United States Marine Corps Advisors

Past, Present, and Future

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Cover photo: A U.S. Marine police advisor on patrol with an Afghan policeman near Kajaki, Helmand province, 2013 (Photo: Sgt. Bobby Yarbrough, USMC).

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Executive summary

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) asked CNA to identify and analyze the capabilities, organization, and training required for advisory missions in the post-Afghanistan era. Key study questions included the following:

- What lessons should the Marine Corps take from its advisory experience in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- What insights can be derived from earlier Marine advisory missions in Central America, the Caribbean, and Vietnam?
- What are the professional characteristics of successful advisors and advisory teams?
- If the service decides to formalize advising as a core competency, what approaches should it consider adopting?

To answer these questions, the study explores the following:

- Marine training of constabulary forces during the 1915-1934 Banana War period
- Advising of the Vietnamese Marine Corps and local security forces from 1955 through 1972
- Marine advisory missions in Iraq and Afghanistan
- The Marine system currently in place to identify and train advisors and create advisor teams for Afghanistan and elsewhere

Our analysis of nearly a century of Marine Corps advising highlights a set of recurring challenges. Inadequate screening or selection of advisors, inadequate pre-deployment training, and language and cultural barriers were particularly recurrent issues, though poor quality local recruits, minimal logistical support and physical isolation, and difficult command-and-control arrangements were also prevalent in our case studies.

Additionally, we found that the lack of human capital within foreign security forces, an "officer first" mentality, and endemic corruption have been the rule rather than the exception. Advisors have also had to confront the fact that their foreign counterparts are free to accept or reject advisors' guidance as they see fit. Our study of contemporary advising illustrates that the success of the mission has often hinged on the ability of Marines to persuade, in many cases by providing (or sometimes withholding) logistical and other support.

Under current U.S. national security strategy and policy, it seems likely that Marines will continue to be called upon to advise security forces abroad. Given the relative ad hoc nature of the Marine Corps' advising efforts over the past hundred years, and the associated recurrent issues, a central question for senior Marine Corps leaders is whether the service should embrace advising as a permanent Marine capability, with associated resource (e.g., training and education) requirements, or whether it should continue as an ad hoc activity—with the strong likelihood that the recurrent issues of the past hundred years will continue.

In addition to identifying the key themes and challenges of past advising efforts, this report offers a set of recommendations senior Marine leaders should consider if they conclude that the service should make advising a core capability of the future Marine Corps:

- *Make advising a core mission essential task*—perhaps under the rubric "develop partner nation forces." Tables of organization and equipment (T/O&E) would then be revised to require Marines with advising skills to be assigned to the operational force, or trained to advisor standards once in the organization.[1] In effect, the ability to conduct advisory missions would become a requirement to which Marine resources, including personnel, money, and training, could be committed.
- *Create a free Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) for advising*: Creating a free MOS (FMOS) is a relatively simple way for the service to develop a more complete understanding of its advisor base; track advisors over time; and more easily identify Ma-

[1] The training and readiness (T&R) manual that guides pre-deployment training plans (PTPs) would therefore include advisor skills.

rines for future advisory missions. More broadly, an FMOS would send a signal across the service about the importance of advising and help overcome any perceptions that advising holds back the development of a Marine's career.

- *Retain structure for advisor training and education.* As a result of its experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps has created institutions for advisor training and education (i.e., the Advisor Training Group (ATG) and Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG), and to a lesser extent, the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL)). Retaining these institutions is a logical starting point for building an enduring training capability.

As our historical case study analysis shows, advising foreign nations' military forces has been a prominent part of the Marine Corps experience for roughly a century, and some of the most storied Marines had advising experiences in their formative years. As in the immediate post-World War II period, the service today is grappling with fundamental questions about how best to contribute to the advancement of U.S. national security. An understanding of the Marine Corps advisory experience—today, in the immediate past, and in earlier periods of history—should inform debate over the service's future direction.

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Introduction

After a decade of long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in a climate of shrinking defense resources, the Marine Corps is engaged in soul-searching about its future direction. As in the immediate post-World War II period, critics inside and outside the service worry that the Marine Corps has become a costly and unnecessary "second land army," and some argue that to survive and flourish the Marines should return to their amphibious roots.[2]

At the same time, senior Marine leaders continue to acknowledge the importance of other, non-kinetic activities and skills. For example, the Marine Corps commandant, in highlighting the need to enhance stability by assisting foreign security forces, stressed the need for "Marines who are not only fighters, but also trainers, mentors and advisors—roles requiring unique and highly-desirable skills."[3]

With this in mind, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) asked CNA to analyze and identify the capabilities, organization, and training required for advisory missions in the post-Afghanistan era. More specifically, study questions included the following:

- What lessons can the Marine Corps derive from its advisory experience in Afghanistan?
- What insights can Marine advisory missions in Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere provide as senior leaders prepare the Marine Corps for the future?

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[2] See for example Timothy Patrick, "Marines Return to Amphibious Roots," *American Forces Press Service*, December 15, 2010, www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=62116 (accessed June 20, 2013.

[3] "35th Commandant of the Marine Corps: *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, 2010," www.quantico.usmc.mil/uploads/files/CMC%2035%20Planning%20Guidance%20v.Q.pdf (accessed July 5, 2012).

- Given the changing international security environment, how should future advisor teams be formed, organized, and trained?
- Which Marines are likely to make the most effective advisors in these future environments? What are the individual characteristics and qualifications required to perform successfully on an advisor team?
- Which institutional changes, if any, should the Marine Corps consider to ensure it continues to provide effective advisor teams to the combatant commands?

An additional, larger question that emerged over the course of our analysis is whether the Marine Corps should continue to conduct advising in an ad hoc manner, or whether it should embrace advising as a core capability of the Corps.

To help set the stage for our analysis, it is worth first defining what advising is. According to military doctrine, advising is an activity that provides "relevant and timely" opinions and recommendations to foreign counterparts.[4] It focuses on the advisee's personal development (interpersonal and communication skills) and professional development (technical and tactical knowledge), in an attempt to create increased capability and capacity in the military forces of a foreign country.[5]

Advising has long been a part of the standard Marine repertoire—a relatively small part, when compared with the scale of combat operations, but significant nevertheless. In the early part of the twentieth century, Marines worked with local security forces in Latin America and the Caribbean, during the so-called "Banana Wars." During the Vietnam era, Marines were again involved in various advising efforts, to include the storied Combined Action Program (CAP). More re-

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[4] United States Army, *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Army, May 2009), p. 2-9. The Marine Corps has no specific advisory doctrine of its own. Instead, it uses both U.S. Army and joint doctrine. For more on advising doctrine, see Appendix I.

[5] United States Army, *Field Manual 3-07.*1, p. 7-5.

cently, the Marine Corps has been involved in large-scale advising efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan designed to create entirely new national armies and police forces in those countries. While advising efforts in Iraq have ceased, the Marine Corps continued to be involved in advising efforts in Afghanistan, as well as in other areas around the globe, most notably in the Republic of Georgia, parts of Africa, and in Southeast Asia.

As our analysis will show, these efforts were (or at least began) as largely ad hoc in nature, with the Marine Corps never choosing to embrace advising as a permanent core capability. As a result, a number of issues were recurrent throughout the last hundred years of Marine advising efforts: lack of adequate screening to identify those Marines most likely to succeed as advisors; lack of adequate predeployment training and education; and lack of cultural and language skills. Additional issues, such as unclear command and control (C2) structures, lack of adequate field support to advisor teams, and poor quality recruits from the host nation were evident in some, but not necessarily all, of the Marine Corps advising efforts of the past hundred years. Our analysis suggests that in general terms, the ad hoc approach appears to have limited the effectiveness of advisor missions.

Given current U.S. national security strategy and policy, it seems likely that Marines will be called upon again to advise security forces abroad, although probably not on the scale of Iraq and Afghanistan—at least not anytime soon.[6] Given the relative ad hoc nature of the Marine Corps' advising efforts over the past hundred years and the associated recurrent issues, a central question for the service's senior leadership going forward is whether the service should embrace advising as a permanent Marine capability, with associated resource (e.g., training and education) requirements, or whether it should continue as an ad hoc activity—with the strong likelihood that the recurrent issues of the past hundred years will continue.

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[6] For a review of strategy documents and their relationship to the future of irregular warfare, see Jerry Meyerle, Megan Katt, Patricio Asfura-Heim, and Melissa McAdam, *Irregular Warfare and the Marine Corps after Iraq and Afghanistan: Setting the Stage for Institutionalization* (CNA, 2013).

Structure of the report

This report is intended to provide essential context for service discussions about the future of advising. The first part of that context is historical. As mentioned above, Marines have carried out advisory activities throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Of course, the advisory experience varied, depending on time and place. But historical analysis, together with an examination of more contemporary advisory missions, can help us understand more fully what skills good advisors should possess; what kind of support they should receive; and how they can be employed most effectively.

The report begins with a review of Marine efforts to build local constabulary forces in Central America and the Caribbean during the so-called Banana Wars of the first three decades of the twentieth century. It goes on to examine the Marine advisory experience in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In each of these cases, the analysis identifies key themes and lessons, to include advisor qualities, shortfalls in advisor training, and language and cultural barriers, among others. The study then provides an overview of the current Marine Corps system for preparing advisors. The report concludes with ideas the Marine Corps might consider should the service decide to make advising a permanent part of the Marine security repertoire.

Several aspects of this study are particularly notable. First, it is the first attempt to look systematically across decades of Marine Corps advisory experiences in multiple conflicts. Although relatively recent, advisory missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are not universally well known, and advisory activities in Vietnam, and Central America and the Caribbean are even more obscure. Second, it makes use of a large variety of sources, including original interviews with Marines, official service documents, and memoirs of participants. Third, the study includes an analysis of U.S. Marine Corps personnel and training databases to develop a fuller understanding of the primary military occupational skills (PMOS) and rank of Marines who have received advisor training. Fourth, the study explores advisor training in depth, particularly with respect to interpersonal skills—the foundation of any productive relationship between advisors and their counterparts.

The U.S. Marine Corps, constabulary forces, and the "Banana Wars," 1915–1934

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, U.S. Marines were engaged on a nearly continuous basis in the so-called Banana Wars in Latin America and the Caribbean. Counter-guerrilla operations against what U.S. civilian and military authorities referred to as "bandits" were a prominent feature of these interventions. In Nicaragua (1912-1933), Marines fought irregulars led by Augusto César Sandino; in Haiti (1915-1934), Marines hunted down Caco rebels; and in the Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Marines suppressed anti-government forces. Marines like Lewis "Chesty" Puller and Smedley D. Butler rose to prominence within and beyond the Marine Corps as a result of their service in the Banana Wars. But offensive operations were only part of the Marine experience during this period. Marines also organized, trained, commanded, and advised local security forces: the Garde d'Haiti, the Policía Nacional Dominicana (PND), and Nicaragua's Guardia Nacional.[7]

As part of the forces of American occupation, Marines exercised considerable authority—not only over the indigenous forces they officered, but also over the provision of public services and other civilian functions. United States Marines in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan had the ability to influence military and civilian counterparts, but they had nothing like the direct power of their predecessors during the 1912-1934 period. That said, Marine experiences in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua foreshadowed challenges advisors would encounter later in the century: a lack of pre-deployment training; language and cultural barriers; and the low quality of many of the local recruits.

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[7] These forces were known by a number of different names during the Banana War period. For simplicity's sake, the names Garde d'Haiti, Policía Nacional Dominicana, and Guardia Nacional will be used.

Drawing on sources such as Marine Corps official records, the professional military literature of the period, and scholarly accounts, this section of the report focuses on three principal topics: the political and military context of constabulary-building; the training of local recruits; and the ways in which Marines adapted to meet the conditions and obstacles they encountered. This part of the report explores the Marine experience in all three of the Banana War coun-countries. However, most of the focus is on Haiti and the Dominican Republic—a reflection of the fact that the historical record on the building of Nicaragua's Guardia Nacional appears to be far more limited.

This historical portion of the report also examines two significant post-war advisory missions. In 1959, Marines returned to Haiti, this time in a strictly advisory capacity to rebuild the Haitian constabulary, which had deteriorated badly in the decades following the U.S. occupation. From 1955 to 1972, Marines served as advisors to South Vietnamese conventional and paramilitary units in what proved to be the largest advisory mission before Iraq. As in the section of the report focusing on the Banana Wars, this portion draws on Marine records, memoirs of participants, and the professional military literature to explore topics such as pre-deployment training, advisor skills, and the challenges of working with foreign counterparts in difficult conditions across language and cultural divides.

"The nightmare of continual discord"

The Banana War interventions were a response to perceived threats to American strategic, economic, and commercial interests.[8] According to President Theodore Roosevelt, too many of America's southern neighbors had "fallen into the revolutionary habit."[9] In the view of Roosevelt and his successors, American guidance and support was required to break this cycle of insurrectionary violence and factional fighting. Washington believed that American intervention would help dampen revolutionary passions, promote order and stability, and en-

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[8] Whitney T. Perkins, *Constraint of Empire: The United States and Caribbean Interventions* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 1-2.

[9] Quoted in Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), p. 201.

sure the survival and success of pro-American regimes.[10] The United States pursued this policy aggressively, intervening militarily in Latin America and the Caribbean some 35 times during the period from 1901 to 1934.[11]

Although the term had not yet been coined, the United States saw "nation-building" as a way to secure its political and economic interests in the region. Policymakers, diplomats, and military officers saw the creation of professional, apolitical, and centralized security forces as a cornerstone of the nation-building strategy.[12] Although some U.S. military officers preferred the creation of separate army and police forces, Washington ultimately insisted on forming hybrid police-army organizations known as constabularies. Organized along military lines, these forces—also known as gendarmeries—were intended to have an external defense role as well as responsibilities for law enforcement and internal security.[13]

American expectations for these forces were high, as illustrated in the U.S. Navy secretary's 1929 report to the president: the Guardia Nacional, he declared, was the "only entity of the Nicaraguan Government upon which reasonable hope for stability of internal affairs rests."[14] In Haiti, according to an in-house history of the Garde d'Haiti, the constabulary was envisaged as a palliative for the repub-

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[10] This period of intervention drew to a close during the first administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose "Good Neighbor" policy in the hemisphere renounced the right of the U.S. to intervene militarily in hemispheric affairs—a right first declared in 1904 by his cousin, Theodore Roosevelt. Mark T. Gilderhus, "The Monroe Doctrine: Meanings and Implications," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 2006), p. 13.

[11] Stephen G. Rabe, "The Johnson Doctrine," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 2006), p. 50. American Marines participated in some but not all of these interventions. For example, the first U.S. military occupation of Cuba (1906-09) was largely a U.S. Army affair.

[12] Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), p. 86.

[13] Martha K. Huggins, *Political Policing: The United States and Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 20.

[14] U.S. Navy Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930), p. 6.

lic, which had been tormented by the "nightmare of continual discord" ever since independence from France in 1804.[15]

Two important steps were required before a constabulary could be created. The first was pacification—that is, the suppression of organized resistance to established authority and the disarming of the civilian population. The second requirement was the disbanding of existing military and police forces, which were deemed as corrupt, incapable, and compromised. The *Small Wars Manual*, first published in 1940, distilled Marine lore and knowledge from the recently concluded Banana Wars.[16] According to the authors, "organic native defensive and law-enforcement powers" should be restored "as soon as tranquility has been secured," adding that "the organization of an adequate armed native organization is an effective method to prevent further domestic disturbances after the intervention has ended."[17]

In Haiti, the Marines carried out their gendarmerie-building mission with élan. Under the terms of a September 1915 Haitian-American treaty, the latter was responsible for raising a constabulary. Reflecting the dominant view of the time that "native" forces should be commanded only by whites, the agreement also stipulated that this new force would be commanded by Americans. Haiti would serve as a testbed for the Marines, who would soon begin raising and officering similar indigenous forces elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean.[18] Brigadier General Smedley Butler, who served as the first commander of the Garde d'Haiti after its creation in 1916, oversaw a

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15 Commandant of the Garde d'Haiti, *History of the Garde D'Haiti* (Port-Au-Prince: Headquarters, Garde d'Haiti), July 1934, p. 137, Historical Reference Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

16 U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (reprint of 1940 edition) (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, 1987). This manual never reached the status of official service doctrine. Even through the Vietnam era, when it would have seemed to have particular tactical and operational relevance, the manual was largely forgotten. Marine Corps interest in the publication revived in the late 1980s, when then-Commandant Al Gray helped propagate it throughout the service.

17 Ibid., pp. 12-13

18 Hans Schmidt, *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), p. 83.

force of 250 officers and 2,500 enlisted men. Throughout the occupation, these officers were overwhelmingly U.S. Marines, drawn primarily from the enlisted ranks and given temporary commissions in the constabulary—a practice also followed in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

A U.S. Marine inspects a Garde d'Haiti unit (Photo: Creative Commons)

"The scum of the island"

The initial intake of Haitian recruits hardly seemed promising. The service history of the Garde d'Haiti describes in a vivid way the challenges Marines faced:

> Marine officers and noncommissioned officers were entrusted with the work of creating, not from virgin material, but from warped, corrupted in part, and extremely ignorant material, a police and military force the mission of which would be to maintain peace and order throughout ten thousand square miles of territory composed largely of in-

> accessible mountains capable of sheltering all the malcontents in the Western Hemisphere.[19]

Recruiting local men to serve as officers proved to be a considerable challenge for the Marines. Haitian elites considered it infra dig for their offspring to receive supposedly demeaning American military training and to serve in a low-status public-order force.[20] This problem became more urgent later in the occupation as the United States adopted a policy of "Haitianization" that transferred security responsibilities to local authorities.

Marines were equally critical of the raw material they encountered elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Dominican Republic, one Marine officer characterized the local men initially inducted into the PND as "sensitive and high strung," "illiterate," and "the scum of the island."[21]

At first, few Marines seemed eager for duty in these sub-tropical, quasi-colonial settings. The prospect of active combat service in France after U.S. entry into the First World War in April 1917 proved irresistible to many Marines and as a result there was a considerable shortage of officers. With a world war raging, many enlisted men were also frustrated with Banana War service. As one officer who commanded Marines in the Dominican Republic recalled, enlisted men were "disappointed and disgruntled" to be serving in the Caribbean rather than fighting in Europe.[22]

For senior officers like Butler, Haitian service represented an opportunity for Americans to nurture and uplift an oppressed and backward people—a belief with obvious parallels to what French colonialists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries referred to as

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[19] *History of the Garde D'Haiti*, p. 36. Haitian enlisted men were reportedly riddled with intestinal worms, syphilis, and blood diseases. Ibid., p. 36.

[20] Schmidt, *United States Occupation of Haiti*, p. 86.

[21] Edward A. Fellowes, "Training Native Troops in Santo Domingo," *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1923.

[22] Quoted in Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic: 1916-1924* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), p. 31. The demands of the war in Europe also created logistical shortfalls for Marines in Latin America and the Caribbean.

their *mission civilisatrice.* Testifying before a U.S. Senate committee in 1922, Butler framed the occupation enterprise in terms of guardianship:

> [w]e were all imbued with the fact that we were trustees of a huge estate that belonged to minors. That was my viewpoint; that was the viewpoint I personally took, that the Haitians were our wards and that we were endeavoring to develop and make for them a rich and productive property.[23]

On a more mundane level, the Marine Corps offered additional pay, leave, rank benefits, and other blandishments to build enthusiasm for Banana War service. In the case of Haiti, duty there was framed as an opportunity to experience a charmingly exotic setting. After the European guns fell silent, Marines considered Latin America and the Caribbean to be desirable postings.[24] For some enlisted Marines, service as an officer in a "native" constabulary no doubt had additional attractions. In particular, it represented an opportunity to exercise considerable authority in civilian as well as military spheres—an opportunity that they would otherwise be unlikely to have inside or outside the Marine Corps. Writing in 1919, one observer, Samuel Guy Inman, described what he termed the "practically unlimited power" vested in a Marine who led a Haitian or Dominican gendarmerie:

> He is the judge of practically all civil and criminal cases, settling everything from a family fight to a murder. He is the paymaster for all funds expended by the national government, he is ex-officio director of the schools, inasmuch as he pays the teachers. He controls the mayor and the city council, since they can spend no funds without his O.K. As collector of taxes he exercises a strong influence on all individuals of the community.[25]

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[23] Quoted in Schmidt, *U.S. Occupation of Haiti*, p. 89.

[24] Charles D. Melson, "Marine Advisors in Haiti," *Fortitudine,* Vol. 36, No.2, 2011, p. 13.

[25] Samuel Guy Inman, *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti: A Cruise with the Marines* (New York: Committee on Co-Operation in Latin America, 1919), p. 68. This authority was more limited in Nicaragua, which unlike Haiti and the Dominican Republic, did not have a U.S. military government during the American intervention. Marvin Goldwert, *The Constabu-*

Marines exercised their authority in relative isolation. A brigade of roughly one thousand Marines garrisoned in Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitian served as a "passive presence," but for those serving with the Garde d'Haiti in the hinterlands there was little regular contact with fellow Marines—a condition exacerbated by poor infrastructure and primitive lines of communication. Contemporaneous observers warned of the "dangers of demoralization" in such circumstances—a euphemism for consorting with local women—and Marines were urged to "seek clean amusement.[26]

"The enemies of evildoers"

In training the constabularies, Marines emphasized military basics such as drill, rifle marksmanship, and personal hygiene. Advanced training focused on skills such as night operations.[27] In Haiti, Marines provided training at Garde d'Haiti district headquarters, at a brigade training center and—as Haitianization began in earnest and a Haitian officer corps emerged—at the *Ecole Militaire*, modeled on the U.S. Naval Academy.[28] Marines did more than simply impart technical skills; they also stressed to their counterparts the importance of personal conduct and professionalism. Predatory behavior against the population was seen as undermining a central goal: encouraging Haitians to see the constabularies as tribunes of the people. Rear Admiral H. S. Knapp, the U.S. military representative in Haiti, reported in 1920 that the American aim was "to indoctrinate the membership of

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lary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua: Progeny and Legacy of United States Intervention (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 7.

