Conflict

FM 41-10 Civil Affairs Operations

FM 3-06 Urban Operations

Joint Pub 3-07.1 Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense



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