[26] Emily Greene Balch, "Public Order," in Emily Greene Balch (ed.), *Occupied Haiti* (New York: Writers Publishing Company, Inc., 1927), p. 134; and Robert C. Kilmartin, "Indoctrination in Santo Domingo," *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1922, p. 386.

[27] Fellowes, "Training Native Troops in Santo Domingo," p. 227.

[28] "Annual Report of the Garde d'Haiti: 1930," Record Group (RG)127, Commandant's Office, General Correspondence, Operations and Training Division, Intelligence Section, Box 10, folder marked "H-4 Haiti Annual Reports of Garde d'Haiti," National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (NARA I).

the gendarmerie that they are upholders of good order and enemies of evildoers."[29]

Accordingly, the ranks of the Garde d'Haiti were instilled with the notion that their duty was to serve rather than prey upon the public. The corrupt, ill-disciplined, or grossly incompetent were quickly dismissed. As one Marine in the district of St. Mare reported to the chief of the Garde d'Haiti in December 1921, twenty "undesirables" had been dismissed from the constabulary during the previous six months.[30] But such sanctions were only part of the training repertoire. Marines were conscious of the role their own conduct and bearing had in the creation of professional and disciplined local security forces. A Marine who had served as the "law officer" with the 2nd Marine Brigade in the Dominican Republic highlighted the importance of what he termed "moral support" to the PND: "We are lending our moral support and that necessarily means that we set the example . . . and show them that we bear ourselves with dignity and courtesy."[31]

Despite the many challenges that Marine advisors faced, they succeeded in creating reasonably proficient and capable gendarmeries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Initially, what were intended to serve as military-police hybrids could perform neither function. As one Marine officer who served in the Dominican Republic explained, the old Guardia Nacional "was never large enough to discharge the military functions incumbent on the national army and was too military to devote itself, except spasmodically, to its police duties."[32] Under Marine leadership and tutelage, the tactical skills, discipline, and professionalism of the security forces in all three improved considerably.

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[29] U.S. Navy Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 226.

[30] "Monthly Report of Conditions, District of St. Mare, for the Month of December 1921," December 21, 1921, p. 4, RG 127, Gendarmerie d'Haiti, General Correspondence, Box 1, folder marked "Summary of Gendarmerie 1921," NARA (I).

[31] Kilmartin, "Indoctrination in Santo Domingo," p. 381.

[32] Rufus H. Lane, "Civil Government in Santo Domingo in the Early Days of Military Occupation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 1922.

On a military-technical level, constabulary capabilities grew, at least in the near term. But in other respects, success proved more elusive. Turning security responsibilities over to local forces was a key component of the American "exit strategy."[33] Yet in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, the U.S. emphasis on training came only as the deadline for the U.S. departure was looming. "Crash courses" were required to prepare adequate numbers of the PND and Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional to assume their new duties.[34] But the lack of officer recruitment and training was an enduring problem in all three countries. Even after training, local officers sometimes failed to meet the expectations of the Marines. In the Dominican Republic, for example, Marines detected the persistence of *personalismo*—that is, the belief among officers and men alike that the commander alone should make every decision, and that any success (but no failure) could be attributed to him.[35]

More significantly, constabularies never proved to be the security cure-all that U.S. authorities hoped for. In Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, the United States hoped to create apolitical forces that would promote stability and help protect American interests. Yet in all three countries the gendarmeries became highly politicized, and their entry into politics had a destabilizing effect. The security forces served as incubators for dictators like the Dominican Republic's Rafael Trujillo and Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza García. All three countries would go on to endure decades of repressive rule, violence, and underdevelopment.

Coda: Advisory mission to Haiti, 1959-1963

Less than thirty years after the conclusion of the Banana Wars, the Marines returned to Haiti as part of an advisory mission. The Garde d'Haiti, renamed the Forces Armées d'Haiti (FAd'H) in 1958, had degenerated badly in the years following the U.S. occupation. As was

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[33] Vernon T. Veggeberg, "A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency: The U.S. Military Occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924," master's thesis, U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, April 28, 2008, p. 11.

[34] Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua*, p. 38.

[35] Millet, *Searching for Stability*, p. 107.

the case earlier in the century, protecting U.S. interests and promoting stability were the key motives for the mission. A rejuvenated FAd'H, in the American view, would foster internal Haitian security and thwart Soviet (and later, Cuban) subversion.[36]

From 1959 until their withdrawal in 1963, the roughly fifty officers and men who made up the advisory team at any given time worked to refashion the 5,000-man FAd'H along Marine Corps lines, albeit one tailored to Haiti's limited resources. The commander of the mission, Lt. Col. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., received no formal guidance, but according to two scholars, understood his instructions to be "to ensure the pro-U.S. orientation of the armed forces and to build up a broad base of professional, politically disinterested officers and non-commissioned officers"—goals virtually identical to those the Marines had with respect to the Garde d'Haiti.[37]

Those selected for service in Haiti were highly experienced and capable Marines, and they arrived confident that their knowledge, skills, and expertise would turn the FAd'H around. However, like their predecessors during the U.S. occupation, Marines received no specific training for their advisory assignment. According to historian Charles T. Williamson, "[t]here was no finishing school on how to be a military advisor at the time, so a number of mistakes were made in dealing with Haitian sensibilities."[38] As before, few Marines spoke French, but even if they had it would likely have made little difference, since the vast majority of Haitians were Creole speakers.

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[36] For more on U.S. policy in the region during this period, see Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), chapter 1.

[37] Bernard Diederich and Al Burt, *Papa Doc and the Tonton Macoutes* (Port-au-Prince: Editions Henri Deschamps, 1986), p. 133.

[38] Charles T. Williamson, *The U.S. Naval Mission to Haiti, 1959-1963* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), p. 353.

Col. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., commander, Naval Advisory Mission to Haiti (Photo: Creative Commons)

During the Banana War period, the Garde d'Haiti was created as a dual-purpose force intended to provide external security as well as carry out police functions. By the time Marines arrived for a second time, the FAd'H had abandoned any pretense of operating as a police service for protecting the public. As improbable as it may seem in retrospect, the United States expected that the FAd'H—once properly organized, trained, and equipped—would contribute to what was termed "hemispheric defense."[39] Marine advisors focused on improving the FAd'H as a strictly military force, focusing on marksmanship and weapons training, tactical skills, maintenance, hygiene, and other military basics. Heinl's own *Guidebook for Marines* (1940) was used as the foundation for the FAd'H training manual.[40]

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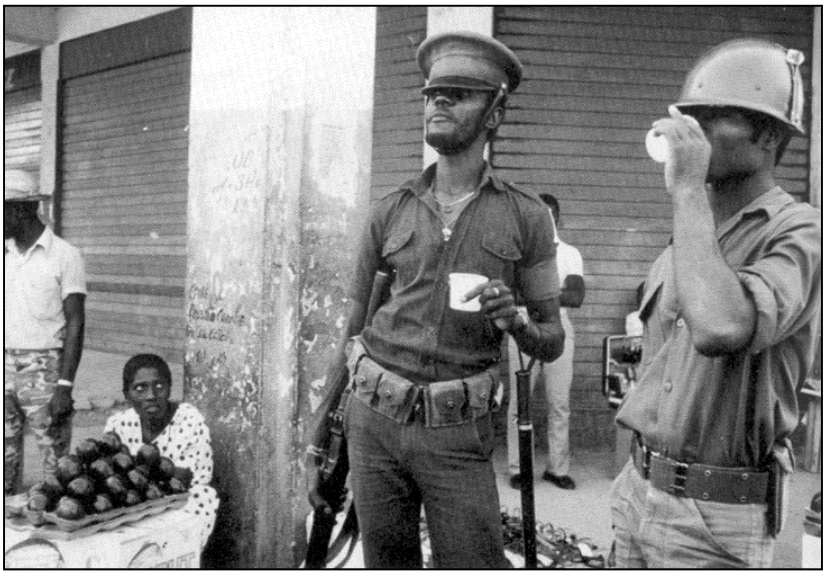
[39] Ibid., p. 356. The Eisenhower administration considered the FAd'H an "internal security" force. The Haitian government was required to bear the cost of the advisory mission—much as local customs revenues were used to fund the Banana War occupations. Alex von Tunzelmann, *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder and the Cold War in the Caribbean* (New York: Picador, 2012), p. 133.

[40] Williamson, *U.S. Naval Mission to Haiti*, p. 210.

The Marines were not an occupying force and had no command authority over their FAd'H counterparts. Advisors, like their successors in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, had to use techniques of persuasion rather than the power of direct command to influence their counterparts. Much of the FAd'H officer corps was receptive to Marine advice. But the country's self-appointed "president for life," Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, grew increasingly antagonistic to the naval mission and to the United States more generally, and relations with Washington deteriorated. Duvalier, increasingly distrustful of the FAd'H, funneled national resources into the *Tontons Macoutes*, a brutal paramilitary rabble he created to help secure his control over Haitian political life.



Tonton Macoute (center), c. 1960s (Photo: www.latinamericanstudies.org)

Along the way, Marines encountered challenges that would become familiar to Marine advisors later in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. The most impoverished country in the hemisphere, Haiti's national budget was meager. The few resources available for national defense were drained off by official corruption and by Duvalier's commitment to his personal militia. Roads and other infrastructure were poor, which created logistical and operational difficulties for the FAd'H. Official decisionmaking was cumbersome and protracted—under Haiti's highly centralized administrative structure,

even the most minor issues were referred to ministry officials in the capital.[41] Human rights abuses by the regime's security forces were rampant. As early as June 1958, as Washington was working out the details of the advisory mission, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti expressed his dismay over providing security assistance to the Duvalier regime:

> "I find myself becoming increasingly repelled by the thought of a mission here when the jails are crammed with political prisoners . . . ; when defeated candidates . . . are beaten, tortured and hounded into exile; when a restrained opposition press has been ruthlessly snuffed out of existence; and when masked night riders, . . . operate from their headquarters in the National Palace."[42]

Finally, the military culture of the FAd'H placed little emphasis on the health, training, and well-being of the troops. Instead, senior leaders besieged their Marine advisors with requests for "things."[43] All the modern weapons in the FAd'H inventory—including M-1 rifles, mortars, and machine guns—were U.S.-supplied. Among the FAd'H, an "officer first" mentality prevailed—a mindset that would become familiar to Marine advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan.

By 1963, the position of the advisory administration was untenable. Through diplomatic channels the Kennedy administration had made clear its displeasure with the Duvalier dictatorship—less out of concern for human rights and more out of the belief that the regime's corruption and fecklessness made the country increasingly vulnerable to a communist takeover. For his part, Duvalier began to treat the United States as a second-rate power, expelling a series of U.S. personnel he had grown to dislike, including ambassadors, Agency for International Development mission chiefs, and military attachés.[44] By

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41 Ibid., p. 217.

42 Quoted in "Editorial Note: Document 309," U.S. Relations with Haiti, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. 5 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1991), p. 818.

43 Williamson, *U.S. Naval Mission to Haiti*, p. 210.

44 Robert Debs Heinl and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People,* 1492-1971 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), p. 623.

the end of July, the last Marine Corps members of the naval mission had left Haiti, with nothing concrete to show for their efforts.

Key themes and lessons

As mentioned above, one of the main issues with which Marines struggled in these cases was the poor quality of recruits they advised. As Marines advisors would discover throughout the region—and in the twenty-first century in places like Afghanistan—security-force recruits were drawn from wider populations characterized by poor health, lack of education, and insufficient physical stamina. For many of these men, service in a constabulary offered the prospect of income, food, clothing, and training not otherwise available.

Additional issues that were prevalent concerned pre-deployment training, and culture and language. In an assessment written in the mid-1950s, a retired Marine concluded that "[o]f all the banana warriors, marines were the least skilled in dealing with the cultural sensitivities of their Caribbean wards."[45] Deeply ingrained attitudes that reflected the prejudices of American society at the time no doubt contributed to such insensitivity. A lack of pre-deployment training also played a part, as Marines themselves would acknowledge. According to Inman's account, Marines slated to serve in the Garde d'Haiti were expected to pass an examination in elementary French and in Haitian national law.[46] In the case of the Dominican Republic, Marine noncommissioned officers (NCOs) seconded to the PND had no specific instruction on how to work with a constabulary force, although U.S. military authorities came to recognize the need for such training.[47] In Nicaragua, the Marines found themselves ill-prepared for their responsibilities, according to one officer:

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[45] James H. McCrocklin, *Garde d'Haiti: Twenty Years of Organization and Training by the United States Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1956), p. 205.

[46] Inman, *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti: A Cruise with the Marines*, p. 68.

[47] Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), p. 57.

> I hope it is possible . . . to have the Marine Corps get up a pamphlet on practical police work. . . . I believe it should be made part of the law course in the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico. It is very important when the Marines capture a place for the Navy in a foreign country that we have officers competent to handle one of the most important functions in getting in touch with the natives. Also in taking over a foreign city allowance should be made for differences in race, customs, laws, language and habits of the natives, until they get used to us.[48]

Lack of language skills also posed difficulties. In the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, Marine NCOs, while committed and resourceful, had little command of Spanish.[49] In Haiti, French proved to have little utility outside the narrow confines of the country's elite. Some Marines took it upon themselves to learn the local language. No English-Creole dictionary existed, so Garde d'Haiti officers created their own, and "[m]any of them learned to speak Creole fluently with their men," Butler recalled in his memoirs.[50] Some Marines relied on translators, but this created problems of its own. According to the Garde's official history, interpreters were sometimes "swayed by their personal feelings for the parties concerned, some of them taking this opportunity to advance the cause of their friends or damage their personal or political enemies." More broadly, the language gulf prevented officers from mingling socially and getting to know the Haitian population.[51]

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[48] Quoted in Richard L. Millett, *Searching for Stability: The U.S. Development of Constabulary Forces in Latin America and the Philippines*, Occasional Paper 30 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), p. 101.

[49] Ibid., p. 104.

[50] Lowell Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye: Adventures of Smedley D. Butler* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1933), p. 210.

[51] *History of the Garde d'Haiti*, p. 84-85.

U.S. Marine Corps advising in South Vietnam, 1955–1973

In the years following the Second World War, the U.S. Marine Corps solidified its identify as the nation's all-purpose amphibious force-in-readiness, capable of conducting everything from humanitarian assistance to peacekeeping and stabilization to major combat operations.[52] For the Marines, Vietnam would be the most important conflict of the post-war period. During the seven years after the Marines first landed at Danang, combat operations against the North Vietnamese Army and main force units of the Vietcong would be the service's most important priority in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, however, the Marines demonstrated their commitment and ability to carrying out other military responsibilities in Vietnam, which represented the Marine Corps' largest post-World War II advisory effort. This section of the report examines U.S. Marine efforts to advise two South Vietnamese forces: the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC), and the paramilitary Popular Forces (PF), the latter as part of the U.S. Marine Corps' Combined Action Program (CAP).[53] Drawing on Marine Corps official documents, memoirs, scholarly accounts, and other sources, this section identifies several issues that Marine advisors in Vietnam experienced, to include advisor selection, pre-deployment training, and language and cultural barriers.

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[52] Aaron B. O'Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 231.

[53] A small number of Marines also served as advisors to the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs). The PRU effort, run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, was aimed at rooting out the so-called Vietcong infrastructure. For an account by a Marine advisor to the PRU, see Andrew R. Finlayson, *Marine Advisors: With the Vietnamese Provincial Reconnaissance Units, 1966-1970* (Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2009).

Advising the Vietnamese Marines

The U.S. Marine advisory presence in South Vietnam began in 1955 following the collapse of the French position in Indochina, the withdrawal of nearly all French troops, and emergence of the Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ngo Dinh Diem. The initial Marine focus was on building the capabilities of its South Vietnamese counterparts. Diem had established a small Vietnamese Marine Corps the previous year by pulling together the disparate collection of Vietnamese National Army and Navy commando-style units, light support companies, and river boat companies.[54] From 1955 until 1961, a lieutenant colonel and two captains served as the senior Marine advisor and assistant Marine advisor, respectively, in the Naval Advisory Group within the U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG).[55]

After 1961, the Marine advisory presence increased substantially, reflecting the Kennedy administration's growing commitment to the defense of South Vietnam. In 1964, the Naval Advisory Group became part of the newly created Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). As the Vietnamese Marine Corps grew, U.S. field advisors were assigned at the brigade and battalion level. Typically, each Vietnamese battalion had two U.S. advisors, one a major and one a captain. Tactical advice and support was a key priority, but as the VNMC expanded, American staff and logistical officers played an increasing role.[56]

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[54] Robert H. Whitlow, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Advisory and Combat Assistance Era* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1977), p. 17.

[55] Charles D. Melson and Wand J. Refrow, *Marine Advisors With the Vietnamese Marine Corps* (Quantico, VA: History Division, Marine Corps University, 2009), p. 11.

[56] Ibid., 12. After the arrival of significant U.S. combat forces in 1965, the advisory mission became a smaller priority. But under the Nixon administration's policy of "Vietnamization," where responsibilities were increasingly assumed by Saigon's military forces, American military advice and support assumed a new urgency. James A. Wilbanks, "Vietnamization U.S. Advisors, and the 1972 Easter Offensive," paper delivered at the 33rd Annual Military History Conference, Omaha, NE, May 5-9, 1999, p. 10.

At its peak in 1972, the Marine advisory unit totaled 67 officers and enlisted men.[57] But at this point the Vietnamese Marines required little in the way of U.S. advice or training—operational liaison between the VNMC and the U.S. Marines was far more important. Anthony C. Zinni, who would go on to become a four-star Marine general, served as an infantry battalion adviser beginning in 1967. He recalled that his South Vietnamese counterparts were able to fight effectively and to maneuver their platoons, companies, and battalions. What they needed from the Americans was logistical assistance and fire support:

> Let's say you're going to call in artillery and an air strike and coordinate at the same time with the maneuver. They really relied on us. If you were going to try to work a re-supply and logistics and set it up or set up a strategic move where they're going to move from one Corps area to another, I think they realized they needed the Americans to pull all of that together for them.[58]

Being able to provide such support was key to building a relationship with the South Vietnamese. Rapport with their counterparts took considerable time to build. Advisors could not command the VNMC, recalled one former Marine: "I would never and I could never really order someone to do something."[59] Combat experience—including experience with Vietnamese counterparts—was an essential criterion in the eyes of the Vietnamese. As one advisor asked, "[w]hy should they accept advice from a new man, one who, for all they know, has never been under fire before?"[60] A "soft sell" and a "gradual but persistent approach, featuring repetition of ideas and proposals" was essential in dealing with the Vietnamese, according to a U.S. Marine

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[57] Ibid., 13.

[58] Transcript of interview with General Anthony C. Zinni, John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute, June 29, 2004, p. 10.

[59] Transcript of interview with Col. John Ripley, John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute, June 25, 2004.

[60] Quoted in James A. Davidson, "The Advisors," *Leatherneck*, March 1973, p. 22.

Advisory Unit report.[61] But rapport, let alone friendship, was rarely granted automatically.

A U.S. Marine advisor with Vietnamese counterparts, January 1968 (Photo: Douglas Pike Photograph Collection, VA008999, Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University).

According to the report, "the counterpart will not consider the new arrival as 'his' advisor until the two have been exposed to combat together."[62] But Marine advisors quickly earned the respect of their counterparts. "They idolized the USMC [United States Marine Corps]," recalled one former advisor.[63] Vietnamese officers and senior NCOs were sent to U.S. Marine schools, including the Basic

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61 U.S. Marine Advisory Group, Naval Advisory Group, "The Role of the Advisor," undated, p. 2, Vietnam Virtual Archive, Texas Tech University.

62 Ibid., p. 2.

63 Transcript of interview with Colonel John G. Miller, John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute, June 26, 2004, p. 3. Vietnamese Marines referred to their American advisors as *co-vans*, a term that indicated considerable respect.

School and the Amphibious Warfare School.[64] Sending the VNMC to the United States had two important benefits. The Vietnamese absorbed U.S. Marine Corps training, operational concepts, and systems, making the job of liaison and support much more seamless. In addition, members of the VNMC were able to develop their English language skills, which eased communication between advisors and their counterparts.

Unlike its American counterpart, the VNMC was characterized by a huge gulf between Vietnamese Marine officers and enlisted men, which one former advisor likened to the "feudal landlord and peasant kind of relationship."[65] But according to another former advisor, this gap narrowed over time, and by the early 1970s, "they began to see the way we operated and they respected the way we operated and I could see changes in a far closer relationship between the leaders and the led."[66] The Vietnamese never became U.S. Marines, but as they demonstrated throughout the war, the VNMC was among the most capable of South Vietnam's armed forces.

The Combined Action Program

The Marines' effort with other Vietnamese security forces was less successful. Beginning in 1966, CAP joined U.S. Marine squads and Vietnamese Popular Force (PF) platoons to defend villages. Under CAP, Marines lived in villages (primarily in the I Corps area of operations in the northern part of South Vietnam) and worked with a PF unit until it was capable of providing adequate "mobile defense."[67] Af-

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[64] Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, MACV, "After Tour Report," May 27, 1969, p. 4, Vietnam Virtual Archive, Texas Tech University.

[65] Ibid., p. 4.

[66] Transcript of interview with Colonel John Ripley, John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute, June 25, 2004, p. 3.

[67] Cao Van Vien, et al., *The U.S. Adviser*, Indochina Monographs (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980), p. 178. For a micro-level account of a CAP, see Bing West, *The Village* (New York: Pocket Books, 2002).

ter the PF unit achieved "an adequate level of military proficiency," the CAP team moved on to work with the PF in another village.[68]

At the height of the program in 1970, 42 Marine officers and 2,050 enlisted men were serving alongside approximately 3,000 Vietnamese in 114 CAP units. The first priority of combined units was combat operations. By 1968, according to one Marine document, the "combination of Marine Corps firepower and discipline and Vietnamese familiarity with the terrain had become literally a killing one."[69] What the service called "advice, training, encouragement, and improved fire support" was a secondary Marine role.[70]

A Marine officer inspects a combined squad of Vietnamese Popular Forces and U.S. Marines (Photo: http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/books/1965/index.cfm?page=0134).

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[68] "Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force," III Marine Amphibious Force, 31 March 1970," p. 1, Vietnam Virtual Archive, U.S. Marine Corps Collection, Texas Tech University.

[69] "U.S. Marine Corps Civic Action Effort in Vietnam, March 1965-March 1966," Marine Corps Historical Reference Pamphlet, Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 1968, p. 1, Vietnam Virtual Archive, U.S. Marine Corps Collection, Texas Tech University.

[70] "Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force," p. 1.

Despite high expectations for the program, the CAP never achieved its objectives. Aggressive CAP patrols helped disrupt enemy operations, but the Vietcong remained firmly embedded in the countryside. Moreover, the PFs remained largely unable to defend their villages without Marine Corps assistance and support.[71] These shortcomings could not be laid exclusively at the feet of the CAP, of course.[72] Relative to the size of the overall Marine Corps effort in South Vietnam, the program was tiny. Moreover, the CAP Marines were compelled to operate in a counterinsurgency environment, in which the government's corruption, abuse, and incompetence had alienated large segments of the country's population.

Key themes and lessons

Advisor selection

Looking over the 1955-1973 period, it is possible to generalize about what made a good advisor. These traits included experience and personal maturity, at least some level of cultural and linguistic awareness, and a willingness and ability to operate effectively in isolated environments. Above all, good advisors had the ability to persuade others to accept advice in challenging foreign settings. Careful selection and training of advisors, the ability to communicate across cultures, and the sustained nature of the advisory program undoubtedly contributed to the success of the VNMC.

As opposed to the Marine Advisory Group, CAP personnel were selected less carefully for their assignments, especially as the program wore on. Early in the program, CAP participants were typically "mature and highly motivated" Marines from line companies with previ-

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[71] Hemingway, *Our War Was Different*, p. 177.

[72] In its first years, CAP faced opposition from the U.S. military high command. General William C. Westmoreland, MACV commander, thought the program was a distraction from conventional military operations. Richard M. Cavagnol, "Lessons from Vietnam: Essential Training of Marine Advisors and Combined Action Platoon Personnel," *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2007, pp. 16-17.

ous combat experience.[73] Over time, however, the service relaxed its standards. The program "had difficulties finding adequate numbers of volunteers and maintaining T/O [table of organization]," according to one scholar, and so the volunteer and combat experience requirements were eliminated.[74] Increasingly, CAP personnel were drawn from combat support units rather than from the line infantry. Some Marine commanders viewed CAP as a way to get rid of underperforming Marines—as one analyst pointed out, "it is not realistic to expect an officer in the field to recommend his best men for transfer to any other duty, whatever its nature."[75]

Pre-deployment training, language, and culture

The Marine Corps invested considerable resources in preparing advisors for their assignments with the VNMC. Indeed, during the Vietnam War, the service established for the first time a school (in Quantico, Virginia) to train advisors. Training during the three-month course stressed military skills that were in particularly high demand in Vietnam, such as fire-support and air-ground communications. It also emphasized the Vietnamese language. A former Marine advisor described it this way: "most of our time was spent in total-immersion Vietnamese language instruction . . . .[O]ur training focused on grammar and structure as we built vocabulary, so we could truly learn the language if we put enough time and effort into it."[76]

Some Marines also attended an advisor training course run by the Army at the Special Warfare School in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina—the first Army course of its kind.[77] Established in 1962, as the Kennedy

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[73] Bruce C. Allnutt, *Marine Combined Action Capabilities: The Vietnam Experience* (McLean, VA: Human Sciences Research, Inc., December 1969), C-1.

[74] Michael E. Peterson, *The Combined Action Platoons: The U.S. Marines' Other War in Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), p. 72-73.

[75] Allnutt, *Marine Combined Action Capabilities*, p. C-3.

[76] John Grider Miller, *The Co-Vans: U.S. Marine Advisors in Vietnam* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), p. 38.

[77] In addition, the U.S. Defense Department operated the Military Assistance Institute (MAI) from 1958 to 1968. MAI gave cultural and other training to military personnel involved in providing material and other aid to U.S. allies under the Military Assistance Program. Walter F.

administration began committing increasing numbers of advisory personnel to Vietnam, the six-week Military Assistance Training Advisor (MATA) course included Vietnamese language and culture orientation, a review of U.S. doctrine, and an overview of Vietnamese military operations and tactics.[78] Advisors like Zinni found the course invaluable, particularly what he termed the "high-intensity" language instruction.[79] That instruction focused less on grammar than did the Quantico course, but it had the advantage of being taught by native Vietnamese speakers. MATA also presented guidelines for working with the Vietnamese: advisors are there to advise and not command; after planting an idea, allow counterparts to take credit for it; maintain high moral standards; and be patient but persistent. According to the *MATA Handbook for Vietnam*, the most important advisor traits were "knowledge of the subject, ability to demonstrate your capabilities in an unassuming but convincing manner, and a clear indication of your desire to get along and work together with your counterpart."[80]

In contrast to the advisors who worked with the VNMC, CAP personnel received relatively little in the way of formal training. Formal instruction, carried out at an in-country CAP school at China Beach near Danang, was confined to a two-week course that included classes on Vietnamese language and culture, as well as "refreshers" in military skills. Marines who showed a particular ability to learn Vietnamese were given an extra month of language instruction, provided they

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Choinski, *The Military Assistance Institute: An Historical Summary of its Organization, Program, and Accomplishments* (Silver Spring, MD: American Institutes for Research, October 1969), p. ii.

78 Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2006), p. 258. By 1964, some 14,000 U.S. military advisors were deployed in Vietnam.

79 Zinni interview, p. 2.

80 U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *MATA Handbook for Vietnam* (Ft. Bragg, NC: Special Warfare School, January 1966), p. 216.

could be spared to attend it.[81] Unsurprisingly, perhaps, few CAP Marines ever developed any real Vietnamese language proficiency.[82]

On-the-job training was expected to provide whatever additional instruction was required: "The CAP Marine conceives of himself as a combat Marine, and therefore his classroom is the 'bush' where the VC provide the necessary training aids."[83] The shortcomings of this approach were obvious: relatively little was done formally to prepare young and relatively inexperienced CAP Marines, who lived with the Vietnamese in isolation, separated from their counterparts by significant language and cultural barriers. For CAP leaders—who received no specialized leader training—operating under such conditions posed considerable challenges.

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[81] Ibid., p. D-2. No attempt was made to recruit into CAP Marines who were proficient in Vietnamese, such as those who had studied the language at the Defense Language School in Monterey, CA. Al Hemingway, *Our War was Different: Marine Combined Action Platoons in Vietnam* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), p. 177.

[82] Cavagnol, "Lessons from Vietnam," p. 16.

[83] "Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force," p. 1.

U.S. Marine Corps advising in Iraq, 2004–2010

The United States and its coalition partners invaded Iraq in March 2003 and deposed the regime of Saddam Hussein. In June, as part of its plan to overcome the country's Baathist legacy, the Coalition Provisional Authority disbanded the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), which included the Iraqi Army (IA) and police. A year later, the U.S. military began rebuilding the ISF from the ground up. To provide this assistance, the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army formed small advisor teams from their conventional forces to train, mentor, and advise the reconstituted IA and police. While living and working side-by-side with their ISF counterparts, these embedded U.S. Marine, U.S. Army, and joint "transition teams" participated in a wide variety of activities—from advising their counterparts on administrative procedures to patrolling with them on Iraqi streets.

In addition, other coalition infantry battalions were partnered[84] with the IA to assist with the mission. However, the partnership between advisor teams and these coalition infantry battalions varied enormously from unit to unit and was often personality dependent. Advisors observed that some infantry battalion commanders appeared to misunderstand the transition team's mission or operations. The advisor teams lived on Iraqi bases and were not always collocated with the infantry battalions. Therefore, the transition teams often operated in isolation from other coalition units.

Over time, as Iraqi self-sufficiency grew, and as the ISF became increasing responsible for its own battlespace, the advisor teams' missions changed. From initially accompanying their counterparts on combat missions, Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) increasingly advised the IA on staff functions and logistics. Similarly, Police Transition Teams (PTTs) working with the Iraqi Police shifted focus from patrolling to advanced skills such as forensics. Overall, as ISF capabili-

[84] Partnering is a command arrangement between U.S. and host-nation forces that enables them to operate together to achieve mission success. See Appendix I for more information.

ties improved, transition teams began to concentrate advising efforts on higher headquarters at the brigade and higher levels across the ISF, focusing on leadership, staff organization, and sustainment of ISF forces.

These relatively small, often isolated teams of advisors faced a variety of challenges during their 7 to 15 month deployments. One of their biggest challenges was to understand their mission and, in turn, their chain of command. In addition, many considered their pre-deployment training inadequate preparation for the situations they faced in theater. Advisors had to navigate the complex environment of embedding with a foreign security force that spoke a different language and was very different culturally.

This section of the report explores how coalition and Marine efforts to advise Iraqi military and police forces evolved from 2004 until the withdrawal of coalition forces in 2010. It also identifies and analyzes four themes that emerged from Marines' experiences, including insufficient pre-deployment training, a lack of mission guidance and authority, an unclear chain of command, and cultural and linguistic obstacles.

The creation of embedded advisor teams: 2004

Initially, mobile training teams worked as part-time advisors with the IA, but the IA did not progress as quickly as the coalition had hoped.[85] Therefore, the U.S. military expanded the advisor role from simply preparing new Iraqi soldiers during their initial training to advising them in combat under the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) program.[86] These new advisor teams were designed so that they would work with, live with, and accompany Iraqis on operations. However, one of the first problems that both the

[85] Brigadier General Michael Jones testimony on "Training of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Employment of Transition Teams," hearing before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives held on May 22, 2007, p.6.

[86] The CMATT was a section of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) that was responsible for assisting the Iraqi government with organizing, training and equipping the IA.

Marine Corps and the U.S. Army faced was finding enough advisors to fill advisor team billets. As a result, many of the individuals initially selected for advising duty were not ideally suited for the position.[87] Still, the U.S. Marine Corps reportedly provided some of the best personnel in the initial wave of advisors to arrive in Iraq.[88] This included officers originally slated for command positions, and key personnel within Marine infantry battalions.[89] But overall, the advising mission in Iraq fell largely to reservists. The U.S. Army, for example, initially gave the advisor assignment to a reserve unit, the 98th Institutional Training Division.[90]

Training these newly minted advisors for their new role was also limited. Soldiers in the 98th were given 42 days of stateside training, which focused on training Iraqi soldiers (*jundis*) on a large military base.[91] Meanwhile, the Marine Corps established the Security, Cooperation, Education and Training Center (SCETC) to train Marine advisors before they deployed. Its first class of 20 Marines completed just two weeks of training and arrived in Iraq along with the first embedded advisor teams in March 2004.[92]

The advisors were organized into 39 ten-man Advisor Support Teams (ASTs) that were assigned to each of the three Iraqi Army Divisions

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87 Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003-January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, June 2008), p. 447.

88 Ibid., p. 447.

89 Carter A. Malkasian, "Will Iraqization Work?" in *U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2004-2008: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, DC: Marine Corps University Press, 2010), p. 165.

90 Later the 80th Institutional Training Division took over responsibility for filling Army billets. See Owen West, *The Snake Eaters: An Unlikely Band of Brothers and the Battle for the Soul of Iraq* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2012), p. 6.

91 Ibid., 7.

92 Joseph R. Chenelly, "Marine Foreign Advisors," *Leatherneck*, 2004; and Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, p. 437.

(1st, 3d, and 5th).[93] The 98th soldiers manned 31 of these ASTs, including five in the 1st Iraqi Army Division.[94] Marines were responsible for filling the majority of the ASTs in the 1st Iraqi Army Division.[95] A few ASTs were manned by the Australian Army until it dropped out of the advisory mission in October 2004 due to political limitations that restricted the types of operations in which its forces could participate.

Consisting of officer and enlisted advisors, the new ASTs faced enormous challenges early on. Because they had little to no time to prepare for their deployments, most Marines and soldiers deployed for their advisory role without a good understanding of the Iraqi culture; even fewer could speak the local Arab dialect. Moreover, advisors were doing more than simply teaching. Many of the reservists were unprepared for the combat they faced as they accompanied their Iraqi counterparts on operations.

Evolution of Military Transition Teams: 2005–2006

In 2005, ASTs were renamed Military Transition Teams to better reflect their mission. The Multinational Force–Iraq (MNF-I), which was responsible for coalition military operations during much of the Iraq War, and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD) created a program to embed MiTTs consisting of ten to twelve advisors into every Iraqi Army division, brigade, and battalion.[96]

MNF-I guidance stated that at least one MiTT would be co-located with every IA battalion by the end of April 2005.[97] The first MiTTs

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[93] These AST positions included 3 division headquarters, 9 brigade headquarters, and 27 battalions. See Wright and Reese, *On Point* II, p. 447; and Steven E. Clay, *Iroquois Warriors in Iraq* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), p. 119.

[94] These included 13 ASTs in the 5th Division, 5 ASTs in the 1st Division, and 13 ASTs in the 3rd Division. See Clay, *Iroquois Warriors in Iraq*.

[95] Marines were responsible for 8 ASTs in the 1st Division (one division headquarters, two brigade headquarters, and five (of nine) battalions).

[96] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), p. 184.

[97] "New Strategy Details Security Handover in Iraq," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, April 22, 2005.

were comprised of U.S. soldiers and National Guard reservists. Marines eventually also contributed both active and reserve forces to the MiTT mission. By May, approximately 70 Marine advisors in seven MiTTs were attached to the IA.[98]

The majority of MiTTs were external teams that were assembled on an ad hoc basis. Yet approximately 20 percent of MiTTs were internal or "taken out of hide" from units already serving in Iraq.[99] For example, the 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division regimental headquarters formed the 1st Iraqi Army Division MiTT in January 2005, as well as other brigade and battalion MiTTs within the division.[100] During the same year, II MEF (Fwd) also provided a MiTT out of hide for the 7th Iraqi Army Division headquarters.[101]

MiTTs were led by U.S. Marines or soldiers, or were composed of a combination of both services, as well as Navy corpsmen. The teams generally ranged in size from 10–15 men, depending on the size of the unit they were advising. At the highest level, a division MiTT generally consisted of 15 men led by a colonel; a brigade-level MiTT usually consisted of ten men led by a lieutenant colonel; and at the lowest level, a battalion MiTT was generally composed of eleven men led by a major.[102]

The size of MiTTs varied over time and depended on the battlespace. In general, Marines found that 12 advisors were not enough to advise

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98 "USMC Advisor Teams to the Afghan and Iraqi Armies: Lessons Learned," memo, undated.

99 Catherine Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, April 2, 2009, p. 91.

100 John "Sean" Meyers, "Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group: An Innovative Example of the Marine Corps' Effort to Rebalance the Force," Marine Corps University Command and Staff College research paper, 2008, p. 8.

101 Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command, "II Marine Expeditionary Force Summary Action," in *U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2004-2008: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, DC: Marine Corps University Press, 2010), p. 120.

102 Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, p. 90.

an entire IA battalion.[103] In Anbar province, the U.S. Marine-led Multinational Force–West (MNF-W) consistently chose to use larger teams, with up to 40 members. In the Marines' view, having larger teams contributed to producing the top two Iraqi Army divisions (1st and 7th).[104]

Regardless of team size, members included officers and enlisted personnel with a range of functional expertise, including administration, intelligence, operations, logistics, communications, and medical support. Regardless of unit level, team members were expected to have expertise or experience in their billet's occupational specialty, although that was not always the case.[105] Yet their responsibilities were not limited to their combat or combat support specialties. Instead, due to the team's limited size, each team member needed to take on a number of additional roles. In addition, team members often operated on their own and away from one another.[106]

Each team member was assigned an Iraqi counterpart with whom he lived and fought, side-by-side. Embedded advisors were generally junior to their counterpart (e.g., a first lieutenant intelligence advisor to an IA colonel). They advised Iraqi soldiers on combat and administrative processes, and participated in combined combat missions. In the city of Fallujah, for example, advisors needed to be proficient in offensive combat fundamentals, such as establishing fire support, submitting a fire support plan, and coordinating with nearby coalition units.[107]

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[103] Carter Malkasian, "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand," *Democracy*, Issue No. 5 (Summer 2007).

[104] Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, p. 90.

[105] For example, see Joseph W. Jones, "Advisor 2.0: Advancing the Military Transition Team Model," paper for Marine Corps University Command and Staff College, 2008, p. 3.

[106] Seth W.B. Folsom, *In the Gray Area: A Marine Advisor Team at War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), p. 56.

[107] Brian G. Cillessen, "Marine Advisor: Can the Marine Corps Prepare them Better?" Contemporary Issues Paper, February 6, 2006.

A Marine advisor and an Iraqi soldier plan a patrol, 2004. (Photo: Sergeant Ryan S. Scranton, USMC)

Police and Border Transition Teams: 2006

Marines also contributed advisors for Police and Border Transition Teams (BTTs), but they generally received fewer personnel and resources than those for the IA.[108] By the end of 2006, Marines manned ten BTTs and four PTTs.[109] The ten-man BTTs developed and trained the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) units to secure the Syrian frontier and interdict foreign fighters by conducting patrols and manning checkpoints.

PTTs were assigned to train, mentor, and advise the Iraqi police and operated similarly to MiTTs. The PTT program initially focused on provincial headquarters, district headquarters, and Iraqi police stations in key cities.[110] For example, the PTT with 3rd Battalion, 14th Marines was tasked to organize the Fallujah police headquarters, train

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[108] Malkasian, "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand."

[109] Major General George J. Flynn quoted in testimony during "U.S. Military Transition Teams in Iraq" hearing before the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives held on December 7, 2006, p. 29.

[110] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Department of Defense Report to Congress, August 2006, p. 44.

their police counterparts to operate independently, and connect the police to the city's IA.[111]

Like the MiTTs, some PTTs were internal to a unit already in Iraq, but many were external, hastily formed, and sometimes even included civilian advisors. For example, in Anbar province, a 17-member PTT was cobbled together from U.S. military active-duty and reserve personnel, as well as civilian police officers from the U.S. Department of Defense International Police Liaison Office.[112]

Police training and advising varied over time and by battlespace. The Marines with MNF-W opted to almost double the normal size of the embedded PTTs in Anbar province because they needed enough Marines to leave some behind at the police station when the rest were on patrol.[113]

The PTT members often deployed believing they would help teach the Iraqi police investigative techniques. Instead, PTTs often worked to reduce bottlenecks in the Iraqi logistics system.[114] Many Iraqi police squads lacked adequate vehicles, radios, or body armor. Pay was also a problem. To deal with these myriad problems required flexible advisors who could "handle the ever-changing smorgasbord of assignments," including smoothing the delivery of equipment (e.g., rifles, ammunition, uniforms, trucks), acquiring fuel for vehicles, overseeing salary payment, advising on police station construction, and processing official documents.[115]

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[111] Bill Roggio, "A Day inside Fallujah," *Long War Journal* (online), December 8, 2006.

[112] Jim Garamone, "U.S. Marines Working with Local Police in Qaim," *American Forces Press Service*, June 13, 2006.

[113] Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom,* p. 89.

[114] Garamone, "U.S. Marines Working with Local Police."

[115] Stewart Nusbaumer, "Police Transition Team 23: Helps Fight the 'Other War' in Hit," *Leatherneck*, August 2007, p. 20.

Moving towards independent operations: 2007–2010

By early 2008, approximately 1,500 Marines manned MiTTs in Iraq.[116] The ISF rapidly expanded and increased their conduct of independent operations. At that time, the focus of MiTTs generally shifted, from basic combat skills (like patrolling) to more advanced skills (like command and control, staff functions, and logistics).

Marines on a presence patrol with an IA company commander, 2008. (Photo: 1st Lieutenant Brian T. Block, USMC)

One such Marine battalion-level MiTT, a team of 15-men known as the "Outlanders," was the sixth embedded MiTT with the 3rd Battalion, 28th Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division (3/28-7).[117] As they prepared to deploy, they did not think that their training adequately clarified their mission. Learning what they were supposed to do during their deployment sometimes proved to be difficult. They ultimately determined that they would focus more on the development of the IA battalion staff than on conducting routine operations, such as patrolling. MiTT members accompanied their counterparts on operations "as

[116] Kimberly Johnson, "Corps: End Piecemeal Transition Teams," *Marine Corps Times*, February 11, 2008.

[117] For the team leader's account, see Folsom, *In the Gray Area*.

advisors and observers, not trigger pullers."[118] During patrols, the Marines trailed behind the Iraqi unit to allow Iraqis to take the lead, and were close enough to assist if necessary. One new challenge identified by the team leader was that MiTT members began to long for combat. He noted that keeping his Marines motivated and focused on their advising jobs was a challenge.[119]

In August 2008, the IA in Anbar province began to show progress by initiating operations. MiTTs began to focus on building coalition-independent IA capabilities.[120] This included a general shift in the focus of U.S. commanders, from training to advising. This also meant that they decreased the rank of the members of the embedded U.S. teams.[121] For example, MNF-W, which had previously assigned colonels to lead teams embedded with IA divisions, downgraded the position to lieutenant colonel.

Similarly, by mid-2008, the focus of PTTs had shifted. In many places, this meant moving from an emphasis on basic policing to the professionalization of the force. MNF-W decided to reduce the size of PTTs because the Iraqi police no longer needed their constant presence. As Iraqi police began demonstrating basic proficiencies, PTTs increasingly emphasized more advanced skills, such as police intelligence and forensics.[122]

The improving security environment also contributed to this shift. One PTT noted that they deployed in January 2007 into "the Wild West," an environment with heavy kinetic activity. During their first few months, they spent most of their time on offensive operations, and only 20 percent on actually building the capabilities of the Iraqi police.[123] But by May, the unit spent most of their time and resources on the Iraqi police. The PTT commanding officer and senior enlisted

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[118] Ibid., p. 76.

[119] Ibid., p. 114.

[120] Cindy Fisher, "Basic Soldiering Lessons Just the Start for Military Transition Teams in Iraq," *Stars and Stripes*, August 3, 2008.

[121] Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, p. 91.

[122] Ibid., p. 90.

[123] Stewart Nusbaumer, "Police Transition Team 23: Helps Fight the 'Other War' in Hit," *Leatherneck*, August 2007, p. 18.

Marine (both with civilian police experience) created training classes for the Iraqi Police and shared the workload for each of their six police stations.[124]

Iraqi police officer and Marine advisor discuss current operations, 2008. (Photo: Sergeant Lukas Atwell, USMC)

In 2008, U.S. Marines with one PTT in Fallujah spent months training their Iraqi counterparts to a level where they could take over their respective areas and become self-supportive in day-to-day operations.[125] The PTT spent more time mentoring the Iraqi police, which included accompanying them on patrols in the city, working on strengthening relationships, and evaluating how the police operated in various situations. In addition, the PTT offered weekly classroom instruction at the police headquarters, which taught Iraqi policemen the fundamentals of marksmanship and how to function together as a team.[126]

The transition team advising model shifted from lower-level to higher-level Iraqi headquarters as ISF self-sufficiency grew.[127] From initially

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[124] Ibid., p. 17.

[125] Chris Mann, "Marines Train Iraqi Police in Fallujah," U.S. Central Command, June 23, 2008.

[126] Ibid.

[127] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Department of Defense Report to Congress, June 2009, p. 39.

advising every Iraqi battalion, they began to advise at the battalion level on a case-by-case, as-needed basis. Eventually, they concentrated on advising at brigade and higher levels across the IA, Iraqi Police, and DBE, focusing on ISF leadership development and staff organization.[128]

Key themes and lessons

Transition team tours ranged from seven to fifteen months. During that time, Marines and soldiers often described their experiences in a variety of ways, ranging from challenging and frustrating to rewarding. There are several common themes that emerge from the experiences of MiTT and PTT members in Iraq: insufficient pre-deployment training; a lack of mission guidance and authority, an unclear chain of command, and cultural and linguistic obstacles. One former MiTT leader described advisors as having "the trickiest job in Iraq."[129] As discussed in the next section of the report, many of these shortfalls were also evident in the U.S. advisory mission to assist the Afghan security forces.

Pre-deployment training

Many Marine advisors described their training as inadequate for the demands they faced in theater. Not every advisor on the team always received the same training courses. Some junior advisors were not allowed to attend particular classes due to a lack of space. In training, very little time was dedicated to teaching future advisors the art of how to advise. Instead, many advisors learned it on the job through trial and error – with varying results.

Marines often received more advisory training than their U.S. Army counterparts, however. For example, before its deployment in July 2006, a U.S. Marine battalion MiTT had five months to prepare, compared to just two weeks of individual pre-deployment training for similar Army teams.[130] Yet many advisors felt that they wasted a

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[128] Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom,* p. 90.

[129] West, *The Snake Eaters*, p. 7.

[130] Wesley R. Gray, *Embedded: A Marine Corps Advisor Inside the Iraqi Army* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009).

significant amount of time in classes that were not central to their mission. One team received training that emphasized protecting large bases from attack.[131] Instruction was based on the assumption that the *jundis* had adequate combat skills *outside* the wire; therefore advisors were instructed to focus on best practices i*nside* the wire. Yet, as the advisors learned, the *jundis* were often ill-disciplined and ill-trained. Therefore, the MiTT was forced to do it all.

Training for the MiTT mission did improve over time, although its quality and length continued to vary by unit. Marine teams often trained in the United States, and in 2007, the Marine Corps established the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG) at Twentynine Palms, California, in an effort to prepare trainers and coordinate, form, train and equip Marine Corps advisors for these operations.[132] Teams from both services received last-minute training in theater before embedding with their Iraqi counterparts. This training was provided at the Army-run Phoenix Academy, which covered instruction on improvised explosive devices (IEDs), communications, and culture.[133]

Lack of guidance and authority

More often than not, advisor teams deployed without clear guidance, and there was no doctrine or standard procedure to fall back on. Advisor teams often interpreted their mission to train, mentor, and advise in different ways. As one former MiTT leader stated, "What distinguished advisor teams was not being Marine or Army; it was how each team interpreted its primary mission. One interpretation stressed training the Iraqis in staff procedures, decision making, and

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[131] West, *The Snake Eaters*, p. 34.

[132] Margaret Hughes, "USMC Forms MCTAG, Consolidates Reconnaissance Training," *Marine Corps News*, November 14, 2007.

[133] The Iraq Assistance Group (IAG) ran the Phoenix Academy, which was located on the Iraqi Army base Camp Taji. Some Marines complained that the academy was poorly run and that instructors were unaware of what the advisor mission actually entailed. For example, see Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, p. 24.

accountability. The other emphasized patrolling and combat leadership."[134]

One battalion-level MiTT in Anbar province arrived without any idea of what was expected of them and improvised as they went along.[135] They accompanied their Iraqi unit everywhere and it took some time for them to figure out their role in a complex operating environment. They taught their counterparts how to fight insurgents and work with nearby coalition forces. Another battalion-level MiTT in Anbar province controlled all of their counterparts' meetings and convoys, and conducted most of the planning for IA operations. As the team's intelligence officer observed,

> Marine advisors are stuck in a "shit sandwich." Their problem is that they need to let the Iraqis lead operations so they can improve their tactics, gain leadership experience, and become a better army. But in certain duties, such as establishing and maintaining defensive perimeters, how the Iraqis carry out their mission has a direct effect on Marines' chances of seeing their families again.[136]

After their counterpart conducted successful independent convoy operations, the MiTT began to shift its focus from training on conducting combat operations to performing higher-level functions, such as command and control.

Additionally, it took time for many advisors to realize that advising did not mean commanding. Advisors could not order their Iraqi counterparts to do anything, and the Iraqis were not obligated to take their recommendations—a widespread challenge Marines faced earlier in Vietnam. Some Iraqis would ask for advice, whereas some did not. Marines had to acknowledge their lack of authority and instead build a relationship with their counterpart to better convince them to take their advice. After all, their overall intent was to work themselves

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[134] West, *The Snake Eaters*, p. 247.

[135] Ibid., p. 8.

[136] Gray, *Embedded: A Marine Corps Advisor Inside the Iraqi Army*, pp. 143-144.

out of a job.[137] Many advisors had to rely on negotiation and sales techniques to convince their counterparts to execute their advice.[138] Others found that they needed to prove themselves through actions on the battlefield before they gained any credibility. Generally, it took time – of which they had limited amounts – to establish rapport and trust with their counterparts. More than one MiTT concluded that it took approximately four months (over half of their deployment) to gain a good understanding of their counterparts and earn their trust.[139]

Chain of command

More often than not, advisor teams deployed in a confusing chain of command. The isolated nature of advisor duty was such that teams often operated on their own with little supervision or guidance from a higher headquarters. In March 2005, the Multinational Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), the operational headquarters under MNF-I, became responsible for all operations, and all IA units were placed under their tactical control.[140] Once in Iraq, transition teams that worked with Iraqi units were assigned *administratively* to the Iraq Assistance Group (IAG), a military command subordinate to MNC-I that advised Iraqi units that operated in their partner unit's battlespace.[141] The Iraqi units had a separate chain of command than their coalition partners. The coalition centralized the programs that organized, equipped, trained, and advised the ISF under the Multi-National Security Tran-

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[137] Jack A. Sile and James B. "Beau" Higgins, "Intelligence Advising on the Military Transition Team: Understand the Situation and Hone in on the Positives," *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 2008, p. 78.

[138] Richard M. Cavagnol, Richard L. Hayes, and Daniel C. Turner, "From Vietnam to Iraq: Applying Lessons and Maturing the Advisor-Counterpart Relationship," *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 2008, p. 16.

[139] Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, p. 153.

[140] Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success*, p. 182.

[141] Carl D. Grunow, "Advising Iraqis: Building the Iraqi Army," *Military Review*, July-August 2006, p. 13.

sition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I), a military command subordinate to MNF-I.[142]

Once embedded with their Iraqi counterparts, battalion-level MiTTs fell under the *operational* control of the ground forces commander, and not to the brigade-level MiTT.[143] This was because IA units were usually partnered with a U.S. brigade which had responsibility for an area within a multi-national commands' area of responsibility. Each Iraqi battalion was partnered with a conventional U.S. battalion for support (e.g., logistics, medevac), and to operate alongside in combat.[144] These partner battalions were supposed to help the advisors train the Iraqi units, but the partnership varied from unit to unit. Some advisors found that their ground forces commanders had incorrect assumptions about partnering and directing the IA in their battlespace, which also reflected a lack of understanding of transition team operations.

Relationships between advisors and the partner unit were essential.[145] The commanders of these units often had different (and sometimes conflicting) views on how the advisory mission should be executed. This sometimes resulted in friction between advisors and the ground forces commander.[146] Other advisors claimed that the infantry battalion never supported them.[147]

Iraqi culture

In addition to struggling with understanding their role, Marines also struggled with some of the cultural differences between them and their Iraqi counterparts. Many advisors concluded that they received

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[142] Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003-January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, June 2008), p. 431.

[143] Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, p. 69.

[144] West, *The Snake Eaters*, p. 8.

[145] Grunow, "Advising Iraqis: Building the Iraqi Army," p. 16.

[146] For one such example at Camp Taji, see Greg Jaffe, "A Camp Divided," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2006.

[147] Folsom, *In the Gray Area*.

"grossly insufficient" preparation for understanding Iraqi culture and argued that advisors required more pre-deployment cultural education than the typical Marine infantryman bound for Iraq.[148]

Advisors needed to understand the Iraqi past in order to provide recommendations within the context of existing customs, circumstances, and military experiences.[149] As one Marine stated, "Only when I started learning more about the history and culture did the fog lift."[150] By understanding their culture, the advisor teams could more adequately "work within their [Iraqi] boundaries."[151] But even after learning more about the culture, many Marines remained frustrated with some of the cultural differences.

For U.S. advisors, a particularly challenging cultural difference was the caste system that separated the IA officers and enlisted men—a significant difference between the Iraqi and U.S. military. Remnants of the old Iraqi regime still existed in the officer corps. Many of the Iraqi generals and officers had spent the majority of their careers in the old Baathist army and as a result, many of them had "Saddam-era tendencies," such as an inability to plan effectively, an unwillingness to trust subordinates, and endemic corruption.[152] Marines noted that the Saddam-era officers carried with them a sense of privilege, which created a large gap in the quality of life (e.g., quality of food, personal allocations of water, air conditioning) between officers and their subordinates.[153] Some advisors noted that the Iraqi officers treated

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148 Robert M. Massie, "Advice for Advisors: Lessons Learned from a Tour with the New Iraqi Army," *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2007, p. 43.

149 Richard M. Cavagnol, Richard L. Hayes, and Daniel C. Turner, "From Vietnam to Iraq: Applying Lessons and Maturing the Advisor-Counterpart Relationship," *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 2008, p. 10.

150 Ibid., p. 43.

151 PTT commanding officer quoted in Stewart Nusbaumer, "Police Transition Team 23: Helps Fight the 'Other War' in Hit," *Leatherneck*, August 2007, p. 20.

152 Richard W. Fox, "A Change of Focus: Why it is Time to Start a New Chapter in the U.S. Advisory Mission in Iraq," *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 2009, p. 22.

153 Juan Ayala, "Reflections: Advisor Duty is Mentally Taxing and Intensely Personal," *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2008, p. 53.

soldiers like servants, which led to poor morale and low retention levels. These deeply ingrained norms were difficult, if not impossible, for Marines to change.

One MiTT leader noted that the IA battalion commander, a former officer in the Baathist army, did not trust any of his officers and if they disagreed with him, he believed that his subordinate was incompetent or could not be trusted.[154] As a result, his staff was simply reactive and unwilling to come to him with questions. That MiTT leader ultimately determined that the IA's biggest challenge was not fighting the insurgency, but was instead tackling the organizational and cultural roadblocks that had long plagued it.

In addition, the IA lacked a professional NCO corps and did not recognize its potential worth. Instead, senior officers made all the decisions. This meant that an Iraqi soldier had to receive approval from his supervisor before he could act, yet nearly all Iraqi commanders (at any level) were hesitant about making decisions on their own. Therefore it was difficult and time-consuming for advisors to make progress in any area. Some advisors formed committees to "provide safety in numbers" for commanders to make decisions.[155]

By Western military standards, Iraqi soldiers spent much of their time socializing and little time working. Business was done by hanging out together, which included drinking chai tea ("Iraq's social lubricant"[156]), smoking cigarettes, and watching television. In addition, Iraqi soldiers worked only about six hours a day, and many slept for the better part of each afternoon (in part due to the temperature). Advisors who tried to change these behaviors and impose Marine-style professionalism on the IA often grew frustrated.[157] For example, one advisor began his tour by trying to implement training he had

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154 Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, p. 83.

155 Richard M. Cavagnol, Richard L. Hayes, and Daniel C. Turner, "From Vietnam to Iraq: Applying Lessons and Maturing the Advisor-Counterpart Relationship," *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 2008, p. 14.

156 West, *The Snake Eaters,* p. 40.

157 Jack A. Sile and James B. "Beau" Higgins, "Intelligence Advising on the Military Transition Team: Understand the Situation and Hone in on the Positives," *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 2008, p. 74.

personally gone through or by trying to make an Iraqi patrol look like a patrol he would actually lead, which only led to increased frustration.[158]

Personal relationships were often more important to their Iraqi counterparts than professional relationships.[159] It underscored the need for advisors to build personal relationships with their Iraqi counterparts. Acknowledging these differences and learning to operate within these constraints helped Marines accomplish more than if they tried to change them. Advisors who recognized that Iraqis were likely to operate differently than Marines often made greater progress with their counterparts. As one Marine observed, "The Iraqis will never do things exactly as Marines do. This is neither good nor bad, just different."[160] However, it was often very difficult for a Marine not to push the Marine Corps answer.[161] Instead, many Marines came to recognize that accepting an "Iraqi solution" was often the best course of action.

Finally, many Marines expressed frustration with their counterparts' monthly leave cycle, known in Arabic as *mujaas*. Under Iraqi MoD policy, each officer and soldier was authorized ten days of leave each month. Lacking a direct deposit system, the MoD had to pay soldiers in cash. These ten days allowed each IA member to bring his earnings back to his family. As a result, Marines could only count on their counterparts being present for a maximum of 20 days per month. In addition, many IA officers frequently took extended leave for a variety of personal reasons, and rarely left anyone in charge in their absence.

Language skills

Communication was vital to the advising mission, yet advisors were often given very little Arabic language instruction. In some cases, advi-

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158 Robert M. Massie, "Advice for Advisors: Lessons Learned from a Tour with the New Iraqi Army," *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2007, p. 44.

159 Cavagnol, Richard L. Hayes, and Daniel C. Turner, "From Vietnam to Iraq," p. 14.

160 Sile and James B. "Beau" Higgins, "Intelligence Advising on the Military Transition Team," p. 78.

161 Massie, "Advice for Advisors," p. 45.

sors received as little as 45 hours or one week of language classes. Some Marines made an additional effort to learn simple phrases and noted how important it was in building bonds with their counterparts: "The most profound benefit … arises from your counterparts seeing in you the desire to learn."[162] Marines noted that Iraqis seemed to be more receptive when they attempted to converse with them in Arabic. For those that took it a step further, not having to rely on interpreters allowed Marines to work more closely with Iraqis. One MiTT officer who became fluent in Arabic noted that it gave him the ability to "humanize" himself through language and the Iraqis began to refer to him as a brother.[163]

As during the Banana Wars, interpreters alleviated much of the language barrier but also presented additional challenges. Due to limited language skills available, many advisors on MiTTs were entirely dependent on their interpreters, both local nationals and contractors. But in some cases, company-level MiTTs could be left without an interpreter. Additionally, an interpreter's abilities could directly impact a team's advising.[164] Some interpreters said what they thought should be said, not what the team member actually said.[165] Others were actually distrusted by the advisors' Iraqi counterparts, which hindered cooperation.[166]

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[162] Ibid., p. 43.

[163] Gray, *Embedded*, p. 36.

[164] See Terry L. Walker, "Lessons Learned: Valuable Information for Training or Advising Iraqis," *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 2008, p. 43.

[165] Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, p. 50.

[166] Massie, "Advice for Advisors: Lessons Learned from a Tour with the New Iraqi Army," p. 44.

U.S. Marine Corps advising in Afghanistan, 2003–2012

This section of the report discusses the history of U.S. Marine Corps advising in Afghanistan, beginning with the deployment of small training teams in 2003 through the surge of Marine forces in 2009 and the beginning of the drawdown in 2012. Its purpose is to describe and compare the variety of Marine advising missions in Afghanistan and identify key themes and potential lessons. The advisory mission is still underway, so these lessons will continue to have on-the-ground relevance.

Marine advising in Afghanistan has gone through numerous iterations since 2003, when conventional forces first became involved in developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The USMC contribution began as a small, ad hoc effort involving just a few teams working with Afghan commandoes and U.S. Army Special Forces (SF), and grew into a larger and more deliberate operation sourced out of a single regiment at 3d Marine Division (3d MarDiv) in Japan. The advisors with 3d MarDiv were responsible for advising the Afghan National Army (ANA) 201st Corps in central and eastern Afghanistan.

In 2008, the first Marine battalion arrived in southwest Afghanistan. Its mission was to train the police in outlying districts openly controlled by the Taliban. In 2009, the USMC ceased supporting the advisory mission with the 201st Corps in central and eastern Afghanistan and shifted all of its attention to Helmand and Nimruz provinces in the southwest. As additional Marine battalions arrived with the surge of U.S. forces in 2009 and 2010, counterinsurgency operations became the focus of effort, and advising took a back seat. Over time, as additional ANSF units were deployed to Helmand, the focus adjusted to partnered operations, where Marines patrolled with Afghan soldiers and police and provided training. It was not until 2013, as the Marine presence reduced by more than two-thirds, that embedded advising once again became a focus of effort.

Small teams with Afghan commandos: 2003–2005

In late 2003, several teams of Marine trainers were sent to Afghanistan to serve as embedded advisors with the fledgling ANA. Each team—known at the time as a Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU)—had approximately 13 Marines, including 1–2 Navy corpsmen—all senior enlisted and officers. These small teams had considerable impact.[167] The first Marine advisor teams worked mainly with ANA commandoes raised by SF soon after the fall of the Taliban. By 2003, it became apparent that SF did not have the manpower to provide enough advisors for these units, though many of them were capable of operating independently with some assistance.

Organization and command-and-control

Each Marine advisor team was assigned to a different ANA *kandak* (the equivalent of a small battalion).[168] The commandos were typically split into companies, each attached to an SF team in a different part of the country. In order to cover each company, the advisor teams split into groups of three Marines each. Most of these three-man teams consisted of a captain and two senior noncommissioned officers (two staff sergeants or a staff sergeant and a gunnery sergeant).[169]

Technically, the Marines reported to Task Force Phoenix, part of Coalition Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A)—a primarily administrative command responsible for manning, training, and equipping the ANSF. CSTC-A was not set up to support or com-

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[167] When Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) was established in 2005, the FMTU program was brought under Special Operations Command.

[167] MARSOC later took over the establishment of village defense units, known as the Afghan Local Police (ALP), in west and southwest Afghanistan. This shift was a substantial effort that involved much of MARSOC's deployed capacity.

[168] *Embedded Training Teams with the Afghan National Army* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, June 2008).

[169] Michael G. Brooks, ed., *U.S. Army Advisors in Afghanistan,* vol.3, *Eyewitness to War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), pp. 243–261.

mand operations and proved incapable of doing so. It was, nonetheless, given authority over embedded advisors operating with Afghan forces across the country, many of them in high-risk missions. Advising was not considered dangerous; those deploying were told they would not be involved in combat operations.[170]

In reality, Marine advisors fell under the tactical control of SF and operated closely with SF teams (known as Operational Detachment Alphas, or ODAs[171]), which controlled the Afghan commandos. The Marines relied on SF for much of their support—including air cover and movement, logistics, intelligence, medical care and casualty evacuation, and even ammunition and weapons—and frequently operated out of SF bases. With few exceptions, support and command and control issues were resolved at the tactical level between the advisors and SF commanders.[172]

The advisors participated in raids, ambushes, cordon-and-searches, and other maneuvers against remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. They also manned outposts on roads and border crossings and conducted security patrols. Many of these operations involved irregular Afghan militia forces (AMF) led by the ODAs. These were mainly counterterrorist or counter-guerrilla operations, not population-centric counterinsurgency, though the advisors did execute some small-scale civil affairs projects.

As advisors embedded with indigenous forces operating with the ODAs against internal threats, these Marines were, in effect, fully integrated augments to SF conducting foreign internal defense (FID). This resulted in an unusual command-and-control relationship that nonetheless worked due to the tactical nature of the mission and the

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[170] Scott A. Cuomo, "Embedded Training Teams," *Marine Corps Gazette,* June 2006.

[171] An ODA consists of 12 soldiers. There are four to six ODAs in each SF company. An SF company command element is known as an Operational Detachment Bravo (ODB).

[172] Brian G. Cillessen, *Marine Advisor: Can the Marine Corps Prepare Them Better?* Contemporary Issues Paper (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, February 2006).

fact that the advisors were fully embedded with ANA commando units and worked closely with SF.[173]

Pre-deployment training

The early advisor teams received little or no training or preparation. Advisors were on their own to prepare, without any standards to go by.[174] The training they did receive was primarily to prepare for combat situations; it was not focused on developing advisory skills. Deploying advisors had few opportunities to learn from those who came before them, because advisors were taken from units across the Marine Corps and returned to those units following redeployment. It was a diverse group of Marines, some of them with experience as drill instructors or teachers at the infantry school. There were no standards by which to screen potential advisors.[175]

The Regional Corps Advisory Command in eastern Afghanistan: 2006–2009

In 2006, 3d Marine Division was tasked with sending seven advisor teams to Afghanistan to serve nine-month tours—part of a joint effort to embed advisors with each of the ANA's region-based divisions. The first group of advisors—totaling 152 Marines and Navy corpsmen—deployed in November 2006. The mission lasted until the summer of 2009, when the Marine Corps shifted its attention to counterinsurgency operations in southwest Afghanistan. The Marines were to make up the bulk of a semi-operational advisory unit known as Regional Corps Advisory Command–Central (RCAC-C).

The job of the advisors from 3d MarDiv was to advise the conventional *kandaks* and command staffs of the ANA 201st Corps, which was responsible for eleven provinces in the east, northeast, and central parts of the country, including the capital and its environs. The northeastern provinces were in some of the most difficult terrain in the world, dominated by high mountains. These provinces were also

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173 Brooks, ed., *Eyewitness to War,* pp. 243–261.

174 Ibid.

175 Cillessen, *Marine Advisor.*

some of the most dangerous parts of the country, measured by the number of U.S. casualties and open battles with insurgent fighters.

Organization and command-and-control

The RCAC was headed by a colonel who also served as an advisor to the 201st Corps Commander. Each of the seven advisor teams were headed by a lieutenant colonel and embedded with a different *kandak*. There were also lieutenant colonels on-site with the three brigade commanders. The RCAC colonel served as the teams' commanding officer and liaison to the ANA leadership. He and his staff of 26 arranged for support to the teams—such as material and higher-level coordination for operations—and worked with the corps and brigade staffs. The advisor chain of command paralleled that of the ANA chain, allowing issues at the tactical level involving the embedded advisor teams to be raised at the operational level with the ANA brigade and corps-level leadership.

Marine advisor with Afghan army officers, eastern Afghanistan, 2008. (Photo: Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdes.)

Marines on the brigade and corps-level staffs provided advice on planning, in many cases forcing the staffs to conduct deliberate planning. At the tactical level, most 201st Corps units performed adequately. However, planning and coordination at the operational level was severely lacking. As the tactical proficiency of ANA units continued to improve, the lack of planning and adequate logistics, intelligence, air, and other higher-order support became more of the central problem. The continued presence of embedded teams with the *kandaks* remained important, however, as it provided senior mentors with leverage and situational awareness of what was happening on the ground.

As with the foreign military training units, there was no formal unity of command—though there was often unity of effort at the tactical level. The advisors from the RCAC technically reported to CSTC-A, which was responsible for their support, yet this relationship was extremely convoluted and largely ineffective. As a result, the Marines enforced command relationships amongst themselves and coordinated informally with the ANA and U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) units in their areas of operation in order to secure necessary support, such as air movement and logistics, casualty evacuation, and air and fire support. Over time, the RCAC also assumed control over additional advisory and support personnel from the U.S. Army and Air Force, and helped coordinate their support as well. In effect, the RCAC commander and his staff ran the 201st Corps advising effort as a semi-autonomous entity.[176]

Support

CSTC-A was not set up to adequately support advisors conducting operations. The command responsible for U.S. and NATO units conducting operations – at the time known as Coalition Joint Task Force 101 (CJTF-101), a predecessor to the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) – had no responsibility to support the advisors. Support to the

[176] Thomas Ross, "Muscular Mentoring: FM 3-24 and Selected Experiences of Regional Corps Advisory Command 3-5," *Culture and Conflict Review,* February 1, 2011, www.nps.edu/Programs/CCS/WebJournal/Article.aspx?ArticleID=71. Daniel Helmer, "Twelve Urgent Steps for the Advisor Mission in Afghanistan," *Military Review,* July/August 2008.

ANA was the responsibility of the Afghan Ministry of Defense. The advisors did obtain some ad hoc support from CJTF-101, but this was based mainly on personal relationships and informal requests. The RCAC worked with advisors from the ANA Air Corps (what later became the Afghan Air Force) to resupply ANA positions where Marine advisors were located.

These ad hoc support arrangements worked most of the time, but there were instances when they broke down and resulted in costly failures. One of the most significant examples was an ambush in early 2009, when a team of Marine advisors, 60 ANA soldiers, and 20 border police were ambushed by some 150 insurgents near the Pakistani border in Kunar Province. The patrol did not receive timely air or artillery support, and it took nearly two hours for a U.S. quick reaction force to arrive, at which point the patrol had taken heavy casualties—U.S. and Afghan. Some have attributed this failure to the fact that support to the advisors was not a priority for the maneuver battalion in the battlespace, which was focused on operations. The advisors also had a separate reporting chain and were not adequately coordinated with the battalion.[177]

Before the ambush, the *kandak* in eastern Kunar had been one of the more effective units in the 201st Corps and was believed to be close to the point where it would no longer require advisors—due largely to good leadership, strong unit cohesion, and commitment to the mission. Following the ambush, the unit deteriorated. Corruption and lack of discipline emerged as serious problems, and the *kandak* was no longer capable of operating effectively. The Afghans apparently believed that if they got into serious trouble, the coalition would support them. When this did not happen, the *kandak* leadership, as well as much of the rank and file, appeared to lose faith in their advisors and the mission.[178]

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[177] Jerry Meyerle, "What Might Advise and Assist Look Like? Lessons from Advisors with Unpartnered Afghan Army Units" (unpublished paper, December 2011).

[178] Ibid.

Pushing the ANA into the lead at the outset

Marine embedded trainers in the east encouraged the ANA to take the lead. In fact, they had no choice but do so: A small team of advisors was not in a position to conduct operations on its own or to force ANA *kandak* commanders to act—a situation much like what the Marines encountered during the Vietnam War. The Marines' experience was that this encouraged initiative and accelerated development toward independence. A common view among the Marine embedded training teams (ETTs) in the east was that too much partnering tended to encourage dependence on coalition forces and discourage ANA units from attempting to operate independently. This trend tended to inhibit ANA development in terms of the capacity of its leadership to make independent decisions and plan its own operations, and the confidence of its rank and file to operate on their own.

The advisors did not push the ANA to conduct Marine-style counterinsurgency operations. They focused instead on facilitating coordination between the army and police, serving as a check against corruption and the use of excessive force against the population during operations. The Marines rarely spoke in *shuras* or engaged with the population, leaving those tasks to the ANA and its religious affairs officers. The advisors coordinated medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), air support, and enablers such as special operations against high-level insurgent leaders. The advisors were also involved in planning. Yet, coalition forces played a very limited role in operations.[179]

ANA units with little experience and less training and equipment than partnered *kandaks* elsewhere in the east operated independently with Marine advisors, some of them far from any coalition units. Most of these *kandaks* had never been partnered. Some were straight out of basic training. Unpartnered *kandaks* with small advisor teams often did better than units partnered with U.S. Army battalions. Part of this phenomenon could have been attributable to the way the U.S. Army did partnering in the east and the level of threat in areas where ANA *kandaks* were partnered. The view of the Marine advisors, though, was

[179] Ibid.

that "advise and assist" was more effective than partnering when it came to making units independent.[180]

There was little correlation between how the units were rated on quantifiable factors such as equipment and manning and their ability to operate independently. The key factor was how well the units functioned while on missions. Much of this was dependent on leadership, unit cohesion, and the level of threat. The first two in particular were human factors that only advisors who interacted regularly with the *kandaks* were in a position to evaluate adequately. It was often necessary to let ANA units fail, or come close to failure, in order to realize their limitations and to break their dependence on Western forces.

A key element of pushing the ANA into the lead was developing the capability of its command staffs to conduct adequate planning. Embedded advisors at the brigade and corps levels coached ANA officers on military planning processes and pushed these staffs to plan ahead. Advisors at the higher levels also ensured that tactical units received adequate support and provided advice on logistics and personnel. Advising at the higher levels of command required Marines with the appropriate rank and experience. At the RCAC, these positions were filled by Marines at the 0-5 and 0-6 levels—many of them with experience as planning officers on regimental and division staffs.

Pre-deployment training

Most of the advisors for the RCAC came out of the same regiment (4th Marines) at 3d MarDiv. The result was better unit cohesion, as the advisors tended to know one another before the teams were formed. Deploying advisors had the opportunity to learn from Marines who had served in previous tours. The 3d MarDiv became a repository of knowledge on advising and operations in eastern Afghanistan. Over successive deployments, an institutional relationship developed between 4th Marines and 201st Corps that enabled continuity and facilitated the smooth turnover between outgoing and incoming advisors.

The 3d MarDiv arranged for its own pre-deployment training. The teams attended the Mojave Viper exercise at Twentynine Palms, Cali-

[180] Ibid.

fornia, which at that time was based on urban warfare operations in Iraq. They then went to Hawthorne, Nevada or Bridgeport, California to receive mountain warfare training. The advisors had on average about three months to train and prepare.[181]

The advisors knew they were deploying into high-threat areas and so focused on combat training. Softer skills such as negotiation and cross-cultural communication received relatively little attention. The advisors also found it difficult to get access to tactically relevant cultural or other information (for example, on dynamics between different tribes) particular to the areas they were to be deployed. This lack of knowledge hampered the advisors during their deployments. The most effective products in this regard were after-action reports of advisors and other forces who had served in the same areas.

There was very little time for language training—and even then, there was considerable uncertainty over which language to study: Dari was spoken by much of the ANA officer corps; Pashto was spoken by much of the population in eastern Afghanistan, as well as by many enlisted soldiers. Ultimately, managing interpreters proved to be the more important skill, yet adequate training in this regard was hard to come by. Once deployed, the advisors had problems communicating effectively through interpreters and ensuring the interpreters did not abuse their position and develop inappropriate relationships with host nation forces.[182]

2nd Battalion, 7th Marines in southwest Afghanistan: 2008–2009

In the spring of 2008, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines out of I MEF was sent to southwest Afghanistan to train district police forces. The 2/7 was the first Marine battalion to establish a long-term presence in southwest Afghanistan, and served as the vanguard for what would later become a much larger Marine presence from 2009 onward. In early

[181] Ross, "Muscular Mentoring."

[182] Ibid.

2009, the primary mission of Marines in southwest Afghanistan was changed from advising the police to counterinsurgency operations.[183]

The 2/7 was spread over eight districts in northern Helmand and eastern Farah Provinces—a vast, mostly ungoverned area, where insurgents moved in large numbers. A platoon was sent to each district with a police force, mostly to remote areas with few or no coalition forces nearby. Some of these districts were entirely under the control of the insurgents. The mission involved extensive combat operations. In several cases, months of operations against the Taliban were necessary before the police were able to interact with the local population in any significant way. When the police forces were able to take on their policing functions, they realized that there was much work to do.

Building police from scratch

In these districts, the existing police barely functioned. They engaged in extensive predatory behavior, and in some instances were in league with the Taliban. In many cases, the police had to be built almost from scratch. In one district in particular, much of the force was disbanded and built anew from fresh recruits.[184]

Advisors often got directly involved in securing pay for the police from district and provincial officials, and ensuring that money was not skimmed off the top. The same was true of uniforms, weapons,

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[183] In early 2008, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit sent a battalion landing team made up of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines to Garmsir district in the southern part of Helmand Province, where it conducted a series of counterinsurgency and counternarcotics operations (the mission did not include advising or other security force assistance duties). The deployment was temporary, and 1/6 was not backfilled. The 2/7 was the first battalion to establish a permanent presence. In late 2008, 2/7 was backfilled by the Special Purpose MAGTF Afghanistan, which brought additional air and logistical capabilities. The 3/8 Marines out of II MEF took over 2/7's battlespace and mission. The SPMAGTF-A served as a bridging element to the Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan that took over in early 2009.

[184] Jerry Meyerle, Megan Katt, and Jim Gavrilis, *Counterinsurgency on the Ground in Afghanistan: How Different Units Adapted to Local Conditions* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2010), pp. 25-34.

ammunition, and money for food and other essentials. The Marines often had to intercede in conflicts between police chiefs and other district and provincial officials. Advisors intervened in personnel issues as well, particularly in response to allegations of physical and sexual abuse by senior officers.

Problems with the advisory command

Like Marine advisors in the east, 2/7 fell under CSTC-A, which determined where the Marines would be deployed. It was CSTC-A's decision to send them to Helmand and Farah Provinces to train the district police. This decision was made without adequate intelligence or analysis. CSTC-A appeared to know little about the level of threat and provided very little information to the Marines. The battalion received little information on the area prior to deploying, and what information they did receive from CSTC-A turned out to be inaccurate – in particular, the strength of the insurgency and level of threat. 2/7 attributed these problems to the fact that CSTC-A was responsible for man-train-equip issues and was not adequately set up to make operational decisions, such as where and how to deploy a Marine battalion.[185]

There did not appear to be a good reason why these districts in particular were of sufficient strategic importance to warrant subjecting a Marine battalion to considerable potential danger. CSTC-A did not appear to have a means of assessing which police forces required advisors or were important enough to warrant the investment; advisors elsewhere in the country were moved around frequently with little warning or explanation. There was little coordination between the security force assistance effort and counterinsurgency operations against the Taliban.

Support issues

The 2/7 was sent to the southwest with little air or logistical support. Like their colleagues in the east, they relied on the goodwill of the battle-space commanders. Yet, unlike the RCAC, the 2/7 did not op-

[185] For this reason (among others), command of advisor teams was later taken away from CSTC-A and given to the IJC, which was responsible for command-and-control of US and NATO combat units.

erate in U.S. army battle-space commanded by a U.S. joint task force. The battalion was stretched across two regional commands—one led by British forces, the other by the Italians. Both commands had limited air or logistical support for their own forces, let alone for those outside their command chain. UK forces at the time were spread out into small platoon-sized outposts under constant fire; the British struggled to provide the bare minimum of air cover and logistical support to these positions.

The battalion arrived in Afghanistan without any training on advising or security force assistance. The 2/7 had been slated to deploy to Iraq to conduct counterinsurgency operations, but was redirected at the last minute to Afghanistan. The Marines knew almost nothing about Afghanistan, much less the particular areas in which they would be operating. The battalion found itself drawn deep into local politics and tribal feuds, and hence conducting a mission for which they were not prepared. Nonetheless, the Marines managed to push the Taliban out of several districts and stand up functioning police forces. Under such difficult conditions, the basics proved essential: professionalism, flexibility, and small-unit infantry skills.[186]

Advising during the surge: 2009–2012

In early 2009, a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) totaling over 10,000 personnel was sent to southwest Afghanistan, part of a surge in U.S. forces ordered by President Barack Obama. Their mission was to push the Taliban out of populated areas, mainly along the Helmand River valley. Advising and operating by, with, and through indigenous forces took a backseat to Marine-led counterinsurgency operations.

Over the course of the surge—from 2009 until the beginning of the drawdown of U.S. forces in 2013—the Marines forced the Taliban out of most key population centers and built an integrated security architecture encompassing the ANA, district police forces, semi-regular local defense forces, and a series of district coordination centers that enabled communication among the different security forces. The Marines did this in the thick of intense resistance by the Taliban. By

[186] Ibid.

2013, much of Helmand was under government control, particularly the central districts where most of the population was concentrated.

From embedded advising to partnering and back again

The MEB continued to develop the Afghan Army and police at the tactical level, but its method of doing so changed from *embedded advising*, which involved small independent teams clustered with ANA units operating relatively independently, to *partnering*, in which Afghan soldiers and police were brought along on Marine-led operations.

In the early days of the surge in 2009 and 2010, U.S. and NATO forces in Helmand outnumbered their Afghan counterparts by several orders of magnitude. Counterinsurgency operations involved small numbers of Afghan soldiers or police; the ANSF rarely acted independently. As more Afghan soldiers and police were deployed to Helmand, and as their capability improved, the ratio of ANSF to Marines grew. There were more Afghans on patrols with Marines. Over time, more capable Afghan units began conducting their own patrols.

When the ANA 215th Corps was stood up in 2010, each of its *kandaks* was partnered with a Marine battalion in battlespace controlled by U.S. forces. The one exception was a *kandak* deployed in Farah along the road to the Iranian border. This unit was the only *kandak* to operate independently with a small team of embedded Marine advisors—similar to the situation with the RCAC in the eastern provinces prior to 2009. The *kandak* did not patrol as aggressively as those partnered with Marine battalions. In the view of its advisors, however, it functioned reasonably well, was less dependent on U.S. forces, and demonstrated greater initiative.[187] In 2013, as the Marine presence in Helmand shrank by more than two-thirds, the focus shifted back toward embedded advising. ANA units and police forces were pushed out front and given latitude to conduct independent operations, with U.S. forces operating more in the background—as Marine advisors had done in the east prior to the surge.

[187] Meyerle, "What Might Advise and Assist Look Like?"

Institutionalized training and education for the ANSF

One of the MEB's most important contributions to the advising effort in Afghanistan was the establishment of independent schools in Helmand to provide institutionalized training and education. It was widely recognized that the ANSF, and the police in particular, did not receive adequate training in schools run by the Afghan Defense and Interior Ministries.

The largest such school was the Joint Security Academy Southwest (JSAS), located at the ANA 215th Corps headquarters. U.S. and Afghan instructors taught classes in explosive ordinance disposal and combat medicine, as well as basic combat skills intended to improve the survivability of police on their way to high-threat areas. New police received an additional eight weeks of training at the JSAS before their assignment to a district.[188]

As the Marine presence in Afghanistan grew from a MEB to a MEF, the command staff expanded and took on additional functions associated with building the institutional capacity of the ANSF. Staff officers worked on improving the ANSF's personnel policies, training, and logistics, and worked closely with the Interior and Defense Ministries in Kabul. The number of advisors at the corps level increased, as did joint planning efforts between the ANA corps staff and the MEF. Plans were drawn up at the MEF, translated into Dari, discussed, and further revised. The MEF's intelligence and logistics components worked to expand the 215th Corps capabilities in these areas as well, and managed funding for these efforts.

[188] Patrick Carroll and Terry Walker, "Victory in Afghanistan," *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2010.

U.S. Marine advisor with Afghan soldier, Helmand Province, 2011. (Photo: Cpl. Jeff Drew, USMC)

Advisor teams

Each Marine battalion commander provided a team of dedicated trainers from the battalion's ranks. As the numbers of police increased, the battalions also provided teams of police trainers. The regimental and division staffs assigned advisors to work with Afghan officers at the brigade and corps-level staffs. As with the ETTs in eastern Afghanistan, these advisors served as liaisons with the ANSF, looked after their support, and provided them with additional training.[189]

Standard advisor teams provided basic training and facilitated command-and-control for the ANSF during joint operations. Over time, as the army became increasingly proficient at basic small-unit operations, there was greater emphasis on providing advisors with specialized knowledge in higher-order functions such as artillery, intelligence, and logistics. These specialized functions became increasingly important as more ANA units were left to operate independently.

[189] "Marine Corps Advisors: Past and Present," 2d MarDiv, 2011.

In Helmand, most of the advisors were taken "out of hide" from infantry battalions— a practice that had its virtues and shortfalls. On the one hand, it enabled unity of command for counterinsurgency operations and advising. The practice also maintained unit cohesion within the teams and between the advisors and Marines focused on operations, as all trained together as a battalion prior to deployment. Finally, the practice gave battalion commanders flexibility to create the right mix of advisors, given the tactical situation.

On the other hand, the practice made it difficult to provide adequate pre-deployment training, as many advisors were not assigned until after arriving in theater. There was no formal selection process for advisors, as there had been for the RCAC sourced out of 3d MarDiv. Selection was entirely up to individual battalion commanders, few of whom assigned their best men to the job—an echo of the challenges in the Combined Action Program in Vietnam. Finally, advisor teams had no advocate in the chain of command to which to look for support or guidance on the mission. They reported only to their battalion commanders, who were mainly focused on operations. The advising mission was not well coordinated or standardized across the battlespace, because so much depended on the individual battalion commanders who owned the advisors.

Unique challenges advisors faced

Marines working with the ANSF faced many of the problems encountered elsewhere in Afghanistan, such as endemic corruption, indiscipline, drug use, illiteracy, lack of leadership, and failings at the institutional level. These problems were particularly acute in the police, which had a reputation for preying on the population—and often on one another. Advisors were often torn between their mission to build the capability of district police forces and moral concerns about their behavior.

Mentors learned to manage various forms of corruption, address abuse of the population, and instill some measure of honesty and professionalism into the forces they were charged with advising. They also learned to acknowledge the limitations of these forces and work within the constraints that these conditions imposed. The advisors were often acutely aware of what the ANSF were and were not capa-

ble of, what they would ever be capable of, and therefore what was ultimately achievable in the long-term.[190]

Key themes and lessons

Marines have participated in a variety of different advising missions in Afghanistan over the past decade under a diverse set of difficult conditions. They have worked with Afghan soldiers, commandos, police, irregular local defense forces, and other units. In some of these missions, Marines were part of a larger Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF); in others, the Marines were separated from the Corps. Frequently, they were on their own completely, with only their Afghan counterparts to rely on. Despite the diversity of these missions, some common themes emerge: command-and-control and support issues, and shortfalls in advisor screening and pre-deployment training.

Command-and-control, and support

Unity of effort and command was an issue in every mission described in this report. The bifurcation of command between U.S. forces conducting security force assistance and those conducting counterinsurgency operations was a perennial barrier to effective coordination. Combat operations against the insurgency were treated differently from the advising mission, though counterinsurgency doctrine clearly states that the two should go hand in hand. Until 2009, Marine advisors fell under a separate chain of command that was not manned or equipped for command-and-control of units conducting combat operations in the field. In part as a result, advisors had little assured access to air support, logistics, and other enablers available to units conducting counterinsurgency operations. They typically had to secure much of what they required through a variety of sources, particularly nearby tactical units. This meant that they relied on the

[190] William Rosenau, *Acknowledging Limits: Police Advisors and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Alexandria, VA and Quantico, VA: CNA and Marine Corps University Press, 2011), pp. 1-9. See also Catherine Norman, *What Do Afghans Want from the Police: Views from Helmand Province* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2012).

goodwill of nearby tactical commanders, many of whom did not view developing indigenous forces as a top priority.

Screening and pre-deployment training

As discussed throughout our explication of Marine advising in Afghanistan, adequate screening and pre-deployment training for advisors was the exception rather than the rule. The USMC struggled with how to screen for and impart "soft skills" needed to be successful as a foreign military advisor. To be effective, advisors required some knowledge of Afghan culture, or at least the ability to learn about and interact with foreign cultures and indigenous forces. They needed a high level of knowledge about the operating environment, including friendly and enemy forces, as well as the population.

The more effective advisors also possessed skills that were not easy to teach, and were, therefore, more a matter of screening than training or education. The 3d MarDiv looked for advisors with good interpersonal skills, the ability to build enduring relationships, and a proven track record in training or instruction. It was necessary to find Marines who were not focused exclusively on combat, and would therefore be able to engage peacefully with foreign populations and work well with indigenous forces, despite attacks from insurgents; infiltration, corruption, and abuse in the ranks; and other pressures. In many cases, these were Marines who were older and emotionally more mature.

Advisors needed to be adaptive and able to operate independently—often surrounded by foreign forces—with little higher-level guidance. The high level of threat in some areas required teams with strong basic combat skills and the ability to manage air support and other higher-end enablers—much in the way Special Forces teams do. In safer areas, or in missions conducted largely in the relatively secure confines of large bases, advisor teams did not require a high level of combat readiness—though the fundamentals of professionalism and basic combat skills were always necessary.

When it came to both screening and pre-deployment training, there were advantages to sourcing advisors out of the same regiment—or at the very least, the same MEF—in order to build a repository of knowledge and experience, and enable interaction between experienced advisors and those readying to deploy. This practice worked

well for 3d MarDiv, which became a repository of knowledge on and experience with advising. Advisors deploying out of 3d MarDiv and returning there following redeployment were able to share knowledge and pass it on to follow-on teams. Finally, teams deployed out of 3d MarDiv had greater unit cohesion than was possible for those sourced mostly from across the Marine Corps.

U.S. Marine Corps advisor training today

Having reviewed the long history of Marine Corps advising, it is worth looking at the state of Marine Corps advising efforts today. This section of the report addresses a number of institutional and organizational issues surrounding advisor training, tracking, and development. It begins with an overview of current advising in theaters outside Afghanistan, and goes on to describe the training provided at the service's two centers for advisor training, the Advisor Training Group (ATG) and the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG). This section then discusses the challenges the service has in tracking advisors. Finally, this section provides further context by analyzing the ranks and military occupational specialties of Marines who have trained at ATG.

Current advisory missions

Advising the national security forces of Afghanistan is the largest Marine advisory mission currently underway. Marine advisors are also deployed in smaller numbers in several other theaters in a variety of engagement, security force assistance, and security cooperation activities. These include the following:

- A twenty-man security cooperation team advises Latin American and Caribbean security forces.
- A 150-man Special Purpose MAGTF advises security forces in Eastern, Southern, and Western Africa.
- In Jordan, a long-standing Marine advisory presence includes a twenty-man team to support the kingdom's military.
- The United Arab Emirates Training Mission, composed of 43 Marines, advises that country's presidential guard.
- The nine Marines who make up the Saudi Training Mission train the Kingdom's marine corps.
- Under the Georgia Deployment Program, a 110-man Marine team trains infantry battalions for deployment to Afghanistan.

- The Black Sea Rotational Force (BSRF), composed of 150 Marines, advises countries in Eastern Europe.

Marines on these teams advise along the spectrum of activities, from small unit training to larger scale planning and logistics program development. In addition to these existing and well-established advising relationships, Marines have in recent years engaged with the following countries in an advisory capacity: Romania, Poland, Liberia, Mexico, El Salvador, Japan, Burundi, Uganda, Guatemala, Senegal, Lebanon, Thailand, Benin, and Nigeria.

Advisor manning and tracking

Technically, in today's Marine Corps there *are* no Marine Corps advisors, since there is no primary military occupational specialty to designate them as such. As a result, it is difficult for the service to track Marines who served as advisors. If a Marine has such experience, it will likely be reflected in his official record, which should include an assessment of his performance as an advisor. But, not all the content of official records can easily be viewed by commanders or personnel managers—the very people who could use that information to staff well-trained and experienced advisor teams.

Currently, the only way to identify and track Marines who have been trained and certified as advisors is the course completion code that Marines get upon completion of the program of instruction (POI) taught by the ATG (this group trains advisors bound for Afghanistan as discussed in more detail later). Using the course identification code, one can locate a list of Marines who have completed the course by searching in Marine Corps Training Information Management System (MCTIMS). While this is a legitimate means to track and identify Marines certified as advisors, it is not ideal for two reasons. The first is because this code does not automatically populate in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), the system commonly used for personnel management. The second is that the course completion code in MCTIMS is only searchable by ATG class and not by an individual Marine's name.

The Marine Corps personnel system uses MCTFS to track all elements of a Marine's career; it includes numerous data points—from college credits to PMOS—and is searchable by name. Right now, the

data from MCTIMS does not appear automatically in MCTFS. It is possible for ATG course completion to show up on Marines' records in MCTFS, but only if they personally hand in their completion certificates to the individual personnel administrative center at their command so that it can be manually entered into MCTFS.

A second complication exists: If a commanding officer wants to know which Marines in his battalion have advisor training, he cannot search for the names of his Marines in MCTIMS. Rather, he must look up every class of ATG, compile a list of names, and then cross-reference that list with a list of his Marines. It is also difficult to access data necessary to determine if a given unit has advised, or whether that unit has provided individual Marines to support the advisory missions of other commands. Unit deployment history and command chronologies should reflect this status, but are often hard to find and time-consuming to review.

Despite these complications, it is possible, though difficult, to analyze the MCTIMS, MCTFS, and other training and personnel databases and identify key characteristics of ATG graduates.[191] This analysis, which covers graduates from March 2010 through January 2013, shows the following:

- 2,900 Marines (officers and enlisted) were trained
- Advisors were drawn from 145 different primary MOSs
- Ranks ranged from private first class (E-2) to colonel (O-6)
- Overall, military police (5811) constituted 26 percent of the graduates—a very large percentage, given their relatively small numbers in Marine Corps.
- For enlisted graduates, 5811 was the largest PMOS, while for officers, the largest was infantry officer (0302).

[191] Acquiring and analyzing this data proved to be a considerable challenge and in itself illustrates the problem of tracking Marine advisors.

- The largest percentage of enlisted graduates were lance corporals (30 percent), while first lieutenants made up the biggest percentage of officers (45 percent).[192]

These results illustrate several important points about Marine Corps advisors in Afghanistan today and in the recent past. First, there is not a "typical" Marine advisor. The wide range of primary MOSs suggests that advisors come from across the spectrum of the service, and not just one or two specific communities. That said, the military police (MP) do appear to be have been more involved than other specialties over the past few years (at least in terms of advising in Afghanistan). Second, while advisors did span the spectrum of ranks from E-2 to O-6, there are significant numbers of younger Marines involved in the advising mission. Both of these points highlight the importance of being able to track Marines with advisory experience. Because they come from across the Marine Corps and tend to be younger, there is a wide variety of expertise that is likely to be around for some period of time, so being able to identify and leverage that expertise could help the Corps better perform advisory missions going forward.[193]

Advisor training and education

Today, there are two institutions that train Marines for advisor missions: the ATG, for Marines deploying to Afghanistan as members of Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams (SFAATs), and MCSCG, for advisors going to other theaters. ATG is a formal school that is part of the Marine Corps' Training and Education Command (TECOM). As a formal school, ATG's POI has been validated by TECOM. Commanders sending their Marines through ATG are assured of a standardized course that certifies them for SFAATs. In contrast, MCSCG is not, at this time, a formal school with POIs validated by TECOM. In the judgment of MCSCG personnel, this gives the group the flexibility to adjust POIs to meet the needs of the forces preparing for advisory missions across the globe.

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[192] See Appendix IV and Appendix V for more detailed results of this analysis.

[193] At the same time, however, these more junior Marines may lack the maturity and experience that the service regards as important for advisor success.

Advisor Training Group

Based at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California, ATG was established in 2007 to prepare Marines to deploy to Afghanistan. Its mission is to "train Marine Corps advisor teams to advise, mentor, and train foreign military, police, and border units in operational techniques and procedures to combat terrorism and counter an insurgency [in Afghanistan]."[194] ATG prepares Marines heading to Afghanistan to be part of SFAATs. These teams advise a variety of units, including the Afghan National Army, Afghan Uniformed Police, Afghan National Civil Order Police, and Afghan Border Police.

Before attending the ATG, Marines will have completed the Advisor Training Cell (ATC) course at their resident MEF. The ATC covers combat and advising proficiencies, known as Blocks II and III.[195] Subsequent ATG training, which lasts 25 days, assesses competency in the first two blocks and has time built in the schedule for required remediation. ATG Block IV training includes billet-specific skills, mitigating insider threat training, rehearsal of common advisor situations, and additional language and culture training. The ATG's capstone is the mission rehearsal exercise, which takes place on a training facility constructed to resemble Afghan districts.[196] More than 250 Afghan-American role players, fluent in Afghan languages and culture, participate. Subject matter experts (SMEs) observe the Marines' performance and provide feedback. The role-playing is an important part of the training offered at both the ATC and the ATG. (See the following vignette for an illustration of role-playing.)

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[194] See ATG's official website, at www.29palms.marines.mil/Units/AdvisorTrainingGroup.aspx.

[195] These include combat marksmanship, combat life saver, tactical casualty combat care, dismounted/mounted patrolling, counter IED, other CENTCOM theatre training requirements, communications, tactical vehicle training, U.S. crew-served weapons, convoy, combined arms, combat hunter training.

[196] Andrew Lubin, "The Advisor Training Group: Making Afghanistan 'Transition' Successful," *Leatherneck*, December (2012).

Vignette: Role-playing in advisor training

An Afghan-American role player is seated behind a table covered from end to end with paper plates piled high with Afghan food. A team of advisor Marines enters the room, greets him, and then takes their seats in the chairs arrayed in front of him. The role player this afternoon is a warlord and, through an interpreter, asks two of the tallest Marines to stand up and, literally, twirl around. The captain in charge of this team is hesitant at complying with this odd request, but eventually submits. The warlord wants these two Marines to become his personal bodyguards. The captain explains that this isn't legally possible, but the warlord persists.

The tension is broken only by the arrival of the warlord's brother, a younger man who, once seated at the table, points to one of the Marines and accuses him of kidnapping his son. The ensuing conversation is tense as the captain offers to leverage his connections to determine the whereabouts of the warlord's missing nephew. But, the physical description of the missing boy provided by the Afghans is virtually unusable—he is tall and has big eyes, soft skin, and a beautiful singing voice.

At the conclusion of the scenario, a contractor with Blue Canopy sits down to give the advisor team an after action report. He offers constructive criticism that, once dispensed, seems obvious. For example, the warlord was frustrated that the captain would not provide merely two of his many Marines to offer protection. One way to make the warlord feel protected would be for the captain to tell the warlord that he had a good eye—the two Marines he pointed out were the captain's very own bodyguards. As such, he couldn't give them up. But, those two bodyguards could provide a 15 minute training session to the warlord's bodyguards. Taking this tack would facilitate a better relationship with the Afghan.

Another critique was that when the warlord's brother discussed his missing son, the Marines lacked empathy for his situation. A discussion ensued about how the Marines could convey that feeling. The tension in the situation, particularly because one of the Marines in the room was accused of kidnapping this boy, nearly prevented any other emotion from bubbling to the surface—at least without practice, and training.

Advisor training, ATG, 2008 (Photo: Lance Corporal Nicholas M. Dunn, USMC)

ATG routinely trains up to 225 Marines a year, although last year it trained 275. As mentioned above, because the ATG's POI has been validated by TECOM, a course completion code (M09KYK8–course name Foreign Advisor Gold) is issued. This code is inputted into MCTIMS for the name of each Marine who completes the course and is ultimately certified as an advisor by ATG. Today, this code is the only systematic means of identifying and tracking Marines who have been trained and certified as advisors—but only those trained and certified by ATG.

Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG)

MCSCG became fully operational in October 2012 and is based at Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Its mission is to, "Execute and enable Security Cooperation programs, training, planning and activities in order to ensure unity of effort in support of USMC and Regional Marine Component Command objectives and in coordination with the operating forces and MAGTF(s)."[197]

[197] "MCSCG Marines Provide SC Mentorship to Command and Staff College Students," https://www.dvidshub.net/news/107449/mcscg-marines-provide-sc-mentorship-command-and-staff-college-students.

Because MCSCG trains Marines deploying to theatres all over the world, there is no set package of training and no set period of time in which the training takes place. MCSCG has to quickly adapt its programs of instruction to fit the needs of the operating force. MCSCG trains approximately 540 Marines and sailors a year.

In closing this section, an important point is that, as in several of our historical case studies, the Marine Corps created training structures over the past decade to try and rectify recognized shortfalls in predeployment training and education for Marines serving as advisors in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. As the Marine Corps currently finds itself in a fiscally stressed environment, decisions on whether to maintain these structures will likely have to be made in the coming years. This and other potential decisions pertaining to the future of Marine Corps advising are the subject of our next section.

The future of U.S. Marine Corps advising

As our historical case study analysis showed, advising foreign nations' military forces has been a prominent part of the Marine Corps experience for roughly a century, and some of the most storied Marines had advising experiences in their formative years. That said, our analysis identified a host of challenges associated with past Marine Corps advising efforts, such as pre-deployment training, linguistic and cultural barriers, and command and control issues. These challenges are summarized in the table below for each of our historical case studies.

Table 1. Key advisory issues

	Poor Quality Local Recruits	Inadequate Advisor Screening/Selection	Inadequate Pre-Deployment Training	Language and culture barriers	C2/Support Issues
Banana Wars	X		X	X	X
Vietnam (VNMC)			X	X	
Vietnam (CAP)		X	X	X	
Iraq		X	X	X	X
Afghanistan	X	X	X	X	X

Poor quality local recruits

During the past century, Marines responsible for organizing and training security forces have often been faced with poor-quality local recruits. This was especially the case in the poorest countries in which the Marines advised—Afghanistan, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti—though even in so-called "second world" countries like Iraq, the quality of recruits has not always been ideal. Looking forward, the quality, numbers, and professionalism of recruits that Marines may advise will vary widely across the globe, so Marines will

need to be prepared to succeed in environments where local recruits fall far short of U.S. or other Western military standards. In order for Marines to succeed in this environment, they will need to be flexible, creative, and culturally sensitive. Additionally, they will need to check their own expectations of what such recruits may be capable of, and manage the expectations of their counterparts, and U.S. and foreign policymakers.[198]

Inadequate advisor screening and selection

In several of our case studies (the Vietnam Combined Action Program, Iraq, and Afghanistan), we identified issues pertaining to inadequate selection and screening of those Marines assigned to serve as advisors. This had negative repercussions in that these Marines were sometimes not of the right expertise (MOS), temperament, age, or rank and therefore were not always put in positions to succeed as advisors. Currently, the Marine Corps does attempt to select Marines within well-defined rank and MOS requirements for advisor missions, but it has only the most rudimentary means of tracking Marines who have served as advisors. Looking forward, the Marine Corps may want to improve its ability to do so, so as to identify who might be good candidates for additional advisor missions or assignment to the formal advisor training institutions.

Inadequate pre-deployment training

From the Banana War period through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, pre-deployment training has been an issue for Marine advisors. We identified in each of our case studies that pre-deployment training was either inadequate throughout the advisor mission or was deemed inadequate early in the mission and followed by revisions to the training or the creation of new training institutions.

In Vietnam, and later in Iraq and Afghanistan, situational requirements—such as the need to strengthen indigenous self-defense forces, or train an army or local Marine Corps—and the sheer scale of the advisory enterprise led to formalized training for U.S. advisors. As the

[198] For more on managing expectations in an advisory context, see Rosenau, *Acknowledging Limits*, pp. 5-6.

Vietnam conflict wound down, the requirement to produce advisors ended, and the training institutions and programs shut down. As a result of the most recent Marine advising efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Corps has established training institutions in ATG and MCSCG. Looking forward, the future of these organizations in the wake of the war in Afghanistan remains somewhat in question.

Language and cultural barriers

In the judgment of Marine advisors stretching back to the first decades of the twentieth century, the service provided too little language and cultural preparation. Looking forward, given the vast array of countries in which the Marine Corps might conduct advising missions in the future and the relatively small size of its advisor training and education institutions, it is likely that linguistic and cultural hurdles are likely to remain a part of nearly every Marine advisory mission. With that being said, the Marine Corps has attempted to weave education on cultural differences into its formal schoolhouses and training institutions (e.g., via the creation of the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL)), and it has begun assigning its second lieutenants regions of the world in which to focus aspects of their professional military education (PME). Both of these efforts should help to create more culturally astute and regionally-oriented Marines.

C2 and support issues

Command and control (C2) challenges and issues with support to advisors in the field are likely to vary from place to place, and we observed these issues in some, but not all, of our case studies. Looking forward, the examples of Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that these hurdles are likely to be persistent in cases where advising missions are being conducted alongside large-scale counterinsurgency or stability operations. However, since these are operational vice service issues, it will be difficult for the Marine Corps to do much more than be aware of the historical precedent for their existence and attempt to mitigate them in future conflicts.

Advising as a core Marine competency

In looking at Table 1 and our case studies in totality, it is clear that some issues Marines have experienced in advising missions are sometimes, but not always present (e.g., poor quality local recruits, C2/support issues) while others were observed in every case (e.g., poor pre-deployment training, language and culture issues). The persistence of training and education (and to a lesser extent, screening/selection) issues is largely a result of the ad hoc nature in which the Marine Corps has conducted advisory missions over the past hundred years. As our case studies illustrated, rather than embracing advising as a core capability (or competency), the Marine Corps' interest in this mission ebbed and flowed in accordance with national priorities.

Looking forward, our national guidance seems to indicate an appetite for advising foreign militaries as a means of building capacity in our friends and allies, so that they can address problems on their own soil and prevent the latter from escalating to the point that U.S. military intervention is required. As such, it seems likely that the Marine Corps will be called upon to continue conducting advisory missions in the near-to-mid future. With that in mind, a question for senior leaders is whether the Marine Corps should continue to conduct advisory missions in the ad hoc manner of the past century, or whether it should take steps to institutionalize advising and embrace it as a service core competency.

Conclusion and recommendations

Today, as an era of large-scale stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan draws to a close, some Marines are calling for a return to the service's historical roots, and specifically, for a renewed emphasis on amphibious warfare.[199] But as this study has shown, those roots include more than amphibious warfare—the Marine Corps has considerable experience in organizing, training, and advising foreign security forces. Advising was part of the career trajectories of some of the service's most storied members, and as a result of protracted operations in Central America and the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, the service has learned and re-learned important lessons about advisors and advising.

The advisory role creates considerable challenges for even the most motivated and professional Marines. Those hurdles include language and cultural barriers, minimal logistical support, difficult command-and-control arrangements, and physical isolation. The lack of human capital within foreign security forces, an "officer first" mentality, and endemic corruption have been the rule rather than the exception. Since Vietnam, advisors have also had to confront the fact that their foreign counterparts are free to accept or reject advisors' guidance as they see fit. Successful contemporary advising has often hinged on the ability of Marines to persuade, in many cases by providing (or sometimes withholding) food, fuel, ammunition, and other support.

A close study of advising in Afghanistan and Iraq, and earlier advisory activities in Vietnam, Central America, and the Caribbean, reveals the personality traits, proficiencies, and knowledge required for successful advising. These include a high level of military expertise, patience, persistence, unimpeachable personal conduct and professionalism, and a willingness to endure hardships. One Marine who served in Vietnam described attributes of advisors that are just as relevant today:

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[199] Monty J. Fontenot and G.L. Lamborn, "Returning to Our Roots: Marine Advisors in the 21st Century," *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 2013.

> There are peculiar customs [among the Vietnamese] to be sure, but these are insignificant beside those characteristics that transcend all boundaries of language and nationality. The officer who is knowledgeable in his trade, unafraid of work, well-mannered, and possessed of a sense of humor will succeed here as he does everywhere else.[200]

Looking ahead, a key question for the service's senior leadership is whether it wants to embrace advising as a core competency. Our historical analysis has shown that not doing so, and continuing to conduct advising missions in an ad hoc manner, is likely to result in the persistence of the same issues that have been present in the past: inadequate screening and selection of advisors; inadequate predeployment training; and cultural and language issues. Our analysis suggests that, broadly speaking, the ad hoc approach has had costs and consequences with respect to the effectiveness of Marine advisory missions.

That said, a decision to make advising a core competency of the Marine Corps comes with resource requirements in the form of money, manpower, and institutional dedication to the mission. In these times of fiscal austerity, such decisions cannot be made lightly. It is outside the scope of this study to make a recommendation on this specific issue, beyond suggesting that a deliberate decision be made one way or the other and the implications of that decision be understood. However, if the service does decide to adopt advising as a core competency, our analysis suggests it should consider the following recommendations.

Make advising a core mission essential task (MET)

Designating advising as a core service competency would drive institutionalization of Marine advising. A key step would be to add an advising component to core MET lists at the MEF, division, regiment, and battalion level—perhaps under the rubric "develop partner nation forces."[201] T/O&E would then be revised to require Marines with

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[200] Quoted in Miller, *The Co-Vans*, pp. 115.

[201] Jonathan Schroden, "Thoughts on USMC Core Competencies and Mission Essential Tasks (METs)," CNA briefing, March 11, 2013. This rubric

advising skills to be assigned to the operational force, or trained to advisor standards once in the organization.[202] In effect, the ability to conduct advisory missions would become a requirement to which Marine resources, including personnel, money, and training, could be committed.

Create a free MOS for advising

Currently, the Marine Corps lacks an easy way to track Marines with advisor experience. More importantly, it lacks a way of ensuring their careers are not negatively impacted via the performance of this mission instead of others deemed critical for promotion (for example, company command for captains), or more positively, of rewarding them for success in this mission. Creating a free MOS (FMOS) is a relatively straightforward way for the Marine Corps to develop a more complete understanding of its advisor base; track advisors over time; and more easily identify Marines for future advisory missions. An FMOS would allow commanders to use MCTFS to find Marines with training or experience as advisors. More broadly, an FMOS would send a signal across the service about the importance of advising and help overcome any perceptions that advising holds back the development of a Marine's career.

Retain structure for advisor training and education

As a result of its experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps has created institutional entities for advisor training and education (i.e., ATG and MCSCG, and to a lesser extent, CAOCL). Retaining these institutions is a logical starting point for building an enduring training capability—and while that sounds like a "null" recommendation, in these times of declining force structure and fiscal pressures, institutions stood up over the past twelve years of war are easy targets for future savings. Additionally, since language and cultural barriers are likely to remain a significant challenge for advisors, it seems prudent to constantly be looking to place additional empha-

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comes directly from the Marine Corps Task List (MCTL), derived from the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL).

[202] The training and readiness (T&R) manual that guides pre-deployment training plans (PTPs) would therefore include advisor skills.

sis on developing basic language skills and cross-cultural understanding across the Marine Corps.

These recommendations are only a starting point. But they can serve as a jumping-off point for a broader discussion about the future of the Marine Corps. As in the immediate post-World War II period, the service today is grappling with fundamental questions about how best to contribute to the advancement of U.S. national security. An understanding of the Marine Corps advisory experience—today, in the immediate past, and in earlier periods of history—should inform debate over the service's future direction.

Appendix I: U.S. doctrine

Advising takes place in the context of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Security Force Assistance (SFA).[203] FID is one of the five components of irregular warfare (IW)—that is, all military operations other than war between regular military forces.[204] FID includes the provision of training, materiel, advice, or assistance to host nation (HN) forces countering internal threats. There is a common perception that FID is the sole purview of special operations forces (SOF). In terms of doctrine, though, both SOF and conventional forces (CF) can conduct FID. The joint publication on FID explains that successful FID involves, "a combination of CF, while leveraging the unique capabilities of SOF."[205]

The advising activities of conventional forces, while they can be part of FID, are often part of SFA. Advising is considered "a pillar" of SFA.[206] SFA is unified action to "generate, employ, and sustain local, host-nation or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority" and is intended to improve the capability and capacity of those forces to combat both internal and external threats.[207] It is part of security cooperation (SC), which encompasses all activities with other nations to build relationships that promote U.S. interests, build host-nation capabilities for self-defense, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access.[208]

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[203] DoD Directive/Instruction, *Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework*, November 1, 2011 (incorporating Change 1, April 27, 2012), p, 12.

[204] *Joint Operating Concept 2.0: Irregular Warfare*, May 2010; and *Joint Publication 3-22: Foreign Internal Defense*, July 2010.

[205] Ibid., VI-4.

[206] *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance*; and *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance*.

[207] *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance*; and *Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework*, p. 12.

[208] Ibid.

There are a number of terms that often are used interchangeably or in conjunction with advising, including training, teaching, coaching, and partnering. While training, teaching, and coaching all can be considered part of what an advisor does, partnering is actually a separate concept: a command arrangement between U.S. and host-nation forces that enables them to operate together to achieve mission success.[209] So, while partnering and advising are complementary in that they seek to build the capacity and capability of the local security forces, they are distinct activities that achieve that aim in different ways.[210]

The joint FID manual draws a distinction between training and advising. *Training* typically is non-operational, and U.S. forces generally are not in a position where they might engage with enemy combatants.[211] *Advising*, on the other hand, generally is operational, with U.S. forces often facing the potential of engaging with enemy combatants.[212] When advising takes place in the context of an active insurgency, the advice that U.S. personnel provide must be processed and acted upon quicker, since lives are potentially at risk.

The Marine Corps' SFA field manual makes a further distinction between teaching and coaching. *Teaching* includes training and education through classroom lectures, seminars, hands-on training, exercises, and simulations.[213] *Coaching* is assistance intended to help counterparts complete a set of tasks.[214] It involves helping those counterparts understand their current performance and telling them how they can advance to a new level of knowledge and skill. Goal setting and attainment are foundational elements of coaching. Teaching and coaching are most likely to be successful when there is a personal and professional relationship, founded on trust, between the advisor and the advised.

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[209] *Tentative Manual for Partnering Operations*, Draft of March 14, 2011, FOUO.

[210] *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance*, p. 2-9.

[211] *Joint Publication 3-22: Foreign Internal Defense*.

[212] Ibid.

[213] *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance*, p. 7-27.

[214] Ibid.

Appendix II: U.S. Army advisor training

In 2009, the U.S. Army's 162nd Infantry Brigade was tasked with training all advisor teams. The Army Security Force Assistance (SFA) training strategy is a five phase process that includes: Combat Skills, SFA, Leader Training Program (LTP), Command Post Exercise (CPX)/Situational Training Exercise (STX), and Culminating Training Event. While some of the training is Afghan-specific, the Army has identified individual critical tasks (ICT) that soldiers must have regardless of where they operate.

Many in the Army see advisor duty as problematic for career advancement. Despite assurances to the contrary, this issue has not gone away. As late as November 2008, the Army lacked the ability to fill transition team requirements above 50 percent in Afghanistan. In 2009, Robert Gates, then secretary of defense, raised the issue of advisor career progression. He wondered "whether personnel and promotions systems designed to reward the command of American troops will be able to reflect the importance of advising, training, and equipping foreign troops—something still not considered a career-enhancing path for the best and brightest officers."[215]

Normally, the Army identifies personnel with specific qualifications or skill sets using an Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) code. The code can be tracked centrally and is usually given to those who have completed military training. Unfortunately, the Army does not use an ASI code for soldiers who have completed advisor training. Instead, the Army uses a different, less formalized means—a Project Development Skill Identifier (PDSI). PDSI codes are used, in combination with a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) or Area of Concentration (AOC), to identify unique skills, training, and/or experience that add value to the Army organization and mission but do not meet the formal requirements of an ASI.

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[215] Robert Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 83 (January-February 2009).

PDSI codes are used merely as an identification mechanism and are not part of any Table of Organization nor used by the Army Force Management System. Unless approved by the Commander of U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC), PDSI codes cannot be used in the requisitioning of active component personnel. There appears to be no consistency as to whether the PDSI code is included in the Officer's Record Brief (ORB) or Enlisted Record Brief (ERB) or as an entry in another record file. Regardless, it is a code that can be used to track or find individuals with certain training, although it cannot be used for such purposes without express HRC approval.

The Army has developed a new Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) concept in which a brigade combat team (BCT) is the designated force for combatant commands (CCMD) for a period of time (about one year). This concept calls for the BCT to provide forces to the CCMD for what missions it deems appropriate. The 162nd Infantry Brigade will provide any required training to these regionally aligned forces. It will also be able to rapidly deploy small teams of regional experts to conduct or assist in SFA missions. Recently, the 162nd adapted its program to train the first of the Army's regionally aligned brigades, 2/1 BCT from Fort Riley. 2/1 is aligned with Africa Command (AFRICOM) for the next year.

Regional alignment gives soldiers the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of a particular country or region. Because of this, the Army is considering permanently aligning certain BCTs with certain CCMDs. While the BCT won't always be the designated aligned BCT in a given year (it will have "off periods" when it is not on tap), when it is aligned in a given year it will always be with the same CCMD. This is similar to how Army Special Forces align regionally.

Appendix III: U.S. Marine Corps advisor training curriculum development

Advisor skills

Marines often categorize advisor skills as either "hard" or "soft." But there is in fact a third set of skills: interpersonal. These categories, while not absolute, are differentiated on the basis of their content, how easily they can be assessed, and whether or not proficiency depends on the individual Marine. Hard skills are traditional infantry proficiencies like conducting a patrol and operating a tactical vehicle. Assessing proficiency is relatively straightforward: a Marine can either operate a tactical vehicle or he cannot. Whether or not he can operate a tactical vehicle depends solely on the knowledge and abilities he brings to the situation.

Soft skills involve understanding foreign languages and the cultural and social environment in which advisors operate. That environment includes "operational culture" –that is, cultural elements that can have an outcome on military operations, such as the economy, political structure, and beliefs that affect an individual's worldview. [216] As with hard skills, these are comparatively easy to assess. A Marine can either enumerate the aspects of operational culture and consider how they impact his mission or he cannot. Proficiency in these soft skills is based on the individual Marine.

Interpersonal skills are proficiencies that include relating to people in a way that builds trust—the foundation of any productive advisory relationship. Assessing proficiency in these skills is difficult because it can be done effectively in the context of an interaction, which also means that proficiency depends on more than the individual Marine. The figure below captures the skills that current Marine Corps train-

[216] Barak A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*, Second ed. (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011).

ing institutions address, categorized by hard, soft, and interpersonal[217]:

Hard skills (35)

- Conduct limited detainee/EPW operations
- Conduct a patrol
- Call for indirect fire
- Conduct close air support
- Conduct tactical site exploitation
- Operate tactical vehicle
- Employ foreign weapon systems
- Conduct basic combat casualty care
- Process casualties
- Conduct aid station operations
- Assess geographic medical requirements
- Conduct advanced tactical combat casualty care
- Execute SERE techniques
- Apply high risk personnel pistol techniques
- Defeat restraints
- Conduct force protection
- Employ US weapon systems
- Perform communication procedures
- Operate command and control suite
- Perform basic radio operations
- Perform information collections
- Conduct mounted operations
- React to an improvised explosive device
- Implement counter improvised explosive device
- Operate a team level operations center
- Conduct unit level assessment
- Manage foreign security force training
- Conduct staff planning
- Manage assigned funds
- Design ranges
- Manage risk
- Detect surveillance
- Avoid apprehension
- Operate a vehicle in a foreign nation
- Conduct convoy/motorized operations

Soft skills (5)

- Communicate using basic language proficiency
- Use tactical language
- Apply operational culture
- Communicate through an interpreter
- Incorporate operational culture into mission planning

Interpersonal skills (9)

- Manage perceptions
- Interact with a foreign population
- Influence a foreign population
- Recognize culture stress
- Mitigate culture stress
- Communicate non-verbally
- Influence behavior
- Negotiate difference

The number of hard skills that advisers train for is seven times greater than the number of language/cultural skills trained for, and approximately four times greater than the number of interpersonal skills trained for. This reflects the understanding that advisors are unlikely to be successful if they lack military skills, experience, and professionalism. However, the relatively small number of interpersonal skills

[217] The individual skills listed here (not including the categorization) are derived from a slide produced by ATG and provided to the report's authors in February 2013.

belies their importance in the advisor mission. Personal relationships with members of foreign security forces are the foundation of successful advising. Interpersonal skills make those relationships possible. As the SFA field manual explains, "no amount of resources can compensate for the lack of a relationship between advisors and their counterparts. It must be honest, genuine, and heartfelt. Mutual respect, trust, and understanding create success." In fact, "relationship building is the mission" in SFA.[218]

Curriculum development

Today, there are two main institutions that serve as sources for the curricula used at ATG and MCSCG: the Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) based at Quantico, Virginia, and the Army's Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) based at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The research that these institutions conduct and the products they offer comprise an à-la-carte menu from which ATG and MCSCG can draw in order to create their own curricula, which invariably rely on other sources as well.

CAOCL is intended to be the service's central repository for cultural training. Its aim is to help Marines understand culture so that it becomes part of the planning process. The organization provides culture and language training, serves as a resource for operational culture, and also provides career-long learning in cultures, languages, and regions. For example, CAOCL offers classes on operational culture in multiple countries including Afghanistan, Thailand, and Georgia. They also offer classes on language familiarization in Pashto, Dari, and Portuguese, among others. Finally, CAOCL SMEs offer advisory support during field and staff exercises.

ARI's origins lie in a meeting of experimental psychologists at Harvard University in 1917, where participants considered how psychology and scientific methodologies could support national defense. In August of that year, the Committee on Classification of Personnel in the Army was established. Today, ARI brings to bear scientific assessments and the insights of behavioral and social sciences on problems

[218] *Cross-Cultural Advising Training Support Package.*

that impact the Army. As such, much of its current research involves the advisor mission.

The following section will review some of the interpersonal skills training designed to help Marines better understand and communicate with their counterparts. The training discussed here revolves around differences between individualist and collectivist cultures, including communication styles, face saving, and time orientation. It also includes similarities such as body language. Recommendations for how to enhance the curricula flow from this discussion. They include more practice communicating indirectly (especially through a translator), a focus on culturally appropriate instructional methods and assessments, and investigation into what traits are compatible with proficient foreign security forces.

Interpersonal skills: individualist and collectivist cultures

The world is divided into two types of cultures—individualist and collectivist. Individualist cultures—like the United States—are a small subset of the rest of the world's cultures, which are predominately collectivist. In individualist cultures, ties between and among individuals are loose. Individual goals are paramount, and people take care of themselves and their immediate families. In contrast, in collectivist cultures, ties between and among individuals are strong and cohesive groups are formed. The goals of the group are paramount.

A video in the Cross-Cultural Advising Training Support Package, created and distributed by ARI and eCross Culture, provides an anecdote to help illustrate the differences between individualist and collectivist cultures, and the impact those characteristics have on how members of those cultures live.[219] An eCross Culture expert poses a question—how many members of your immediate family and extended family (including their relationship to you) can you name? In the United States, that number is generally less than 50. In a tribe in eastern Africa, in contrast, the average number is 400. In collectivist cultures, then, those 400 people are, in some way, part of a person's thinking and decision-making.

[219] *Cross-Cultural Advising Training Support Package.*

A hallmark of individualist cultures is the direct, linear communication style. Because all individuals are different, according to individualist cultures, it is important to communicate precisely and to say what one means. A collectivist culture is characterized by an indirect, non-linear communication style. Because members of collectivist cultures are thinking about the group, communication is more context-dependent and subtle. Members of collectivist cultures go to great lengths to preserve group harmony and avoid hurting the feelings of group members.

This desire not to hurt feelings is extended to members outside of the collectivist culture. In a video that is part of the Cross Cultural Advising Training Support Package, an eCross Culture expert relays a story in which even she had difficulty communicating with someone who used the indirect style.[220] She asked her colleague, a man from a collectivist culture, if he would like to go with her to a restaurant that served foods prepared with tamarind, a spice. In response to her question, he said, "I think we will be working late and it will be too late to go." She replied, "No, we actually won't finish that late." He responded, "It is far away and I am not sure we will know how to get there." She assured him that she had printed directions. He countered, "It is not in the best part of town." She said it was a safe area. It was only when her colleague ordered a bowl of plain white rice at dinner that she implored, "Why didn't you tell me you didn't want to eat here?!" Her colleague explained that he had tried to tell her "no" many times.

In collectivist cultures, people will avoid saying "no" outright, even if that is what they intend to say. Obviously, this can create difficulties for Marines trying to work with foreign counterparts. As the aforementioned example shows, even cultural experts can sometimes miss the clues. One instructional video suggests that advisors refrain from asking their counterparts yes/no questions. For example, instead of, "Do you know the local officials here?" ask "*What* do you know about the local officials here?"

Americans like to ask yes/no questions because they are direct and, in western cultures, they prefer information to be communicated

[220] Ibid.

quickly and clearly. In an operational environment where counterparts do not speak English, yes/no questions become a default. Making the shift from asking those types of questions to "who/what/when/where/how" questions is a substantial task that requires sustained practice. Marines not only have to rethink how they communicate, but they also need to practice communicating more complex questions and answers through translators.

Face-saving

Indirect communication is critical in collectivist cultures because it allows for face-saving, which is the preservation of dignity in the event of being wrong, making a mistake, or not performing well. A former advisor interviewed for the instructional videos explains that when an Afghan makes a mistake in public, everyone remembers. As a result, "You're not just wrong today—you're wrong for 100 years."[221] A culture expert also speaking in the video characterizes being publicly wrong as an "unrecoverable error."[222] Because of this cultural stigma, people in collectivist cultures tend to avoid quick or public decisions. This impacts how advisors teach. Teaching is the communication of material using appropriate instructional methods and implementing assessments to determine if desired objectives have been met. In the U.S. educational system, it is common for students to volunteer answers to promote discussion and even for teachers to randomly call on students to provide answers. But in collectivist cultures, where everyone needs to maintain the aura of being right, teachers cannot teach or assess students in this way.

An instructional video urges advisors to mimic local teaching strategies. Christian missionaries suggest a similar tack—namely, observing children and adults learning in the contexts of their homes and communities.[223] Doing so allows missionaries to help students learn new material in the context of familiar situations.

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[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Judith E. Lingenfelter and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* (Baker Academic, 2003), p. 52.

Once in theatre, Marines do not have the time to engage in the sustained observation that will reveal the hidden curriculum, or the cultural agenda for learning that surrounds schooling.[224] Therefore, training should be tailored to the location that the advisor will be sent and include the following type of information: how teachers interact with students, whether or not it is appropriate for students to ask questions, how students learn (by observation or other means), how long after being taught a skill should a student be able to demonstrate proficiency in it, and whether learning is a group or individual activity.

While advisors should adapt their teaching and assessments to the culture they operate in, they must be careful not to completely change to conform to local cultural patterns. Missionaries have found that in doing so, local people no longer value the experience.[225] Local people do want some westernized form of instruction and assessment, but a careful balance must be struck. The best information on what this balance is should be provided by advisors returning from an advising tour.

Time orientation

Individualist cultures strictly adhere to "clock time." In contrast, collectivist cultures have a much looser conception of time. If a friend stops by unexpectedly, or a relationship must be tended to in some other way, then appointments may be broken.

This difference in orientation to time has caused advisors difficulty in the field. When foreign forces do not show up to a scheduled appointment, advisors may view that as a reflection of their character—they are seen as lazy and untruthful.[226] But breaking an appointment

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[224] Philip Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

[225] *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching.*

[226] This is the fundamental attribution error. When a person does something bad or fails, we are more likely to see it as a direct result of character or personality than context. In contrast, if we do something bad or fail, we are more likely to see it as a direct result of context, rather than character or personality. For example, if another driver is behaving erratically and cuts you off, you are more likely to view that as indicative of his poor character or hot-headedness, rather than him rushing to the

can also be attributed to cultural approaches to time. In the instructional video mentioned above, a Kenyan suggests that advisors schedule "margins of safety" when setting up meetings with counterparts.[227] If you really need the meeting to start at 12:00, then it might make sense to schedule it at an earlier time.

Training currently provided to advisors is not judgmental or normative. It highlights differences in how cultures operate, but does not make a value judgment about either behavior or prescribe the adoption of one behavior over another. The way collectivist cultures operate is not wrong, just different. However, training needs to grapple with the impact of collectivist culture traits on the proficiency of foreign security forces. For example, if a soldier cannot prioritize his professional responsibility and report on time for duty, is that compatible with a functioning military? If not, how can you modify an ingrained cultural approach to time?

Another aspect of time orientation is whether a culture thinks more about the future or the present. The United States is a very future-oriented culture. Americans are comfortable planning. In present-oriented cultures, in contrast, people do not plan; rather, they react. This too has implications for the types of militaries and police forces that arise in collectivist cultures. For example, can a military be expected to defeat enemies without engaging in long-term planning?

Similarities in body language

Most communication is non-verbal. As such*, facial expressions* are important clues to meaning. The basic human emotions (anger, disgust,

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hospital to see a dying relative. The instructional video used to explain the fundamental attribution error is an Iraqi recalling the frustration of an American team member he was working with. Iraqis would promise to get things done by a particular date, but would never deliver on time. The American advisor thought this demonstrated laziness and a general lack of initiative. But, the Iraqi explains that they lived in a centralized system for 35 years and that context shaped how they did things—superiors needed to get authority from their superiors and so on up the chain of command, which gravely impacted the time it took to get things done.

[227] *Cross-Cultural Advising Training Support Package*.

fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise) manifest themselves the same way, regardless of culture. A person's use of *space* is also telling. How much space does a person create when interacting with you? There are some cultural norms, but the rest can depend on the person's feelings toward you. If he likes you, he may be closer to you than when interacting with others. It is critical to establish a baseline, however, before ascribing meaning.

Space consumption is another potential indicator. How much space a person consumes can also reveal his feelings. Hands on hips can express dominance and hands clasped behind the head can express comfort, for example. Particular behaviors can also be indicative of a person's state—rubbing the neck and cracking knuckles are both signs of stress. Again, however, establishing a baseline is critical to understanding what these behaviors might mean.

Much of the interpersonal skills training assume that foreign counterparts are open and honest in their interactions with advisors. But as mentioned elsewhere in this study, both foreign military personnel and interpreters may be deceptive.[228] In a kinetic operating environment, deception can have lethal consequences. According to a 1990 study, Americans only detected deception (in other Americans) 55 percent of the time.[229] Advisors need to have much better than a 50 percent chance so that they can protect themselves and fellow Marines. Most people assume that avoiding eye contact and being fidgety is evidence of deception, but in fact, this is not always the case.[230] This common misperception is problematic because averting the gaze of authority figures is often considered respectful in collectivist cultures. FSF may routinely not look advisors in the eye. Dispelling

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[228] For a detailed treatment of deception detection and training, see Mark Yager, Beret Strong, Linda Roan, David Matsumoto, and Kimberly A. Metcalf, "Nonverbal Communication in the Contemporary Operating Environment" (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, January 2009.)

[229] C.F. Bond, A. Omar, A. Mahmoud, and R.N. Bonser, "The Miscommunication of Deception: An Adaptive Perspective," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 21 (1990, pp. 331-345.

[230] C.F. Bond, "A World of Lies," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 37 (2006), pp. 60-74.

this misperception is a function of training. While there are no reliably valid indicators of deception, training in attention to vocal pitch and types of smiles have been shown to improve detection accuracy in experiments.[231] If Marines are sent to permissive operating environments in the future, however, deception training may be less critical.

[231] P. Ekman, M. O'Sullivan, W.V. Friesen, and K.R. Scherer, "Face, Voice, and Body in Detecting Deceit," *Behavioral Science* 15, no. 2 (1991), pp. 125-135.

Appendix IV: Analysis of ATG graduates (March 2010-March 2013)

Figure 1. Officers by rank

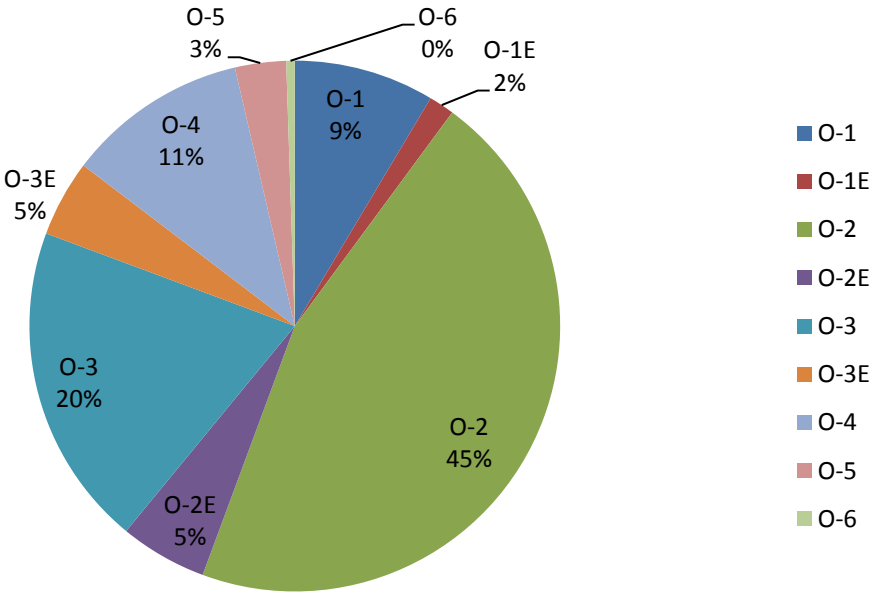


Figure 2. Enlisted personnel by rank

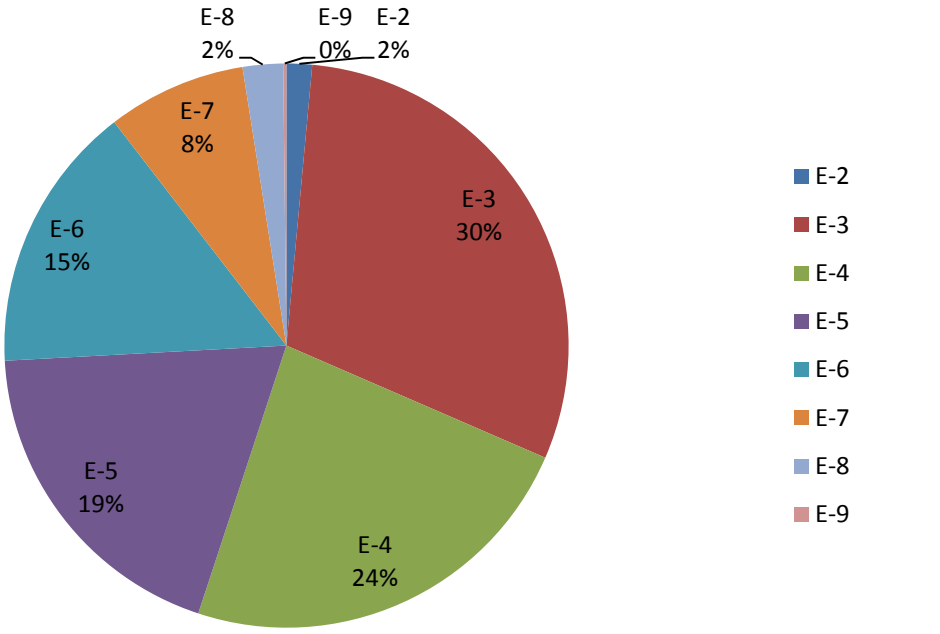


Figure 3. Personnel by category

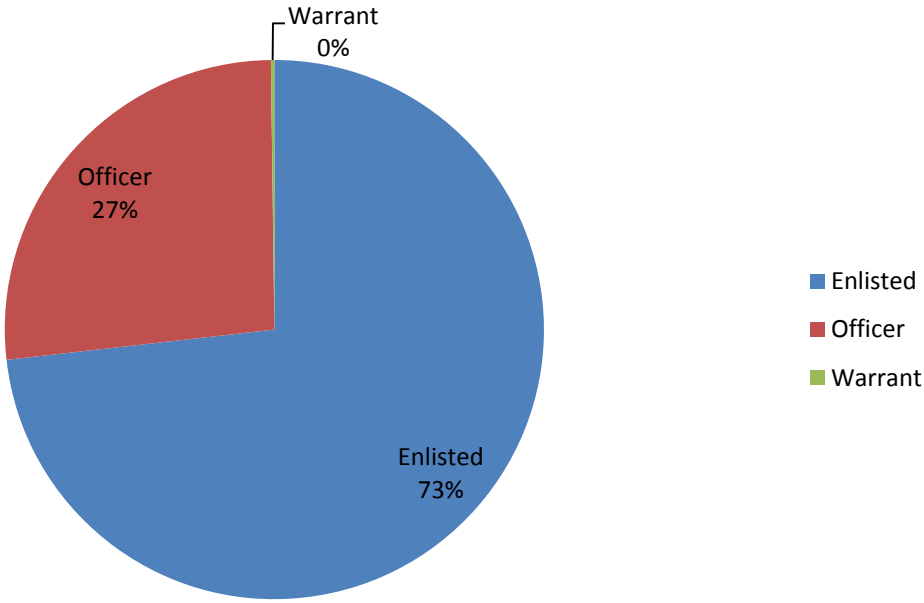


Figure 4. Graduates by PMOS (All)

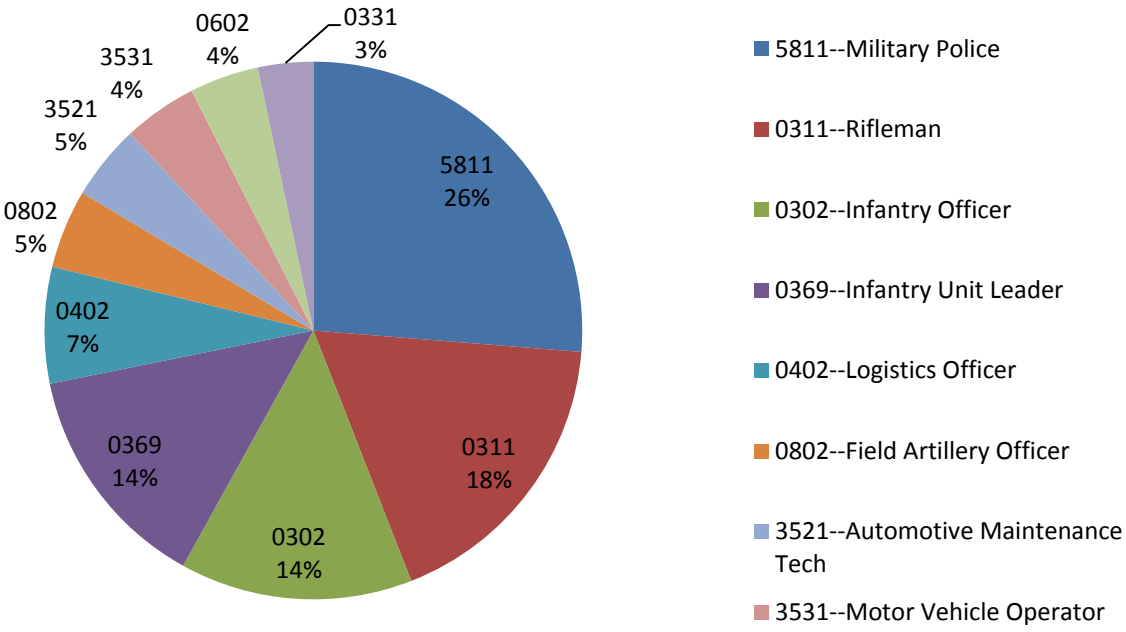


Figure 5. Officer graduates by PMOS

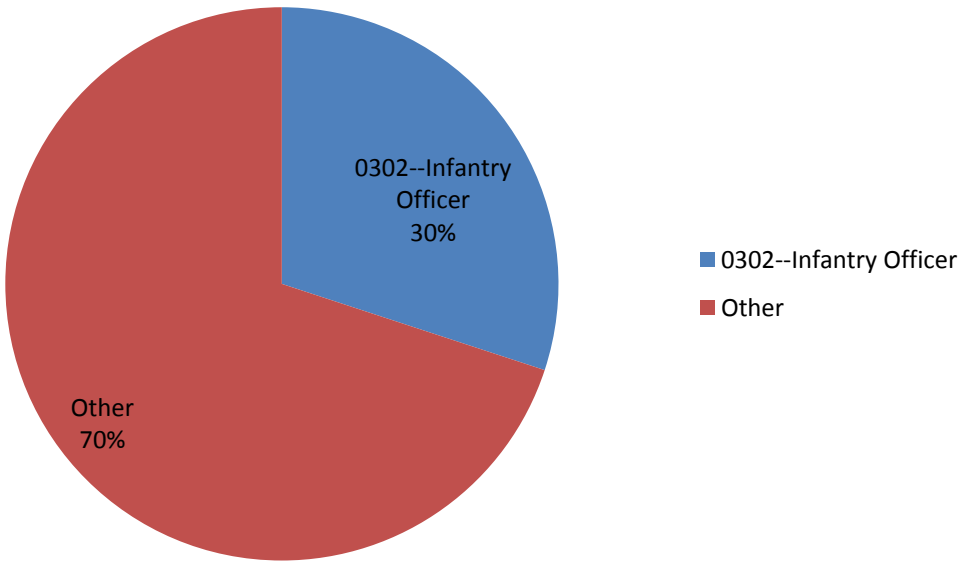
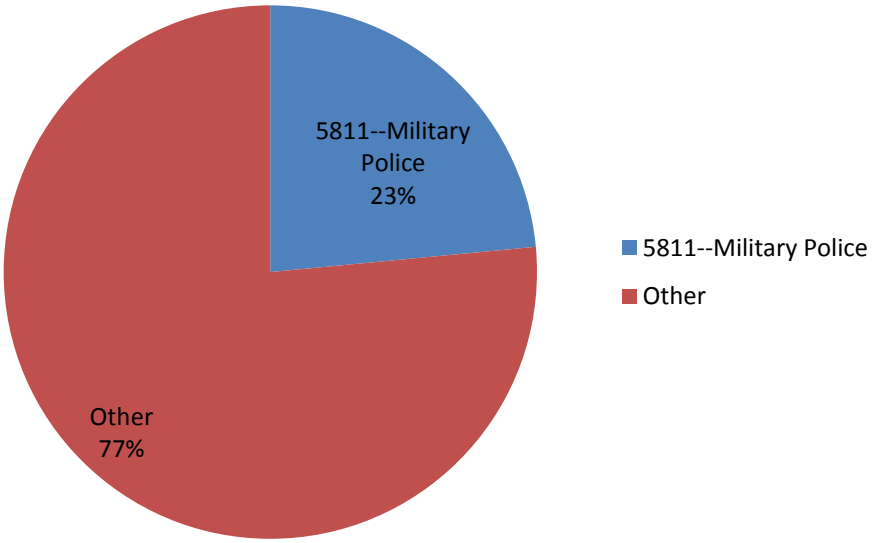


Figure 6. Enlisted graduates by PMOS



Appendix V: Primary military occupational specialties (PMOSs) of ATG graduates (March 2010–March 2013)

1. 0111—Administrative Specialist
2. 0151—Administrative Clerk
3. 0170—Personnel Officer
4. 0180—Adjutant
5. 0193—Personnel/Administrative Chief
6. 0200—Basic Intelligence Marine
7. 0201—Basic Intelligence Officer
8. 0202—MAGTF Intelligence Officer
9. 0203—Ground Intelligence Officer
10. 0204—Counterintelligence/Human Source Intelligence Officer
11. 0206—Signals Intelligence/Ground Electronic Warfare Officer
12. 0207—Air Intelligence Officer
13. 0211—Counterintelligence/Human Source Intelligence Specialist
14. 0231—Intelligence Specialist
15. 0241—Imagery Analysis Specialist
16. 0261—Geographic Intelligence Specialist
17. 0300—Basic Infantryman
18. 0302—Infantry Officer
19. 0311—Rifleman
20. 0313—LAV Crewman
21. 0321—Reconnaissance Man
22. 0331—Machine Gunner
23. 0341—Mortarman
24. 0351—Infantry Assaultman
25. 0352—Antitank Missileman
26. 0369—Infantry Unit Leader
27. 0402—Logistics Officer
28. 0411—Maintenance Management Specialist
29. 0431—Logistics/Embarkation Specialist
30. 0451—Airborne and Air Delivery Specialist
31. 0481—Landing Support Specialist

32. 0491—Logistics/Mobility Chief
33. 0511—MAGTF Planning Specialist
34. 0602—Communications Officer
35. 0612—Tactical Switching Operator
36. 0619—Wire Chief
37. 0621—Field Radio Operator
38. 0622—Digital Multi-Channel Wideband Transmission Equipment Operator
39. 0623—Tropospheric Scatter Radio Multi-Channel Equipment Operator
40. 0629—Radio Chief
41. 0651—Data Systems Technician
42. 0659—Data Chief
43. 0699—Communications Chief
44. 0802—Field Artillery Officer
45. 0811—Field Artillery Cannoneer
46. 0842—Field Artillery Radar Operator
47. 0844—Field Artillery Fire Control Man
48. 0848—Field Artillery Operations Man
49. 0861—Fire Support Man
50. 1141—Electrician
51. 1142—Engineer Equipment Electrical Systems Technician
52. 1161—Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician
53. 1169—Utilities Chief
54. 1171—Water Support Technician
55. 1302—Combat Engineer Officer
56. 1310—Engineer Equipment Officer
57. 1316—Metal Worker
58. 1341—Engineer Equipment Mechanic
59. 1345—Engineer Equipment Operator
60. 1349—Engineer Equipment Chief
61. 1371—Combat Engineer
62. 1391—Bulk Fuel Specialist
63. 1802—Tank Officer
64. 1803—Assault Amphibious Vehicle Operator
65. 1812—M1A1 Tank Crewman
66. 1833—Assault Amphibious Vehicle Crewman
67. 2110—Ordnance Vehicle Maintenance Officer
68. 2111—Small Arms Repairer/Technician
69. 2141—Assault Amphibious Vehicle Repairer/Technician
70. 2146—Main Battle Tank Repairer/Technician
71. 2147—Light Armored Vehicle Repairer/Technician

72. 2149—Ordnance Vehicle Maintenance Chief
73. 2171—Electro-Optical Ordnance Repairer
74. 2181—Senior Ground Ordnance Weapons Chief
75. 2311—Ammunition Technician
76. 2336—Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician
77. 2621—Special Communication Signals Collection Operator/Analyst
78. 2651—Special Intelligence System Administrator/Communicator
79. 2673—Asia-Pacific Cryptologic Linguist
80. 2676—European II (East) Cryptologic Linguist
81. 2805—Data/Communications Maintenance Officer
82. 2844—Ground Communications Organizational Repairer
83. 2846—Ground Radio Intermediate Repairer
84. 2862—Electronic Maintenance Technician
85. 2887—Artillery Electronics Technician
86. 3001—Basic Supply Administration and Operations Officer
87. 3002—Ground Supply Officer
88. 3043—Supply Administration and Operations Specialist
89. 3051—Warehouse Clerk
90. 3052—Packaging Specialist
91. 3381—Food Service Specialist
92. 3404—Financial Management Officer
93. 3432—Finance Technician
94. 3451—Financial Management Resource Analyst
95. 3510—Motor Transport Maintenance Officer
96. 3521—Automotive Maintenance Technician
97. 3529—Motor Transport Maintenance Chief
98. 3531—Motor Vehicle Operator
99. 3533—Logistics Vehicle System Operator
100. 3537—Motor Transport Operations Chief
101. 4821—Career Retention Specialist
102. 5524—Musician
103. 5702—Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense Officer
104. 5711—Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Defense Specialist
105. 5803—Military Police Officer
106. 5811—Military Police
107. 5831—Correctional Specialist
108. 6002—Aircraft Maintenance Officer
109. 6048—Flight Equipment Technician
110. 6072—Aircraft Maintenance SE/Hydraulic/Pneumatic/Structures Mechanic
111. 6074—Cryogenics Equipment Operator

112. 6116—Tiltrotor Mechanic, MV-22
113. 6123—Helicopter Power Plants Mechanic, T-64
114. 6153—Helicopter Airframe Mechanic, CH-53
115. 6154—Helicopter Airframe Mechanic, UH/AH-1
116. 6216—Fixed-Wing Aircraft Mechanic, KC-130
117. 6217—Fixed-Wing Aircraft Mechanic, F/A-18
118. 6324—Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Electrical/Weapon Systems Technician, U/AH-1
119. 6332—Aircraft Electrical Systems Technician, AV-8
120. 6469—CASS Test Station IMA Advanced Maintenance Technician, IMA
121. 6492—Aviation PME/Calibration and Repair Technician, IMA
122. 6602—Aviation Supply Officer
123. 6672—Aviation Supply Specialist
124. 7041—Aviation Operations Specialist
125. 7202—Air Command and Control Officer
126. 7204—Low Altitude Air Defense Officer
127. 7212—Low Altitude Air Defense Gunner
128. 7220—Air Traffic Control Officer
129. 7257—Air Traffic Controller
130. 7507—Pilot VMA FRS Basic AV-8B Pilot
131. 7509—Pilot VMA AV-8B Qualified
132. 7521—Pilot VMFA FRS Basic F/A-18 Pilot
133. 7523—Pilot VMFA F/A-18 Qualified
134. 7532—Pilot VMM, V-22 Qualified
135. 7543—Pilot VMAQ/VMFP EA-6B Qualified
136. 7557—Pilot KC-130 Aircraft Commander
137. 7562—Pilot HMM CH-46 Qualified
138. 7563—Pilot HMLA UH-1 Qualified
139. 7564—Pilot HMH Ch-53 A/D Qualified
140. 7565—Pilot HMA AH-1 Qualified
141. 7566—Pilot HMH CH-53E Qualified
142. 7597—Basic Rotary Wing Pilot
143. 8041—Colonel, Ground
144. 8042—Colonel, Naval Aviator/Naval Flight Officer
145. 8999—Sergeant Major/First Sergeant

Acronyms

AFRICOM	Africa Command
ALP	Afghan Local Police
AMF	Afghan militia forces
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOC	Area of concentration
ARI	Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
AST	Advisor support team
ATC	Advisor Training Cell
BSRF	Black Sea Rotational Force
BTT	Border Transition Team
C2	Command and control
CAOCL	Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning
CAP	Combined Action Program
CCMD	Combatant command
CF	Conventional forces
CJTF-101	Coalition Joint Task Force 101
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Team
CPX	Command post exercise
CSTC-A	Coalition Security Transition Command - Afghanistan
DBE	Department of Border Enforcement
ERB	Enlisted record brief
ETT	Embedded Training Team
FAd'H	Forces Armées d'Haiti
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FMOS	Free military occupational specialty
FMTU	Foreign Military Training Unit
HRC	Human Resources Command
IA	Iraqi Army
IAG	Iraq Assistance Group
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
IW	Irregular warfare

JSAS	Joint Security Academy Southwest
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAGTF	Marine Air-Ground Task Force
MarDiv	Marine division
MARFORCOM	Marine Forces Command
MARSOC	Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command
MATA	Military Assistance Training Advisor
MCSCG	Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group
MCTAG	Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group
MCTFS	Marine Corps Total Force System
MCTIMS	Marine Corps Training Information Management System
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MET	Mission Essential Task
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multinational Corps - Iraq
MNF-I	Multinational Force - Iraq
MNF-W	Multinational Force - West
MNSTC-I	Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MOS	Military occupational specialty
MP	Military police
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Noncommissioned officer
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
ODB	Operational Detachment Bravo
ORB	Officer's Record Brief
PDSI	Project Development Skill Identifier
PF	Popular Forces
PME	Professional military education
PMOS	Primary military occupational specialty
PND	Policía Nacional Dominicana
POI	Program of instruction
PRU	Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
PTP	Pre-deployment Training Plan
PTT	Police Transition Team
RAF	Regionally aligned force
RCAC-C	Regional Corps Advisory Command - Central

RC-SW	Regional Command - Southwest
SC	Security cooperation
SCETC	Security, Cooperation, Education and Training Center
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SFAAT	Security Force Assistance Advisor Team
SME	Subject matter expert
SOF	Special Operations Forces
STX	Situational Training Exercise
T&R	Training and Readiness
T/O&E	Table of organization and equipment
TECOM	Training and Education Command
TF	Task Force
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps

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